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Pepperdine University  
Graduate School of Education and Psychology

WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP: STRATEGIES FOR WORK-LIFE BALANCE

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the degree of  
Doctor of Educational in Organizational Leadership

by

Kerri Heath

July, 2012

Margaret Weber, Ph.D. - Dissertation Chairperson

This dissertation, written by

Kerri Cissna-Heath

under the guidance of a Faculty Committee and approved by its members, has been submitted to and accepted by the Graduate Faculty in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

Doctoral Committee:

Margaret Weber, Ph.D., Chairperson

Maire Mullins, Ph.D.

Judge John Tobin, J.D

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
LIST OF TABLES .....	vii
LIST OF FIGURES .....	viii
DEDICATION .....	ix
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS .....	x
VITA .....	xi
ABSTRACT .....	xvi
Chapter 1: Introduction of the Study .....	1
Introduction .....	1
Background of Problem .....	5
Statement of the Problem .....	7
Statement of the Purpose .....	9
Recent Statistics on Women in the Workplace .....	10
Research Questions .....	12
Significance of Topic .....	12
Key Definitions .....	14
Key Assumptions .....	16
Summary .....	17
Chapter 2: Review of the Literature .....	18
Historical Background .....	18
Agricultural era .....	18
Women's suffrage .....	19
Industrial era .....	20
Women's liberation .....	21
The new millennium .....	24
Contemporary American women .....	31
Benefits of women in the workplace .....	31
Work/family conflict .....	35
Coping strategies .....	36
Strategies for work/life balance .....	39
Professional strategies .....	49
Personal strategies .....	53
Political strategies .....	57

	Page
Theoretical Framework.....	60
Reactive coping strategies.....	61
Proactive coping strategies .....	62
Summary.....	63
 Chapter 3: Methodology .....	 65
Research Questions.....	65
Research Methodology .....	66
Selection of Data Sources .....	68
Instrument .....	70
Validity and Reliability of Data.....	74
Interviews.....	77
Proposed Data Analysis .....	79
IRB Process.....	80
Summary.....	81
 Chapter 4: Data Analysis and Findings .....	 83
Introduction.....	83
Data Collection Procedures.....	84
Selection Criteria .....	85
Population Descriptions .....	86
Interviews.....	88
Data Analysis.....	91
Findings.....	92
Find meaningful work.....	99
Obtain a mentor.....	100
Work hard .....	102
Prioritize.....	103
Increase confidence.....	104
Faith .....	106
Organizations outside of work .....	107
Support system.....	107
Work-life balance philosophy.....	110
Intentional parenting .....	113
Self-care, play hard, hobbies.....	116
Work strategies .....	118
Proximity of work to home/school .....	120
Technology .....	121
Break from work.....	122
Integrate/segregate work and family.....	124
Manage emotions.....	126
Additional Findings .....	128

	Page
Proactive strategies .....	129
Reactive strategies .....	130
Summary .....	131
Chapter 5: Conclusions .....	132
Overview/Summary of the Study.....	133
Findings Related to the Research Questions.....	134
Demographics .....	135
Findings.....	135
Other Findings .....	136
Implications, Comparisons, and Contrasts.....	138
Limitations of the Study.....	144
Recommendations for Future Research .....	145
Conclusion .....	146
REFERENCES .....	148
APPENDIX A: Common Reservations about Hiring/Promoting Women .....	159
APPENDIX B: Interview Protocol .....	160
APPENDIX C: Informed Consent .....	161
APPENDIX D: Demographical Information .....	163
APPENDIX E: Interview Questions .....	164
APPENDIX F: EDOL Course Integration .....	167
APPENDIX G: IRB Approval .....	174

## LIST OF TABLES

	Page
Table 1. Population Demographics .....	89
Table 2. Source Summary .....	93
Table 3. Strategies for Work-Life Balance .....	94
Table 4. Themes of Strategies for Work-Life Balance .....	97
Table 5. Break-down of Prioritizing Strategy .....	105
Table 6. Framework for Work-Life Balance .....	110
Table 7. Proactive Strategies .....	130
Table 8. Reactive Strategies .....	131
Table 9. Strategies for Work-Life Balance .....	136
Table 10. Proactive Strategies for Work-Life Balance .....	137
Table 11. Reactive Strategies for Work-Life Balance .....	138



LIST OF FIGURES

Page

Figure 1. Data analysis .....80

## DEDICATION

“Well-behaved women seldom make history.”

-Laurel Thatcher Ulrich

This work is dedicated to the working women who invested in my growth and development while pursuing their own dreams and passions. Their examples instill in me a drive to succeed without fear or limitation. My mother, Rev. Dr. Connie Cissna, worked tirelessly as a leader, wife and mother and continues to fight for gender equality. My sister, Ada Pollock, was a consistent role model and support for me and now models great leadership and work-life balance to her daughter, Dorothy Sharon. My Grandma, Barbara Rambo, who was a trailblazing entrepreneur while raising seven children and taught me that life is a party to be enjoyed. And my sisters-in-law, Whitney Dickinson and Tara Heath: who are strong, passionate working mothers with an uncompromising drive to succeed at both roles.

I thank my father, Charles W. Cissna, for his constant support and encouragement and for instilling his feminist ideology in my life early on. I have never felt inferior because of my gender as a result of your faith in me. I thank my father-in-law and mother-in-law, Butch and Jan Heath, for being a strong support and modeling great parenting. And to the biggest feminist I know, my husband, Zac Heath. I am so thankful to have a true partner who believes in the unyielding passionate pursuit of dreams and calling (and annual honeymoons).

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I first want to thank God for the breath of life. I am grateful for the privilege and opportunity to pursue higher education and for all of the people who have made this journey possible.

To my dissertation committee members:

Dr. Margaret Weber, my chair, you have been a strong and empowering mentor. I sincerely could not have done this without your guidance and constant support. You have epitomized the work-life balance that this study is about.

Dr. Maire Mullins, you are a true inspiration and role model for all the women you encounter. I am so grateful that you took the time out of your busy schedule at work and as a mom to support me in this endeavor.

Dr. Judge Tobin, the world needs more men like you. I am so thankful for your thoughts and suggestions along this journey. Thanks for believing in the women who surround you.

To all my professors in the EDOL program, thank you for your patience and constant inspiration. Thank you to every student in my EDOL classes who worked with me on presentations, papers, the consultancy project and more. Your support and encouragement got me through many challenging moments.

And a final thanks to the women who shared their lives and stories with us for this research project. The strategies you shared are one of the many ways you are making a difference in the lives of women who follow you.

## VITA

Kerri Cissna-Heath

*Academic Background*


---

<b>Doctorate of Education in Organizational Leadership</b> Pepperdine University, Malibu, CA	<b>May 2012</b>
<b>Masters of Education in College Student Affairs</b> Azusa Pacific University, Azusa, CA	<b>May 2003</b>
<b>Bachelor of Arts in Religion, Minor in Leadership</b> Warner Pacific College, Portland, OR	<b>May 2001</b>

*Professional Positions***Pepperdine University 2006 - Present**

<b>Director- Residence Life</b> Pepperdine University, Malibu, CA	<b>May 2011 – Present</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Supervise 11 professional staff, 115 paraprofessional staff</li> <li>•Manage daily operations and multi-million dollar budget</li> <li>•Lead emergency response team training and recruitment</li> </ul>	
<b>Director- Housing &amp; Residence Life</b> Pepperdine University, Malibu, CA	<b>May 2010– May 2011</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Supervise 15 professional staff, 115 student staff</li> <li>•Manage multi-million dollar budget</li> <li>•Supervise Daily Housing Operations and all Residence Life programs</li> </ul>	
<b>Interim Director- Housing &amp; Residence Life</b> Pepperdine University, Malibu, CA	<b>July 2009– May 2010</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Supervise 15 professional staff, 115 student staff</li> <li>•Manage multi-million dollar budget</li> <li>•Supervise Daily Housing Operations and all Residence Life programs</li> </ul>	
<b>Associate Director- Housing &amp; Residence Life</b> Pepperdine University, Malibu, CA	<b>May – July 2009</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Supervise 7 professional staff, 115 student staff</li> <li>•Manage budget, monthly reporting, selection &amp; training</li> <li>•Serve on emergency response team</li> </ul>	
<b>Student Leadership Development Coordinator- Student Activities</b> Pepperdine University, Malibu, CA	<b>July 2006 – May 2009</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Advise and guide Student Government Association</li> <li>•Coordinate campus wide Leadership Education and Development programming</li> <li>•Organized the first Student Leadership Conference and Project L.E.A.D.</li> </ul>	
<b>Resident Director of Graduate Housing- Community Living</b> Pepperdine University, Malibu, CA	<b>July 2007 – May 2009</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Guide graduate resident advisors</li> <li>•Manage graduate housing</li> <li>•Plan monthly community builders and educational programs</li> </ul>	

**Interim Director- Intercultural Affairs Office** **October – July 2007**  
Pepperdine University, Malibu, CA

- Advise student staff interns and cultural clubs on campus
- Create campus wide initiatives to develop intercultural competency
- Implemented the Diversity Summit Retreat, and Monthly Leadership workshops

**Asbury College 2006 - 2009**

**Resident Director- Office of Leadership Development** **July 2003- July 2006**  
Asbury College, Wilmore, KY

- Manage Apartment Complex of 150 student leaders, & Theme Housing Projects
- Manage Budget and Respond to emergencies
- Teach Leadership workshops, and coordinate service projects

**Azusa Pacific University 2001 - 2003**

**Assistant Residence Director, Office of Residence Life** **July 2001 - May 2003**  
Azusa Pacific University, Azusa, CA

- Supervised On-Campus Housing (250-300 juniors and seniors)
- Assisted with leadership development, community building projects, judicial procedures
- Worked on Resident Assistant Training programs, and Hiring committee

**Other Work Experience**

**Youth Minister** **August 2000 – May 2001**  
Lynchwood Church of God, Gresham, Oregon

- \*Taught weekly bible study with 30 middle school and high school students
- \*Organized weekend activities
- \*Planned retreats, camps and overnight excursions

Teaching Experience

---

General Education 100: Introduction to College, Asbury College  
First Year Seminar: Exploring Leadership, Pepperdine University  
COM 292: Communication & Leadership Pepperdine University

Volunteer Experience

---

Advocate, Compassion International  
Boys and Girls Club  
Mentor for Emancipated Foster Youth, HerShe Organization  
Project Team Leader to Barbados, Azusa Pacific University  
Project Team Leader to Mexico, Azusa Pacific University  
Youth Ministry Volunteer, Nicholasville United Methodist Church  
Youth Ministry Volunteer, Vancouver Church of God  
Youth Ministry Volunteer, Lynchwood Church of God  
Volunteer, Haiti Outreach Ministries

Professional Associations & Leadership

---

Association of College and University Housing Officers International (ACUHO-I)  
American College Personnel Association (ACPA)  
Association for Christians in Student Development (ACSD)

College Personnel Association of Kentucky (CPAK)  
 National Association of Student Personnel Associates (NASPA)  
 National Association of Professional Women (NAPW)  
 Western Association of Colleges and University Housing Officers (WACUHO)  
 Host Committee Member, WACUHO 2009

#### Presentations

---

Heath, K. & Troyer, M. (June, 2005). Living and Learning Communities: Lessons Learned. Association of Christians in Student Development Conference. George Fox University, Newberg, Oregon.

Heath, K. (2006). The Balancing Act of the Working Parent. College Personnel Association of Kentucky Conference. Lexington, Kentucky.

Heath, K. (2006). Living and Learning Communities: Lessons Learned. American College Personnel Association Conference. Indianapolis, Indiana.

Heath, K. & Dulgokecki, J. (2007). The EVE Project: Addressing Sexual Violence on your campus. Association of Christians in Student Development. Minneapolis, Minnesota.

Heath, K. & Lundberg, C. (2008). New and Included: Thriving in the First Professional Position. American College Personnel Association Conference. Orlando, Florida.

Heath, K. & Collins, Christopher (2009). Finding Your True North. California College Personnel Association. California State Berkeley University, California.

Heath, K. & Gamboa, Sue. (2009). Creating a Graduate Community. Western Association of College and University Housing Officers. University of Santa Barbara, California.

Heath, K. & Lessly, M. (2009). Think Cheap: Professional Development on a Budget. Western Association of College and University Housing Officers. University of California Santa Barbara, California.

Heath, K. & Johnson, Rachel (2009). The EVE Project: Addressing Sexual Violence on your campus. National Collegiate Leadership Conference. University of Tucson, Arizona.

Heath, K. & Lessly, Michelle (2009). Finding Your True North. National Collegiate Leadership Conference. University of Tucson, Arizona.

Heath, K. & Stanfield, Hunter (2009). Students Mentoring Students. National Collegiate Leadership Conference. University of Tucson, Arizona.

Heath, K. (2009). The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People. L.E.A.D. Conference. Pepperdine University, Malibu, California.

Heath, K. & Lessly, M. (2010). Teaching Student Leaders how to use their Moral Compass. Western Association of College and University Housing Officers. Stanford University, California.

Heath, K. & Thomas, M. (2010). A Fresh Look at Diversity Training. Western Association of College and University Housing Officers. Stanford University, California.

Heath, K. & Henry, M. (2010). Think Cheap: Professional Development on a Budget. Association of College and University Housing Officers International. Austin, Texas.

