The New Dad:
Caring, Committed and Conflicted

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Outline of Today’s Session

- Introduction, changes in working families
- Our sample and study participants
- The self-fulfilling gender role dilemma
- Fathers as caregivers
- The intersection of work and family
- Recommendations
  - For Employers
  - For Fathers
The Old Stereotype of Fathers

“Look, it’s silly for you to come home from work miserable every day. Why don’t you just stay there?”
Changes in gender role & families…

- In US, women earn: 62% of associates, 57% of bachelors, and 60% of masters degrees
- 75% of married couples with children under 15 are dual-career couples. In those, 25% of time, the woman earns more than her spouse (BLS)
- Women in dual-earner couples contributed 44% of family income, up from 39% in 1997 (NSCW, 2008)
- Of 15 the jobs with largest projected growth rate in next decade, 12 are “women roles”
- During recession, men experienced $\frac{3}{4}$ losses in the US (6 of 8 million jobs)
Men feel more w-f conflict than women

Background of our study

- 2009: Center for Work & Family conducted a qualitative study of 33 fathers
- First-time fathers, children’s age ~11 months
- All were college grads with 5+ years professional experience, nearly half had masters degrees
- Became *The New Dad (2010)* which garnered tremendous media attention
- We wanted to increase our sample and broaden the research to more fathers
- We also wanted to better understand and quantify what was happening
Descriptors of our sample

- 963 respondents, 4 large companies, national sample
- “White collar” group: 60% were managers, 37% salaried workers, 3% were paid hourly
- Virtually all work full-time and well educated:
  - 87% held at least an Associates-level degree, 77% at least bachelor’s, 35% master’s degree or more.
- 76% earned more than $75,000, 44% over $100,000.
- 87% were married or living with partner, 69% worked
- Average age: 42.6, range from 25-65.
- 81% White, 7% Black, 5% Hispanic, 4% Asian, 1% NA
Career Aspirations

I have sought opportunities to gain knowledge of a variety of functional

I have asked to work on challenging assignments

I have participated in networking opportunities within my organization

I wish to advance to a position with greater responsibility

I would like to be in a position where I can have greater influence on policy

I have a strong desire to advance to a position in senior management

Percentage

- % Agree
- % Strongly Agree
Top ten reasons fathers value a job …

1. Provides job security (4.29)
2. Gives me a sense of accomplishment (4.11)
3. Is interesting (4.07)
4. Allows flexible work arrangements (3.99)
5. Provides opportunities for advancement (3.7)
6. Provides high income (3.65)
7. Allows me to work independently (3.62)
8. That it is beneficial to society (3.28)
9. Allows a lot of leisure time (2.79)
10. Sorry, we only had 9 criteria
The self-fulfilling gender roles

- We looked only through the lens / perspective of fathers (i.e. men) in our study
- But we could easily identify a trend occurring that reinforced gender role stereotypes
- May not reflect the attitudes of fathers
- But you can easily see how roles are reinforced
  - Educational levels
  - Leave taking
  - Work patterns
  - Income levels
Comparison of Education Levels

- Some high school
- High school diploma or equivalent
- Some college
- Two-year college degree
- Four-year college degree
- Master’s degree
- Doctoral degree

- % of Fathers
- % of Spouses/Partners
By contrast, most professional mothers take 2-6 months leave.
Comparison of Workweeks

- Less than 20 hours
- 20-34 hours
- 35-45 hours
- 46-55 hours
- More than 55 hours

- % of Fathers
- % of Spouses/Partners
Comparison of income levels
What about fathers intentions?

- From outset, bias is woman is primary caregiver
- That said, how do fathers feel about their role to caregiving and their commitment to it?
- Average hours spent with kids on workday: 2.65
- 77% said like to spend more time with children, 22% satisfied, 1% said less (the last honest men?)
- 86% agreed that “My children are the number one priority in my life
- And few saw “Breadwinner” as the most important role
How Father’s see their role

- Earning money to meet my child's financial needs.
- Mostly earning money to meet my child's financial needs, but also providing some physical/emotional care for him/her.
- Both caring for my child and earning money to meet his/her financial needs.
- Mostly caring for my child, but also earning some money to meet his/her financial needs.
- Physically/emotionally caring for my child.

Percentage

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What Makes a Good Father?

- Provide love and emotional support
- Be involved and present in your child's life
- Be a teacher, guide and coach
- Provide discipline
- Provide financial security
- Do your part in the day-to-day childcare tasks

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How should / is care giving divided?

