

*Balancing the Personal  
with the Professional*



*Impact of gender*

*Bias avoidance*

*Seeking balance*

*References*



# Balancing the Personal with the Professional

Julie T. Millard  
Colby College



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## *Impact of gender on having it all*

- 33% of high-achieving women are childless at age 40
  - 25% of men
- 49% of ultra-achieving women are childless at age 40
  - 19% of men
- Female academics have the highest professional rate of childlessness (43%).

Source: Parenting & Professing

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## *Impact of gender on having it all*

- Perceived advantages of being an academic mom
  - Flexible work schedule
  - Ability to work from home (?!?)
  - Summers off (?!?)
- Disadvantages of being an academic mom
  - Schedule out of sync with schools
  - Inability to call in sick
  - Work often needs to be done at home

Sources: Parenting & Professing; JTM

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# *Impact of gender on having it all*

“It would seem that a university-- with its ability to allow teachers to work from home, its paid sabbatical semester and its famously liberal thinking-- would be an ideal place to balance career and family. But by all accounts, the intense competition, the long hours and the unspoken expectations of the academy's traditionally male culture conspire to make it really, really hard to have a baby and be a professor.”

-H. Cohen (2002) *The Baby Bias*, *New York Times*.  
as quoted in *Parenting & Professing*



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# *Impact of gender on having it all*

“After having obtained a position, you may decide to have a family. You may also entertain the idea of leaving the university for one or several years until your children are of school age, and then going back to your former position. If so, you are indulging in wishful thinking. You can never go back. Although maternity leave, usually unpaid, may be provided, you must return to your job almost immediately thereafter or forfeit your career as a serious academic professional.”

-Marjorie Farnsworth (1974) *The Young Woman's Guide to an Academic Career*,  
as quoted in Parenting & Professing

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## *Bias avoidance behaviors*

- Behaviors intended to minimize or hide any apparent or actual intrusions of family life on academic commitments
- More common for women than men

### **Bias Against Caregiving**

*Faculty members rarely take advantage of family-friendly workplace policies. What are we so afraid of?*

By Robert Drago, Carol Colbeck, Kai Dawn Stauffer, Amy Pirretti, Kurt Burkum, Jennifer Fazioli, Gabriela Lazarro, and Tara Habasevich

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## *Bias avoidance behaviors*

- Correll and coworkers looked for a “motherhood penalty” in the job market.
- “Mommification” of a job applicant resulted in significant penalties (e.g., half the call backs, lower salary).

**Getting a Job: Is There a Motherhood Penalty?**

SHELLEY J. CORRELL  
STEPHEN BENARD  
IN PAIK

Survey research finds that mothers suffer a substantial wage penalty, although the causal mechanism producing it remains elusive. The authors employed a laboratory experiment to evaluate the hypothesis that status-based discrimination plays an important role and an audit study of actual employers to assess its real-world implications. In both studies, participants evaluated application materials for a pair of same-gender equally qualified job candidates who differed on parental status. The laboratory experiment found that mothers were penalized on a host of measures, including perceived competence and recommended starting salary. Men were not penalized for, and sometimes benefited from, being a parent. The audit study showed that actual employers discriminate against mothers, but not against fathers.

Featured in the New York Times, “Mom’s Mad. And She’s Organized.” February 22, 2007.

Source: Sorrell, Benard, and Paik (2007) Motherhood Penalty, American Journal of Sociology 112: 1297-1338

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## *Types of bias avoidance (BA)*

- Productive BA
  - Delay of partnering or marriage
  - Delay of child rearing
  - Limiting the number of children
  - Timing births for summer
- Unproductive BA
  - Hiding caregiving responsibilities
  - Shirking caregiving responsibilities
  - Opting out of the tenure track

Source: Drago et al. (2006) Avoidance of Bias against Caregiving,  
American Behavioral Scientist 49, 1222-1247



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## *Differences in BA*

- Drago and coworkers surveyed 4,188 faculty from chemistry and English for BA.
- These disciplines represented “gendered fields.” In 1999,
  - 19.5% of chemistry teachers at college level were women
  - 60.1% of English teachers at college level were women
- Absences from the lab are highly visible; absences from English offices are not.