Heath, K. & Lessly, M. (2010). Teaching Student Leaders how to use their Moral Compass. Association of College and University Housing Officers International. Austin, Texas.

Heath, K. & Thomas, M. (2010). A Fresh Look at Diversity Training. Association of College and University Housing Officers International. Austin, Texas.

Heath, K. (2011). Think Cheap: Professional Development on a Budget. Association of Christians in Student Development. Springfield, Missouri.

Heath, K. & Thomas, M. & Yi-Suh, C. (2011). A Fresh Look at Diversity Training. Association of Christians in Student Development. Springfield Missouri.

Heath, K. & Kemmerer, T. & Yi-Suh, C. (2012). Spiritual Life Advisor Program: Vision, Selection, and Training for a Hall-Based Peer Ministry. Association of Christians in Student Development. Marion, Indiana.

Heath, K. & Barron, B., & Yi-Suh, C. (2012). Counteracting the Sophomore Slump through Project L.E.A.D. (leadership, education and development). Association of Christians in Student Development. Marion, Indiana.

Heath, K. & Barron, B., Houston, M. & Yi-Suh, C. (2012). Developing Intercultural Competence at Predominantly White Institutions. Association of Christians in Student Development. Marion, Indiana.

#### Publications

---

Heath, K. (2005). Frugal Flushing; A New Look at Stewardship. Koinonia Journal of the Association of Christians in Student Development, Winter Edition.

Heath, K & Yasick, K. (2012). Pepperdine University Students Paws to Relax. Waves Newsletter of Western Association of College and University Housing Officers, Spring 2012.

#### Committee Assignments

---

##### Pepperdine University

Member, Alcohol and Other Drugs Committee  
 Member, Associate Dean Search Committee  
 Member, Building Bridges: Create Safe Space for LGBT Students  
 Member, Graduation Speaker Selection Committee  
 Chair, Leadership Conference Planning Committee  
 Chair, Leadership Programs Planning Committee  
 Member, Meal Plan Restructuring Committee  
 Member, Sophomore Experience Task Force  
 Member, Student Affairs Co-curriculum Assessment Committee  
 Member, Student of Concern Committee

Asbury College  
Member, Women's Issues Planning Committee

Azusa Pacific University  
8 Cows Women's Development Committee  
Chair, Residence Life Newsletter Planning Committee

Warner Pacific College  
Member, Chapel Planning Committee  
Member, Meal Plan Restructuring Committee  
Member, College Activities Planning Committee  
Member, Student

#### Grant Funding

---

Target Leadership Grant: \$5,000  
Lilly Grant: \$3,000

#### Developments

---

Founder, Student Leadership Conference, Pepperdine University  
Founder, Project L.E.A.D. Spring Break Alternative, Pepperdine University  
Founder, Crossing Boundaries Leadership Institute, Lausanne Switzerland  
Co-Founder, Inspired Life LLC

#### Honors and Awards

---

Student Chaplain, Warner Pacific College, 1998 - 2000  
Student Body President, Warner Pacific College, 2000 - 2001  
Minority Student Ally Award, Black Student Association, Pepperdine University, 2007  
A.F. Gray Founders Award, Warner Pacific College, 2001  
Student Affairs Staff Member of the Month, Pepperdine University, June 2006  
Distinguished Young Alumni, Warner Pacific College, 2011



## ABSTRACT

Although women have been a prominent presence in the workplace for over 5 decades, the struggles surrounding work-life balance still drive some women to opt out of career opportunities. Women now make up more than half of the populations at universities and in the work force, yet they are not advancing into the highest positions at the same rate as their male counterparts. This study seeks to empower women who desire both families and careers by analyzing the work-life balance strategies of women in leadership.

Data collected from interviews of 22 women leaders are used to identify strategies that integrate a sense of balance in their personal and professional lives. Each subject has at least 1 child, is employed full-time and makes a minimum annual salary of \$100,000. This phenomenological analysis utilizes a narrative life-course framework created by Giele (2008) which explores identity, relational style, drive and motivation, and adaptive style in order to understand the work-life balance of women. A section was added to this framework for this study to explore strategies that women implement into their lives to succeed at work-life balance (Weber, 2011). Many studies have focused on strategies women use to get ahead in their careers or in their role(s) at home, yet there is a lack of research that focuses specifically on strategies for work-life balance.

Findings from this study indicate that women are more likely to be successful at juggling multiple roles if their career is meaningful and fulfilling. In addition to this, women are learning from mentors how to balance the competing demands of dual roles. A strong work ethic is another strategy that surfaced as a theme among the 22 women in this study. In addition to these 3 strategies, there are 15 more themes that emerged.

## Chapter 1: Introduction of the Study

In her most recent autobiography, Saturday Night Live Comedian and social commentator, Tina Fey writes about being a working mom. Fey (2011) states that the rudest question you can ask a woman is “How do you juggle it all?” (p. 255). She admonishes this guilt-inducing question which typically leaves women to feel criticized and judged. It is a difficult task to be a working mom, but work-life balance is not impossible. Fey chooses to reply to this question by saying, “I have the same struggles as any working parent” (p. 255) with the intention of illuminating the fact that men share in this dilemma but are rarely asked about it.

Over the past few decades, the number of women advancing in education and careers has led to a tipping point in American society. Women make up more than half of the people studying at universities and in the work force, while simultaneously balancing the roles of wife and mother. The Center for American Progress and Maria Shriver published the *Shriver Report: A Woman's Nation Changes Everything* which describes a shift in the makeup of American labor (2009). According to the report, women comprise over half of the employed citizens in the U.S. and that nearly two-thirds of all American families retain a working female. Geile (2008) describes the dual-career family as becoming the norm, in which both husbands and wives are working. This phenomenological study explores the narratives of working women who strive to balance their personal and professional lives.

A new era of dual-career families inaugurates a fresh set of demands on women who seek to work while raising a family. A significant amount of women face pressure

to choose between work and family life, rather than encouragement to pursue both simultaneously. Most studies have focused on the advantages or disadvantages of the increased number of women in the workplace however few studies have analyzed how women are succeeding at balancing dual roles. This study will explore practical strategies that women use to achieve success at home and the workplace.

Storm (2009) summarizes what she believes is the dilemma of the working mom (2009). She describes the mother's dilemma as women who never feel like they are doing everything well. When at the office, they feel guilty that they are not at home. When they are at home, they feel guilty that they are not at the office. Storm says, "It feels like our family suffers because of our job and our job suffers because of our family" (p. 4).

American women who are choosing to work are burdened by a set of life-draining pressures and a soul-draining kind of perfectionism (Warner, 2005). Warner labels this the mommy mystique in response to the term "feminine mystique" which described the plight of unhappy stay-at-home moms in the 1960s. According to Warner, stay-at-work moms are dissatisfied and guilt-ridden primarily because they cannot obtain perfection. American media and culture create an atmosphere that teaches women they cannot be successful at work-life balance. This external pressure and self-imposed expectation is also called the "superwoman syndrome" that plagues working moms (Henderson, 2006). Work-life balance can counteract these negative experiences women are having.

There are numerous outcomes and benefits of work-life balance. "They can be related to personal satisfaction and well-being at work, at home and in life as a whole, to

somewhat more objective indicators of behavior and performance at work and at home to impact on others including work colleagues and family and friends” (Guest, 2002, p. 255). Having a career helps women feel good about themselves and their relationships with spouses and children (Sachs, 2005). Sachs claims that work can be “good for the self-esteem and actually buffer depression” (p. 5). Among the companies that *Working Mother Magazine* has deemed the 100 best companies for working mothers, “there’s an increasing realization that pushing employees beyond their limits has a cost in diminished productivity and lost investment in staffers who eventually quit” (Finnigan, 2001, p. 52). Another study found that “a major deterrent to employee job performance is stress associated with juggling work and personal life” (McMillan, Morris, & Atchley, 2011 p. 6).

“The most effective and efficient employees and managers are often those who are confident in managing responsibilities in all spheres of their lives” (Wirth, 2001, p. 116). Research shows that women are happiest when they are given the opportunity to have both a career and a family (Hewlett, 2002). “Professional activity, it turns out, provides mental stimulation, financial resources, self-confidence and adult friendship” (Hewlett, 2002, p. 294). Employed women are frequently found to have higher levels of satisfaction, self-esteem and less depression than unemployed mothers. Molloy (2004) stated, “Integrating work and life adds value to our daily lives, reducing stress and improving relationships in all areas of life” (p. 7).

People who have multiple significant roles in life (professional, parent, spouse, etc.) are found to have a better overall mental and physical health and superior feelings of wellbeing (Eagly & Carli, 2007). Although balancing multiple roles can be stressful,

each individual role provides opportunities for learning and mastery which increase satisfaction. Each role usually increases “social support and builds social capital” (Eagly & Carli, 2007, p. 176).

There are studies that have shown the correlation between women and better performance of the organizations they work for. In fact, “studies on corporate executives and boards of directors in U.S. firms find that the inclusion of women is associated with stronger financial performance” (Eagly & Carli, 2007, p. 192). Organizations that have integrated women into the highest positions have experienced economic gains and increased shareholder value (Eagly & Carli, 2007). When there is an increase of women in power the policies that reflect female rights also advance. Barriers which impede the career growth of women are costing in lost productivity and attrition which negatively impact the bottom line (Schwartz, 1992). Women are a pool of talented, trained resources that should be utilized to advance every organization. There are economic advantages related to promoting women (Wirth, 2001). In fact, utilizing women to the fullest of their abilities is not a cost but an investment.

In addition to financial advances, organizations will benefit from the gains that women make from having children. Sachs (2005) studied women who chose to stay in the workforce while simultaneously raising children. Sachs states that, “our careers help define us, they make us feel complete; they enhance our wellbeing and our relationships and give us a more secure financial future” (p. xiv). Wellesley College did a study in 2003 of 60 accomplished female professionals. They found that 20% of these women cited mothering as a training ground for management and another 20% spoke of leadership being similar to mothering (Ellison, 2005). The women from this study cited

that the most important skill for successful professionals is time management, a quality attributed to many working moms.

## **Background**

In 1986, an article was published in the Wall Street Journal that described an invisible barrier called the “glass ceiling” for women who were climbing up the ranks in various organizations. Most women believed that the “executive suite seemed within their grasp, but they just could not break through the glass ceiling” to get there (Klenke, 2011). This term is used to describe barriers that are created by organizational attitudes and prejudices, which although invisible, still block women from executive positions (Wirth, 2001).

In their book *Through the Labyrinth*, Eagly & Carli (2007) describe three eras that women have endured over time which have prevented them from moving into leadership roles in the American job market. The oldest era is described as a concrete wall, when women had no opportunities to advance into leadership at work (Eagly & Carli, 2007). The era that followed was called the time of the glass ceiling, and is known as the aforementioned roadblock which prevented women from high-level leadership roles (Eagly & Carli, 2007). The image of glass was used to suggest that organizations were misleading women about their opportunities and it is not easy to see the barriers. The “glass ceiling” has become the most widely used imagery to describe the dilemma women face in the workplace.

Eagly & Carli (2007) describe the current era as a Labyrinth, where no absolute barriers exist for women. Some have advanced to leadership roles and have “successfully negotiated the labyrinth that impedes most women’s progress on the path toward these

positions” (p. 27). Women still do not have an easy way to top leadership roles, but they are not stymied from advancement. Female leaders may have a more difficult time reaching these types of jobs because they must overcome discrimination, organizational policies that are not favorable towards women, and the inequitable distribution of domestic responsibilities at home. In 2004, the Wall Street Journal published an updated article titled *Through the Glass Ceiling* which introduced 50 women who made it into top executive positions in their organizations (Eagly & Carli, 2007). This article gave the false impression that the glass ceiling has been completely broken and women are reaching positions that had previously been barred to them. The labyrinth is a more accurate depiction which acknowledges that the ceiling is no longer absolute, but the road for women to reach the most powerful positions still takes a lot of maneuvering (both at work and at home).

The new millennium marks a time when women are advancing in almost every field. Females now make up 56% of undergraduate college students and a majority of the workforce as well. Although women are advancing in numbers, they are not progressing to the highest offices and positions. Harlan & Berheide (1994) describes this as a sticky floor which holds women in lower-level positions. Women who are stuck at entry level or lower management positions never even reach the glass ceiling.

According to Sandberg (2010), out of 190 main heads of state in the world only nine are women, only 13% of parliaments are comprised of females, and women in the corporate sector make up 15-16% Board members and C seats (CEO, COOs, etc.). Not-for-profit organizations only have 20% women at the top (Sandberg, 2010). “Only 17% of the partners in major law firms were women in 2005” which is just a slight

improvement from 1995 when women made up 13% (Collins, 2009, p. 352). Collins (2009) stated that “while women held nearly half of lower-level managerial jobs in American businesses, they represented only a handful of CEOs in Fortune 500 companies” (p. 353). Out of the 500 largest companies, 17 of them have a woman at the top (DeCarlo, 2012).

At the top of these companies are the highest paid administrators known as president, chief operating officer, chief executive officer, and chairman. In the 1970s, only two women held any of these positions, and in 2007 this number only grew to 6% (Eagly & Carli, 2007). The highest paid positions primarily go to men, who comprise more than three-quarters of the American workers making \$100,000-\$200,000 (Collins, 2009). Forbes magazine reported 1,226 billionaires in 2012, yet only 21 of these are women (Carlyle, 2012). Out of the 400 wealthiest Americans, only 42 are women (O’Connor, 2011).

