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6. Juggling family and career: parents' pathways to a balanced and happy life

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Welcoming a child into the family is often met with new challenges to balance the demands of the parents' careers with the needs of their families. Parents may be confronted with seemingly endless tasks associated with caring for a child – arranging childcare, preparing meals, and sleepless nights in the early years. Without any adjustments to demanding work schedules – early meetings, project deadlines, and concerns about maintaining productivity – parents may feel overwhelmed with the sheer number of unavoidable daily tasks. Perhaps not surprisingly, more than half of workers report difficulties balancing the responsibilities of work and family (Parker and Wang, 2013), and parents frequently experience fatigue associated with being 'on call' 24/7 (Feldman and Nash, 1984). Despite these stresses, however, we suggest that both work and family provide unique benefits, and, that when parents can maximize the benefits and minimize the stresses, they will achieve work–life balance and wellbeing. Drawing from research on work–life interaction (e.g., Eby et al., 2010, for a review), parenthood (e.g., Nelson et al., 2014a), and ways to improve wellbeing (e.g., Lyubomirsky and Layous, 2013), we suggest multiple strategies for parents to juggle family and career and lead full, balanced, and happy lives.

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO HAVE WORK–LIFE BALANCE?

Work–life balance involves a perceived balance between work and the rest of life – the ability to meet commitments at home and at work (Guest, 2002). Imbalance occurs when work life and home life directly conflict with one another, due to toiling long hours and an inability to meet commitments at home, or to spending too much time at home, resulting in

a failure to complete responsibilities at work. Thus, achieving work–life balance involves finding a happy medium in which one can meet the responsibilities of both work and home. Integrating classic theoretical approaches to understanding the interactions between work and family life, we argue that maintaining balance involves minimizing conflict between work and family, and maximizing the beneficial effects of integrating work and family. Not surprisingly, this goal can be highly challenging, as each day contains a finite number of hours, yet the tasks may seem relentless. Indeed, people often experience a 'time bind', in which they do not have enough time to meet the demands of both work and home (Hochschild, 1997).

Moreover, achieving work–life balance is also highly variable, as both parenting and work responsibilities may differ from person to person. For example, a single mother who is working towards a promotion and has two children under five may have great difficulty finding work–life balance, as she juggles numerous responsibilities at both home and at work. By contrast, a mother with teenage children and a supportive spouse may find balancing work and family life considerably easier, as her children require less attention and her partner helps manage household tasks. Indeed, research suggests that the specific demands of work and of family differ across life stages. Young parents tend to have fewer resources in both career and family, and higher demands, and therefore experience greater conflict. By contrast, middle-aged parents may experience less work–family conflict, as they have accrued greater resources in both domains (Demerouti et al., 2012).

Living a balanced life has important implications for personal happiness. Happiness (also known as subjective wellbeing) is typically conceptualized as consisting of an affective component (i.e., frequent positive emotions and infrequent negative emotions) and a cognitive component (i.e., high levels of life satisfaction; Diener, 1984; Diener et al., 1999). Thus, a 'happy' person is one who reports frequent positive emotions, infrequent negative emotions, and high satisfaction with life. Throughout this chapter, we focus on work–life balance and its implications for wellbeing, and we use the terms subjective wellbeing and happiness interchangeably.

Finally, although finding work–life balance appears to be an important goal for nearly everyone in the workforce, the focus of this chapter primarily involves issues of work–life balance specific to working parents. Because the challenges of work–life balance may be vastly different for parents and non-parents, a review of the literature on working non-parents is outside the scope of this chapter. In addition, although work conducted inside the home may have implications for parents' wellbeing, in this chapter we use the term 'work' to refer to paid employment outside the home.

