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The Impact of Working Women on Work/Life Balance Perspectives

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Submitted to the Program of Organizational Dynamics in the Graduate Division of the School of Arts and Sciences in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master of Science in Organizational Dynamics at the University of Pennsylvania.

Advisor: Dr. Larry Starr

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Abstract
This thesis describes the impact of women entering the workforce after 1970 on work/life balance issues. I have argued that women entering the workforce after 1970 held a different perspective from their predecessors: they believed they could develop a career as robust as their male counterparts while sustaining active engagement in personal life. This perspective created a paradigm shift in organizations, which had previously precluded the family as a stakeholder. I have discussed the business environment from the 1960's to 2006 by reviewing several well established business theories. Empirical data has been presented supporting my thesis, interspersed with collateral material in the form of anecdotes, which demonstrate the efforts of this new generation of working women to build a successful work/life balance model. Often, these women were motivated solely by their anger at a dysfunctional system and resistant stakeholders, which compromised their success by seeing the world through a linear lens rather than as a dynamic reality. This thesis was written for women who participated in an experiment in change and, hopefully offers a cathartic evaluation of the inextricable link of work and family.

Disciplines
Organizational Behavior and Theory

Comments
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THE IMPACT OF WORKING WOMEN ON WORK/LIFE BALANCE PERSPECTIVES

by

Denise Horner Mitnick

Submitted to the Program of Organizational Dynamics
in the Graduate Division of the School of Arts and Sciences
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of
Master of Science in Organizational Dynamics at the
University of Pennsylvania

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

2006

THE IMPACT OF WORKING WOMEN ON

WORK/LIFE BALANCE PERSPECTIVES

Approved by:

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Program Director/Advisor

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Stephen I. Mitnick/ Reader

ABSTRACT

This thesis describes the impact of women entering the workforce after 1970 on work/life balance issues. I have argued that women entering the workforce after 1970 held a different perspective from their predecessors: they believed they could develop a career as robust as their male counterparts while sustaining active engagement in personal life. This perspective created a paradigm shift in organizations, which had previously precluded the family as a stakeholder. I have discussed the business environment from the 1960's to 2006 by reviewing several well established business theories. Empirical data has been presented supporting my thesis, interspersed with collateral material in the form of anecdotes, which demonstrate the efforts of this new generation of working women to build a successful work/life balance model. Often, these women were motivated solely by their anger at a dysfunctional system and resistant stakeholders, which compromised their success by seeing the world through a linear lens rather than as a dynamic reality. This thesis was written for women who participated in an experiment in change and, hopefully offers a cathartic evaluation of the inextricable link of work and family.

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LIST OF TABLES

TABLE		Page
1	Percent of Workers Employed By Work Category	2
2	Trends Impacting Women and Work From 1900-1980	9
3	Working Mother Statistics	10
4	Work/Life Balance Environment	16
5	Change to Transition Diagram	30

TABLE OF CONTENTS

		Page
ABSTRACT		iii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS		iv
LIST OF TABLES		v
CHAPTER		
1	Historical Perspectives: Work	1
2	Case Study #1: KS's Story	5
3	Women in the Workforce: History	7
4	Case Study #2: DH's Story	13
5	New Management Issues #1	15
6	Case Study #3: CS's Story	18
7	New Management Issues #2	19
8	Case Study #4: KM's Story	21
9	New Management Issues #3	23
10	Case Study #5: DM's Story	25
11	The Tipping Point	28
12	Case Study #6: MB's Story	33
13	The Conundrum	35
14	Conclusions	40
15	Author's Story	43
REFERENCES		46

CHAPTER 1

HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVES: WORK

Peter Drucker is among the most prominent business management theorists of the past 50 years. His death in 2005 at the age of 95 was a global loss. In his obituary, The Washington Post cited him as the guru to whom other gurus kowtow. He popularized taking a long view of planning by creating shorter term objectives and promoting the value of decentralized decision making in an organization. He predicted almost every major business trend from the 1950's including the transformation of business through computers, the rise and fall of Japan as an impact on the world economy and the backlash to over compensated executives (Sullivan, 2005). But Drucker's most profound influence was his view that management's greatest resource is its talented people (Byrne, 2005).

In 2001 he wrote about the impact of the "knowledge industry," a term he and economist Frit Machlup coined in 1960. According to The Economist (2001), at the beginning of 1900, most people in developed countries, like the United States, performed manual labor working on farms, in domestic service or in small stores. By 1950, about 35% of the United States' workforce was employed in factories. In 2000, approximately 25% of the workforce was comprised of manual laborers, 15% worked in factories and the *majority* worked in knowledge based industries: teaching, finance, computers, or insurance, as examples (see Table 1).

Table 1. Percent of Workers Employed (1900 – 2000) by Work Category

	Year		
Work Categories	1900	1950	2000
Farm/Domestic	100	15	10
Factory		35	15
Knowledge Industry		50	75

Drucker wrote that knowledge workers are the "new capitalists" because they own the means of production. Specialized knowledge, he argued, needs a place for action, and this place is the modern organization. The teacher needs a faculty and class; the software developer needs a company to produce computers and consumers to buy them. Knowledge workers see themselves as professionals and as equals to those who buy their knowledge. Knowledge workers require formal education in order to enter the workforce and they must take continuing education to keep their knowledge current, unlike workers of yore whose schooling traditionally stopped when work began (The Economist, 2001).

While Peter Drucker was developing his positions on management, Thomas Kuhn, a history of science professor, was developing a novel scientific theory. Kuhn presented his theory in 1946 while working toward his doctorate in physics at Harvard University. The work was later published as a book, The Structure of Scientific Revolutions (Kuhn, 1962), in which Kuhn describes changes in discovery which he called paradigm shifts. He argued the following: First, that discovery occurs within an environment – it is contextual. Second, that the observer is part of, and influenced by, that environment. Third, that shifts in science occur when the current paradigms do not work for a few and then those few change the science to prove the new theory.

In this seminal work, The Structure of Scientific Revolutions (Kuhn, 1962), Kuhn also discussed the concept of *gut feeling*. This aspect of his work became very controversial (des.emory.edu.mfp/Kuhnsnap.html). Historically science did not take seriously hunches or feelings – not even from proven scientists. Kuhn proposed it was important to pay attention to the feeling because it might be an indicator of the future of the particular paradigm being utilized:

> But paradigm debates are not really about relative problem solving ability, though for good reasons they are usually couched in those terms. Instead, the issue is which paradigm should the future guide research on problems many of which neither competitor can yet claim to resolve completely. A decision between alternate ways of practicing science is called for, and in the circumstances that decision must be based less on past achievement than on future promise. The man who embraces a new paradigm at an early stage must often do so in defiance of the evidence provided by problem-solving. He must, that is, have faith that the new paradigm will succeed with the many large problems that confront it, knowing only that the older paradigm has failed with a few. A decision of that kind can only be made on faith. (Kuhn, 1962, p. 157).