This void of women at the top does not make sense in a world where more than half of the workforce and universities are comprised of women. More women are needed at the top of organizations and governments, so the few women who have already made it there need to share their advice with other women. Strategies for work-life balance may help women who are striving for these top seats across the globe.

### **Statement of the Problem**

The problem is two-fold. First, there is a lack of women who are promoted into top leadership positions. Even though women make up over half of the population, men hold a majority of the top leadership positions. The second problem is explicit within the



context of work-life balance among these women who do make it. Preparation is needed in order for women to succeed at the top, especially in regards to work-life balance.

Working women have different needs from working men, “and anyone who thinks that it is the same has never had a boob leak in the boardroom” (Storm, 2009, p. 4). Work-life balance may contribute to the success of women in the workplace, and therefore should be studied and replicated when possible. The problems are clearly stated as:

1. There is a lack of gender diversity in the most powerful positions in the American workforce.
2. There is a void in research that focuses on strategies women use for work-life balance to help them succeed.

This power dynamic is ultimately an ethical issue that needs to be addressed. Ethical leadership depends on how power and influence are distributed among the members of an organization (Ciulla, 2003). It is a moral obligation to find out why there is a lack of women in leadership at the top in organizations. The goal is that this will lead to a better distribution of power and dismantle discriminatory practices. The philosopher Immanuel Kant explained ethics as the importance of acting on principle and doing something simply because it is the right thing to do, regardless of consequences (Ciulla, 2003). This ethical issue must become a priority. Women in power represent the voices of others yet they continue to be left out of conversations that impact women on a daily basis. Carol Gilligan uses the metaphor of “women finding their voice” (p. 295) to describe the need to approach things in a more balanced way (Hinman, 2008). This is a matter of ethics regarding equity among powerful decision makers. Each organization needs to demonstrate a commitment to having all voices represented and heard.

## Statement of the Purpose

The purpose of this study is to determine how successful women integrate work and family life. It is a review of the experiences (identity, relationship style, drive and motivation, and adaptive) which shape the life course of women and impact work-family life balance. The ultimate goal is to be able to give practical advice to women who are exploring a career while raising a family. Qualitative data were explored to discover coping strategies, advice for preparing for the dual roles, and practical strategies for balance to see if any themes and or new discoveries emerge.

This research was introduced by the life-course theoretical framework that was developed by Giele (2008) in an article called *Homemaker of Career Women: Life Course Factors and Racial Influences Among Middle Class Families*. In her study, Giele interviewed 48 women about the factors that influenced their decision to work, raise families, or both. The interviews are divided up into four sections of questions including: childhood, young adulthood, current adulthood and future adulthood (Giele, 2002). The study is framed as a life-story method where the entire context of a woman's story is explored in order to find patterns among the women being analyzed. The context gives insight into each woman's frame of reference regarding identity, types of relationships, personal drive and motivation and adaptive style (Giele, 2002).

In 2011, Weber replicated Giele's (2008) qualitative study with a team of research assistants. Weber's study began with a primary focus on female doctoral students at Pepperdine University. This research team used the life-course research model, with the 4 sections of questions, to examine the trends among the lives of each interviewee. The data were collected and analyzed to find themes among the women.

After Weber's initial study, it became clear that there were some things missing from the Geile (2008) study which should be modified with Weber's future research. Geile did not specifically ask women about the strategies they utilize for work-life balance. Some of the women would allude to this in other sections of the interview(s), however some women did not comment at all about how they actually balance their competing roles at work and home.

In order to obtain some of this information which specifically focused on strategies for work life balance, the Weber research team added a fifth set of questions to the instrument. The Weber (2011) research also expanded to women in the professional world, rather than just doctoral students. This additional set of questions explored both proactive strategies for balancing dual roles and reactive coping strategies that women use.

This dissertation research is grounded in the Geile (2008) study, but utilizes the interviews from Weber's (2011) study. The life-course framework is used to explore the narratives of women and extract data regarding strategies for work-life balance. This is a phenomenological study that seeks to understand any factors that might influence this balance.

### **Recent Statistics on Women in the Workplace**

As earlier noted, women make up half of the workforce and mothers are the primary breadwinners or co-breadwinners in nearly two-thirds of American families (Shriver & Center for American Progress, 2009). According to the Department of Professional Employees (2010), women accounted for 47% of the workforce in 2008.

According to this same report, about half of the multiple-job holders are women and women make up the majority of temporary and part-time workers in the United States. The number of working women was over 66 million in 2009 (DPE, 2010).

In 2007, it was reported that 80% of moms in the U.S. were working (Cotter, England & Hermsen, 2007). The U.S. has roughly 26 million working mothers and nearly 40% of them have children under the ages of six (Ellison, 2005). Women earned 59% of all degrees for postsecondary education in 2008 (DPE, 2010). Women outnumber the male students in universities across the nation yet only earn more money than men in a few American cities (Leonhardt, 2008).

Women are not entering the executive level positions at the same rate as their male counterparts, even though they are just as educated and trained, and are being hired by organizations at the same rate (Davidson & Burke, 2004). Only a handful of these women have climbed into the highest corporate levels and in 1997 only 3% of top executives in America's top 500 companies were women (Gallagher, 2000). There has not been much progress since that time and women are not advancing to the upper echelons of organizations at the same rate as men.

This lack of women reaching the highest positions is not isolated to one field, but seems to be a national trend across all sectors. It is a strange phenomenon being that there is no shortage of women who are qualified. Women earned more than half of the bachelor's degrees, 58% of master's degrees and 44 % of the doctoral degrees in the year 1999-2000 (Davidson & Burke, 2004). Women make up more than half of the workforce and in 1999 women comprised 45 % of the managerial jobs in the United States (Gallagher, 2000).

## **Research Questions**

The research questions that guide this study are:

1. What experiences (identity, relationship style, drive and motivation, and adaptive) shape the life course of women that impact work-family life balance decisions and strategies?
2. What pro-active strategies are women utilizing for work/life balance?
3. What reactive coping strategies are women using in response to the demands of dual roles?

## **Significance of Topic**

Having women in the workplace is not a new phenomenon because women have been working and raising families for decades. A study of these women will seek to identify the strategies for work-life balance which might help women achieve success at juggling both roles simultaneously. The strategies extracted from these interviews will be used to inspire other women who may want to explore a career while raising a family to pursue the highest offices in their respective fields. There are many reasons why work-life balance is significant and the benefits of achieving equilibrium are plentiful (see Chapter 2 for specifics).

Equipping women with a list of strategies to balance the demands of multiple roles will hopefully increase their desire to strive for more leadership opportunities. The Female COO of Facebook, Sandberg (2012), gave a speech which identified a problem

called the “ambition gap” that describes the difference between how young girls and boys are raised. Sandberg (2012) states,

From early childhood through marriage we reward men for being leaders, taking risks, being competitive... We need our boys to be as ambitious to contribute in the home and we need our girls to be as ambitious to achieve in the workforce.

Ettus (2012) added to this by pointing out that pre-school girls have regular salon appointments, toys are divided based on gender, working moms are apologizing, girls aspire to be princesses, and we teach girls to be pretty and boys to be strong and smart. She points out that our daughters will not reach their full potential until we start setting up gender equity at home (Ettus, 2012). Ettus (2012) says that “children with working moms grow up with great role models” (p. 1). This significance of this study is that it may help women who want to abolish the ambition gap. We are encouraging women to find ways to pursue all their dreams regarding family and career ambitions. Sandberg (2012) describes the dilemma this paper is trying to address: “We are not teaching our girls and women to have professional ambition. We’re not encouraging women to lean into their careers and aim for powerful jobs.” In a world that is still run by men, this study can empower women to take on more challenging careers without compromising their ambitions for family. Thomas (2012) states that the women’s movement is now in the hands of powerful female leaders who have risen to the top of their careers and feel the responsibility to reach out and inspire the women who will follow (2012). This study is significant because it describes these women leaders and how they can reach out to others.

## Key Definitions

*Adaptive:* Innovative versus traditional, how a person responded to change and transition (Giele, 2002).

*Breadwinners:* The member of a family whose wages carry its livelihood (Gallagher, 2000).

*Cement Wall:* The era when women were expected to stay at home to raise a family and were not welcomed in the workplace (Eagly & Carli, 2007).

*Co-Breadwinners:* The household income is equally supplied by both members of a family (Gallagher, 2000).

*Coping:* Setting some goals to help a person deal with conflict (Hall, 1972) and changing cognitive and behavioral efforts to manage psychological stress (Lazarus, 1993).

*Culture of an organization:* The pattern of shared basic assumptions that the group learned as it solved its problems of external adaptation and internal integration, that has worked well enough to be considered valid and therefore to be taught to new members as a correct way to perceive, think and feel in relation to these problems (Schein, 1992).

*Family-friendly policies:* Formal or informal set of terms and conditions which are designed to enable an employee to combine family responsibilities with employment (Simkin & Hillage, 1992).

*Feminism*: The theory of equality of the sexes. The idea that women should not be forced to 'choose' between public justice and private happiness, and that they be free to define themselves--instead of having their identity defined for them by their culture and their men (Faludi, 2006).

*Glass Ceiling*: The invisible barrier to advance women and minority men into management and decision making positions (Smullen-Grob, 2003).

*Identity*: Conventional versus being different, associated with time, space, culture (Giele, 2002).

*Labyrinth*: The difficult road that women take towards reaching the top executive positions (Eagly & Carli, 2007).

*Motivation*: Achievement versus nurturance reflects motivation (Giele, 2002).

*“Opting Out”*: A woman’s decision to leave the workplace (Stone, 2007).

*Proactive Coping*: A persistent personal belief in the rich potential of changes that can be made to improve oneself and one’s environment (Greenglass, 2002).

*Reactive Coping*: After a stressful event has occurred, these types of coping are directed towards compensating for a loss or alleviating harm (Greenglass, 2002).

*Relationship*: Egalitarian versus deferent, shaped by networks and loyalties (Giele, 2002).

*Sexual Division of Labor*: Assignment of different tasks to women and men (Padavic & Reskin, 2002).



*Stay-at-Home Moms*: Women who choose to stay home and take full responsibility of raising children and administering all domestic responsibilities (Stone, 2007).

*The Second-Glass Ceiling*: The exclusion of women from the top leadership positions in organizations (Mason & Eckman, 2007).

*Work-Family Balance (also Work/Life Balance)*: The accomplishment of role-related expectations that are negotiated and shared between an individual and his or her role-related partners in the work and family domains (Grzywacz & Carlson, 2007).

*Work-Family Conflict*: A form of inter-role conflict in which role pressures from the work and family domains are mutually incompatible in some respect (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985).

### **Key assumptions**

The Weber (2011) study includes qualitative interviews with women of every ethnicity, age, profession, social class, geographical location and marital/parental status. The interviews that were analyzed for this dissertation are limited to women who are working and have families. The reader can assume that the data collected come from women who are actually juggling several roles at home and at work.

This paper is written from a feminist viewpoint. The reader can assume that gender equality is not only acceptable but it is the ultimate goal which is sought. The definition of feminism that drives this research is simply a woman's right to choose her

own path, whether it is to hold a career or to stay home and raise a family, or if it to do both at the same time. A woman has the same rights and responsibilities as a man in making these decisions. Career prerogatives are no longer gender restrictive.

### **Summary**

In summation, there are many benefits of living a life of balance between work and home. Because of the significance of work-life balance, this study seeks to find the strategies that women implement into their lives to obtain equilibrium. By studying the narratives of women this study gains insight regarding the pro-active and re-active strategies that women utilize in the dual roles.

Chapter 2 reviews literature on the history of women in the workplace and strategies that women implement in their lives for work-life balance. This background will create a context for the study to take place. Chapter 3 will focus on the methodology and implementation of this research study. It will explain how the data were collected and analyzed. It will also express plans for any findings and future studies. Chapter 4 is a summary of the methodology while Chapter 5 will be the final presentation of findings and recommendations for future studies.

## Chapter 2: Review of the Literature

This chapter reviews the literature on women in the workforce and issues related to work-life balance. It begins with an overview of the female workforce in America, from its inception to the current state of affairs. This historical context will then lead the reader into an exploration of what the literature says regarding strategies for work-life balance. This body of research is extensive and impossible to capture in its entirety. Therefore, significant events and contributors are highlighted regarding work-life balance of women in the workplace while a more in-depth review is given to the section on strategies which is the focus of this project.

### Historical Background

Women in America have not always been afforded the rights that they enjoy today. Currently women are allowed to attend almost any school and pursue almost any profession that they desire. Women also enjoy the freedom to decide whether or not to stay home and raise a family, select a career, or juggle both at the same time. As we look back through the pages of our history books, we learn that this has not always been the case.

**Agricultural era.** Agriculture played a major role in the U.S. economy from the beginning of its inception until the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The work of the family farm tended to be segregated with the responsibility of men being to work heavy equipment for plowing, harvesting and caring for larger animals. The role of women included lighter agricultural responsibilities such as gardening, caring for small animals and all of the “indoor” responsibilities (Hattery, 2001). According to Collins (2009), “the colonial

farmwife actually enjoyed considerable status within her family, because she manufactured many of the things her husband and children needed to survive and greatly contributed to the family fortunes” (p. 4). Women were responsible for the production of household goods such as butter, cheese, candles, soap, clothes, etc.