PARENTHOOD AND WELLBEING

As a central element of adult life, parenthood holds implications for numerous aspects of parents' day-to-day lives – including their careers and their overall wellbeing. Previous research on the association between parenthood and wellbeing has been mixed. Some studies indicate that parents are happier than non-parents (e.g., Aassve et al., 2012; Nelson et al., 2013); some studies suggest that parents are less happy and experience higher rates of depression than non-parents (e.g., McLanahan and Adams, 1987; Evenson and Simon, 2005); and some studies find that parents and non-parents experience similar happiness levels (e.g., Rothrauff and Cooney, 2008).

To better understand the conflicting findings on the association between parenthood and wellbeing, we conducted a comprehensive review of the literature on this topic (Nelson et al., 2014a) and identified several factors that may explain why some parents report relatively greater wellbeing, whereas others report relatively lower wellbeing (see Figure 6.1 for a conceptual model). We theorize that parents are happy when they experience greater meaning and purpose in life, more positive emotions, fulfillment of their social roles, and satisfaction of their basic human needs. By contrast, we theorize that parents are unhappy when they experience more negative emotions, financial strain, sleep disturbance and fatigue, and troubled marriages. Furthermore, this model of parents' wellbeing can be used to understand the experiences of specific circumstances characterizing parents – for example, their employment status – and how those circumstances might be related to parents' wellbeing. Throughout this chapter, we use this model as a guide for understanding how parents' employment may influence their happiness.
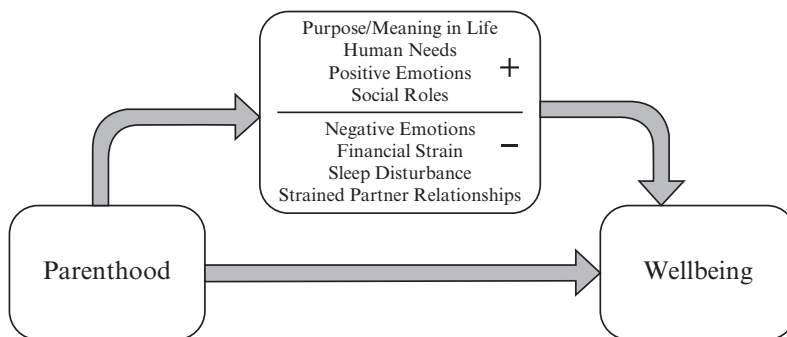
Source: Reprinted with permission from Nelson et.al. (2014a)

Figure 6.1   Parents' wellbeing model

FINDING BALANCE AND HAPPINESS FOR WORKING PARENTS

Working parents may encounter particular challenges in finding work–life balance and wellbeing. On one hand, as they struggle to juggle deadlines at work, organizing childcare, and chauffeuring their children to numerous activities, their wellbeing may take a hit. On the other hand, by combining the work and the family role, parents may have more opportunities to feel fulfilled by multiple social roles, to enjoy financial security, to experience positive emotions, and to satisfy their basic human needs. Indeed, a large body of research on work–family interaction has focused on the many ways that work and family influence one another. At the broadest level, work–family interaction is defined as the influence of experiences in one role (e.g., family) on the experiences in the other role (e.g., work; Eby et al., 2010). Moreover, these experiences may be either positive or negative; they can flow in either direction (i.e., from work to family or from family to work); and they have strong implications for personal happiness. Accordingly, drawing from the parents' wellbeing model (Nelson et al., 2014a) and literature on work–family interaction, we argue that the key to finding balance for working parents involves learning to maximize the benefits of being a working parent while minimizing the challenges. We discuss each of the challenges and rewards in more detail below, along with some specific suggestions for how to reap the benefits and tackle the difficulties.