Peter Drucker's ideas of planning for the long term by taking a shorter view, his identification of the "knowledge industry" and the value he assigned to talented personnel all set the tone for the business environment in the decades which followed. These decades presented the post-war, baby-boom generation with a new profile for college freshman across the nation: equal numbers of females. Women graduated and entered the workforce prepared not only for teaching, but for the burgeoning knowledge industry. Managers were being educated, as a result of Drucker's impact, in the belief that workers were the new value-added resource to their competitive markets and that many of these workers were now women. In their book, In Search of Excellence , Tom Peters and Robert Waterman (1982) identified a list of companies which met their criteria for excellence. Each of these companies evidenced respect for the individual.

> There was hardly a more pervasive theme than respect for the individual. That basic belief and assumption were omnipresent. But like so much else we have talked about, it's not any one thing – one assumption, belief statement, goal, value, system, or program – that makes the theme come to life. What makes it live at these companies is a plethora of structural devices, systems, styles, and values all reinforcing one another so that the companies are truly unusual in their ability to achieve extraordinary results through ordinary people. The message goes right back to our earlier chapter on man and motivation. These companies give people control over their destinies; they make meaning for people (Peters and Waterman, 1982, p. 238).

These trends, together with the notion of long term planning through a series of shorter term objectives, created, in Kuhn's terms, a paradigm shift. Managers investing in human capital -- which now included women -- were required to look at their organizations as part of a larger community/environment. The lens through which these managers focused their organizations mandated consideration of the family as a stakeholder.

The paradigm shift of evaluating work/life issues as inextricably bound is a dynamic process. The dynamics are impacted by an ever changing model of family and work. I will examine in Chapter 13 why a systems approach can be aptly applied to many of the work/life balance issues workers face today.

CHAPTER 2

CASE STUDY 1: KS's Story

KS's grandmother was a garment worker in New York during the 1920's. KS says her grandmother talked about her work with pride and recalls having fun taking public transportation to and from Brooklyn where she lived with her two sisters, her mother and father. After work, the factory girls would go dancing and KS's grandmother says she knew people who, "even then, did drugs". She tells stories of passing people sitting inside the apartment buildings on the steps with needles. They were hard times according to KS's grandmother and having work was very important. Then she got married and her husband, KS's grandfather, didn't want her working anymore. It was a bad reflection on his ability as a provider. KS's grandfather quit NYU and took a job on Wall Street as an accountant. They started a family and then KS's grandfather lost his job. Her grandmother had cousins in Pennsylvania who owned a pasta factory where both of them could secure work. The grandmother helped a few days a week in the office and the grandfather worked on the factory floor. They went on to have two more children, one of whom was KS's mother. Her grandmother stopped working but throughout her life valued the idea that her daughters worked. The grandfather encouraged his children to become educated (KS reflects that perhaps it was because he felt he paid a price for dropping out of college). None of his children finished her education, but several of his grandchildren pursued college and graduate level work. KS's grandmother lived into her nineties, and when her granddaughter came to visit, she'd introduce her to the staff in the nursing home with the following phrase "This is my granddaughter K, a college graduate". KS isn't sure if her grandmother knew what her

work entailed, or that it mattered if she knew, so she never really explained to her grandmother the details of her work. She was glad that she served as a source of pride to her grandparents. KS senses that her grandmother (who outlived her grandfather by ten years) received some sort of vicarious pleasure from her granddaughter's college degree and work. KS regrets not having asked her grandmother if she quit working because she couldn't balance four children and factory life, or if there were other reasons.

CHAPTER 3

WOMEN IN THE WORKFORCE: HISTORY

Women have worked as long as men, as evidenced by cave drawings that show women toiling in fields and over fires. As well, the Old Testament describes stories of women collecting water at wells and tending flocks. In the modern era, the phenomenon of women in the workplace is closely tied to economic and social trends. When, for example, women were needed to support men in times of war, institutional childcare to support working mothers was created. Evidence of this type of institution exists from the Civil War, 1860, through World War II, 1945. These institutions survived, intermittently during that time for the sole purpose of caring for the children of widows who were forced to work (Grossman, 1981). The first of these federally-funded institutions was established in 1863, during the Civil War, in Philadelphia by Hanna Biddle (Prochner, 2003). She modeled the program after the French institutionalized childcare programs which began in 1844 called “creches”, which looked after the children of the poor to keep them off the streets of Paris. The crèche was funded through charities, the first being wealthy Social Catholics. The crèche looked after pre-school children and infants, freeing up older siblings for school. The crèche offered better care of the children than they received at home because there was formal training of employees, physicians attended to the care of the children, and education to the mothers was available (Prochner, 2003).

In the early 1900’s there was a resurgence of interest in institutionalized childcare, this time, as a result of the influx of a working-poor, immigrant population to the United States. The social benefit of institutionalized childcare was assimilation of

immigrants' children into society. These childcare institutions continued during the first and second world wars and operated post-war to support working widows. The institutions often provided jobs for these women in the homes of wealthy patrons. The patrons would subsidize the care of the women with handouts of food and clothing. The social stigma for these women was difficult. Working women of this era, whose children required this type of federally subsidized care, were seen as victims and pitied by their communities (Prochner, 2003).

The modern era also provides examples of professional working women, such as, Florence Nightingale, considered the founder of the nursing profession, who did not suffer the same indignities as most other young women. Since her father wanted all his children to receive an education, young Florence was provided a tutor at home who educated her in the classics and mathematics (Audain, 1998). This was not uncommon: Many of the women professionals prior to the 1950's were guided through male-dominated educational and work systems by esteemed, well-positioned fathers who believed their daughters warranted opportunities for careers. If not for their fathers' clout, these women may have become well-educated socialites (Horowitz, 1994).

By the 1950's, the predominant profession for a college educated woman was teaching. Higher education was dominated until the 1990's by men (DaMetz, 1994). The only apparent purpose for educating women prior to the 1950's was to create an educated mothering population which in turn, it was hoped, would produce educated male offspring. Fathers who gave their daughters permission to receive a college education expected those daughters to marry well and produce male heirs who would, by virtue of an educated mother, enter school better prepared to achieve than their peers.

The theory of "educating for the purpose of producing educated progeny" backfired somewhat. The first generation of college educated women typically married later, wanted a career and rejected domesticity (Kaminer, 1998).

Most work had been divided by gender until the advent of the knowledge worker, a phrase coined by the late Peter Drucker (Sullivan, 2005). The knowledge industry created greater access for women, resulting primarily from higher education and the ability to be evaluated based on knowledge performance rather than physical capabilities, as was previously required in factory or farm work. A more level playing field, coupled with factors such as changes in marital patterns and smaller families, has contributed greatly to an increase in the number of working women and, hence, working mothers (Grossman, 1981) (see Table 2 below).