During this era, work and family life were interwoven as male children would work with their fathers out in the field and female children would work alongside their mothers (Hattery, 2001). Women were not given the opportunity to attend institutions of higher education and many were not even allowed to have an elementary education. American women at this time were discouraged, for the most part, from having a profession outside of the home.

**Women’s suffrage.** The end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century is marked in the history of women rights and often referred to as Women’s Suffrage. The women’s suffrage campaign was a combination of community organizing, filing appeals to state legislatures, launching referendum efforts, and campaigns at state constitutional conventions. In order to receive the right to vote, members from the National Women’s Party began picketing at the U.S. Capitol and chaining themselves to the White House gates (Faludi, 2006). On August 26, 1920 women were granted the right to vote on American ballots with the passage of the nineteenth amendment to the U.S. Constitution.

The term “feminist” was first introduced in a book review in the *Atbenaeum* of April 27, 1895. The review described it as a woman who “has in her the capacity of fighting her way back to independence,” according to Faludi (2006, p. 15). Despite negative connotations that have evolved, feminism has always been intended to recognize

that women who make up half of the national population are worthy of the same rights and opportunities as the male population. Feminism is a movement that seeks equality among all humans, regardless of sex. Hewlett (2002) states that, “one of the most valuable contributions of feminism is that it has enabled women to consider it moral to care not only for others, but also for themselves” (p. 21).

**Industrial era.** Small populations of women have always played a role in the American economy, by operating small trades, schools, taverns, and shops (Behrman, 1982). In 1850, women comprised 24% of the Americans who were employed, according to the first manufacturing census (Hoffman & Nye, 1974). By 1910, the amount of women in the workforce decreased slightly to 21% as factories were being built and jobs were being industrialized (Hoffman & Nye, 1974).

The 20<sup>th</sup> century was defined by the industrial revolution which changed the role of work and family by creating a new division of household labor. The economy began to revolve around the production of goods and services therefore unpaid work was not considered an economic production (Hattery, 2001). American society did not assign value to anyone who did not contribute to the marketplace economy (Collins, 2009). During this period, men primarily controlled the sphere of paid work, while women’s roles were mostly relegated to work in the home which was unpaid. This had “profound effects on the organization of gender, work and family” (Hattery, 2001, p. 13). Both men and women continued to work and provide economic goods for their families, yet the work of women ceased to be economic and thus the division of labor evolved into what we still see today in U.S. families (Hattery, 2001).

The number of working women did improve during the Great Depression while so many men were unemployed (Collins, 2009). Social policies in the 1930s supported men being paid more than women through a “family wage” which rested on the assumption that families were not relying on the female for economic provision (Hattery, 2001). The American economy relied on women to join the labor force during World War II, while men were serving in the armed services (Hattery, 2001). In 1940, female workers increased to 25% of the workforce (Hattery, 2001). Policies improved throughout the 40s which prohibited wage discrimination based on direct favoritism towards men (Collins, 2009).

Despite these developments, the wage gap between men and women still expands due to job segregation by gender (Carlson, 2007). This has been called the sexual division of labor or the delegation of tasks according to the gender or sex of a person (Padavic & Reskin, 2002). Societies delegate tasks in part on the basis of workers’ sex although which the tasks vary over time and across countries of the world (Padavic & Reskin, 2002). Family Wages were associated with jobs for men and individual wages were associated with jobs for women. During this period, the manufacturing industry was in full swing.

**Women’s liberation.** In the 1960s, the number of women in the workplace increased but they were still considered the weaker sex. At the beginning of this decade, laws required women to have permission from their spouses to go into business and to have a male co-signer to get a loan (Collins, 2009). Women were routinely paid less than their male counterparts, some employers refused to hire women, and medical/law schools limited the numbers of women they accepted into each class. Despite these harsh

conditions, the economy was growing and new jobs were being created of which two-thirds went to women (Collins, 2009).

Opportunities for working women increased and a growing dissatisfaction spread throughout the women who were stay-at-home moms. In 1963, a book called *The Feminine Mystique* was written by Friedan (1963) which addressed the unhappiness that a portion of the female population was experiencing from their lives as housewives. This book encouraged women to find fulfillment using their mental capacities in careers, not just at home. Friedan stated that, “We can no longer ignore that voice within women that says I want something more than my husband and children and my home” (p. 78). Throughout the 60s, a new ideology based on equality between the sexes and division of labor emerged. This era became known as the second wave of feminism or the Women’s Liberation Movement.

With the growth of jobs for women, there still was no room for them to move up into leadership positions. A report in the Harvard Business Review in the 60s focused on women in management and found that there was scarcely anything to study (Collins, 2009). During the Civil Rights movement, women were made conscious of the ways in which they had also been treated as second class citizens. The Equal Pay Act of 1963 was a turning point to address discrimination against women in the workforce which required men and women to be paid equal pay for equal work. The inclusion of women in the Civil Rights Act of 1964 prohibited employers from segregating or classifying on the base of sex in addition to race or ethnicity (Carlson, 2007). Title VII prohibited all forms of discrimination against women and blacks in the workplace (Smallen-Grob, 2003).

It should also be noted that the birth control pill went on the market in 1960, which gave women a new array of choices regarding the number of children to bear and the ability to plan for a career. By the early 1970s, a majority of young unmarried women had access to birth control pills which was also the time when they began to apply for medical, law, dental and business schools in large numbers (Collins, 2009). This was extremely liberating for young woman who could now be confident in the ability to finish school and begin a career without getting pregnant. The 70s also became known as the sexual revolution, where women openly challenged the myth that you have to be married to have an enjoyable sex life.

During the women's liberation movement in the 60s-70s, many women continued to fight for jobs, equal pay and education. One of the most publicized events was the protest against the Miss America Pageant, where several women tossed a few brassieres into a trash can, which was falsely reported as bra-burning. This event is why feminists to this day are frequently associated with bra-burning.

The largest demonstration in 1970 was the Women's Strike for Equality which led to numerous legal victories and a growth in feminist organizations. Congress passed an Equal Credit Opportunity Act, a bill on equalizing benefits for married employees, and Title IX which prohibits sex discrimination for educational programs who receive federal aid (Collins, 2009). In 1972, the Equal Rights Amendment was finally passed by congress, but failed to receive ratification by its expiration date in 1982 and the law was never adopted. By 1979 the American workforce was comprised of over 40% women (Collins, 2009).



In her book *Backlash*, Faludi (2006) describes the 1980s as a time when the media created a backlash against feminism called anti-feminism. She says that it was a decade-long campaign to thwart women's progress. Journalism focused on the negative ramifications of women in the workplace, the ones who were unhappy and wished they had chosen family over career. Despite the negative publicity and attack on feminism, female representation in the workforce continued in the 80s (Faludi, 2006). Women in the 80s needed to make money to help support their families (Collins, 2009). "Women who got good jobs felt lucky to have them, and the ethos of the 80s called for them to make balancing work and home look easy" (Collins, 2009, p. 305).

The 1990s marked the first generation of women in America who had not been told that their only choice was to stay home and raise a family (Collins, 2009). Collins describes this as "American women who had grown up confident that they were entitled to all the educational and career opportunities that boys got" (p. 331). In 1990, "60 % of mothers with children under the age of 5 were working" (p. 333). By 1991, two-thirds of married women with children were working as a result of the economics pressures (Collins, 2009).

**The new millennium.** The new millennium marked a time when women were advancing in almost every field. Women living in the current period do not face the same pressure to choose between work and home. America is currently a country where a majority of the families with children are headed by dual-career parents or single-earner parents (Christensen & Schneider, 2010). Over 70% of American families have dual-earners (Bianchi, Robinson & Milkie, 2006). The question for this generation of working women is whether or not they can stick with their careers long enough to make progress

and reach the top positions. Women are striving to keep their paychecks and satisfying employment while maintaining a complete family life as well (Collins, 2009). Although women can now hold almost any job, the tensions of trying to raise a family and hold down a job at the same time are still high. Sachs (2005) explains that, “despite growing up at a time when more and more women worked, we had few examples showing us how to succeed at being both great moms and women with amazing careers” (p. 19).

Women are also not being paid as much as men. Padavic & Reskin (2002) state that “the more heavily female an occupation, the less both female and male workers earn” (p. 10). The wage gap between women and men has improved over time, but is still not equal. Working women with children earn seventy cents to the working man’s dollar and childless working women earn about ninety cents to the dollar for men (Ellison, 2005).

There are several proposed reasons for the gender wage gap. Large numbers of women have worked lower-paid jobs such as waitresses, secretaries, cashiers, elementary school teachers, and childcare workers which help to explain this historic wage gap (Lerner, 2010). Babcock and Laschever (2003) blame the discrepancy in pay on the fact that women don’t ask for higher salaries. Sexism and discrimination play a large role in the cause of this gap. It has become a self-fulfilling prophecy to some degree and women are settling for a lower wage (Schwartz, 1992). The highest paid jobs typically have more continuity in their careers while some women have had to change companies for promotions. In societies that devalue the work of women, the pay for women is lower relatively to the pay of men (Padavic & Reskin, 2002). Wellington and Spence (2001) suggest that the wage gap might be related to the fact that men rise higher than women because they have more mentors than women do.

This new era was also marked by women choosing to “opt out” of a career in order to stay home and raise a family, even after pursuing an education and upward mobility in their employment. “Following a long-term advance, the labor force activity of married mothers of infants began to decline in the late 1990s for a variety of demographic groups and since 2000 has been relatively stable” (Cohany & Sok, 2007, p. 9). Many educated women are happily opting out of successful careers in order to return to full-time motherhood (Sachs, 2005). Men are also choosing to stay at home to raise children more frequently. Belkin (2003) states that the number of stay-at-home dads has increased to 16% and “46% of the employees taking parental leave at Ernst and Young last year were men” (p. 42).

As the number of working women has increased, so has the scrutiny of a mother’s ability to work while raising children. Critics say that if a woman chooses to work outside the home instead of raise her children full-time, there will be negative consequences that the children experience. The argument is that a child with a stay-at-home-mom is actually going to have a better upbringing than a child with a stay-at-work-mom.

There is research that shows children do equally well, whether their moms are working or homemaking (Eagly & Carli, 2007). What seems to matter to children the most is that someone is nurturing them, regardless of who it is (parents, caregivers, daycares, etc). According to Sachs (2005), there is an “overwhelming correlation between a mother’s working and her daughter’s desire to work when she has children of her own” (p. 14). Children who grow up watching their mothers work hold more

egalitarian gender role ideology and have more egalitarian views towards the roles of men and women (Barnett & Rivers, 1996).

Another phenomenon that was highlighted during this era is the exclusion of women from the top leadership positions which is sometimes referred to as the “second glass ceiling.” Although women are advancing in numbers, they are not advancing to higher level positions. The “glass ceiling” was so widely accepted during this decade that the President of the United States appointed a bipartisan committee called the Federal Glass Ceiling Commission to investigate the barriers for advancing women and minority men into management and decision making positions (Smallen-Grob, 2003). Some women are reaching powerful positions that were previously beyond their grasp however there are still many women who fail to do so (Mason & Ekman, 2007). Even in occupations that are dominated by women, the top paid positions are still going to men.

There are more female teachers; however, the majority of top administrators in education are male (Wirth, 2001). “Women remain clustered in midlevel and administrative positions (deans and directors), in lower-level positions, or in positions more peripheral to promotion into central administration, such as librarians or students services” (Aleman & Renn, 2002, p. 484). A study published in the Chronicle of Higher Education described the percentage of female presidents at colleges and universities to be at 23%. In 2009, only 27% of women have professional occupations, while 73% of working women hold white collar jobs (DPE, 2010). “Although men and women enter corporate training programs in equal numbers, just 16% of corporate officers are women and only eight companies in the Fortune 500 have female CEOs” (Belkin, 2003, p. 1). In

2011, there are 17 females out of 100 senators and there are 75 females out of 435 serving in the United States House of Representatives.

In the field of healthcare women are a majority of the nurses and support staff; however, more doctors and the heads of hospitals are male. According to the International Labor Organization (ILO), this concept is known as “vertical gender segregation” (p. 13) where the movement upwards for women is prohibited by social barriers within an organization (Wirth, 2001). Stone (2007) expresses concern that the number of women at the top remains stubbornly and disproportionately low.

Catalyst (1998), a non-profit organization created to advance women in management, published a list of the most powerful barriers to career advancement. These are the most common things preventing women from leadership roles in the executive suite. The first barrier that Catalyst explores is negative assumptions that are made about women regarding their abilities and commitment to careers. Negative perceptions exist about a woman’s ability to fit in with corporate culture. According to Ridgeway and Correll (2004), motherhood is a status characteristic which will “lower people’s expectations for a woman’s competence on the job, reduce her perceived suitability for positions of authority, and raise standards she must meet to prove ability in the workplace” (p. 697). These negative expectations create barriers for women in the workplace. There are also assumptions that women will not relocate for career advancement or that they are unwilling to work long hours (Catalyst, 1998). There has also been a culture of male superiority which haunts organizations and prevents women from advancing.