Rewards of Working Parenthood

Maintaining paid employment is associated with many psychological benefits (for a review, see Erdogan et al., 2012), including greater life satisfaction and self-esteem, as well as lower levels of distress and depression, for both men and women (Aneshensel et al., 1981; Menaghan, 1989). In addition, longitudinal studies reveal that wellbeing improves at the commencement of a new job (Boswell et al., 2005) and that wellbeing declines during periods of unemployment (Clark et al., 2008). Employment may also have some special benefits for working parents. For example, maintaining paid employment increases family income and is associated with greater resources for housing, medical care, nutrition, and education available to children in the family (Duncan and Magnuson, 2002). Moreover, work participation may provide opportunities to develop social support networks, as well as a sense of competence and identity (Rout et al., 1997), further contributing to an overall sense of wellbeing. Marrying research suggesting psychological benefits of work (e.g., Erdogan et al., 2012) and

research explaining the conditions that explain greater wellbeing among parents (Nelson et al., 2014a), we suggest that working parents may experience greater wellbeing due to their fulfillment of multiple social roles, greater financial security, opportunities for positive emotions, and satisfaction of basic human needs.

Role fulfillment

Research on social roles suggests that holding multiple roles is advantageous for mental and physical health (Menaghan, 1989; Thoits, 1992; Gara et al., 1993; Barnett and Hyde, 2001), in part due to a strengthened identity. Past research has indicated that having multiple sources for one's identity (i.e., self-complexity) can act as a buffer from negative spillover from one aspect of the self to the rest of the self (Linville, 1985, 1987). Supporting the buffering role of self-complexity, one study found that fathers are less likely to feel distress after a negative experience at work when they have positive relationships with their wives and their children (Barnett et al., 1992). In addition, having greater self-complexity provides more ways for an individual to self-affirm (Niedenthal et al., 1992), and behaving in ways that affirms one's identities may also boost overall wellbeing. For example, one study found that people who placed high importance on family identity experienced relatively high levels of job satisfaction and low levels of job distress whether their families interfered with their work or not. By contrast, those who placed low importance on family identity reported lower job satisfaction and greater job distress when their families interfered with their work (Bagger et al., 2008). These findings suggest that placing high value on family identity can buffer potential negative effects of role spillover.

Research on work–family interaction also suggests that holding multiple roles may be beneficial because experiences in one role can enrich experiences in the other role via gains in resources (Greenhaus and Powell, 2006; Wayne et al., 2007). For example, a mother's negotiating skills learned at work may be useful for bargaining over grades and curfews with teenagers. Likewise, a father's multitasking abilities (e.g., cooking dinner and reviewing his child's homework) may help him to be more efficient with his time at work. Supporting this idea, in a study of female managers, women reported that several qualities learned in their personal lives (e.g., interpersonal skills, ability to multitask, respect for individual differences) improved their effectiveness as a manager (Ruderman et al., 2002).

Strategies to capitalize on this reward

In sum, parents' participation in both the worker and the parent role can influence their wellbeing both by securing their sense of identity and by

accumulating resources for use in both domains. To continue to reap the benefits of role fulfillment, parents could practice affirming their identities as a parent and as a worker. Previous research has indicated that self-affirmation exercises – namely, taking time to contemplate one's most important values – secure one's sense of identity (Steele, 1988) and improve wellbeing (Nelson et al., 2014b). As a result of this exercise, parents may experience greater feelings of balance and wellbeing.

Financial security

Past research has found that having children in the home is associated with financial strain among parents (McLanahan and Adams, 1987; Umberson and Gove, 1989; Ross and Van Willingen, 1996). In turn, the financial pressure experienced by parents can have a negative impact on their overall wellbeing (Bird, 1997; Jackson et al., 2000; Nelson et al., 2014a). Given that income is a critical advantage of being employed, working parents may experience greater overall wellbeing due to their greater financial security. Previous studies have shown that job security (De Cuyper and De Witte, 2006, 2008; Silla et al., 2009) and income (Diener and Oishi, 2000) are related to greater overall life satisfaction.