Table 2. Trends Impacting Women and Work from 1900 - 1980

	1900	1910	1920	1930	1940	1950	1960	1970	1980
Women working in Knowledge Industry							x	xx	xxx
Women working in factory or field	x	xx	x	xx	xxx	x	x		
Mgmgt. By Objctvs.								x	x
Return on Invstmt.									x
Kuhn's Paradigm Shift						x			
Women in college	x	x	x	x	x	xx	xx	xxx	xxxx
Institutionalized Childcare	x	x	x	x	x				

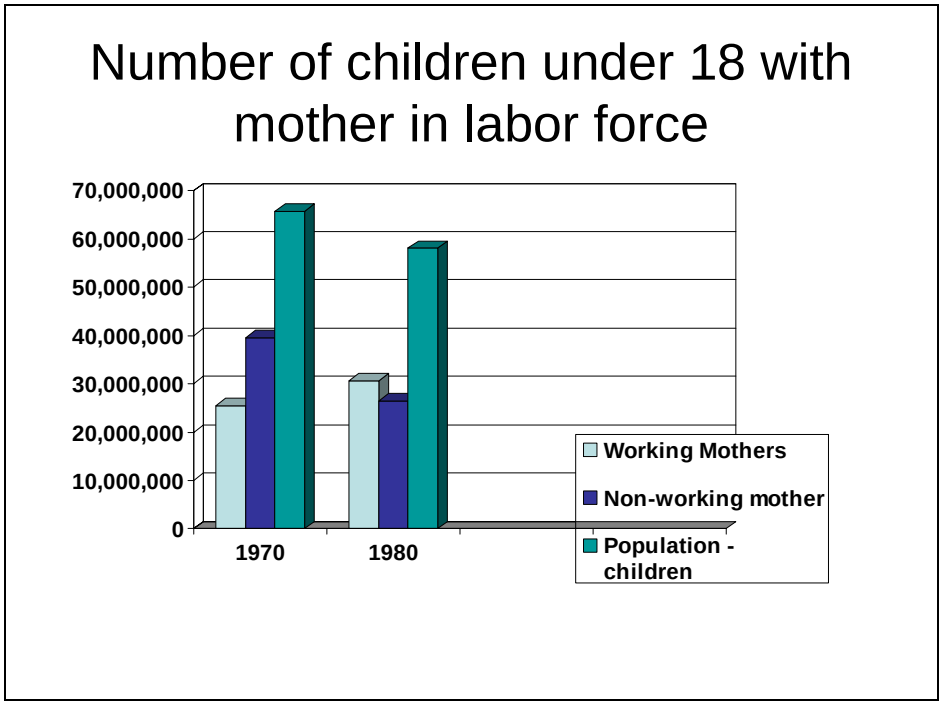
Each (x) represents a relative degree of impact the trend had on working mothers; 1 (x) being the lowest level impact, 5 (x's), the greatest impact.

For the purposes of this thesis, "working mother" is defined as a woman having one or more of one's own children under the age of 18 living in the same household. "Work" is defined as contributing to the workforce. A "child" is defined as a natural or

an adopted child not grandchildren, nieces or nephews, foster children, or other children in one's care.

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, in 1980 there were 17 million working mothers, representing a 44% increase from 1970. By 1990, the number of children with working mothers grew by 5 million, despite fewer children in the population (the result of a precipitous drop in birth rate between 1980 and 1990) (Grossman, 1981). (See Table 3). Despite their added role of "parent", women were choosing the workplace in record numbers.

Table 3. Working Mother Statistics



Notwithstanding race or family structure (one parent, divorced parents or married parents), children of families of higher incomes have higher percentages of a working

mother (Grossman, 1981). The relation between higher family income and the greater percentage of a working mother may be an indicator that adding children to a family often necessitates two working parents (more people to feed, clothe, house and educate) and it is more likely that two parents can earn more. But the statistics reveal that in any family structure when there is a working mother there is a greater percentage of higher family income. The statistics point to another trend, however: Even with fewer children in the population there were more working mothers (12 million more children in 1970 than in 1980) (Grossman, 1981).

The United States, while leading the world in number of working mothers relative to a decreasing child population, is not the only nation to show these data. According to a 1970 Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) study, the US, France, Great Britain and Japan employed between 47% and 55% women in their workforces. By the year 2000, those percentages were 65% to 73% (The Economist, 2001). In the United States in 2002 the overall participation of working mothers in the workforce was 72% (Carter, 2003).

The trend of more women in the workplace and a greater percentage of working mothers, notwithstanding a decrease in the population of children, can be attributed to several factors: (1) higher educational levels of women, (2) greater work satisfaction expectations of women, (3) postponement of children and (4) the expectation that family and work aren't mutually exclusive for women (Goldin and Katz, 2002).

An important impact on women and work was their ability to put off childbearing. The birth control pill was introduced in 1960. By 1965, 41% of married women using birth control used the pill. Few single women under the age of twenty–one used the pill,

as they needed parental consent. Not until state laws reduced the age of majority and extended “mature minor” decisions is there evidence of substantial use of the pill. The Twenty-sixth Amendment was enacted in 1971 (Goldin and Katz, 2002) granting 18 year olds “the age of majority”. After young women were able to obtain the pill, its use expanded rapidly. By 1976, 73% of women using birth control, whether married or single, used the pill and it continues to be the most popular contraceptive of choice today, despite its potential health risks. (Goldin and Katz, 2002).

The impact of women under the age of twenty-one gaining access to effective birth control ten years after their married counterparts is revealed in several important trends after 1970: (1) more women entering and graduating from college, (2) more women entering the workforce and (3) more women delaying marriage and children (Goldin and Katz, 2002).

CHAPTER 4

CASE STUDY 2: DH's STORY

By 1974, the pill was readily available on college campuses or in local clinics nearby most campuses. DH doesn't recall her impetus to go on the pill, because she didn't have a boyfriend and she didn't "sleep around". What she does remember vividly is that going on the pill was a rite of passage for female college freshman. It signified gaining a control over one's life that the previous generation of women didn't enjoy. Going to the clinic was a group event – many of her girlfriends from other colleges described similar experiences: an upper classwoman working at the clinic gave out brochures and organized appointments on the dorm floors; you showed up, filled out some paper work, and received the pill. The sexual freedom provided by the pill was only part of what was happening. Freedom to explore education, work and gain control over choices was the bigger implication of the pill.

DH's mother discovered her pill pack on a weekend visit home during her sophomore year. After a yelling match, DH described feeling very sad that her mother didn't support her decision to be on the pill. She saw it as activism, and her mother saw it as bad values. DH is now the mother of a college freshman daughter who asked DH to go with her to a doctor to be examined prior to selecting a form of birth control. To DH, this seemed as natural as any other rite of passage she has watched her daughter experience. She was supportive and involved in the choice of birth control, which turned out to be the pill.

DH describes sitting in the waiting room while her daughter was being examined and feeling sad upon reflecting on her own experience thirty-two years ago. DH's

mother gave birth to her when she was twenty. DH wonders why her mother wasn't supportive of her going on the pill. But DH has the perspective of having postponed motherhood until she had worked for many years and the only perspective her mother knew was the one she chose.

