



Sharon Meers

Teamwork: Balancing Work Inside and Outside Home

Attendee Notes for Menlo School Workshop: Feb. 4, 2012

Sharon Meers leads business development at X.commerce, a division of eBay. Sharon co-founded the Partnership for Parity at the Stanford Graduate School of Business and the Harvard University Dual-Career Initiative to help shift the dialog about work—making it more fact-based, co-ed and fun. She is the co-author of *Getting to 50/50*. More information may be found at www.gettingto5050.com.

Studies show that children turn out equally well whether their mothers work or not. What really matters is that both parents spend time with their children and being home for dinner is very important. See *Speaker Handout for research data*.

Professional leadership is less than 15% female and that doesn't suit men or women well – the pressure for either parent being the sole financial provider is extreme. Having more women in the work force is actually good for men and women alike.

Steps to align men's and women's desires:

- 1) Change the talk – open frontiers for our kids
- 2) Re-think time – cut waste, cut guilt
- 3) Take control – focus on the things you value, not balance
- 4) Find common ground – stop propagating Mars vs. Venus (as the differences between men and women are small and changeable) and focus on common values

More time at work does not mean better work. Switching off from work restores production levels, refreshes the mind and ultimately leads to better communication.

Aim high. Dare to do things differently. Limit time in meetings and use written agendas. Use “study halls” – quiet time with devices off.

Dads make a difference in the lives of their kids. Involved dads are a top predictor of better grades and behavior. In the U.S., only 27% of married dads participate in their children's

activities but studies show that divorced dads spend as much time with the kids as their moms do. And divorce rates are 50% less in families where the parents share equal roles.

There is no evidence that working harms children and instead offers vision of possibilities to children. Get rid of the guilt for both parents.

Do away with the notion of the household CEO. End the chore wars and drop the idea that women know how to run the household better. Most women need to relax their standards - men just do it differently.

Studies show that highest satisfaction rates are those parents who work approximately 50 hours a week AND are home for dinner. So, share the work!