Comparative Essay: Mothers With A Divided Heart Essay, Research Paper

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The importance of raising children to be productive members of a rapidly

evolving, achievement oriented society, is paramount to the success of the

family and the global economy. At the same time, the stresses of every day

individual economic and personal fulfillment needs are a significant counter

force. This force works against the available time and effort required for

mothers to successfully nurture their young. It has resulted in societal “Mommy

Wars”, pitting the working mom against the stay-at-home mom, in a battle over

which model offers the clearest path to nurturing success. Bridging the gap

requires each to accept that there is not one right choice for every family and

to understand and respect each individual decision. All moms have one thing in

common: they make sacrifices to do what is best for their families. To a

working mom, this means not spending as much time with her children, and for

stay-at-home moms, this means not getting much time to herself. Being home or

not with the children is not as important as creating an environment where the

children can thrive and feel loved.

Stay-at-home moms are often viewed as “soap-opera-watching couch potatoes” with

no ambition. Rather than being praised for their decision to stay home, they

often feel they need to defend it. Society talks so much about family values,

yet gives little respect or value to stay-at-home moms who raise the families.

In addition, stay-at-home moms find it challenging to provide a social setting

for their children when being at home all day is the only stimulation they have.

Furthermore, the strain of not bringing in money for a better standard of living

can lead to self-doubt and isolation. That feeling of insecurity can be put to

rest, however, with the peace-of-mind that comes from knowing that the child is

being well taken care of. Stay-at-home moms have the opportunity to become

more involved in the children’s school activities as well. This can be

important to both because it shows interest in the child and that leads to

higher self-esteem for the child. This way of living is beneficial for the

children as well because there is only one set of rules to follow. The

children feel a constant unconditional love from their own parents that is

unlike any other love. Children can thrive with a routine and rely on the

stability they feel when they have mom to count on “being there” all the time.

Staying home to raise a family is healthy for the family to grow together and to

support each other’s roles.

Family support is important, however, working moms are often viewed as deserting

their children in order to have nicer cars and homes. They are said to “want it

all.” Yet at times, they are denied “it all” in the work place specifically

because they are moms. Working moms experience the stress of being pulled in so

many directions, it is like living with a divided heart. The pressure of

economics that force many single mothers into the workplace makes the choice a

limited one and creates a sense of guilt. The guilt about not “being there” for

the children and the fear that they are not being well taken care of adds to the

stressful decisions working moms need to make. The guilt multiplies when there

is a feeling of selfishness wanting to pursue a career and wanting “more” for

the children and the family. In spite of these drawbacks, working moms have

many benefits. They have the luxury of learning and growing every day

independent of their families. The mental satisfaction of knowing that they

contribute to the success of their company is very satisfying. It is rewarding

to know the children are learning how to play, share and laugh with others.

Working moms are so anxious to see their children after a day at work, it

creates a sense of bonding when they get home. Moms and kids have the evenings

to really focus on each other and learn about each other. They are also pulling

their own weight with an income of their own, and this builds personal self-

confidence which is healthy for the whole family. Financially, it is easier to

provide a larger home and a higher education for the children. The advantages

to the children lie in the social skills they acquire being in different

settings and interacting with other people. If the children are in a daycare

setting, they can learn how to adapt to change, share with other children, and

prepare for school which is important for their roles as future adults. Working

moms should feel proud of their accomplishments and good about themselves for

giving their children the gift of independence, self confidence and love.

Happy, healthy children is the common goal for every mom. The environment

mothers place them in is up to each individual. Both kinds of moms have a lot

in common: both miss what the other has, both make sacrifices, and both find

themselves having to justify their decisions. Dr. Jacqueline Lerner, a

psychologist at Penn State, did a study of each group and found that “the most

poorly adjusted children were those with mothers who wanted to work but were

staying home, and those with working mothers who felt they really should be

home.” Although it makes sense that happy mothers will raise well-adjusted

children, the problem for many mothers is the guilt and worry they feel no

matter which route they take. Moms should be proud of the work they do and

confident that they are doing what is best for the family. After all, children

are unconditionally accepting, and all they ever want is to be loved.

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