CHAPTER 5

NEW MANAGEMENT ISSUES #1

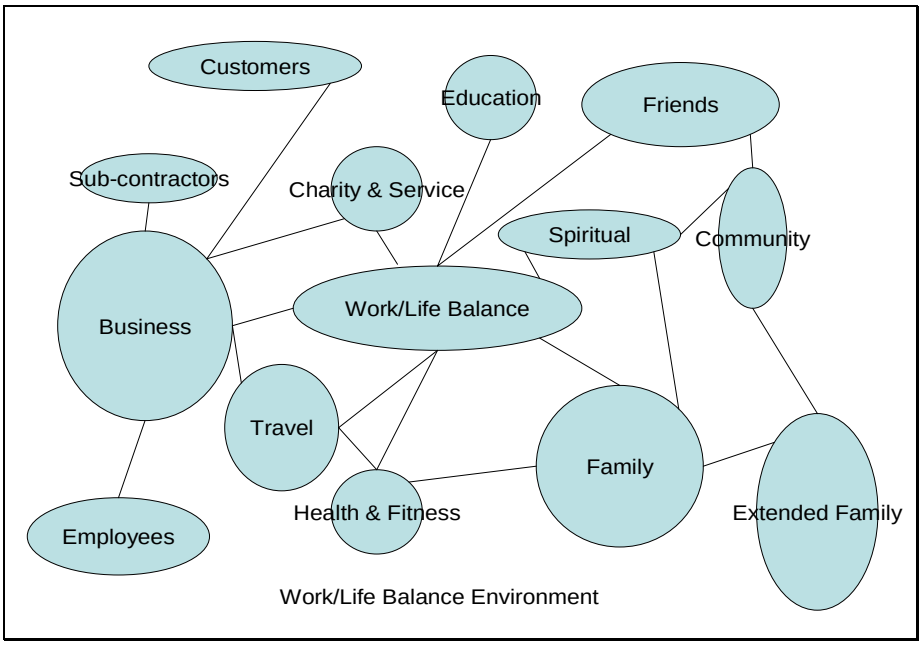
Women entered the workforce in record numbers in the 1970's and 1980's, bringing a different perspective to the workplace: the concept of equal satisfaction from their personal lives and their work. Along with the burgeoning knowledge industry, changing norms regarding the approach to work, such as, valuing talented workers and utilizing short term objectives to accomplish longer term goals, created an environment of opportunity for women. Issues unique to women entered the management arena: how to deal with pregnancy, sexual harassment, equal pay for equal work and equal access to management. Previously unaddressed life balance issues became bargaining chips and perquisites. These issues included items such as flexible schedules, new baby leave, elderly parent care leave and extended leave for charity work.

A problem must be identified before it can be solved. Systems thinker, Russell Ackoff, refers to the process of identifying the interactive components of a complex problem as *mess formulation*. The mess formulation is the procedure that fully describes the current state. Engaging in the idealized design is the process of describing and moving to where we want to be (Ackoff, 1999) and where the problem is dissolved.

For women entering the workforce after the 1970's with expectations very different from their predecessors, the mess formulation was a difficult process. The model for corporate America didn't include family as a stakeholder. The hierarchal design of corporate America, dominated by white males, didn't have a space on the organization chart for life/balance issues. The environment in which women operated

looked more like a dynamic universe than an orderly hierarchy. Table 4 provides a systems interpretation of the work/life balance environment.

Table 4. Work/Life Balance Environment



An issue on a direct collision course with corporate values is pregnancy, not because corporations are inherently opposed to children, but rather because of "active inertia," a phrase coined by Donald Sull and Dominic Houlder (2005). They noted during their work in change management that managers do what has succeeded in the past, even when the circumstances are different. They wrote,

> We use the phrase "active inertia" to describe managers' tendency to respond to even the most dramatic changes in their competitive environment by relying on and accelerating activities that have worked in the past. Like the driver of a car with its wheels stuck in the mud, executives notice a change in the environment and step on the gas. Ultimately, they end up digging their organizations deeper into the quagmire. The ruts that lock people into active inertia are the very commitments that led to their past successes but that have now hardened: Strategic frames become blinders, selected processes lapse into routines, relationships turn into shackles, resources become millstones, and once vibrant values ossify into dogmas. (Sull and Houlder, 2005, p. 87).

Men dominated organizations prior to the influx of women in the corporate culture. Men don't get pregnant and becoming a father doesn't require absence from work. It is financially and organizationally expedient, then, for companies to continue leading with men and expect no down time due to parenting. Organizations had no motivation to change in the 1970's or early parts of the 1980's. In 1970 most organizations did not have policies for maternity leave. It wasn't necessary to design a policy for a constituency that didn't exist. Most women were at the mercy of their supervisors if they wanted to return to work after a pregnancy. It was more likely than not during this period that a woman would not return after pregnancy. Not until the advent of many women in the workplace, showing excellence and adding corporate value did corporations need to deal with a pregnant individual. One individual may not make a difference, but many individuals with talent and value can.

Rumblings could be heard in human resource departments about pregnant women, especially managers, and what to do with them. Unlike their male counterparts, women striving for corporate advancement were required to postpone parenthood. Those who became pregnant often found their careers stalled. When working mothers who had advanced within the workplace reached a critical mass, their collective impact forced a paradigm shift. The shift began in the early 1970's, when the net gain of working women averaged nearly one million annually throughout that decade. By 1980, there were 17 million working mothers, up 44 % from 1970 (Grossman, 1981).

CHAPTER 6

CASE STUDY 3: CS's STORY

In 1989 CS was 33 years old and held a middle management position with a Fortune 500 telecommunications company. She had an 18 month old son with whom she wanted to spend more time. She approached her boss about part-time work and he refused her proposal, despite her outstanding record with the company. He believed an interruption in her career path would result in a permanent stall. CS didn't give up. She talked to a few women in comparable positions and found another new mom who had similar desires. Together they crafted the concept of a shared job. They proposed that one position be shared by each of them for half the time. They drew up a formal proposal, showed it to their respective bosses and were both given conditional permission to pursue this new arrangement. They were assigned to a lateral position within the company and stripped of their benefits except for their respective pensions. They were told not to expect promotions and warned that "all eyes were upon them". After a 17 year job-share partnership, an out-of-town position, many promotions and a re-instatement of their benefits, they both resigned in 2005 as VP's. CS's creative efforts to satisfy a personal agenda resonated with many working moms. Her shared position served as a successful model which was subsequently adopted as a permanent program.

CS and her job-share partner left the company after a long distance corporate relocation was announced. They have been consulting to other corporations on flexible work options as it relates to best practices standards.

CHAPTER 7

NEW MANAGEMENT ISSUES #2

Revlon introduced a perfume in 1978 targeted for the working woman. The television advertisement for "Enjoli" featured a woman stripping off her suit jacket, spraying the perfume while singing a "strip-club" like tune that included the lyrics "you can bring home the bacon - fry it up in pan and never let him forget he's a man –'cause you're a woman. Enjoli." The advertisement brought protests from The National Organization for Women. (Wallis, 1989). In college classrooms across the nation women were being told of their opportunity for success in the work world. Feminism was rampant. The slogan introduced by Bryn Mawr College president, M. Carey Thomas, in the early 1900's, "our only failures only marry", became a feminist mantra on campuses throughout the 1970's (Kaminer, 1998, p22).