In addition, parents' financial security may also improve their wellbeing indirectly by increasing their feelings of competence. Employed parents may feel more confident in their ability to provide for their children. For example, employed parents may be more financially capable to fund relatively higher-quality resources – for food, clothing, medical care, and education – for their children (Duncan and Magnuson, 2002). Supporting these ideas, parental competence has been linked to greater happiness, as well as satisfaction with family life (Williams et al., 1987; Bandura et al., 2011). Thus, parents may experience greater overall wellbeing as they feel they are fulfilling their role as a parent by providing for their children.

Strategies to capitalize on this reward

In a society in which everyone is trying to keep up with the Joneses, parents may wish to take a few moments to be appreciative and grateful that they have a steady income and can provide for their kids. Expressing gratitude – whether by recalling the blessings in one's life or by thanking a specific person – has been shown to reliably improve wellbeing (Emmons and McCullough, 2003; Chancellor et al., 2014). In addition, according to correlational evidence, gratitude is related to reduced materialistic strivings (McCullough et al., 2002; Polak and McCullough, 2006), suggesting that gratitude may be particularly beneficial in this context. Finally, parents may wish to rein in their spending, so that they may continue to enjoy financial security. Indeed, research suggests that

people can spend less while enjoying the fruits of their spending more, thus improving overall wellbeing (for a review, see Chancellor and Lyubomirsky, 2011).

Positive emotions

Stemming from research on the beneficial effects of holding multiple roles, some investigators have posited that participating in both work and family improves wellbeing via gains in positive emotions. In turn, the gains in positive emotions may lead to upward spirals of greater overall wellbeing (Fredrickson and Joiner, 2002).

Supporting these ideas, theory suggests that the positive emotions experienced in one role can improve functioning in another (Greenhaus and Powell, 2006). For example, after enjoying a particularly good day at work, parents may happily greet their children and appreciate their time with them at home even more. Indeed, one study found that fathers who experienced positive affect at work demonstrated high attention in the family role, and that mothers who experienced positive affect within the family became more absorbed in their work (Rothbard, 2001). In addition, momentary satisfaction experienced at work was positively associated with marital satisfaction reported later the same day (and vice versa). Moreover, this 'spillover' effect was partially explained by improvements in positive mood (Heller and Watson, 2005). Similarly, other studies have found that on days that employees reported high daily job satisfaction, they also reported higher daily marital satisfaction, greater positive affect and less negative affect at home, and greater happiness at the end of the day (Ilies et al., 2007; Rodriguez-Munoz et al., 2014).

Strategies to capitalize on this reward

The evidence described above suggests that the experience of positive emotions at home and at work may be mutually rewarding for a parent's alternate roles. To further maximize the positive emotions gained in each of these domains, we recommend that parents practice savoring their positive experiences in each context. Previous research has found that savoring positive experiences improves positive emotions and life satisfaction (Quoidbach et al., 2010). For example, parents may savor their joy in witnessing their child's emerging speech by making efforts to 'be present' and effortfully directing their attention to the present experience (e.g., Bryant, 1989; Erisman and Roemer, 2010). Parents could also savor the positive emotions experienced from victories at work by sharing good news with others. Past research has found that celebrating positive news leads to even greater positive emotions than the effect of the event itself (Gable et al., 2004). In sum, the evidence shows that, as parents amplify the positive

emotions experienced in their daily lives (either at work or with family), they will experience even greater overall wellbeing.

Opportunities to satisfy basic psychological needs

Psychological theory suggests that in order to live happy and fulfilling lives, people must satisfy their needs for autonomy (feeling that one is capable of controlling important outcomes), competence (feeling that one is effective and skilled), and connectedness (feeling close and connected to others; Deci and Ryan, 2000). Although parenthood in itself allows the individual to fulfill all three of these needs, being a working parent may provide unique opportunities to fulfill more of these needs – especially for competence and connectedness – more frequently, thus contributing to greater overall wellbeing and balance.

