

Times have Changed for Women

By Patricia Morgan

Fall 2009 two significant reports featured the current status of women. Time magazine published a feature called **"What Women Want Now"** and the Center for American Progress and Maria Shriver issued **"The Shriver Report: A Woman's Nation Changes Everything."** Since the feminist movement of the 1970s, women have made significant strides, particularly in the workforce. At the same time societal supports for this shift have not kept pace.

Here are some highlights:

- Nearly 50% of American workers are women.
- Women are increasingly becoming the primary earners or co-earners in 66% of families.
- 70% of men say they are comfortable with women working outside of the home.
- Mothers and fathers express concern about the effects on their children of no stay-at-home parent.
- During the current recession most job losses have been men's positions. More stable careers tend to be in education and health where women are the majority.

Similar shifts are happening in Canada. In 2007, women made up 47% of Canada's workforce. That's almost half! A Nov 6, 2009 Statistics Canada report stated, "Among adult men, although down 177,000 (-2.3%) since October 2008, employment has stabilized in recent months. For adult women, employment was unchanged compared with a year earlier."

One of the most exciting points of the reports is that the "battle of the sexes" has moved to "negotiation of the sexes" over work and family responsibilities.

In 2006 Statistics Canada reported, "The average Canadian woman will perform 4.3 hours of unpaid work in contrast to a man's 2.5 hours."



If that workload continues, many women would benefit by doing more delegation on the home front. Actually just this week after I described a husband, called Hardy Harry, preparing dinner each Sunday, a woman in the audience piped up to say, "Well, he's fiction." But I don't completely agree with her. I see big changes in our adult children and their coupleship relationships.

Women who set a low value on themselves make life hard for all women.
Nellie McClung (1873-1951)

If you want a tool to assess and re-assign home responsibilities please refer to an article I wrote in 2005 called "Mom's Work Worth Thousands." It includes a list of the dozens of tasks that we do on a daily, weekly and monthly basis, often without giving thought to *who does what*. Here is the link:

http://www.solutionsforresilience.com/motivational_articles/Moms_Work_Worth_Thousands.pdf

Nellie McClung and the rest of the Famous 5, who fought for women to be declared "persons," would be pleased to see these changes. It was 80 years ago that a Calgary Herald editor wrote, "Our women, thank Heaven, are too sensible and too fond of their home lives to indulge in agitations for 'freedom.'" I say, "Our women, thank Heaven, took on another kind of sensibility to make their own choices." Women are exercising their options to focus on the home front with family or accept full-time employment or combine part-time home responsibilities with part-time employment or become entrepreneurs.

The next step will be for organizations and governments to take more seriously the term, "family friendly" workplaces. In the meantime, the times are changing for women, men and families!

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