Women anticipated being valued for their brain power, assuming it would serve to create equanimity in the workplace. Women were donning suits, albeit skirted, and sometimes bow-ties, to compete with their male counterparts for management positions. In their attempt to climb the corporate ladder, women encountered many difficulties, in part due to mixed cultural messages such as be smart yet sexy, be nurturing yet tough and be assertive, yet not aggressive. Many business women recall the difficulties of being the only female in a room of men where sexist jokes and sports metaphors were routine. The first sexual harassment case in The United States was decided in 1976 (Roberts and Mann, 2006). In 1976, a Redbook magazine poll reported that 90% of women in the workplace reported unwanted sexual advances in the workplace (Roberts and Mann, 2006). In 1980, the federal government conducted its own survey and found 42% of

female federal employees had experienced some form of sexual harassment (Roberts and Mann, 2006). In their law review article Roberts and Mann reveal the following:

> Although men face harassment, women are the most likely victims. Harm caused by sexual harassment is often extreme, including humiliation, loss of dignity, psychological (and sometimes physical) injury, and damage to professional reputation and career. Inevitably, the victims face a choice between their work and their self-esteem. Sometimes, they face a choice between their jobs and their own safety (Roberts and Mann, 2006, p2).

CHAPTER 8

CASE STUDY 4: KM's STORY

KM was working for a national hotel chain in 1983 as a restaurant advisor. Her management position included responsibility for every detail of the restaurant design, from architectural details and menus to equipment and staffing. She interfaced with vendors, construction managers, architects and designers, the legal team and the financial team. Once the restaurant was operational, her job was to move to the next project. She describes her work as satisfying because it enabled her to exercise her creativity, as well as the management skills she had learned in graduate school. She was the lone woman in management and the travel and long hours her work required weren't problematic. KM had prepared herself for a career and expected to work hard and be rewarded by promotions and salary increases.

KM's boss was a few years her senior and the work required a great deal of travel together. Part of his job was to oversee the overall integration of the restaurant into each hotel. Among his other responsibilities was to oversee quality control. KM described repeated uncomfortable situations with her boss where he talked about offensive sexual issues customers could present in a hotel environment (having loud sex, dirtying the decorative bed covers, etc.). She felt this discussion was out of her related area of work, but when she casually mentioned to him that she wasn't comfortable talking of such issues, he told her she better get a tougher skin if she wanted to be promoted in the hotel business.

She realized he had a personal agenda in desensitizing her to these topics of conversation: his blatant sexual advances. He intimated there were potential career

advancement opportunities if she acquiesced. KM was embarrassed and scared - both for her physical safety and her job security. She declined his advances and requested a job transfer.

Several years later, having achieved success based on the merit of her work, KM became a part of policy discussions concerning harassment and discrimination.

CHAPTER 9

NEW MANAGEMENT ISSUES #3

The knowledge industry created a different workplace for women from the factory or the field. In the 1980's, access to better work, equanimity and a desire for personal achievement attracted more mothers into the workforce than in any previous generation. These women came to the workplace with expectations of a career and, over time, crafted solutions for balancing family with work.

In 1989 The Harvard Business Review, (HBR), produced an article which argued employing women in management was more expensive than men, because of time and costs associated with maternity leave or abandoning their careers entirely in order to stay home with children (Schwartz, 1989). Several months later in the New York Times the author of the HBR piece wrote that it was "valuable" for companies to promote women on the "mommy track" into management positions, as they didn't require as much pay or benefits as their male counterparts because of women's willingness to trade dollars for values (Schwartz, 1989). Both articles prompted controversy and opened dialogue between women and their employers and among women themselves.

For sure, the "mommy track" meant incredible creativity. There are many successful stories of women who didn't give up their jobs – or their careers – and learned to successfully manage motherhood and a career. These women pioneered compartmentalization. Unlike their male counterparts, who became parents and continued to work, women didn't have the benefit of an attendant co-parent at home. Instead, they crafted shared childcare arrangements with other working mothers, hired

live-in nannies (giving rise to an entire industry heretofore virtually non-existent in the United States) and sometimes relied on their own mothers to help with childcare.

The rising demand for childcare also created rising childcare costs, prompting some women to choose between a career and motherhood. Rather than lose their investment in those women, some organizations created on-site childcare facilities to combat the trend of women choosing to stay home after maternity leave.

For some women, the alternative to leaving their careers was to start their own businesses. They left their organizations with accumulated management skills and a database of customers, armed as competition to those very organizations which trained them.

CHAPTER 10

CASE STUDY 5: DM's STORY

DM had a seven year tenure with a Philadelphia design/contract furniture dealership which was family owned. DM began working as an assistant to the president of the logistical support group in design and architecture immediately after her college graduation. During college, she had a cooperative work experience with two of the leading interior design firms in the country. DM entered her work life with eighteen months of full-time experience, a significant factor in her gaining employment during the 1970's. The country was in a recession that would take several years from which to recover. Design/architecture and related industries were very sluggish and hiring was at an all time low. Several unproductive employees were laid off and DM took advantage of the opportunity to discharge their unmet responsibilities. With hard work and perseverance, she rose quickly to the position of sales director of this small division. In conjunction with upper management, she developed a strategy which was based on knowing customers better than one's competition and servicing that customer base utilizing the resources available, which included large corporate suppliers. She encouraged ownership to end supplier relationships with smaller suppliers and align itself with a few non-competing large suppliers with which the organization could develop exclusive relationships. The company successfully accomplished that objective and repositioned itself as a service based organization rather than a distributorship. DM was promoted to vice president of sales and marketing, during which time she helped grow the company from $3M to $33M in annual sales.

She left the company after seven successful years to serve as vice president of sales and marketing for a national architectural and design firm based in Philadelphia. The firm's objective was to develop a distributorship which supported its national corporate client base. In the process of developing this division of the company, the firm was approached by a Fortune 500 company interested in purchasing the fledgling division which DM headed. DM recalls the timing being good for both the company and herself. The Fortune 500 company had financial resources, which meant that operations could commence as soon as the sale was official.

DM became pregnant with her first child during this time period and decided to tell her employers as far in advance as possible, in order to maximize her time before the baby was due. The news was not received well by the architecture/design firm. A month later, DM would require complete bed rest because the pregnancy was in jeopardy. She continued working from her bed, making phone calls and accumulating necessary documentation for the sale of the division. The company withheld her disability pay (something for which she had contracted during the job negotiation) and wouldn't provide documents or equipment for her to continuing working from home. She crafted a solution with co-workers and her husband purchased equipment for her to continue working.

DM delivered her baby ten weeks prematurely. He lived a short while and after a painful farewell, she and her husband donated his small body to science. She took two weeks to recover from the delivery and begin to sort out her emotions over the loss of her son. She received visits from coworkers, but management of the company withheld any kindness.

