

BROOKLYN_BORN

[Change Banner Image](#)**154,981**
SparkPoints[Info](#)[Photos](#)[Feed](#)[Blogs](#)[Awards](#)[More](#)

Advice from my mother (1922-2011)

Wednesday, March 13, 2013

"Have something to put on that resume every year. People say they value the work of housewives and mothers, but employers forget that when you apply for a job."

Obviously, I'm paraphrasing. It was 1957 and it's unlikely I can remember Mom's words exactly. She quit her job when Dad returned from WWII to be a wife and mother. So she had been out of the job market for about 12 years. Although she had done "home typing" while a SAHM (an acronym she wouldn't understand), and her typing skills were as good as ever, she wasn't finding it easy to return to the business world. Interviewers found it easy to dismiss her experience as not recent enough.

Usually I write about the changes in attitudes toward women's fitness. However, since March is Women's History Month, I've been thinking more about the general changes that have occurred. What some study as history now, I think of as my life. I may not have been there during the struggle for the vote, but I grew up knowing and listening to women who were there.

The fire in the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory in NYC isn't some paragraph in a history book to me, but conversations I remember among the seamstress women in my neighborhood, some of whom were eyewitnesses.

I did take my mother's words to heart. Although I married young (almost 20), I did have a college degree, a teaching license and a job teaching math. As the babies came along, I stayed home like Mom did, but took a grad course each semester. It took 5 years to get a Masters Degree, but now that resume could list Graduate School – perfectly acceptable in the academic world. During the next 5 years another mother and I each worked one day a week and watched each other's children, who were friends anyway. Ah, but the resume showed "Substitute Teaching" and no one ever asked how many days I had actually worked.

I know a lot of things have changed for women, but I passed on the same advice to my daughters, one who was a SAHM for awhile with part time work to follow and one who returned to her full time engineering job after short maternity leaves. Since I clearly see both choices as valid, it saddens me to read of the antagonism that sometimes exists between women choosing different paths.

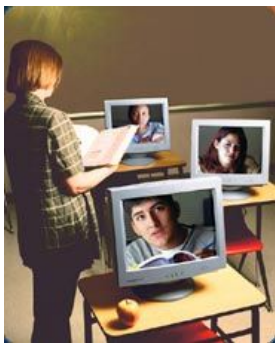
It's about having choices and maintaining the ability to support yourself should the situation arise. Today with the availability of online education and some degree of "work from home" flexibility, I hope women will take advantage of any opportunity.

This is a cover photo from Education Week magazine. It's about 10 years old. That's me holding the textbook, my one shot at being a "cover girl." Some may say it's my best side. I'm proud of the strides we've made.

[Add a Blog Entry](#)[See Today's Featured Member Blog Posts](#)

More Blogs by BROOKLYN_BORN

[Now I can add one more event to my "Anniversary Dates" to forget - 6/7/2021](#)[Avoiding Our Wedding Anniversary - 6/4/2021](#)[Multitasking for Safety – Plus Remembrance and Reflection - 6/1/2021](#)[Taps Across America – The National Moment of Remembrance - Monday 5/31/21 3PM - 5/30/2021](#)[View All >](#)



I want to thank Celiaminer whose comment yesterday prompted my blog entry today. Celia said, "My mother's advice was, "Never let yourself be dependent on a man."

More information about this landmark tragedy - Triangle Shirtwaist Fire:

www.ilr.cornell.edu/tria

nglefire/victimsWitnesses/

victimsList.html

www.csun.edu/~ghy7463/mw

[2.html](#)

For the record: I remember the pay rate for "home typing." Mom received \$3 for each 1,000 envelopes completed. She would do 3,000 to 5,000 every week. She eventually did find a job on one of those new "keypunch" machines and graduated to mainframe terminals. She worked until her retirement at age 65

[Edit Blog Entry](#) | [Delete Blog Entry](#)

Share This Post With Others

[Report Inappropriate Blog](#)

Member Comments About This Blog Post



JAHINTZY

That was certainly great advice from your mom... advice that I'm tucking away into my own memory now :)