The barrier that may be most difficult to address is the lack of accountability towards managers in advancing women. Some men who lead organizations show reluctance to give women an opportunity to lead. Since advancement opportunities rely heavily on who you know and connect with, it is no surprise that leaders are often times chosen by friends with similar backgrounds and worldviews, implying that men are hiring men. This has been referred to as the 'good ole boy' system which is difficult to be penetrated from external candidates, no matter how qualified they are.

Another barrier that prevents women from advancing is the lack of career planning (Catalyst, 1998). Women need to explore the future needs of the organization in order to gain the appropriate job experiences. Succession planning is also needed in order to replace women when they leave. Scholars call this the leaky pipeline problem where highly trained and qualified women are ascending into thin air, rather than high-paying positions of authority (Stone, 2007). Other barriers are a lack of mentoring, the need for an appraisal and compensation systems that are uniform for men and women, and the impact of outdated corporate systems which were designed by men at a time when many women were not working. There are a host of other reservations that people have about hiring and promoting women (see Appendix A).

Smallen-Grob (2003) described that the representation of women on corporate boards remains insufficient and if there are any at all, they have responsibilities that are softer than the men's. Finding evidence of the "glass ceiling" is difficult, because as the adage suggests, it is invisible. There appears to be no obvious reason or systemic practice that prevents women from reaching the very top. Discrimination is inherent in culture and social structures make them subtle in nature. Wirth (2001) illustrates this by

saying, “qualified and competent women look up through the glass ceiling and can see what they are capable of achieving, but invisible barriers prevent them from breaking through” (p. 25).

With an increase of educational opportunities and work experience, it would be expected that women would just as quickly climb to the top of organizational roles. The progress of women managers has actually been quite slow with only a few becoming the top earners within their field (Nelson & Michie, 2004). “Women achieve success up to a particular organizational level and then receive promotions more slowly into the presidency than their white male counterparts” (Aleman & Renn, 2002, p. 484). Gallagher (2000) believes that the increase in highly-educated and working women is a sure predictor that women will one day climb to the top of the corporate pyramid and hold the “prized corner offices of CEO, chairman, president and other top executives” (p. 5). These words have not yet proved to be prophetic. In 2008, women held 50% of all management and professional positions, yet only 2% of Fortune 500 (Wellington & Spence, 2001). According to Wellington and Spence (2001), “it has been a half-century since the start of the women’s movement, and women have only moved closer to the half-way mark in the corporate world and other organizations; most are stuck in middle management” (p. 3).

If organizations do not identify future managers and provide adequate training, support and coaching for them, the quality of service and products will be negatively impacted (Wirth, 2001). Strategies need to be in place which will help to identify future female leaders and create training programs to help them succeed once they get to the top.

An exploration of strategies for work-life balance may give women the support needed to succeed in future leadership roles.

### **Contemporary American Women**

An overview of the historical background regarding women in the workplace leads into the current setting of American society. The next section of this paper is a review of the literature on contemporary issues pertaining to working females. Attention will be given to the benefits of working women and the strategies that they use for work-life balance.

**Benefits of women in the workforce.** In the past, literature on work-life balance was heavily focused on the conflict of the duals roles however a new movement focuses on the positive synergies between work and family (Wayne, Grzywacz, Carlson, Kacmar, 2007). A notion called work/family facilitation was developed to articulate the “extent to which and individual’s engagement in one life domain (i.e. work/family), provides gains (i.e. developmental, affective, capital or efficiency) which contribute to enhanced functioning of another life domain (i.e. family/work)” (Wayne et al., 2007). Studies are showing that work can enhance functioning of the family domain and vice versa. There are four categories which are advanced: (a) developmental gains (skills, knowledge, values, perspectives); (b) affective gains (moods, attitudes, etc.); (c) capital gains (economic, social, health assets); (d) efficiency gains (focus, multi-tasking, etc.; Wayne et al. 2007).

When women are satisfied in one area of their lives, it helps them to better manage disappointment and stress in other areas (Sachs, 2005). Employed mothers are



healthier, more fulfilled, and suffer less emotional and mental illness (Barnett & Rivers, 1996). According to Clark (2000), “work and family systems, though different, are interconnected” (p. 748). If an individual is unhappy or disappointed at work, it will spill over into life at home. Clark states that people crossover between the world of work and the world of family throughout each day (2000). “Balance is much more than dividing time between separate compartments of our lives. Success or failure in any one part of your life will naturally impact on the quality of other parts of your life” (Molloy, 2004, p. 6).

When employees achieve balance between their work and home lives, they are “more productive, stay in their jobs longer, have reduced absenteeism, and increased rate from parental leave, experience less stress-related illness and record higher morale and commitment to the company” (Molloy, 2004, p. 7). Pless (2006) describes work-life integration as having tangible benefits for individuals and companies. Instead of viewing work and home as competing demands, Pless encourages women to find ways to integrate them into mutually value adding components of life. This process starts by clarifying values and priorities, which is a proactive strategy to help integrate work-life balance. Creating a personal definition of success, purposefully establishing productive habits and eliminating destructive habits are all proactive strategies for balance. The next strategy is to make sure that every day tasks align with these priorities, values and goals.

There are also financial benefits for work-life balance. According to Storm (2009), “The world needs capable women to run our companies and bolster our economy. The world needs talented women to raise our children and produce the next generation” (p. 4). “Women in developing economies have made substantial gains in the workplace

during recent decades,” (Desvaux, Devillard-Hoellinger, & Meaney, 2008, p. 4).

According to Desvaux et al. (2008) research shows that companies with senior-level women tend to perform better financially. Bird (2006) found that “accelerated on and off-the-job stressors and expectations are adversely affecting top and bottom-line growth, unnecessarily driving down productivity” but work-life balance can reduce both “the real and perceived overwork and out-of-balance pressures that hamper productivity, producing a dramatic positive return on investment” (p. 1).

It may be expensive to replace an employee so there is incentive to retain people. Companies are beginning to realize the price they will pay for overworking employees may be too high (Finnigan, 2001). It is more cost effective to develop and invest in the same people over time. There are emotional and professional benefits for the women who are retained as well. According to Eagly & Carli (2007), “research has shown that women experience long-term advantages in life satisfaction and well-being from retaining a career, despite parenting responsibilities” (p. 188).

The advancement of women into leadership positions can also be of great benefit. There are many advantages to having leadership positions held by women whom research has shown lead in ways that are relational, inclusive and transformational (Nelson & Michie, 2004). Women focus on consensus building/power sharing, win-win solutions in conflict, promote diversity and build supportive environment which make subordinates feel important, included and energized (Rosener, 1990). These characteristics can transform organizations and the people who work in them.

Storm (2009) wrote a book called *Motherhood is the New MBA*, where she describes the ways in which motherhood has enhanced her ability to manage people in the workplace. Being a mother equips women with skills that are transferable to any work setting. Storm looks at the parallels between raising children and managing people as similar to a boot-camp type of training. After realizing how motherhood was helping her to be a better boss, she became more confident in both roles. These skills include flexibility, multi-tasking, empathy, change management, dealing with angry employees, advocacy, and more. Storm articulates the confidence that she gained as a leader once she began to apply her success as a mom into her role as a manager.

In *Mommy Brain: How motherhood makes you smarter*, Ellison (2005) describes the professional benefits of women who choose motherhood. She breaks motherhood down into five categories: perception, efficiency, resiliency, motivation and emotional intelligence. Women have enhanced senses, especially when they are pregnant, which is the first attribute of perception. Ellison states that mothers have a boost in motivation and the ability to deal with stress. She ultimately suggests that women have a hormone which improves the capacity for learning and a sharper memory. Emotional intelligence is an ability that women have to see the world through another person's eyes, and this is a boost to the brain. She describes motherhood as stimulating; which increases time management, prioritization, networking with other women, focusing on the future, handling chaos, and dealing with difficult situations. Moms become super attentive and learn a lot in a short amount of time. According to Storm (2009), women are actually smarter once they become a mom, which contributes to a stronger workplace.

**Work/family conflict.** With women having the ability and freedom to work and raise a family simultaneously, an increase in stress has followed. There is a constant state of imbalance regarding the demands of work and family, which leads to feelings of conflict (Mesmer-Magnus & Viswesvaran, 2005). Conflict from these roles can produce stressors which may constitute a major source of psychological and physiological strain. Many studies since that time have shown that conflict between work and home can cause absenteeism or tardiness, an energy deficit, preoccupation with family-related matters at work and work-related matters at home, and reluctance to take on extra work, which might intrude on family time (Somech & Drach-Zahavy, 2007). Bird (2006) stated that bosses/organizations who don't value work-life balance are the number-one reason that people quit their jobs.

There are several models that have been developed to explain the relationship between work and life outside work. Segmentation is the model which defines work and non-work as two domains that are lived separately and have no influence on one another (Guest, 2002). The Spillover model hypothesizes that one world can influence the other in either a positive or a negative way (Guest, 2002). There is not much information regarding the causes or consequences of the spillover model. The Compensation model suggests that what is lacking in work or non-work can be made up in the other, in regards to demands and satisfaction (Guest, 2002). Instrumental model is similar to compensation, which suggests that the success in one sphere of work or home life can actually facilitate success in the other. The Conflict model focuses on the demands that are placed on an individual and the difficult choices that ensue. Clark (2000) added the

Border Theory which argues that people are daily border-crossers as they move between home and work.

Stress related to demanding lifestyles can negatively impact both physical and mental health. People all cope with stress differently but individuals need to learn how to manage distressing problems and emotions in order to remain balanced. Research has shown that stress can cause a variety of illnesses including diseases of the heart and circulatory system, as well as various cancers (Greenglass, 2002). Stress is expected to occur in almost every aspect of life, and there has been a tremendous amount of research regarding the strategies used to cope with stress.

This intrinsic struggle for balance in response to the demands on working women is the reason for this study. Women implement coping strategies into their lives to juggle their roles successfully and achieve work-life balance. Coping strategies are individual efforts to manage the taxing demands which exceed personal resources and abilities (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). Coping is what people do to relieve stress (Somech & Drach-Zahavy, 2007). Stress can lead to disequilibrium in people's lives so coping is used to restore the balance (Scheck, Kinicki, & Davy, 1997). An overview of literature on strategies for work life balance will guide the next section of this study.

**Coping strategies.** Coping strategies can alleviate stress levels that accompany a busy lifestyle of juggling the demands of work and family. Coping strategies can also promote a higher quality of life (Greenglass, 2002). Schwarzer (2000) developed a Proactive Coping Theory which describes four types of coping: reactive coping, anticipatory coping, preventative coping and proactive coping.

Hall (1972) identified several types of coping strategies: structural role redefinition, personal role definition, and reactive role behavior. Structural role redefinition alters any expectations that have been externally or structurally placed on someone. An example of this would be a woman who negotiates a new work schedule with her supervisor so that she can be at home when her children get out of school. A critical feature of this approach is that it deals directly with environmental transmitters of the structurally imposed demands in an attempt to alter them and come up with new expectations (Hall, 1972). This is a proactive strategy which creates a new set of expectations rather than a response to the situation. Structural role redefinition seeks to eliminate conflict where it originates by permitting people to change the external role demands and make them more congruent with personal interests/goals (Hall, 1972).

Personal role redefinition changes the internal expectations and perceptions that one might place on them self (Hall, 1972). This approach entails changing attitudes and perceptions of role expectations as opposed to changing the actual expectations. A typical example of this might be a change in attitude which comes to accept that role conflict is simply unavoidable and needs to be dealt with over time. This can be viewed as a reactive coping strategy that helps respond to stressors.

Reactive role behavior attempts to find ways to meet all of the expectations both internal and external (Hall, 1972). This is an internal shift in perception and an external shift in environmental factors. This approach seeks to integrate the structural role redefinition and the personal role definition.

Beehr and McGrath (1996) introduce five types of coping with stress.

Preventative coping deals with stress long before it actually occurs. Anticipatory coping is used when there is expected stress in the future. Dynamic coping is ongoing and can utilize multiple coping strategies at the same time. Reactive coping happens after a stressful event has taken place. Finally, residual coping is a result of the long-term effects that stress can have (Beehr & McGrath, 1996).

Greenglass (2002) developed a Proactive Coping Inventory to assess the different aspects of coping that are used during stressful times and the anticipation of stress. This inventory was given to 252 Canadian undergraduate students and 144 Polish immigrants living in Canada. The study findings suggest that proactive coping can lead to “lower burnout and anger but also to positive outcomes including greater professional efficacy, fairer treatment at work and greater life satisfaction” (Greenglass, 2002, p. 15).

Somech and Drach-Zahavy (2007) explored the lives of 266 parents through quantitative methods to propose eight coping strategies for coping with work-family conflict. This study suggests that the coping strategies are: super at home, good enough at home, delegation at home, priorities at home, super at work, good enough at work, delegation at work, and priorities at work (Somech & Drach-Zahavy, 2007). Super at home describes a woman who insists on doing all family duties single-handedly and perfectly. Good enough at home suggests lowering the performance of family duties to a less-than-perfect level. Delegation at home explains a woman who is able to cope with her family responsibilities by delegating the work to others. Priorities at home create a strategy of ranking the family duties in order of importance and only focusing on the high priority items. Super at work introduces a woman who insists on doing all work duties

singlehandedly and perfectly. Good enough at work is obtained by women who can let go of the expectation for perfection in the work place. Delegation at work is achieved by managing through the sharing of a work load. Priorities-at-work describes a person who ranks the level of importance for each work responsibility and focuses only on the most important ones (Somech & Drach-Zahavy, 2007).