Upon her return to work, DM demanded the withheld disability compensation. Additionally, she helped to craft a successful offering which enabled the firm to be purchased three months later. DM received stock, a senior management position with the new company (which she declined) and a payout of her former contract - all of which she used to begin her own firm.

DM has owned her own company now for 20 years and is the mother of two daughters.

CHAPTER 11

THE TIPPING POINT

Prior to discussing the tipping point of women's impact on work/life balance issues, I offer a piece of American history as a case-in-point to a large transition following a change.

In the formative stages of American democracy, a strong sentiment existed against absolute power and monarchy. A nation awaiting birth was divided into colonies, each vying for political power and center stage. The colonies were held together by their collective hatred of a common enemy: British rule. Colonists took up arms and fought side by side with the French against Britain. While this fight ensued, percolating just below the surface, a change was brewing. A small group of leaders representing the colonies recognized their shared vision for self-governance and the unique opportunity to build a republic founded on democratic values. They came together, putting aside personal gain, for the purpose of a greater cause. History termed them the "founding fathers". They were the authors of the American Constitution, the written basis of our democratic union, which has survived more than 200 years (Ellis, 2005).

The Boston Tea Party may be described as the tipping point of changing attitudes toward centralized power, resulting in the Revolutionary War. The transition produced by this change evolved into the birth of our democratic nation.

It is in these change-moments that transition occurs. Change is situational and transition is psychological (Bridges, 2003). In the example above, the Revolutionary War was the change. The transition was the creation of a democracy. Freedom from

tyranny took many years, perhaps a generation, to fully transition into the collective psyche.

The effects of this historical change, which led to a long transition, highlight several points which are valuable in interpreting the change to transition process in work/life balance. Although the process wasn't as violent as the American Revolution the outcome, some might say, has been almost as liberating.

The tipping point in the work/life balance revolution occurred in the early 1980's, produced by the convergence of several factors: First, the accelerated rate of working mothers entering the workforce (1,000,000 people annually for the preceding decade); second, a higher percentage of educated women in the workplace than in any previous decade; third, the demands of family (as a result of the high number of working mothers) created a new stakeholder in the workplace.

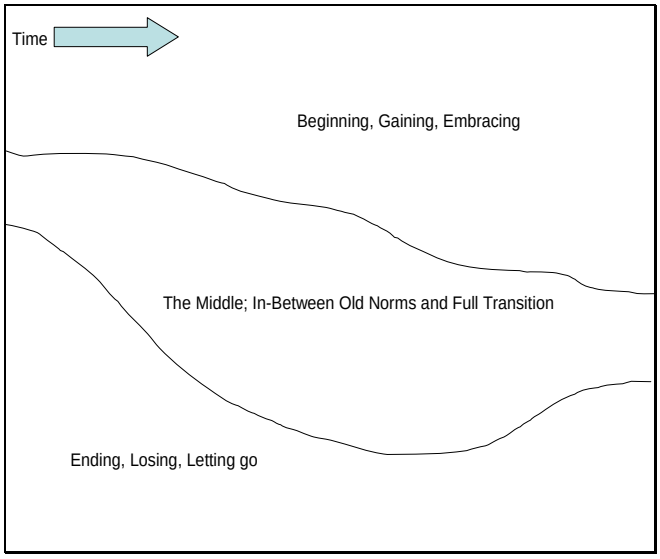
While the tipping point leading to change was the sheer numbers of women in the workplace and the resulting demands of the families revealed in their daily work lives, the transition is still continuing a generation later. In his work on change management, Bridges (2003) describes a change as something tangible. For example, more women in the workplace required a policy which dealt with maternity leave, which is a change policy. The transition, however, is not tangible. It is psychological. How did management distribute work during the pregnant woman's gestational period? Was she perceived as fragile; less capable? How did the pregnant employee deal with the transition from workplace, to home, to newborn nursery and back to the workplace? In his book, Managing Transitions, Bridges (2003) writes:

> Change is situational: the move to a new site, the retirement of the founder, the reorganization of the roles on the team, the revisions to the plan. Transition, on

> the other hand, is psychological; it is a three-phase process that people go through as they internalize and come to terms with the details of the new situation that the change brings about (Bridges, 2003, p.3).

Bridges suggests there are three phases which people need to experience for a complete psychological transition: First, letting go or ending the old ways or ideas. The middle stage is getting through the old stage to the new stage. During this time, recapitulation and regression are to be expected. Because of their psychological nature, transitions do not happen quickly or easily. The third and final stage is a new beginning which occurs when people develop a new identity and make the change work (See Table 5).

Table 5. Change to Transition Diagram



The psychological transition to work/life balance issues is not exclusively a female phenomenon. Rather, this transition is a social phenomenon. It represents the trickling down of incremental change and the slow inculcation of a new set of values. Women who worked so diligently to create crucial conversations about families as

stakeholders provoked a transition in the workplace, which now allows both parents to avail themselves of family, while maintaining careers.

Crucial conversations are discussions about tough issues. A tough issue is defined by the authors of Crucial Conversations (Patterson, Grenny, and Switzler, 2002), as a discussion where the opinions vary, the stakes are high and the emotions run strong. These conversations are often defining moments because they challenge our core values. The authors spent twenty-five years researching 500 organizations to find the key to organizational success. The common factor they found was that organizations had a developed pattern of crucial conversations:

> Our research has shown that strong relationships, careers, organizations, and communities all draw from the same source of power --- the ability to talk openly about high-stakes, emotional, controversial topics (Patterson, Grenny, and Switzler, 2002, p.9).

In any social movement where norms are changed and people must transition to a new psychological state, crucial conversations are involved. In his book, Founding Brothers), Joseph Ellis (2005) recreates vivid accounts of crucial conversations, such as at Thomas Jefferson's dinner party where heated conversations ensued regarding the location of the national capital and a settlement on Alexander Hamilton's fiscal policy (Ellis, 2000). Our history is replete with examples of difficult, yet necessary conversations to change: Lincoln's Gettysburg address, Roosevelt and Churchill's rendezvous on a stormy night at sea during WW II, Rosa Parks' defiant conversation with a bus driver, Kennedy's "ask not what your country can do for you…" call to social activism or the Roe vs. Wade decision.

The call for balance in work and life can be witnessed today as a result of the struggles of women whose core values of intellectual curiosity and satisfaction with

career forced a tipping point in our work history. No more compelling conversation for change in work/life balance exists than a woman who has spent the night awake with her crying infant; or a man who has held vigil all night at the bedside of a terminally ill parent. The core values upon which our nation is built offer the promises of equality and the pursuit of happiness to its citizens. As a result, organizations have a moral responsibility to respond to the call for continued efforts in changing the paradigm in work/life dynamics.