![Bar chart showing percentage of responses to the question of how care giving should be divided. The chart includes options for 'Father sole caregiver', 'Father provides more care', 'Both provide equal amounts', and 'Spouse provides more care'. The chart also indicates whether respondents believe it should be divided in the way it currently is (Is) or how it should be (Should be).]
Being stay-at-home Dad a possibility?

- In our qualitative study (2010) many fathers said that being a stay-at-home dad was a possibility they had considered however …
- … only 2 of 33 fathers saw it as realistic option
- For most, finances was major stumbling block, but many said it was difficult to see themselves in that role or accept how others might perceive them as stay-at-home fathers.
- So we tentatively concluded most fathers felt like this guy ….
“Of course I want to have kids, Claire—just not all the time.”
But perhaps we were wrong ....

- According to our new study:
  - 2/3 of the fathers said agreed with the statement “To me, work is only a small part of who I am.”
  - Only 16% supported the statement that “Most of my interests are centered on work.” And ....
  - 53% agreed that: “If my spouse made enough money for our family to live on comfortably, I would feel okay if I didn’t work outside the home.”
  - …which they picture as ...
Becoming a father, a winner at work …

- New fathers receive universally positive workplace feedback regarding their career after becoming a parent (more mature, more credible, etc.)
  - 91% said peers welcomed them back
  - 87% said managers welcomed them back
  - 89% said supervisor supports them when they have a family problem

- Research suggests women receive much more mixed messages (Ladge) and are perceived as committed, less promotable, even less competent when they become mothers (Correll at. al.)
But why wouldn’t it be?

- Organizations are not confronted with real change for their fathers after children
  - 96% of fathers said managers expect the same, 1% lower, 3% higher
  - 99% worked full-time after the birth
  - Only 4% took > two weeks off & only 1% took > four weeks
- And while many used flex, few struck a formal arrangement
Fathers flex, but not formally
Conflict and Enrichment

WORK

CONFLICT
(Negative Impact)

ENRICHMENT
(Positive Impact)

FAMILY
Conflict flows more from work to family

Work conflicts with family more than vice versa:

- 29% interrupt time with family quite / very often to handle work issues
- <7% interrupt time at work quite / very often to handle family issues
- Example: Interruptions, children or managers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Never</th>
<th>Rarely</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Quite Often</th>
<th>Very Often</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How often do you interrupt your time with your children to address work-related issues?</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How often do you interrupt time with your manager or supervisor to address family-related issues?</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>0.1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
However enrichment is also occurring

- 60% agreed/strongly agreed that work provides them with a sense of success and this helps them be a better family member
- 64% agreed/strongly agreed that involvement in their family helps them gain knowledge that makes them a better worker
- 82% agreed/strongly agreed that family life makes them feel happy and that helps them be a better worker; only 29% felt that happiness at work transferred over to family
Importance of spouse supportiveness

- The more supportive spouse is of father’s work, the higher his job & career satisfaction
- Also lower w-f conflict & greater w-f enrichment
  - 80% said spouse contributes to their career
  - 92% said their spouse acknowledged their obligations as a worker
  - 79% said their spouse willingly takes on more responsibility at home when they are required to travel for business
  - 75% stated that their spouse is supportive when they take on challenging projects at work.
Importance of a supportive workplace

Supportive Environment
- Family Supportive Culture
- Manager Supportiveness
- Co-worker Supportiveness

Improved Work to Family Alignment
- Lower Work-to-Family Conflict
- Higher Work-to-Family Enrichment

More Satisfied Employees
- Higher Job Satisfaction
- Higher Career Satisfaction
- Lower Job Withdrawal Intentions
Recommendations for employers

- Fully embrace flexible work arrangements but focus on informal is critical
- Get to know your Dad’s and their needs
- Recognize father’s caregiving role and strongly consider offering paternity leave
- Give Dad’s place and permission to talk
- Ensure not only policies but all work-life initiatives reflect no gender bias
Recommendations for fathers

- Examine your caregiving goals in light of your career goals: *Myth of having it all?*
- Consider taking more time off after the birth of your children, if not immediately over long term
  - Consider reduced work hours
  - Formal flexible arrangements
- Support your fellow fathers who want to provide shared caregiving
- Help to create workplace cultures support working fathers
Maybe this is changing, we’ll see …

“I love you too, Daddy, but it just kills me that you’re a man.”