First, working may afford opportunities for parents to build relationships with their co-workers, thus fulfilling the need for connectedness. For example, work-based social support is linked to greater life satisfaction (Michel et al., 2009). Even more convincing evidence comes from a study that found that working mothers had more social networks and emotional support than stay-at-home mothers (Rout et al., 1997). Moreover, not only did working mothers in this study demonstrate greater social ties, but also stay-at-home mothers reported that their biggest stress was their lack of social life, suggesting that stay-at-home parents may feel particularly disconnected.

In addition to fulfilling the need for connectedness, working may also fulfill parents' need for competence. Working grants individuals opportunities to pursue and achieve goals, thus contributing to their overall sense of competence, which, in turn, could lead to greater happiness. Related to these ideas, studies show that job performance (Babin and Boles, 1998), feelings of professional competence (Carmel, 1997), and self-efficacy for job-related tasks (Yan et al., 2007) are related to life satisfaction. Although parents' competence in their parenting role may also contribute to their overall wellbeing (e.g., Williams et al., 1987), the need for competence may be more easily fulfilled within the organized structure of work, in which employees frequently receive feedback on their job performance from their co-workers and supervisors. Thus, to the extent that working improves parents' sense of competence, they will enjoy greater overall wellbeing.

Evolutionary theory provides an alternative perspective on the fulfillment of human needs. In a revision of Maslow's hierarchy of needs, evolutionary theorists suggest that human beings have a number of needs – for immediate physiological drives, for mate acquisition and retention, for status and esteem, and for parenthood – that they are motivated to fulfill (Kenrick et al., 2010). In addition, research suggests that fulfilling

each of these needs is associated with greater psychological wellbeing (see Lyubomirsky and Boehm, 2010, for a review).

Employment provides a unique opportunity to fulfill two of the higher-level needs in this hierarchy – namely, status and esteem. At a societal level, continued participation in the workforce likely improves parents' status via gains in income and socioeconomic status (SES). In addition, working parents may also fulfill their need for status and esteem as their careers continue to advance. By contrast, stay-at-home parents may have fewer opportunities to advance their status and esteem. One option for stay-at-home parents to gain status and esteem is via community involvement and volunteer work; however, the opportunities for advancement in those outlets may be limited. Findings from the organizational literature support the link between work-related status and life satisfaction. For example, research has demonstrated that the power and prestige of employees' jobs (Redman and Snape, 2006) and the mere opportunity for promotion (Kantak et al., 1992; Judge and Locke, 1993) are correlated with life satisfaction. Together, these findings suggest that employment may improve parents' wellbeing via gains in status.

Strategies to capitalize on these rewards

In sum, working parents may enjoy higher overall wellbeing because working outside the home provides opportunities for parents to fulfill their basic psychological needs for connectedness and competence, and their evolutionary needs for status and esteem. The positive psychological literature suggests some key ways that parents could capitalize specifically on the benefits of connectedness with their co-workers – namely by engaging in prosocial behavior at work. Indeed, performing kind acts for others has been found to promote peer acceptance in addition to wellbeing (Layous et al., 2012). In one study, employees were instructed to perform kind acts for their co-workers each week for four weeks. The recipients of kindness demonstrated immediate boosts in connectedness and happiness, but the benefits for givers were longer lasting – they reported less depression two months later (Chancellor et al., 2013). Thus, parents who practice generosity towards their co-workers may find that they get along better with their peers at work, and experience greater wellbeing as well.

Summary

In sum, theory and empirical evidence suggest numerous benefits of employment among parents. Working outside the home may facilitate wellbeing among parents by securing their sense of identity in multiple

social roles, by reducing financial strain prevalent among parents, by generating upward spirals of positive emotions, and by providing greater opportunities to satisfy basic human needs. In addition, we have high-lighted numerous ways that parents may capitalize on these benefits of working parenthood so that they may enjoy happiness and balance in their lives.

The Challenges of Working Parenthood

Although working parents may reap rewards from both work and parent-hood, they may also experience many stressors that challenge their balance and wellbeing. As parents manage both their families and their careers, they may experience negative emotions associated with work–family con-flict, as well as reduced meaning in life. These experiences, in turn, could result in lower overall wellbeing. We discuss each of these challenges to working parenthood in greater detail below, along with some specific sug-gestions to combat them, so that parents may find fulfillment and balance.

