

Changing the rules for the team sport of bread-winning

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The New York Times Editorial Observer: Changing the Rules for the Team Sport of Bread-Winning The above editorial ed by Nicholas Kulish and published September 23, 2005 discusses the changing trends of bread winning in a family.

The author tells us how he was conditioned from the very young age to accept the fact that equality between sexes prevailed. He assumed that marriage was always juggling two important careers along with the children and the responsibilities it brought along. The current trends, where the wife stops working once the babies arrive seem to counteract the author's assumptions. He is of the opinion that with today's rising cost, giving up working and staying home may not be a very prudent decision since it puts greater stress on the person who brings in that one income home. He of course says that this trend is more possible in highly qualified women whose husbands bring in a fat paycheck: Single parents and low income families don't have an option of quitting since their incomes pay for basics rather than luxuries.

In my opinion the author seems to be right on one count. The cost of living is phenomenally rising. According to the National Association of Realtors, the median single-family home price in July was \$217, 900, which has increased dramatically compared to ten years ago. This makes the " American dream" a little beyond the reach of an average family. Trying to make ends meet on a single income is often an uphill task in today's cost of living.

But is cost the only consideration There are other factors that I would take into consideration.

Parents, especially mothers who return to work after having babies face an

extraordinary amount of guilt and agonize about the childcare arrangements. The current corporate culture offers six to eight weeks of maternity leave and often the child is totally not ready for daycare, making a difficult decision of returning to work more complex. Spouses who travel a lot cannot pitch in and this requires more juggling to accommodate changes.

Today the demands and expectations in employment are high and often returning to work means a total lack of time to spend with the children. With a mammoth number of things put on wait for those precious hours of leisure, often the energy left is insufficient to enjoy those few growing years of the children.

The downside, of course, is the severe financial strain that this constraint imposes on the family trying to make ends meet with one income. Stay-at-home moms also seem to suffer from isolation and low self esteem and are often classified as "doing nothing" while executing the toughest job of parenting and being a homemaker.

Above and beyond all this, motherhood seems to be universally appealing and lot of women are willing to give up their careers or at least put it on hold until they are ready to let go of nurturing their children themselves. I cannot emphasize enough that there is a different solution to each individual family placed in a quandary by this issue. There is no hard and fast rule and each mom and dad need to take a stand on what best suits their needs and be ready to accept and accommodate the changes and revamp the strategy if the current one doesn't work.

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