

## An Individual Sense of Self among American Women and Motherhood

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### Abstract

It's not difficult to observe American women's strong confidence in an individual sense of self that they have worked out after 1970s, and has become even stronger after 1990s. The foundation for that is great progress, reached in women's lives in terms of education – girls education is in much better place, more women are being elected to political platform, economically women are participating in more significant ways than modern women's mothers or grandmothers. Microcredit, for example having a transformative impact, has lifted up the poorest of the poor and created livelihoods, so people can sustain themselves and their families. U.S. women are in the paid workforce than ever before, including 70 percent of mothers. Many women employed outside the home carry the main responsibility for housework and raising children and have very little time for themselves. So, the new type of a busy American woman with a strong individual sense of self may also find life stressful. About three million women in the United States provide assistance to family members who are sick or disabled, and over ten million women provide care to people and their husband's elderly parents. This caretaking may overlap with the women's other obligations – holding jobs, taking care of growing children and managing households. This regimen involves physical and emotional stress and can affect their quality of life. These women may be reluctant time by time, but accept their situation as being a good wife or daughter. It is crucial to realize that women who care for others need respite.

**Keywords:** Multi-task, pressures, sustainable

### Introduction

American women have made amazing straddles in white and blue-collar professional areas, and have broken severe gender barriers in nearly all industries. They are more than ever respected by others and they respect themselves. They have more independence, alternatives and capacity to live rich, abounding lives.

Together with many choices they have procured, however comes some very real agitation going hand in hand by a feeling of being confounded.

Unlike women of generations before, contemporary women are short of a concrete model to live by. Instead, they have taken their ability to multi-task, and to accomplish a huge amount. They are "super women" with amazing accomplishments – yet they are depleted.

The modern generation of full-grown US females has developed a strong confidence in an individual sense of self. It's what probably their mothers or grandmothers were not allowed; it's what the liberated women of the 1970s fought so rigorously for, and the younger generation do not like to let them down. College-educated women in their twenties, thirties, and forties have got matured with much more public discussion of women's rights than did their mothers and grandmothers and with increased opportunities for education and professional work.

Since contemporary American women's lives have radically changed from former generation women, we would like to analyze modern American women's individual sense of self and try to consider positive and problematic sides of a contemporary American independent, busy woman. Growing as individuals, women's personal relationships may also evolve into sustainability. But sometimes they don't meet women's changing needs and worries, and they have to take a sorrowful decision to leave. Sustainable marriage, committed relationship integrates loving care, communication, accountability, humor, luck and to my mind great patience. I'd like to underline the significance of uncomplainingness. Let's admit that much of life is mundane. Life consists of myriads of tasks and chores –that come and go every time. Just as you get satisfied you've got it all organized and managed, the day begins and you are retreated to the point where you started. The first mundane task is, probably, every morning spending an hour collecting the mass left behind in everyone's taste to get out the door. To get less stressed some women enjoy this time of the routine thinking of it as clearing the path of the day. You have to submit to the fact-that while these tasks are mundane, they give an opportunity to ponder in your own way while doing the ordinary. It is important for a woman to keep order in herself when things are tidy on the outside. The next time

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you feel challenged by the repetitive nature of keeping your household in order, try to find something pleasurable in doing the ordinary.

If you manage to see it as vacating your path for the day, that will be one less mental conflict to fight.

## Stress Ruiners

We all have days of exhaustion and stress. We would like to introduce remedies helping some women to cope with strenuous state of mind.

- Organize a ten-minute ritual in the morning or evening of having at least ten minutes of peaceful time. Sit comfortably with a cup of coffee or tea and close your eyes listening to pleasant music.
- One of the most simple and recovering things to boost your energy is washing your hair and rinsing your head in cool water after long hot bath.
- On the occasions when children are going crazy, instead of being punitive with them, “take a time-out” and withdraw from them, asking them not to harm each other.
- Engage yourself in something physical. It is beneficial not only physically, but mentally as well.
- Reading a good book before going to sleep can be an escape, at the same time beating the nightly negative news.
- If your neck and back muscles are cramped after sitting at the computer desk for too long, every hour stand up, slowly curl your back down and reach for your toes, keeping your legs fairly straight, then curl your back slowly up again.
- If you are stressed, because you’re physically out of balance, it’s good to have a “health spree”, being cleansed by eating fresh fruits, veggies, and juices for at least some days. That will help to break the cycle of some unhealthy eating habits.
- Practicing these relaxation remedies each day can reduce stress levels, and you’ll find it easier not to get stressed over trifle things.

## Material Conditions

Many contemporary forty plus are immensely independent, emotionally and financially go-getters. Those who work in corporate or professional positions have much more financial security than did middle-class housewives of the 1950s. Older women, born in the 1920s and brought-up during the Great Depression of the 1930s, often valued material security with a man who would be a good provider above emotional closeness. Nowadays, many women expect much more intimacy in personal relationships than did their mothers (Kirk, 2004, p. 277).

