

From: P P [mailto: [REDACTED]]  
Sent: Thursday, 10 February 2005 2:52 AM  
To: tonydelroy@your.abc.net.au  
Subject: Work-Life balance - it is such a scam!

Tony Delroy  
ABC Radio  
CC: Sex Discrimination Commission

Good evening Tony,

I just missed being able to talk on your slot, but it was very interesting, intelligent and fun.

I'm one of the few lucky fathers, who has a work life balance. I'm a part-time parent, I work 3 days a week and my daughter's mother also works a three day week as well. It is such a scam, I love it!

It is best for me, best for my daughter and best for mum too. I feel sorry for all the men who rang up your show, married or divorced, because they almost all had one thing in common... the all missed out on time with their children. Why is the debate about work-life balance framed from mother's perspective? What about fathers? Fathers nearly always work full-time plus overtime to pay for it all, and if you ask them, nearly all fathers wish they had the choice to spend more time with their children.

For most people becoming a mother gives a woman three choices, 'stay-at-home, work part-time, or return to their careers. But fathers feel that fatherhood robs them of choices... after all, they feel responsible to 'be a good dad' and, that usually means to be the primary breadwinner. So most fathers feel that their three choices are work extra long hours, work extra long or work extra long hours.

I want to encourage men to ask for "sharing the load" and also "sharing the fun" too! Spending time with my young daughter is great! No father should miss out on this time.

As you saw recently in Dr Leslie Carnold's research, our low birth-rates are due to men not-committing to have children. Why don't men commit? Because it is hard work, and takes their income, their choices and their quality of life away from them. Australian fathers on average work 47 hours a week to pay the bills. Half of fathers work over 50 hours a week\*. And fathers don't like it. Over two thirds of fathers wish they had the time to spend more time with their children.\*

The other thing that stops men committing to have children is the very real fear of divorce. While women talk about "having it all", Australian men as frightened of "losing it all". For most fathers, divorce means they loose their children, but they

still have to pay for everything throught "Child" Support. With the majority of marriages failing, men are realistic, they are scared to commit.

Things used to be different. At home I have an old washboard, that some mother scrubbed the family's clothes with in the days before washing machines. You can picture it, a plank of wood with ridges that the clothes were rubbed against after boiling them in the copper. The wash-board I have is worn out. The ridges are worn flat through years of scrubbing. Every time I see it I'm reminded of how hard it once was to be a home-maker. Today smaller families, milk formula, disposable nappies, prepared food, washing machines and so on, I find that looking after my daughter is a doddle. It's not work, it's fun. And I'm doing it half my life. Yeas I get woken at 6am, but I get four naps a day to compensate, if I need them.

But work for money is just as competitive and hard as it ever was.

Being a breadwinner-father is hard for most men. I am always so thankfull that I am one of the lucky few fathers who has a work/life/parenting balance.

Phil Jones [REDACTED]

\* Fitting Fathers into Families

A report for the Commonwealth Department of Family and Community Services  
January 1999

(if you want I can emial you the research findings, or you can find it on the Dept web-site.

Also

<http://www.theage.com.au/articles/2003/07/28/1059244556494.html>