**Strategies for work/life balance.** There has been extensive literature written about strategies people should implement into their lives to create better balance between work and home life. Many of these are grounded in anecdotal findings which point to the stressors of maintaining dual roles. These success strategies are helpful in creating a conversation, but there is no actual theory or framework which outlines strategies that are best implemented by those who want to be successful at juggling multiple roles.

Hattery (2001) did an intensive research project to determine what factors are considered as mothers with young children make the decision to stay at home or return to the workforce. At the end of her study she suggested that future studies seek to conceptualize the strategies that women use to combine work and family in order to move past the notion that women cannot have it both ways (Hattery, 2001). Hattery states that “women can be successful professionally as well as in their roles as mothers when they are supported by partners, family, friends, child care teammates, and those in their work place in their efforts to seamlessly weave work and family (p. 187).

Catalyst put out survey results in 1996 which describe the ways in which women executives balance career and personal life (Wirth, 2001). They said women would employ domestic help, pursue personal interests, curtail personal interests, use childcare



services, and develop networks outside of their employment. Finally, they described that some female executives worked at home or worked part-time, flexible hours in order to balance a career and home life. Catalyst made recommendations for companies who wish to maximize the potential of their female workforce which include moving women into line positions and promoting them, finding mentors for them, creating networking opportunities, embracing change, being flexible with work schedules and more (Nelson & Michie, 2004).

A few women executives have decided not to get married or have children. Some women just delay marriage and motherhood until a more convenient time that won't conflict with career goals. In fact, out of "a small percentage of high-level executives who are women, almost half do not have children" (Halpern & Cheung, 2008, p. 4). The US Census Bureau (2004) reports that women who make over \$100,000 a year are less likely to have children. And finally, some women take a leave of absence to raise children.

Foley (2005) has written multiple books designed to share success strategies with women who are seeking career and personal success. She suggests 10 ways to create a bodacious career for yourself: Don't take things personally, build relationships, network, market your value, know how to be treated, take a stand, thrive on change, know your worth, embrace politics, and think strategically while acting bodacious. Foley also lists strategies for hiring the right people, building the right reputation, creating boundaries and building financial security which could all be used for work life balance.

Wellington and Spence (2001) share the strategies women need to implement in their lives to reach the top. The first strategy is to become indispensable by doing the job better than anyone else can do it. Several other strategies are to build confidence, get what you want by insisting, learn to read the organization, choose the right company and seek assistance in selecting a career (Wellington & Spence, 2001). Women should also learn to building bridges, keeping faith, stay alert for opportunities, and know when it is time to go.

Strategies can be created to address the challenges of work life balance in order to have a more successful experience. Molloy (2004) conducted a study which concluded that the greatest challenges for work/life balance include time management (39%), being organized (16%), financial pressures (10%), lack of energy (9%), emotional management (9%), childcare (7.5%), saying 'No' (7%), and living with a focused partner (2.5%); (p. 7). Her book *Get a Life* explains strategies for work life balance such as: getting focused (on dreams, priorities, people, finances), getting organized, not getting stressed, getting connected with others, and pursuing goals (Molloy, 2004).

Finnigan (2001) described an article in *Working Women Magazine* that suggests work-life balance strategies such as establishing clear priorities, developing better communication skills, setting limits, and learning to say no. Hewlett's (2002) book *Creating A Life: Professional Women and the Quest for Children*, implies that "women should start achieving as soon as possible, strategically choose a life partner early in life, have children before the age of thirty five and find a career that is flexible" (p. 301). Hochschild (2003) interviewed working mothers and shared several strategies they suggest in her book the *Second Shift*. She talks about ways that women try to share the

domestic responsibilities with their spouse, including acting helpless or withholding sex. Hochschild (2003) refers to other strategies, such as cutting back hours at work or housework, marriage, self and time with children. Seeking help from others is another strategy that working women employ including housekeeping work, childcare, or hiring a personal assistant to help with bills and other administrative tasks.

Super-momming is another strategy that describes women who work long-hours at the office but then keep their children up late at night so they can spend quality time with them (Hochschild, 2003). These “supermoms” often go without rest, without time for self, and seem out of touch with their feelings. These type of moms can do it all and they do it with a smile, a perfect figure and on a budget (Hall & Bishop, 2009).

Smallen-Grob (2003) discusses several strategies in her book, *Making it in Corporate America*. The first suggestion she has for women is to band together to shatter the glass ceiling. She feels that women need to support each other, build alliances and consensus in order to succeed in the workplace. The second piece of advice Smallen-Grob (2003) gives to working women is to be open to starting at the bottom and working your way up in an organization. She suggests being open to learning new fields that need women. Another way that women will advance in their careers is learning to be “nice” and at the same time keep from being a pushover. Smallen-Grob advises women to have confidence in themselves and be willing to ask questions about things they don’t know. Women also need to take risks and be willing to make mistakes. Learning from mistakes is another strategy for getting ahead. Successful women do not agonize over details; they stay focused on a bigger vision (Smallen-Grob, 2003). Women are highly scrutinized and need to maintain unadulterated integrity (Smallen-Grob, 2003). The final

suggestions from this study are to know self and select work that revolves around passions and desires. Work should be fun and fulfilling in order for it to be successful.

White (1995) suggests that women take on more aggressive or “gutsy” behaviors in order to succeed in the workplace. She cautions women about behaviors that could be seen as motherly. Mendell (1996) lists seven rules for making it in a man’s world: act confident, act strong, play to win, don’t get emotionally involved, be aggressive, accept fighting, and be a team player. Mendell (1996) also advises women to be in control at all times and learn masculine skills for communication. Masculine characteristics are usually regarded as the traits required for management (Wirth, 2001). In contrast, Eagly and Carli (2007) suggest that women should blend assertive behavior with kindness, niceness and helpfulness (p. 164).

Eagly and Carli (2007) suggest that men need to share domestic responsibilities in order for both partners to succeed in the workplace, which includes housework and childcare. This study also finds that women are taking breaks from employment to make time for family responsibilities. This phenomenon has been labeled the mommy-track which describes women who take part-time jobs, and a big cut in ambition and salary (Warner, 2005). Women are also taking leaves of absence and sick days to be with their children. Another strategy that Eagly and Carli (2007) explain is the flexibility in full time jobs or reduction of work load by part-time status. They also suggest that women need to:

1. Establish an exceptional level of competence
2. Combine competence with warmth and friendliness

3. Forge connections with others
4. Seek mentors
5. Take credit for accomplishments
6. Negotiate effectively (higher salaries and other career advantages)
7. Feel authentic in leadership roles
8. Build social capital
9. Balance work and family (delegate housework and childcare if needed)

Henderson (2006) says that work-life balance can be achieved through: exercise, identifying values, meditation, creativity, social activities, financial stability, taking regular holidays, having do-nothing-days at least once a week, learning to say no and stopping the superwoman-syndrome. This syndrome is what she refers to as women who strive to be perfect all the time. Those who suffer from this typically impose deadlines and pressure when there is no real urgency. “Women still maintain primary responsibility for child-rearing and elder care, still take the lead in household management, still report higher percentages of time spent on the job, and deem diminished commitment in any area to be unacceptable” (Aleman & Renn, 2002, p. 485).

Jeffries (2006) writes about the Seven Steps to Sanity: respect yourself, feed your body, move your body, play more, get a life, stop procrastinating, and chill out. These are the keys to integrating good food, good rest, and good play into your life. She suggests healthy eating tips and exercises that can be done at work.

According to James (2006), work-life integration is about finding the right combination of work and play, which all depends on your wants, needs, goals and life

circumstances. James suggests that balance is achieved when three components of life are working well: emotions, expectations, and environment. In order to make sure the emotional side of life is managed properly, a woman must give up any guilt, choose a peaceful mood, plan down time, book a vacation in advance, enjoy the moment, and find energy. In order to manage expectations, women must communicate and ask questions, set achievable goals, be realistic, schedule routines and block out time for self, avoid crazy deadlines, plan recovery time and accept the seasons in life (James, 2006). James also suggests that we eliminate words like urgent and asap from our vocabulary which increase stress levels and frustration. The third component suggests that our environment can play a role in determining our sense of balance. We need to be surrounded with positive people, remove clutter, and utilize our senses through candles, aromatherapy oils, relaxing music, or a water feature. Pleasant sounds, smells and visuals can create a more pleasant and productive environment.

Goodchild (2006) describes work/life balance as the ability to consciously identify what is most important to us and allocate time and energy to those things. Balance is not giving equal amounts of time and energy to work and play, but its living a life in which all the important aspects of being human are nurtured (Goodchild, 2006). She describes strategies that begin with making time for self-care and using what is left for other people. She thinks that we need to spend a lot of time caring for ourselves and pursuing our passions, in order to live out a balanced life.

Campbell (2006) says that “work/life balance revolves around the need for setting boundaries so that our work doesn’t intrude on our private lives” (p. 76). She implements six strategies in her life to obtain balance. The first is the ability to see obstacles as

opportunities instead of challenges. The second is eliminating unhelpful guilt. The third is building supportive networks, and the fourth is monitoring and responding to changing needs. The fifth is making time for self, and the sixth is enjoying each moment in life.

Majstorovic (2006) works to be at her best so that she can handle all her responsibilities, which is what she recommends for other women in order to remain balanced. She encourages women to stay focused and enjoy their lives no matter what may come their way. She has several rules for ensuring work-life balance:

Rule #1: Honor and cherish yourself

Rule #2: Accept that there is no perfect balance

Rule #3: Family is top priority

Rule #4: Keep perspective on what you are doing

Rule #5: Laughter

Rule #6: Gratitude

Rule #7: Friends

Rule #8: Multi-task

Rule #9: Let go of guilt

Postans (2006) suggests that women must be fit and healthy in order to do everything they need and want to do in life. She suggests that, “the effects of stress, and even the way we cope with stress itself, can be exacerbated by a lifestyle that is not balanced with adequate rest, play and nutrition” (p. 108). The strategies of regular exercise and quality nutrition can lead to a balanced life.

Holt (2006) has an innovative theory called ‘Mind Management’ that she suggests will reduce stress and improve work/life balance. Mind management follows the Ripples

Process: reflect, identify, prepare, plan, leverage, evaluate, success. By using this method, women can begin to change old mind-sets into new expectations. By rediscovering what is really important, women can take action on the things in life that really matter. This theory implies that even a very small insignificant change can lead to a powerful ripple effect, which leads to work/life balance.

Ellison (2005) suggests several strategies which help women in balancing the many demands of life including time management, prioritization, networking with other women, focus on the future, handling chaos, and dealing with difficult situations. She implies that women are smarter once they become a mom. Ellison (2005) summarizes the strategies that various neuroscientists have said women should implement to make the most of the *Mommy Brain*:

1. Take Back Motherhood (remind yourself of that you are smarter)
2. Recognize your Priorities
3. Don't underestimate the Power of Sleep
4. Improve your Spin Control (reframe stressful situations into mental challenges)
5. Engage Oxytocin (birthing and breastfeeding hormone which increases memory)
6. Socialize
7. Stroller-cize (exercise)
8. Mother Thyself (take breaks for self)
9. Multi-task Away (within limits)
10. Change the World (starting with your world)



Blair-Loy (2003) studied women who have reached senior positions that were primarily dominated by men and categorized careers of women into two cultural schema models. The “schema of work devotion” describes the career which deserves immense commitment and devotion. These vocations take single-minded allegiance and are driven by meaning and purpose (Blair-Loy, 2003). Another schema is described as family devotion where women choose to place marriage and motherhood as the primary vocation. These two schemas create a conflict of work-life balance, so new schemas were introduced. Some women are choosing to work part-time in high level positions, while staying committed mothers. The final schema is the group of women who have opted not to have children while they pursue their careers.

Women can also look to cyberspace for strategies regarding work life balance. There are numerous magazines and electronic sources dedicated to assisting the working parent. *Parents Magazine* and *The Working Mother* are two popular resources for women who are seeking strategies for weaving together work and family life. Hall (2009) describes a phenomenon he calls mom.com with the increased traffic of moms and the complexity of their interests which are personal and commercial. Virtual communities and social networks have become a huge outlet for women who want to share tips on work/life balance, raising children, domestic short cuts and more. These sites target moms with messages like “eliminate the chaos in your life” and maternity wear that makes women look amazing. Hall (2009) calls this generation the “Millennial Moms” who enjoy unprecedented social, political, and economic mobility and are in “need of the consolation of cyberspace” (p. 193).

*Professional strategies.* Organizations are beginning to recognize the value of work-life balance (Somech & Drach-Zahavy, 2007). Some research has recommended that organizations do a better job of developing policies and benefits which build more flexibility between work and family (Fu & Shaffer, 2001). Companies are able to help manage this by creating a family-friendly environment which provides flex time, family leave, on-site day care, career-breaks, and support networks (Perry-Smith & Blum, 2000).

Bird (2006), the founder and CEO of WorkLifeBalance.com, suggests dual-purpose learning which helps employees both on-the-job and in their off-the-job lives. Dual-learning can be considered professional development and an employee benefit. In studies done with corporate and government clients, the dual purpose learning has doubled the “retention and utilization rates of specific relationship, time management, and project-management skills learned as measured 60-120 days following the learning” (Bird, 2006, p. 6). Dual-learning of 5,000 participants found that 94% reported gains from the learning with an average reported individual productivity increase of 24% (Bird, 2006, p. 6).