CHAPTER 12

CASE STUDY 6: MB'S STORY

MB has worked for thirty years in the not-for-profit sector, leading programs in development, community outreach and education. She is currently employed as the vice-president of development for a medical clinic which provides services related to breast cancer prevention, diagnosis and treatment. She sits on an advisory board under the umbrella of the hospital which supports the clinic. She is the only woman on the advisory board, despite the fact that the clinic primarily serves women and that all of the programs the clinic offers are for the prevention, diagnosis and treatment of women.

MB shared stories of the advisory committee's monthly poker game and quarterly sports events outings. She attends meetings concerning the progress of breast cancer research and describes being moved to tears with some of the cases. MB was surprised that none of the men showed any emotion. She has tried using humor to make her discomfort more obvious. MB has suggested the inclusion of women on the advisory board and was told to make that an agenda item for future meetings (somehow that item never seems to make it onto the agenda).

MB described a meeting in which the head of the advisory committee, a leading physician in breast cancer care at the affiliated hospital, made a joke related to menopause at her expense. She excused herself from the meeting to "collect herself ", returned and took the opportunity to begin a crucial conversation regarding whether their mission matched their actions. The result of that conversation was the formation of a task force committee, which MB insisted be led by a majority of women. MB is aware of the

lack of inculcated values in the leadership of the hospital regarding breast cancer care and believes she can make a difference serving on the advisory board by continuing to raise issues that force crucial conversations.

Presently, MB is rolling out a community-based service which brings vans with cancer screening equipment into under-served communities. She is proud of her contribution to this very important research for women and equally proud of her ability to forward the transition from “this disease is a women’s problem” to “this disease is a community problem.”

CHAPTER 13

THE CONUNDRUM

The dilemma for organizations presented with so many talented women in the 1980's was how to retain the organization's investment in women by satisfying the most important issues this generation of women faced, while remaining profitable and competitive. Some of the women's issues were the same as their male counterparts, such as access to management and equanimity in pay. Other issues unique to women, such as pregnancy policy, baby leave policy and childcare benefits created new management scenarios.

A systems approach can be applied to organizations that face messy, dynamic issues such as described above. Many stakeholders exist and each may have a competing agenda. In his book, Re-Creating the Corporation: a Design of Organizations for the 21st Century, Russell Ackoff (1999) describes a methodology for dealing with such problems. His universal methodology of mess formulation and its practical applications can be applied across disciplines, such as government agencies, medical departments in healthcare institutions, manufacturing companies and not-for-profit organizations.

The starting point in the design of a new organization is the recognition of what exists -- what systems thinkers refer to as current reality. The vision of a different future creates a gap between the current reality and its idealized future. The dynamic plan in achieving a different future is what Ackoff refers to as the "idealized design" or "ends planning" – the closing of the gap. Ackoff argues that organizations which do not have an adaptive plan are bound for destruction:

> An organization's mess is the future implied by its current plans, policies, and practices, together with the changes it expects in its environment. This future implies the destruction or deterioration of every organization, no matter how successful it may be now, because under these assumptions it would fail to adapt to even expected internal or external changes (Ackoff, 1999, p.80).

Based on a systems thinking approach, if organizations in the 1980's had examined their plans, policies and practices and extended those conditions into the future, considering the changing environment which included, on average, 1,000,000 additional working mothers annually, they could have foreseen the mess formulation and, in some cases, saved the organization from demise.

The 1980's had the highest rate of business defaults since the Great Depression (<www.huppi.com/kangaroo/6Economy.htm>: 10/2006.). Some experts believe the high rate of failure was linked to rigid organizational structures and policies which lacked adaptability in a rapidly changing environment. Looking across organizations at a series of complex problems is akin to a doctor's looking across an ailing body - patterns of symptoms become evident. The rigid adherence to policies and structure are pervasive symptoms, then, whose effect can be observed wherever one begins evaluating the organization.

Organizations that adapted to the quickly changing personnel environment of the 1980's were probably more likely to survive other dynamic and sometimes "life threatening" trends. Furniture manufacturer, Herman Miller, Inc. is one such organization. A Fortune 500 Company and leader for decades in work environment solutions, Herman Miller was led by its CEO and Chairman, indefatigable Max De Pree. His leadership was as innovative as the products his company designed and produced. The company has won prestigious design accolades, innovative management awards and

Best Company to Work For awards every year since 1986 (American National Business Hall of Fame, 2006). During the 1980's, when many companies were creating golden parachute plans to protect upper management in the event of a hostile takeover, Herman Miller was creating silver parachute plans to protect all its workers (American National Business Hall of Fame, 2006). Herman Miller consistently leads the national and industry standards regarding diversity in the workplace and having higher levels of females in management, (American National Business Hall of Fame, 2006).

Organizations which survive change are those which have the capability to recognize trends and adapt accordingly. These organizations are guided by a vision, rather than being bogged down by close adherence to a specific strategy. Max De Pree, chairman emeritus of Herman Miller, Inc., A Fortune 500 Furniture Manufacturer, says:

> A true legacy establishes a direction. People write down a strategy and follow it. We see a vision and pursue it. A clear sense of direction is the necessary foundation for a life of service. (De Pree, 1997, p.167).

In his work in organizational change management, Peter Senge (1990) stresses the importance for organizational leaders to understand the principle of creative tension. Senge describes creative tension as the energy between the vision (where we want to be) and the current reality (where we are). He noted, "The principle of creative tension teaches that an accurate picture of current reality is just as important as a compelling picture of desired future", (Senge, 1990, p.9). To illustrate this principle in action, Senge quoted Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.:

> "Just as Socrates felt that it was necessary to create tension in the mind, so that individuals could rise from the bondage of myths and half truths … so must we … create the kind of tension in society that will help men rise from the depths of prejudice and racism." (Senge, 1990, p.9).

As organizations faced a future which included families as stakeholders adaptability was essential. An ever increasing constituency of female workers required the flexibility necessary to answer the demands of family while remaining productive workers. As a result, understanding the new stakeholders' impact was essential. The conversations which were provoked, based on a value-driven vision, charted an organizational revolution which we are still experiencing today. The value-driven vision is life/work balance.

In 2001, The Sloan School of Management at MIT released a report detailing a holistic approach to work/life balance. One of the key findings of the researchers is women are the most motivated group to impact policy changes regarding work/life balance issues, yet too few women are in places of upper management to effect such a change, (Bailyn, Drago, and Kochan, 2001). Their research indicates that women are still the primary caregivers in families, for both children and aging parents. The authors make a compelling case for a systems approach to change the current paradigm (Bailyn, Drago, and Kochan, 2001).

The authors identify the employers, unions and professional associations, governments and communities, and families as the players who can together make a change in the dynamic of work/life balance. They suggest a synergistic approach of these players, compiling a change plan based on information collected from across the nation which reenvisions paid work, careers and care work (Bailyn, Drago, and Kochan, 2001).

This MIT research corroborates the work of John Seely Brown, Xerox's former director of Research, which suggests that the trends in research of innovation were less about products than process. His work indicated that research on new work practices was

as important to innovation as product research. Additionally, his findings showed that innovation occurred incrementally in work process and innovation had to be co-produced. In other words, before an innovation can become effective a partnership must be developed within the stakeholder community. Only after a foundation of deep understanding of the importance of the change is built can effective change be implemented (Brown, 1991).