Material circumstances may have an enormous impact on marriage relationship. Having money, food, personal security, a home, reliable child care, and additional care for a job or a chance to study and having good health are patterns of beneficial circumstances.

The couple may have friendly relationship and expect that together they can provide for each other’s material and emotional needs and fulfill their wishes. While experiencing the joy and happiness of sharing life on daily basis, the partnership may also be accompanied by the burden of work pressures, money worries, stress from a violent community, as well as problems due to personal misunderstandings, different priorities, or differing views of what it means to be a husband or a wife.

Half of U.S. marriages end in divorce, usually launched by women for reasons of incompatibility, infidelity, mistreatment, economic problems (Kurz, 1995). Economic security is fundamental to women’s well-being and the security of children, especially when they say that half of U.S. marriages end in divorce.

Although in recent years some women trespassed on some professional jobs, that were once the domain of men, most paid jobs in the United States are divided according gender lines, and women in the majority of cases are occupying low-paying jobs. Most women in the workforce do “women’s work” in service and administrative support jobs, like secretaries, waitresses, health aids. Women in professional jobs are school teachers, social workers, nurses, and health care workers. The best-paid jobs for women are as lawyers, physicians, pharmacists, engineers, computer analysts, and scientists, but many more women earn the minimum wage (Tanya Kiendersley, p. 257. *Motherhood*, 204, 219).

For many women, work is not a choice, it’s necessity, as few families can afford to exist on a single income; on the other hand, many women enjoy work, and so do not consider having children as an end of their professional realization.

## Motherhood and Family

Many people regard motherhood as the absolute female experience as we have perspective in motherhood through the familiarity of our own mothers, and very often women who do not want to be mothers are disapproved. Like marriage, motherhood in the US is also undergoing change. Women in wealthier families have fewer children, among all racial groups. About a third of all babies born in the United State are to unmarried women. Percentages differ considerably by race. Fewer Chinese American and Japanese American mothers are unmarried (6.5 percent and 10 percent, respectively), compared to Native American and Puerto Rican women (58 and 61 percent) (Ventura et al. 1999, pp. 38-39).

More and more women are deciding not to have children or have them later. In 1960, 80 percent of women between 25 and 29 years old had children. In 1996, this figure had dropped to 57 percent, and in the next age group (30 to 34 years) 26 percent of women had not given birth to a child (Kirk & Rey, 2004, p. 278; U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1998). Most of these women are childless according to their wish, despite the idea, accentuated in the media, that women are controlled by a "biological clock", skipping the years when conception is possible. Many of these women describe themselves as childfree rather than childless, highlighting that this is a positive choice for them (Bartlett, 1994; Ireland 1993; Morrell, 1994; Reti, 1992; Safe, 1996). Instead of the argument that women must have children to be fulfilled, they prefer to focus on intimate relationships, friendships, work, travel, community involvement, and connections with other people's children. And there is another reason from abstaining from having more children, or having them at all.

This way, or other women are an important part of the workforce, fully expected to raise their financial level. Educationally and culturally, they are trained for a full-degree equality – despite the pay gap between the sexes floating around the 25 percent mark. On the other hand, mothers who go back to work often consider that they are rejecting their biological duty. It brings about a lot of miscomprehension. There is a choice: give up work, or just take some time out. Some women think, they are letting the side down. From the employer's viewpoint, you have failed to represent a good investment, the point, as a woman of childbearing age, they always secretly are afraid of.

Mothers who transfer from the office to the home are changing the location of their work. Bringing up the next generation is as crucial as working in the mainstream economy, and not less hard. As a mother, it's not just feed and water them, you are also believed to act as a mentor, guide, educator, nurse teacher, psychologist. It requires endless patience, dissemblance, resourcefulness. And there is another penalty: if a woman is not making Social Security contributions, her pension packet is not filling.

If once the children are at school, a woman decides to return to work, she will descend to a far lower level, than those women who have not taken time away. It's not surprising, that many choose to burden themselves, taking minimum amounts of maternity leave and either paying through the nose for childcare, or count on relatives' support. On a practical level, this entails its own, bunch of problems, as the world of work is not provided for mothers. Very few workplaces supply daycare. Despite e-mails, internet, messaging, working hours are rigid. Employers are inclined to sideline women, either during pregnancy or when on maternity leave. Although the latter has been extended to enable women to take time off after having a baby, but most of that leave will be on little or no pay.

## Conclusion

You benefit by staying with your baby for longer time, on the other hand you have bundle of bills to pay. As for childcare, things are even worse. A working mother who employs full-time childcare, is not only paying nanny's taxes, Social Security, and an extra employer's tax, she also has to pay all this out of her net salary. Of course all these problems are accompanied by psychological and emotional pressures.

Rearing children is hard work, often boring and repetitious, requiring humor and patience. Many women experience contradictory emotions, including scare, offense, inadequacy, anger about motherhood, despite social idealization of it, especially overloaded working mothers. A good recommendation would be to use your career as your spiritual work by incorporating your spirit in all you do. Use your talents and gifts that have been bestowed to you to give back to others through your work, and it won't matter what you do; you will find fulfilment.

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