

**MAN WORKS FROM SUN TO SUN BUT WHEN WOMEN WORK –  
WOW  
02/20/01**

Recent circumstances have caused me to more fully comprehend and empathize with the plight of working mothers.

In spite of what some may think, this is not a new realization for me. I have long been aware of same, but have had to become more personally involved in the process and it has helped me place it in its proper perspective.

We are most fortunate to live in close proximity to five of our grandchildren, one of whom has shared our home for the past 15 years. It has presented extenuating conditions to us and a state of affairs more and more prevalent in today's society.

It seems grandparents today have had to accept a more active role in the raising of our grandchildren than our parents ever did.

When I was growing up very few mothers with small children worked outside the home. There was little opportunity in industry and elsewhere that society deemed suitable or felt women were capable of doing. If there were jobs available and suitable, most mothers would have deigned them feeling the welfare of their children came before financial needs of the family. I know this was the general feeling of my mother and most women of her time.

World War II brought a sudden and abrupt halt to both society and industry assumptions on the subject. Women, including mothers in unprecedented numbers, began to work outside the home. Primarily single women or wives with husbands in the service and mothers with older children were the first to enter the work force.

A trend that was dictated by a national emergency soon transcended its original purpose and like an avalanche began slowly and continued onward gaining momentum with each passing day. Women proved their worth and value in the working world and that it is possible to balance both family and career.

All three of our daughters are working mothers and face the problems inherent with their situations. Two of the girls live nearby and we have been drawn into the cauldron that a working mother's life can become. It has made me more acutely aware of just how tough it can be on all members of a family where mom works.

“Family” may well be the key word in the whole working mother scenario. In our case, plenty of family member involvement has helped ease and soften the impact on everyone.

The children are unquestionably the ones most dramatically affected by their mother’s absence. The stress is alleviated when familiar and loving family members are able to stand in for mom. Younger children and those not experiencing an early transition into the working-mother mode have a tougher time with the transition.

We are experiencing this phenomenon at the present time with two of our grandsons, aged six and two.

The six-year-old is handling it very well with few appreciable problems. The two-year-old is another matter and his actions and responses have been directly responsible for my recent awakening to the predicament facing working mothers.

The recent rash of sickness that has swept through our school system has also heightened my awareness and appreciation of the problems many moms face. It’s one thing for a working mother to assure an apprehensive two-year-old all will be well, but quite another when she may have to leave the child who is suffering with a raging fever. If our four grandsons are typical of the local tads in general, the antibiotics must have had to be ladled out by the barrel.

To make a long story short, the whole situation has caused plenty of anxiety and consternation for one doting grandpa and also renewed his appreciation for working mothers.