As this incremental change occurs regarding work/life balance, it is important to note that learning is an essential ingredient to development and change. Organizational learning occurs when the norms by which an organization operates are changed. In 1988, former head of planning for the Royal/Dutch Shell Group of Companies, Arie P. de Gies, revealed in his research that organizational learning can only occur if the people who are learning have the power to change an organization.

De Gies' observation and the research at MIT (which argues not enough stakeholders (women) are at the top of organizations to effect change), point to the conclusion that organizations will continue to remain in a stall pattern with the work/life balance paradigm until more women reach positions to effect change and the value of work/life balance is inculcated into organizational culture at every level.

CHAPTER 14

CONCLUSIONS

Prior to the 1950's women were predominately employed as factory, farm or shop workers. The few women who had access to higher education were at the mercy of their fathers' or husbands' attitudes regarding women and work. The developing knowledge industry created a more level playing field for female workers, with brain power being the requisite skill, rather than endurance or brute strength. Universities, having long been the feeder of talent to corporate America, opened their doors to all eager learners after World War II, when the need for students who would eventually provide a labor pool for the financial, insurance, real estate and related service businesses (otherwise known as the knowledge based industries) escalated dramatically. Social factors, such as the change in the age of majority, access to reliable birth control and a higher percentage of educated women in the population, added to the trend of more women in the workplace. By the early 1970's, women were entering the workplace at an average rate of 1,000,000 annually.

As women became working mothers, they were expected to continue on a career path, as well as manage the primary care of children and extended family. As a result, the family became an organizational stakeholder. This powerful social trend became the beginning of the work/life balance paradigm shift. The dynamic elements of organizational life and family life create an ideal scenario for a systems management approach as a problem solving tool. Inherent in this approach is an interactive planning

scenario which includes crucial conversations and a deep understanding by all the stakeholders of the importance of any change plan.

The tipping point of the paradigm shift in the work/life balance model was caused by the number of women in the workforce and the resultant demands of the “families”. The change in the paradigm itself occurred when organizations responded interactively with their stakeholders to dissolve problems which had been caused by rigid, inflexible policies, plans and practices. The transition, which is the result of a collective psychological inculcation of the value of the paradigm change, is unique to each organizational culture. The effectiveness of the life/work balance transition lies in the ability of each organizational culture to fully adapt to a model in motion – evolving and dynamic – like its environment.

The paradigm for work/life balance can only be effective if it is universal rather than prescriptive. For example, a middle-manager working mother with an infant and a toddler has different requirements for success in the workplace than does a single parent executive-level leader with two adolescents. The inherent nature of family life is ever changing. The result of bringing this stakeholder into organizational life is a more dynamic organization, and therefore the need for an adaptive model for change.

Paramount to the successful transition from old models of work and life to a work/life balance paradigm is leadership. Until more women are in positions of leadership, the transition will not be effective, because women are the most motivated stakeholders in the change process. Nothing leads better than authenticity and truth. When more female leaders like Nancy Pelosi, the 2007 Speaker of United States House of Representatives Elect, are willing to lead from an authentic platform of work/life

balance as she has, the residual effect will be dynamic. Shortly following the election which positioned her as the first female to preside as Speaker of the House, Pelosi made public her congressional leadership agenda and her intention to attend her pregnant daughter's impending delivery.

Final Words

This thesis discussed the impact of working women on work/life balance issues. While discussing organizations with effective life/work balance programs may be instructive, it is not within the realm of this project. However, the work/life balance paradigm shift caused by working mothers creates opportunities for both men and women to reevaluate their personal and professional agendas. Through interactive planning within their organizational environments, they can effectuate change and forward the transition of a nation of stakeholders.

CHAPTER 15

AUTHOR'S STORY

I entered the Organizational Dynamics Program in 1989. I had previously explored the Social Systems Science major at the Wharton School, but the program was eliminated in 1986. My interest in systems thinking and interactive planning was a natural outgrowth of what I was experiencing personally and professionally and this project has been a great wrap-up of the program. My thesis has been cathartic and affirming.

I have worked for 25 years in the architectural and design industry in various capacities, but primarily as a sole proprietor. I consulted to small design firms regarding aspects of growth and development (change management), managed a sales force for a national architectural firm and served as the operations director for a national design/supply firm. During my consulting tenure, I developed a bar coding software product for inventory control. My current work involves renovating residential properties and being a student of organizational life.

My interest in organizational life is born out of my personal experience as an employee, an entrepreneur and a mom. The demands that my work and my family brought together were often on a direct collision course which seemingly precluded success in either world. I correctly believed that I was not the only person experiencing these conflicts and, in remaining curious rather than frustrated, was able to craft solutions which enabled me to achieve professional and personal goals.

The solutions which allowed for my success were not based upon traditional methods of problem solving, however, and nearly always required “a little extra” for my part: having a home-based office, developing interactive communication policies with clients, family and co-workers where it hadn’t previously existed, taking leave of organizations that were too rigid and creating the closest model possible to a non-hierarchal company of my own. Many women were experiencing similar issues with work/life balance issues, and now that my generation of working moms has reached mid-life, we are taking stock – which is how this thesis was born.

The human aspect I find most intriguing is that everyone has a story and wants to be known. How we are known, to what degree and to whom, is what makes each of us unique. This paper helped trace the historic backdrop against which a generation of women, including me, crafted solutions to balance their busy lives without sacrificing their core values regarding work and family. While we are still seeking solutions for better balance, the model has been shifted to create room for change and transition.

I feel that this paradigm shift is so much a part of me. Recently I barked angrily at an extended family member when she told someone that “Denise has always been home with the kids” because that isn’t my story or how I want to be known. My story is that I created a home-based business in anticipation of the demands of family life and I co-parent with my husband (whose business is also home-based). The other part of the story is that while I wasn’t always the parent (and sometimes neither of us was) who saw the first step or attended a soccer game, I am the mom who navigated a complex set of models and helped chart a different course for my children based on a greater understanding of dynamic systems and interactive communication and planning.

Additionally, I have maintained a deep sense of commitment to the future of our world. In the words of Max De Pree (1992), "History can't be left to fend for itself. For when it comes to history and beliefs and values, we turn our future on the lathe of the past." I have lived by a firm belief that we can have it all – we just can't have it all at once. In having it all, it is important to know what it is that you already have. Taking stock is part of the process of change; knowing where you want to go and evaluating the tools necessary to get there. The transition is being where you thought you were going. Often during my journey of "getting there" I didn't recognize the destination. It was affirming to read the stories in Patricia Auberdene's (2005) book, Megatrends 2010, about life changes which others in organizational life are participating in, such as meditation rooms and community service leave, and know that I was part of a generation that made these important aspects of life balance more accessible.

I look forward to the next part of my story – writing and teaching the art and science of organizational change. The journey is dynamic. I'm glad to have had the chance to tell this part of my story.

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