Source: Avoidance of Bias against Caregiving

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# Differences in BA

## Productive BA

	Women	Men
Stayed single because I did not have time for a family and academic career	0.161	0.102**
Had fewer children than wanted	0.255	0.126**
Did not ask for reduced teaching load for fear of repercussions	0.329	0.189**
Delayed second child until after tenure	0.127	0.068**

\*p < 0.05;

\*\*p < 0.01

Source: Avoidance of Bias against Caregiving

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# Differences in BA

## Unproductive BA

	Women	Men
Did not ask for parental leave though it would have helped me	0.291	0.264
Did not ask to stop the tenure clock though it would have helped me	0.177	0.150*
Missed some of my children's important events because I didn't want to appear uncommitted to work	0.441	0.342**
Came back to work sooner than I would have liked after a new child	0.420	0.103**

\*p < 0.05;

\*\*p < 0.01

Source: Avoidance of Bias against Caregiving

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## *Differences in BA*

- Conclusions
  - BA is prevalent in academics
  - BA is gendered
  - Behavior of supervisors influences BA
  - Discipline has an effect
    - ✓ Men in chemistry delayed a second child less often than men in English; more often parents and partners
    - ✓ Women in chemistry returned to work too soon after a child
  - Type of institution has an effect
    - ✓ Women at teaching institutions were MORE likely to miss children's events
    - ✓ Higher levels of gender equity reduce some BA in women

Source: Avoidance of Bias against Caregiving



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## *Seeking balance*

- Balance can be positive for both sides
- Example: being a mom and a chem prof
  - ☺ Moms must work when exhausted
  - ☺ Moms must multi-task
  - ☺ Moms must pick their battles
  - ☺ Moms are often humbled
  - ☺ Moms learn “tough love”
  - ☺ Chemists make ice cream with liquid N<sub>2</sub>
  - ☺ Chemists can help with most homework
  - ☺ Chemists make good soccer moms
  - ☺ Chemists make good role models

Sources: Parenting & Professing; JTM

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## *Seeking balance*

- Reasons to seek balance
  - ☺ Less likely to sweat the small stuff
  - ☺ Increased interaction with the “real world”
  - ☺ You will be nicer to interact with if you retain hobbies and interests outside of home and work
  - ☺ You will be more interesting if you retain hobbies and interests outside of home and work
  - ☺ The human psyche needs variety

Sources: Juggling; JTM

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## *Seeking balance*

“If you can manage enthusiasm for Candyland, you can manage alertness for the most petrifying committee meeting about copy machines.”

“(With pregnancy) I felt an urgency to utilize all the time and to get to the point sooner. I started telling students to come in with questions written down or specific goals for our meetings.”

“Children remind us that everything does not have to be perfect...Those cupcakes don't have to look like Martha Stewart decorated them as long as there is extra frosting. Some things are fine at 'good enough.'”

-Lorretta Holloway, *Today, She's Just Mama*  
in Parenting & Professing

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## *Seeking balance*

- Embrace the concept of “comfortable chaos”
- Determine your “chaos coefficient”
- Determine how you are spending your time vs. how you would like to be spending your time
- Consider 10 tips for getting it all done

Sources: Comfortable chaos



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## *Seeking balance*

- Decide on your top priority projects
- Apply time management (to-do lists; spend 80% of your workday on the critical)
- Use the “project of the week” concept
- Get over the guilt of e-mail
- Develop the need for speed
- Avoid any meeting that doesn't help you with a critical task
- Learn the necessary tools for your job
- Be organized
- Think before you say “yes”
- Surround yourself with capable people

Source: Comfortable chaos

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## *Seeking balance*

- ☺ Give up perfectionism (frozen food)
- ☺ Reduce the number of balls through elimination (e.g., grading homework/labs) or delegation (e.g., housekeeper)
- ☺ Be conscious of the “one more thing” syndrome (don’t try to squeeze in another 5-minutes task on your way out)
- ☺ Remember that self-care isn’t selfish (exercise, meals, medical appointments)
- ☺ Create (and keep) your boundaries (e.g., no weekends)
- ☺ Try to do nothing once in a while

Sources: Comfortable chaos and JTM

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