I have read into the triangle fire in the past, and I can't even fathom just knowing people who witnessed it, let alone having actually been there.
3007 days ago



LIBBYL1

Your mother sounds amazing.... you should write a book to bring back the words and conversations you remember from the Triangle fire and people like your mother...Inspirational.
3013 days ago



CD6329775

Awesome blog.... thanks so much for sharing.
"Never let yourself be dependent on a man."
Financial independence makes loving someone "truer."
3014 days ago



COCK-ROBIN

Wonderful!
3014 days ago



DONNA5281

AWESOME THANK YOU! for sharing!
3014 days ago



DRB13_1

I knew OF the Triangle Fire but had not learned much about it. Thank you for sharing.
It's important that workers' rights and safety be protected.
3014 days ago





DEBBY4576



Hey, I have a daughter with her Master's. She's a Geo Tech, Geological Engineer from U W (Seattle). And she had children in the last 2 years. She is a SAHM, but is doing private tutoring a few nights a week. I see her choice as valid too. I was a SAHM for 13 years. Whether you become non dependant on a man by college right after high school, or at some other point in your life, it is very necessary to a women's well being. We are not responsible for another's happiness, just our own.

3014 days ago



SUNSET09



My mom told me the same thing as my dad supported it as well. I was not a stay at home mom, however, wanted my mom to be there during the times we were not in school. They taught us to be self-sufficient because no matter how you look at it, it is a man's world. We can rise above the stereotypes and become the professional women we are. Even though you're a SAHM, does not mean you're sitting there cooking, knitting and watching T.V. The resume classes suggest you put these skills there however, there is so much competition out there. My plan was not to go from father to husband and then, be out there with little means of support! They pushed us in getting our education and learning household skills if we choose to not marry. I am truly thankful for the example my parents provided for me and share these with my daughter. Good advice even if it's



taking a typing class.

3015 days ago



CD11026554



Another thought provoking blog - thank you. I love hearing about recent social history from people who have experienced it. My grandparents shared many interesting stories, I'm only sorry they passed before I was old enough to interrogate them properly! And I wholeheartedly agree when you say "it's all about choice".....

3015 days ago



DR1939



My mother was not my inspiration, my grandmothers were. Although my paternal grandmother was SAHM and dropped out of school in the 3rd grade. Following the death of her 3-year-old son in the flu epidemic she moved herself and her children to another state and completed a college degree. She remained married, he visited on weekends, and she returned home following the completion of her degree. She was the wife of the owner of the Tin Factory in a very small town, in other words, she was the queen of the village. They lost everything during the depression but she never lost the sense of herself. From when I can remember she served as an election judge. She never worked outside the home but she never told me I shouldn't. My maternal grandmother also lost a son in the flu epidemic. She handled it very differently. My maternal grandfather was an alcoholic and spent the small income he made on drink. Luckily he was not abusive, either mentally nor physically. However, this meant my grandmother must work and she had very little education. She worked as a caregiver to older adults. I've always wondered how she survived with 8 children. She always had a huge garden. What they gave me was a sense that women were something special and were capable of handling good times and bad. They also loved me unconditionally. It didn't hurt that both women were very smart as well as very capable. I don't mean to dismiss my mother's influence nor to see as her less because she was the prototypical stay-at-home mom. She always backed me up on what I wanted. And I failed to mention my great-grandmother who was an itinerant preacher in the late 1800s. She was a story for another time.

There is a small team that focuses on women's issues. It is not very active but for those who are interested it is This is What A Feminist Looks Like. We would welcome your input.

3015 days ago



CD8467616



I really love your blogs!

Women's eyes were really opened after WWII. The trouble was, after the war years came the fifties, where women were stuck back at home wearing girdles and cinch belts and petticoats and pointy bras. Don't get me started!