Bird (2006) explains the benefits organizations will experience when they commit to the work and life success of each employee. A shift needs to occur towards getting the most out of people by encouraging them to have a life. He states that employees are looking for a work environment that is positive and values the life outside of work. Employers will greatly benefit from a healthier workplace as well. Bird suggests ten options for encouraging work-life balance from an organizational standpoint:

- Reinforce through better communication what you are already doing. Pull together all work-life benefits, procedures, and policies and publicize them as a work-life package.
- Abolish internal Friday-afternoon meetings.
- Give half day off on Fridays if the individual has put in the incremental hours earlier in the week and assuming that no outside customer meetings are scheduled.
- Endorse working from home one day per week.
- Offer subsidies for off-site exercise.
- Create and support athletic teams. Consider underwriting part of the expense.
- Provide one or two days off with pay for approved community involvement.
- Create and encourage an annual or quarterly “bring your family to work” day.
- Establish a “disconnect from work” vacation policy- no cell phones or laptops.
- Create a more accommodating “on-and-off ramp” policy for those who leave the firm, especially if it is to spend time with family. When they show interest in coming back, make it easy for them to get back on where they left.

“A loyal, stable workforce is more productive than a revolving door,” claims Mason and Ekman (2007, p. 132). Organizations who have adapted practices which

boost work-life balance have simultaneously increased retention rates among employees. Organizations like Ernst & Young and Johnson & Johnson offer part-time employees the opportunity to progress in the company (Finnigan, 2001). Merck and Goldman Sachs promote mentoring and networking for women who are “up and comers” in the organization (Finnigan, 2001). Companies that allow women to have flexible schedules have dramatically affected the ability to have work/life balance. Strategies that help with work life balance are flexible schedules, job sharing, telecommuting, working from home, part-time hours, and parental leave.

The work culture of long-hours at work can be oppressive to people with families. “Flex-time” gives employees some choice about when to begin and when to end each work day and people with flex schedules have less work-family-related stress than workers who work a standard schedule (Bohen & Viveros-Long, 1981). Flexibility looks different across various professions, and is especially needed in what Mason and Ekman (2007) call the make-or-break years when employees are in their 30s and 40s. Pricewater Coopers and the Family and Work Institute (FWI) sponsored a study called *Feeling Overworked: When work becomes too much* (Finnigan, 2001). According to this FWI study no matter how much time people work, the less control people have over their schedules, the more overworked they feel (Finnigan, 2001).

In *Creating a Life*, Hewlett (2002) describes strategies for work-life balance. She starts with a time bank of paid parenting leave which can be taken at any point in the child’s life. She suggests that women would like the option of taking job-protected leave for up to three years, and not have to worry about having to adjust the way their retirement plan is structured. Parents would like to have reduced hours in high-level

careers. Other suggestions were tax breaks for workplace reentry and creation of alumni status for employees to get career benefits.

According to Hitchin and Hitchin (1998), those who succeed at living a reasonably balanced life are named “Middlaners.” Middlaners are deliberately living reasonable and appropriately balanced lifestyles (Hitchin & Hitchin, 1998). Most leaders strive to be “careerist” who consistently put professional responsibilities first and give whatever energy is left to personal activities. In order to become a “Middlaner” there are several rules that must be followed. The first rule is to define success in terms of personal growth and spiritual development, relationships and the quality of work (instead of quantity). This theory describes middlaners as taking on limited assignments but doing an exceptional job with them (Hitchens and Hitchens, 1998). The second rule is to be prepared for others to have negative perceptions or opinions about not putting work as a top priority. The third rule and fourth rules are to understand the pressure to have better balance and what pressures are causing the disruption of a balanced lifestyle. The fifth rule encourages the careful use of every dollar that is earned. Energy and time is expended for that money and should be carefully spent.

Wirth (2001) suggests that women should develop assertiveness and strong presentation skills in order to advance in their careers. She encourages women to: build confidence, take risks, cope with stress in hostile environments, and balance work and home. She also suggests the development of a comprehensive approach for career-building strategies such as networking, mentoring, career-tracking, succession planning (Wirth, 2001). Flexible schedules, assistance with childcare, work/family programs,

recruitment and promotion systems are all needed for companies to truly capitalize on the full potential of their female staff members (Wirth, 2001).

*Personal strategies.* Gallagher (2000) conducted in-depth interviews with 200 women executives and found that they all used three vital strategies to get ahead. First, all the women leaders were self-aware and knew what they wanted. They had an understanding of their strengths, growth areas, and purpose. Second, they had a keen awareness of the company they worked for and the unwritten rules (Gallagher, 2000). Last, women leaders had role models which they studied and emulated in order to get ahead in each of their careers. Through her research, Gallagher identified that, “almost every executive mom whom I interviewed has a house manager, a housekeeper, a nanny, a supportive spouse, and/or someone else who provided crucial logistical and emotional support” (p. 193). Gallagher encourages all women who are working and simultaneously raising a family to get a support structure in place prior to advancing in career.

Work/Life Harmony is a strategy that was introduced as the natural progression from the conflict of dual roles to the integration of work/life conflict and enrichment (McMillan et al., 2011). Work/Life Harmony is defined a pleasing and congruent arrangement of work and life roles which are interwoven into a single narrative of life (McMillan et al., 2011). By integrating the demands of both roles a certain degree of balance can be achieved.

Rockler-Gladen (2007) suggests a list of strategies for women who are working. She encourages women to lose any guilt they have, divide the workload, and be in the

moment at work or with family. Rockler-Gladen also recommends that females communicate with the boss and coworkers, look for smart ways to readjust schedules, document anything “fishy” at work, put housework lower on your list of priorities, find a good child care solution, schedule in down time for others and time for self.

Sachs (2005) suggests creating clear boundaries between work and family life as a key strategy for work-life balance. Other strategies are to stay organized and efficient, set boundaries, delegate responsibilities, and have terrific childcare and support at home. Compartmentalizing helps limit focus and thinking to the situation one is in. Women focus completely on work when they are on the job and then give their family full attention when they are at home. Multi-tasking is inseparable from motherhood (Sachs, 2005). Letting go of perfection, both at home and at work, is another strategy that women use in work/life balance. Women have to let go of the guilt that is associated with the demands of dual roles as well.

The Bureau of Labor Statistics released data in 2007 which expressed that women do 63% of the domestic work, and put in sixteen hours of household work weekly while men do ten hours (Lerner, 2010). Multi-tasking is a strategy that many working parents use to juggle the demands of work and family. Some examples of this strategy are talking on the phone while cooking dinner, assisting children with homework while doing laundry, and preparing for a presentation while driving. New technology has made multi-tasking a lot easier, as you can access the internet and email at any moment in almost any setting worldwide. “Advances in technology have made it possible to work twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week” (Burke, 2004, p. 4). These tools include email, smart phones, laptop computers, Ipads, etc.

Rest and sleep are very important strategies that women use. According to the National Sleep Foundation in 2006 married and single working mothers get less than 6 hours of sleep a night (Lerner, 2010). If women are not getting enough sleep they will not be able to function at their highest level.

Support groups are personal strategies that women use for work-life balance. Social support can reduce the negative effects of stressors (Carlson & Perrewe, 1999). This type of support is an interpersonal transaction which demonstrates emotional concern, esteem, information and instrumental aid (House, 1981). According to Gallagher (2000), “there is an inherent strength in numbers” (p. 13). Eagly and Carli (2007) state, “women need to remind themselves of their worth, assertively seek demanding assignments, expect more rewards for their work, and learn to negotiate well” (p. 180). Women attend workshops, conferences, professional associations, small groups, churches and more to find social networks and community. Some research proposes that social support can improve the entire stress process of an individual (Carlson & Perrewe, 1999).

Formalized mentoring and coaching programs are utilized as strategies for women. Women who have obtained leadership roles serve as role models for the younger generation of women. A significant amount of power will be left on the table if this type of mentoring does not happen (Smullen-Grob, 2003). Mentoring relationships based on trust and shared tasks are the key to building authentic connections and furthering career advancements (Gallagher, 2000).

Networking is used as a tool for women to make connections in order to advance their careers. Women should forge connections with others in multiple networks both



inside and outside of the organization (Eagly & Carli, 2007). In order to succeed, women need to gain full support from employees, peers and supervisors. Smallen-Grob (2003) states that women must build a strong support system through networking. Close relationships can help people cope with stress as they disclose personal information, discuss concerns, and receive advice (Wills, 1990).

Childcare is another strategy that can assist with work-life balance however it can be very expensive. The U.S. Census released data in 2006 concluding that families who live below the poverty line spend a quarter of their income on child care, while the average family spends 7% of their annual income on childcare (Lerner, 2010). The landscape of child care in the U.S. has dramatically changed and there is no shortage of resources for women who want to work while simultaneously raising a family. There was very little paid childcare during the 1950s and 1960s, however today many employed mothers rely on non-parental paid childcare.

In most organizations, a majority of new moms choose to nurse (Sachs, 2005). Some companies have on-site childcare facilities and lactation rooms to help working parents. However, this is not the average American experience. Most private employers do not provide options for child care. The U.S. Department of Labor said that only 2% of blue-collared workers and 7% of white-collared workers have access to employer-sponsored child care (Lerner, 2010).

While studies often focus on the negative impact that childcare might have on children, there are also studies that have shown otherwise. Galinsky (1999) shows that children in high-quality childcare situations can do just as well academically and socially, if not more so, than when children stay at home with their mothers. Mothers are

intentionally seeking out childcare that will better prepare their children for kindergarten by placing them in a day care facility or preschool. Perry-Smith and Blum (2000) report that a “bundle” of family-friendly practices are associated with superior ratings.

***Political strategies.*** Official laws and policies help to create a political environment in an organization. There are also accepted rules and behaviors such as civil law, common law, ethics and customs which contribute to the legal culture. Organizations can increase relevancy by thinking holistically about gender issues in the workplace, which oftentimes have legal implications. Feminist ethics describe the awareness of women’s oppression and the policies that could rectify past injustices (Hinman, 2008). The goal of political strategies is to look at legislation and policies that are dominated by power relationships and diminish women. According to Peters (2010), “the major task of the policy analyst is to define clearly the problem that must be solved. Once that is done the solution may not be simple, but it at least potentially analyzable, and a feasible course of action may become more apparent” (p. 112). The elimination of domination in regards to power over women is the ultimate goal (Hinman, 2008).

Organizations are increasingly offering parental leave, flexible hours and part-time work schedules to employees in order to retain them while they are raising a family. There is a negative impact of outdated corporate systems which were designed by men at a time when many women were not working. They lack benefit systems and productivity measures that take into account flexible work arrangements. Workplace arrangements such as job sharing, working from home or via the internet, taking career breaks, extended leave, maternity/paternity leave, child care and flexible schedules are not an end in themselves, but they are a means to help women advance in an organization (Nelson &

Michie, 2004). Companies that offer a wide array of work/life options such as flextime, paid leave, and reduced hours have a higher rate of women who stay in their careers (Hewlett, 2002).

The greatest challenge working women face regarding childcare is the hours and holiday breaks of our American school system. Schools should match the hours of the workday so that parents could work while the children are learning, however most American schools do not. Fewer families have a full-time parent at home, yet school days still remain six or seven hours long and summer vacation still remains to be several months long. Students should be in school while adults are working and holiday breaks need to coincide with offices being closed on national holidays. Students also need to remain in school during the summer months. If this doesn't change, it would also be helpful if schools could provide care for children after school. Prekindergarten programs could be free or subsidized by the government. These political strategies would assist all parents with work life balance.

There are several laws that have greatly impacted the role of work life balance in the lives of women. In the 1930s, the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) set a standard for the workweek to be forty hours and anything outside of that to provide overtime compensation. This law, however, did not provide any safeguards for part-time employees whom are primarily female (Christensen & Schneider, 2010). Hourly workers could be compensated for overtime in the form of time off instead of extra pay, which will encourage parents to spend time with their families. The Family Medical Leave Act allows women to take twelve weeks unpaid job protected leave for medical and maternal reasons. As a result of the women's movement in the 1970s, many legal and social

changes occurred which reduced the most dramatic forms of gender discrimination (Blair-Loy, 2003).

Hewlett (2002) suggests an extension of the Family Medical Leave Act to workers in small companies which can be turned into paid leave. She also suggests tax incentives to companies that offer employees what she calls “the gift of time” which come in the form of job sharing, reduced hours, paid parenting leave, telecommuting, and compressed work weeks. She would like the government to promote legislation which eliminates the incentives for long-work and start paying everyone overtime for any extra hours they work.

The U.S. government still has no family leave and child care programs like most industrialized nations (Faludi, 2006). Mothers who do not have maternity leave because they are new to their positions, should be able to receive unemployment benefits from the government (Kinnick, 2009). Workers should also be allowed to use sick leave to care for an ill child, parent or parent (which is now practiced in California).

Tax incentives could encourage organizations to install family-friendly policies such as flex-time and part-time work (Kinnick, 2009). The marriage penalty tax needs to be reformed so that married couples are not taxed higher than two people with the same income. Tax deductibles which can offset the cost of college will also help working parents.

