

TALES FROM THE FRONT

Stay-at-home wives and their position

Do men lose respect for their stay-at-home wives? If women aren't out there in the workplace, do men secretly think these women are home eating bonbons and watching soaps? Do men feel that stay-at-home wives are lesser women? Lesser partners? We've heard from women who say yes. We've heard from women who say no. Today we hear from men ...



**CHERYL
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Ryan: "As the husband of a full-time Household Logistics and Operations Coordinator (a.k.a. housewife), I fully believe that my wife's work at home is far more difficult than mine, which is Bringing Home the Bacon. I admire her ability to balance 14 different things at once. Granted, some of her days are very chaotic, such as when she tries to do laundry, change diapers, kiss ouches, cook food, clean house, homeschool, tend garden, answer phone, etc., etc. It's no wonder that she's tired at night and wants to go to sleep!

"I think that we all need to step back from our own 'me-first' attitude and really look at what our marriage partner-for-life does for us and truly thank them for it. And that includes scrubbing the toilet! Another thought to consider: When two horses are hitched

together as a team to pull a wagon, one horse takes on the role of the lead horse and the other horse becomes the follow horse. Now, in pulling the wagon which horse does the most work? Neither. The work is equal between the two. It's just that their roles are different. Just like a husband and wife. We're hitched together, but our roles in the marriage are different."

Rich: "Several years ago, I married a wonderful woman: smart, athletic and my best friend. We both had college degrees from a large, well-known university. We got married two weeks after graduation, on my birthday. We immediately moved to the Chicago area and both had successful careers.

"When it came time to have children, my wife decided that she wanted to be a stay-at-home mom. We both felt that the decision was best for our family. From that point forward, my respect for her has only grown enormously. She has made a sacrifice because she doesn't get much appreciation in this stage of her life. She doesn't get the salary or the social life that comes with working, or the acceptance of society. However, the rewards are countless, if not very obvi-

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ous. They're the little things. Like raising our own children herself. Being able to volunteer at our schools. Having the time to take on responsibilities in community activities.

"I respect my stay-at-home wife because she gives more to others than to herself. We have found that the easy way out would have been to follow society's trend and have a career outside the home, where recognition is easy to come by. I have honestly heard from many women who work because they cannot handle the stay-at-home responsibilities, which require sacrifice, organizational and time-management skills, and patience. I have grown to deeply respect women who have chosen the more difficult path. But then again, challenge is what life is all about."

Were your children born out of wedlock? Do you think there's a stigma for children who were born out of wedlock? Send your tale to Cheryl Lavin, Tales From the Front, Chicago Tribune, 435 N. Michigan Ave., Chicago, IL 60611.