Negative emotions

Although some evidence suggests positive effects of combining work and family, research on work–family interaction has traditionally focused on the negative interaction between work and family – namely, work–family conflict. Work–family conflict is a specific form of inter-role conflict in which the obligations in the work and family roles are viewed as incompat-ible with one another, and participation in one role is made more difficult by participation in the other (Greenhaus and Beutell, 1985). A parent may experience work–family conflict when she has to attend a late meeting at work and is unable to make it to her child's soccer game (i.e., time-based conflict). She may also experience conflict when, although she catches the soccer game, she is preoccupied by a stumbling block in a project at work and misses her child scoring a goal (i.e., strain-based conflict). Finally, she may experience conflict when her child expects her to cheer him up after a disappointing performance at the soccer game, but she has difficulty switching from her 'no-nonsense' attitude that is expected of her at work (i.e., behavior-based conflict). Notably, the negative effects of work–life conflict not only flow from work to home, but stress and tension at home can also negatively impact work experiences, as working parents may be distracted from the task at hand by intrusive thoughts about a child's illness, an incompetent nanny, or marital disagreements about how to handle a poor report card.

Moreover, each type of work–life conflict, whether it is time-based, strain-based, or behavior-based, can be a barrier to maintaining balance

and is associated with negative wellbeing outcomes. Experiences of work–life conflict are accompanied by greater negative emotions, such as anxiety, tension, worry, frustration, guilt, and distress (Frone et al., 1997; Geurts et al., 2003; Matthews et al., 2006; Livingston and Judge, 2008). Moreover, as people juggle increased responsibilities at both home and at work – making life difficult to balance – they report more negative moods and feeling less calm (Williams and Alliger, 1994). In addition, negative moods experienced at work, due to high workload (e.g., Ilies et al., 2007), demanding work schedule (e.g., Jackson et al., 1985), or feeling that one's professional reputation is threatened (e.g., Doby and Caplan, 1995), among others, can spill over and lead to greater negative moods at home. Consistent with these findings, a meta-analysis found that work–family conflict is negatively related to job and life satisfaction (Ernst Kossek and Ozeki, 1998).

Strategies to combat this challenge
A number of strategies may help parents grapple with each type of work–life conflict and the associated negative emotions. For example, as previously discussed, savoring activities may help direct parents' awareness to the present moment and enjoy their experiences with their children. Similarly, meditation practices, such as mindfulness meditation and loving-kindness meditation, may help parents focus their attention on the here and now (Lutz et al., 2008), thus freeing them from worrying about their children when they are at work and worrying about work when they are with their children (i.e., strain-based conflict).

In addition, new evidence suggests that practicing gratitude may help parents focus better (and accomplish more) during their working time, allowing them to join their families earlier. One study found that employees who listed three good things that happened at work each day not only enjoyed greater happiness, but also socialized less at work and left work earlier (Chancellor et al., 2014). Although reducing time at work may not always be possible, if parents are able to manage their time more effectively and leave the office earlier, they may reduce the frequency of time-based conflict and experience greater balance and wellbeing.

Reduced meaning in life
An intriguing line of research has found a negative association between SES – a construct related to employment – and parents' experience of meaning in life. For example, highly educated women report relatively less positive attitudes towards motherhood (Hoffman, 1978), and highly educated men and women report finding less value and fulfillment in parenthood (Veroff et al., 1981). Extending these results, high-SES

parents have recently been found to experience less meaning in life specifically when they are spending time with their children than low-SES parents. Moreover, when parents were primed to think about money, they reported less meaning in life during time spent with their children (Kushlev et al., 2012). Thus, one surprising challenge to balance and happiness among high-SES working parents appears to be reduced meaning in life.