I was a single mom in the 70s, but I was fortunate in having \$500/month from my parents, which paid the rent, food, and utilities. Still, I started working part-time as a music teacher. When my daughter started school, I kept working part-time and went to grad school. I felt very committed to parenting and I'm very glad my daughter chose a similar route when she became a parent. She has been raising her two kids while working as a part-time reporter, with no babysitters ever. She is married so she also has the financial essentials covered. We both managed to stay home with our kids and keep our hands in the working world, and I truly believe that's the way to go. However, I have lots of concern and empathy for women who don't have that financial cushion and must earn the rent money. They deserve our help and their kids deserve high-quality daycare. On the flip side, I have strong reservations about partnered career women with high-pressure, long-hour jobs who rationalize their choice to have a full-time nanny. What I hear is "The nanny is so wonderful!" and that may very well be, but does the nanny have your values, your understanding? What happens when she leaves? Where does that leave the child? If the nanny is with your kids 80% of the time and you are with your kids 20% of the time, who really has the most impact on their feelings and attitudes?

Oops, I just ranted. Sorry. It's just that your blogs always get me thinking!!! :)

3015 days ago

GINIEMIE



I was a SAHM also, for about 13 years. Then I found a job as lunchroom monitor at an elementary school in FL. It help me earn money to go see my family in Belgium. Helped me feel



more independent and get back into college to finish my degree. Actually I virtually had to start over again as 18 years was a long time to be out of an education program. I earned my way through college subbing, after the first year which Steve paid for because in FL you had to have an associates degree or equivalent to sub.

My mom was a teacher in Belgium, but when she came stateside her English wasn't good enough, so she sewed. She was an excellent seamstress, but warned her six daughters to gain marketable skills. After I got married, she became a "Head-start teacher" (pre-school) for about six or eight years, when she lost her job to reverse discrimination. She had found another job after that, but it wasn't working with children, which was what she loved.

Thanks for the flashbacks my friend. I'm enjoying these blogs during this month.



3015 days ago



SUZYMOBILE

Another SparkFriend and I were talking last night about blogging, and how we blog when we feel we have something to say and feel "inspired." The fact that you blog every single day (not counting sick time, of course) and ALWAYS find something interesting to say is truly inspirational!

The Ed Week issue must've been about the online classroom, no? Good cover!

And when I was working on our history list, we published a small volume on the Triangle Fire, with an interior design that typeset extracts like newspaper clippings. I'd send you a copy, but I'm afraid it's out of print.

http://www.cengage.com/search/productOverview.do?Ntt=233667685467266281334876609880434599&N=16+4294922390+4294967268+4294967083+4294921235&Ntk=P_EPI
3015 days ago



CELIAMINER

Thanks for the plug AND for sharing how your mom shaped you into the wise, wacky, wonderful woman you are today!
3015 days ago



WATERMELLEN

Super blog, super advice: and how great that you took it and made it work. I too was a SAHM for some 12 years (between gigs teaching college and now practising law) and I too did some "strategic planning" and some "marketing consulting" while at home!!
3015 days ago



KELLIEBEAN

Hey covergirl!



Great advice! You mom mom was a wise woman and raised a wise daughter!

I never understood the notion of looking down on other women when they choose to stay home with their kids or work full time or breast feed or not breast feed. It's a wonderful world when everyone has the freedom to make the choices that work for them!

I heard a snippet of Helen Reddy on the radio the other day. I've been in "powerful woman" mode for a couple days! She's appearing in my area tonight. I wish I could go!



3015 days ago



MISCHAKEO

Great advice from your mom. I also raised all of my children to be marketable and support themselves in a job. I have been a SAHM and also worked in a job. It was hard getting a job again while out of the field.



Interesting blog.
3015 days ago



CD13724954

Truly "Mothers Know Best"
3015 days ago

Add Your Comment to the Blog Post

Leave encouragement, a question, or anything else relevant to this post. All blog comments must abide by SparkPeople's [Community Guidelines](#).

Subscribe to this blog

ADD AN EMOTICON

SPELL CHECK

Post Comment

Disclaimer: Weight loss results will vary from person to person. No individual result should be seen as a typical result of following the SparkPeople program.