One interpretation of these findings is that high-SES working parents experience an 'opportunity cost' of parenthood – that is, when parents are spending time with their children, they feel as though they should be doing something else (Kushlev, 2011). Other research supports this link, finding that higher SES is associated with greater time stress and the perception of time as a limited resource (Hamermesh and Lee, 2007; DeVoe and Pfeffer, 2011). Furthermore, other evidence suggests that high-SES parents may place greater importance on roles other than being a parent, which could heighten their experience of goal conflict (Heiss, 1976; Emmons and King, 1988). For example, working parents with high-status jobs may prioritize achievement and personal promotion (agentic goals), which could conflict with nurturing their children (communal goals; Kushlev et al., 2012) and reduce the meaning experienced during childcare.

Strategies to combat this challenge

Parents with high levels of education and job status could combat these deleterious effects of employment in a number of ways. First, they could attempt to change how they view their time spent with children to be more consistent with achievement-oriented goals. For example, parents could focus on helping their children with schoolwork as a way to promote their child's future, rather than taking away from their own opportunities for promotion. Second, by affirming the importance of their parent identity, even high-SES parents may experience lower opportunity costs of parenthood (cf. Bagger et al., 2008) and experience greater meaning in life when spending time with their children (Nelson et al., 2013). Finally, as described above, the attention-focusing benefits of meditation may help parents to focus their attention during their daily activities, thus alleviating the sense that they should be doing something else.

Summary

In sum, evidence suggests that in addition to the benefits of work and parenthood, parents may also experience some costs to their balance and happiness. Specifically, parents may experience challenges to work–life balance and happiness when they experience negative emotions associated with conflict between work and family, and when the time pressures of a

high-status job reduce the sense of meaning they experience when spending time with their children.

GENDER

Men and women likely face different struggles in their attempts to find work–life balance. Past research has indicated that men consistently experience wellbeing benefits associated with parenthood, whereas women do not (Nelson et al., 2013). In addition, mothers are paid less than childless women (Budig and England, 2001), yet fathers are paid more than childless men (Lundberg and Rose, 2000). Consistent with these findings, when working women become mothers, they are perceived as less competent, but more emotionally warm. Fathers, on the other hand, do not suffer a hit to their perceived competence – instead, they are perceived as both competent and warm (Cuddy et al., 2004). Moreover, mothers typically face a 'second shift' (Hochschild, 1989) after arriving home from work, and they typically bear the brunt of childrearing responsibilities (Nock and Kingston, 1988; Milkie et al., 2002; Nomaguchi and Milkie, 2003). Accordingly, the challenges of working parenthood may be magnified among working moms compared to working dads. Demonstrating the challenges of work–life balance among working moms, previous studies have found that mothers report greater time strain (Nomaguchi et al., 2005) and distress (Bird, 1997) than fathers.

Despite the gender differences in work–family interaction, we believe that the issues of work–life balance discussed here apply equally to both men and women. As women's participation in the workforce has increased, so has men's participation in household labor (Bianchi et al., 2000). Accordingly, one perspective of work–life balance may be to consider balancing work and life within couples, as well as within individuals. As we have discussed throughout this chapter, maintaining work–life balance is beneficial for personal happiness. Building on this work, evidence also suggests that maintaining balance within couples is linked to greater marital satisfaction (Ilies et al., 2007). Consequently, balancing work and family is a concern for both men and women.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

In sum, working parents are in a unique position – one filled with both rewards and challenges to their balance and wellbeing. Although parents may experience stress and negative emotions – and high-SES parents may

additionally feel reduced meaning in life when with their children – they may also benefit from strengthened identities, frequent positive emotions, bolstered financial security, and satisfaction of their basic needs. Drawing from research on parenthood, happiness, and work–life interaction, we have suggested that parents can live balanced and happy lives if they can maximize the benefits and minimize the challenges of combining work and parenthood. From this perspective, 'having it all' may be possible after all.

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