There is still a rather large wage gap between women and men in the American workforce. It has improved over time, but is still not equal. Sexism and discrimination play a large role in the cause of this gap. It has become a self-fulfilling prophecy to some

degree and women are settling for a lower wage (Schwartz, 1992). The highest paid jobs typically go to men and they have more continuity in their careers while women have to opt out to have families or change companies in order to progress. There is a need for an appraisal and compensation systems that are uniform for men and women, to ensure that women are not being paid less for the same jobs. Workplace policies really do make a difference in the retention of employees. This is a political strategy that could ensure assistance for women who strive for work life balance.

### **Theoretical Framework**

This research project intends to focus on the strategies that women use for work-life balance. A scan of the literature on coping strategies revealed that most studies are focused on frameworks for coping with stress, regardless of the situation. However, there is no specific framework designed for coping with stress related to the work life balance of working females. The closest thing to this type of theory was the Hall (1972) typology which was introduced earlier. The Hall theory states that there are three strategies which can be used to cope with inter-role conflict: structural role definition, personal role definition, and reactive role behavior.

Hall (1972) also categorized coping strategies into proactive and reactive, although he did not use these terms. Hall explained the difference as “coping” and “defense” which coincide with the terms proactive and reactive which are used for this study. Coping strategies tend to focus on the long-term conflict relationship and satisfaction, whereas defensive strategies respond to the situation itself. Defensive strategies can be more reactive, less confronting and aggressive (Hall, 1972).

As a result of Hall's research, Somech & Drach-Zahavy (2007) worked on a new measure which sought to solidify the strategies that adults utilize to deal with work family conflict. This study was able to identify the eight coping strategies that were mentioned earlier in this chapter: super at home, good enough at home, delegation at home, priorities at home, super at work, good enough at work, delegation at work, and priorities at work (Somech & Drach-Zahavy, 2007).

The research describes two types of coping strategies: emotion-focused and problem-focused (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). Emotion-focused coping strategies attempt to eliminate stress by managing feeling and emotions via cognitive reframing and positive psychology. Problem-focused coping strategies define the problem and seek to reduce or circumvent the distress that is being caused (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). Problem-focused coping, which we will refer to as pro-active coping, has generally been found to be the most effective way to deal with stress (Bernas & Major, 2000; Rotondo, Carlson, & Kincaid, 2003; Somech & Drach-Zahavy, 2007). These strategies allow a person to have psychological control and self-efficacy play a role in effectively managing stress.

**Reactive coping strategies.** There are situations where people have little to no flexibility in changing their current environment. If individuals have no ability to change the situation related to stressors, then emotion-focused coping, or reactive coping, is often the method of choice (Somech & Drach-Zahavy, 2007). Examples of emotion-focused coping are escape, avoidance, venting, suppression and resignation.

The traditional form of coping has always been through the use of emotion-focused reactive strategies. They are called reactive because they deal with stressful situations that have already occurred. As the events have already taken place the coping intends to compensate for the loss or alleviate harm from the past (Greenglass, 2002).

Reactive coping focuses on the response to a taxing and stressful situation. Individuals will consider the problems and available resources to make decisions about how to best manage the distress (Amirkhan & Auyeung, 2007). Re-active coping is utilized by people who view stressors as setbacks in life which must be dealt with.

**Proactive coping strategies.** While historically coping referred to reactive strategies that were used once stress had occurred, more recently a new form of proactive coping has been introduced (Greenglass, 2002). Proactive coping strategies are used before stress actually occurs and can reduce or eliminate the impact of stress. This form of coping incorporates a positive approach to dealing with stressors through the use of positive psychology (Greenglass, 2002). Proactive coping is forward-looking and integrates quality of life management with self-regulation and goal attainment. There are 5 stages in proactive coping: resource accumulation, recognition of potential stressors, initial appraisal, preliminary coping efforts, and the elicitation and use of feedback concerning initial efforts (Aspinwall & Taylor, 1997).

According to Greenglass (2002), proactive coping has three distinct characteristics. First, proactive coping is future-oriented and focuses all efforts on promoting personal growth and overcoming challenges. Second, proactive coping is seen as goal management instead of reactive coping which is more risk management

(Schwarzer, 1999). And last, the motivation for proactive coping comes from the perception that challenging situations can be stimulating and growth inducing as opposed to harmful, negative and threatening. Someone who uses proactive coping takes initiative, actively faces the stressors in life, and mobilizes resources for work-life balance.

Schwartz (1992) refers to pro-active coping as a self-determinate and conscious choice to respond to the demands of work-life balance. Proactive strategies link reality to what a woman wants to make happen in the future. This is the result from a choice to adopt, modify, or reject norms that are set up in order to create new terms (Schwartz, 1992). These proactive strategies create conditions for work and family life that will be successful and fulfilling. Proactive coping suggests that some people are apt to live their lives in a way that accumulates assets and preparing for the challenges in life (Hambrick & McCord, 2010).

### **Summary**

A review of the literature demonstrates the context for the progression of women in the workforce and development of stressors related to dual roles. This stress leads to a clear need for coping strategies. The research is robust in regards to strategies that women utilize to remain balanced and deal with the stressors regarding to work life balance.

There is a void in the research regarding practical suggestions for women who want to excel at work-life balance. This study seeks to utilize the theoretical frameworks found in psychology on reactive and proactive strategies for dealing with stress. “We can



observe when someone has lost their balance; and we know that in given circumstances some people have better balance than others and may perceive that they have balance” (Guest, 2002, p. 255). By analyzing women who implement these proactive and reactive coping strategies into their lives for work-life balance, some themes emerge. These serve as advice and suggestions for women who aspire to work and raise families simultaneously.

### **Chapter 3: Methodology**

This study of working women employs a qualitative methodology, through a technique called life course. In order to identify themes among the lives of the subjects who were interviewed, this study followed the Geile (2008) research which used life story methodology to focus primarily on four periods: early adulthood, childhood and adolescence, their current life, and future plans. The goal of this particular study is to explore proactive and reactive strategies that interviewees implement in order to achieve work-life balance.

The methodology section of this paper will include a restatement of the research questions and a description of the research process. An explanation will be provided for the selection of the data sample and a definition of the analysis unit. The reader will also learn about the instrument that was used to collect the data and its validity and reliability. The techniques for gathering and analyzing the data will be covered. The final section of this chapter describes the approval process from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) which ensures the protection of the research subjects.

#### **Research Questions**

The first research question(s) is grounded in the Geile framework which explores identity, relationship style, drive and motivation, and adaptive style. In addition to these four areas, an additional section was added which reveals the strategies used for work-life balance. The additional research questions are based off of the strategies section of a woman's life course.

1. What experiences (identity, relationship style, drive and motivation, and adaptive) shape the life course of women that impact work-family life balance decisions and strategies?
2. What pro-active strategies are women utilizing for work/life balance?
3. What reactive coping strategies are women using in response to the demands of dual roles?

### **Research Methodology**

This qualitative method of research utilizes an existing database of over 150 interviews collected by the Digital Women's Project (Weber, 2011). These in-depth semi-structured interviews were recorded and lasted approximately one hour. As stated earlier, this research follows the Giele (2002) study and uses life story methodology. According to Giele (2009), "Life histories reveal patterns that surveys cannot, because surveys take a fragmented approach that examines the effects of variables on given outcomes in the populations" (p. 238).

Life course research can be described as a series of case studies designed to help gather information. The life story method looks at past, present and future in order to link internal feelings and external situations. It also helps to show the continuity of a person's life over time (Elder & Giele, 2009). Giele noted the benefit that life stories are comprehensive (social and individual), subjective (from the person's point of view), and narrative in form (which accounts for change over time) (Elder & Giele, 2009). The Giele study covered four time periods to elicit major themes in the women's lives.

The first section of questions focused on young adulthood, asking respondents to reflect on the time in college and aspirations for career and family life. To understand the context, it is important to learn about a woman's memories from her early adulthood. The second set of questions focused on the women's childhood and the beliefs held by her family towards education, similarity between siblings, finances and expectations. This brings out how the person was treated as a child. The third set of questions focused on the middle of adulthood, with reflections on rewards, recognition, frustration, problems and successes in both work and home life. This looks at current life status. The last section of questions invited women to reflect on their future goals and aspirations. This section also looks at the challenges that women anticipate or fret over about the future.

Implicit in life course studies, are the recurrent factors that shape a person's life. "Family background, social pressure, individual traits, and economic conditions all play a part" (p. 245) in the context of life course methodology (Elder & Giele, 2009). The goal is to identify an outcome and the key variables that led to it.

Elder and Giele (2009) describe four main factors which contribute to an individual's behavioral system: (a) historical and cultural, (b) social relationships, (c) personal motives, and (d) timing and adaptation to major life events. Historical and cultural is coded as "identity" and looks closely at a person's milieu: location, time and space. The social relationships factor is coded as "relational style" and is shaped by person loyalties and social circles. The personal motives section is coded as "motivation" and the work achievement and successes. The timing and adaptation section is coded as "adaptive style" and looks at the adaptability to change and think outside the box. The

scholar who relies on life course is consolidating value, social networks, motivation and adaptive style of a person as the conceptual framework for explaining the differences in the life outcomes (Elder & Giele, 2009).

The next step is to apply inductive studies to find themes and deductive studies to search for differences and similarities among the life stories. The task at hand is to identify major antecedents and causal influences leading to one of the outcomes. It takes some discernment to identify major themes that link the person's origins to their life outcomes (Elder & Giele, 2009).

### **Selection of Data Sources**

Female leaders have been identified from the Digital Women's Project (Weber, 2011) existing database of qualitative interviews from professionals and doctoral students. The database contains over 150 interviews of women who were selected using a sampling method called snowballing. Snowballing refers to the method of recruiting by asking each subject to refer acquaintances to join the research project. Each person refers one or more subjects to be interviewed, thus creating a snowball effect of adding to the participant pool. This is a purposeful kind of sampling which ensures variation and diversity among the experiences and perspectives (Stone, 2007).

Weber's (2011) study began with a sample selection of women enrolled in a doctoral program at Pepperdine University's Graduate School of Education and Psychology. An electronic letter was sent to all female doctoral students, inviting them to participate in this study on work life balance. The women who volunteered were then asked for the names of other women who might be interested in the study. The Weber

research team decided to expand the research to women in the professional world outside of Pepperdine University. The process began with an article in the *Orange County Metro Magazine* which featured 40 women on their success and achievements. These 40 women were invited to participate in the study as well, and the women who volunteered for this study were also asked to refer friends or colleagues to participate as well. This began the collection of interviews for working women around the Country.

The women who have been interviewed are an amalgamation of various ages, ethnicities, geographic locations, careers, marital status and parental status. Given the complex nature of the dataset, selected women participants will be the focus for this study. The focus for the selection of the women will be those who are working and raising a family simultaneously.

In order to protect the privacy of each participant, a waiver was used to explain the research and request their level of comfort with the findings being used and shared with others. They were also given the opportunity to stop the interview at any time or refrain from answering any question at any point. Although they were asked to provide very detailed demographical information about themselves, they were given the opportunity to place this information in a sealed envelope which would be transcribed by someone who was not aware of the participant's identification.

### **Instrument**

The retrospective interview process is an efficient way of eliciting high and low points of a person's narrative (Scott & Alwin, 1998). For this research, individual interviews followed the four sections of questions from Giele (2008) along with a set of

socio-demographical questions. An additional set of questions supplemented the Giele study by focusing on strategies for coping with the activities of work-life balance.

Each respondent was asked to complete an informed consent form which explained the research and the options each participants has in regards to how far the information can be shared (Appendix B). The participants were also asked to fill out a form with socio-demographic information which provides context for the responses (see Appendix C). The demographic information that was collected includes: mother's maiden name for coding, birth date, place of birth, education level, occupation, employer, marital status, date of marriage, spouses birth date, spouses education and occupation, children's gender and year of birth, mother's education and occupation, father's education and occupation, siblings gender and year of birth, total household income, own earnings, health/illness/accidents/disabilities, religion, languages, countries visited and live. The questions for the interview(s) follow:

The first set of questions regarding early adulthood:

- What was your major?
- Name of your college where you completed your undergraduate education?
- What year did you graduate?
- What about graduate education? Where did you attend?
- What was the area of study for your degree?
- And what year did you receive your degree?
- What did you think you would like to become in terms of occupation and type of lifestyle or family life?

- What were you thinking then and how did things actually turn out?

The second set of questions regarding childhood and early adolescence:

- What was your family's attitude toward women's education?
- What did they think about you going to college?
- What did they think about what you would become?
- What was the effect of your parents' education on your attitudes?
- What about brothers and sisters? What were their influences on you?
- What about family finances and their impact on your attitudes?
- How about you or your families' involvement in a faith community? What were these influences?
- What about your families' expectations and their impact on your attitude?
- How was your education different from or similar to that of your parents and brothers and sisters?

The third set of questions regarding current adulthood:

- Since college, what kinds of achievement and frustration have you experienced?
- What type of mentors have you had?
- What has happened that you didn't expect in employment?
- What about with family?
- What about your faith?
- How about furthering your education?



- What type of work opportunities have you had?
- How about equal work opportunities?
- Have you had children and how have they influenced your life?
- How have changes in marital status impacted your life?
- How have any lifestyle changes influenced yourself or a family member?
- What about moves, how have these influenced you?
- What about your memberships in the community?
- How has your involvement or lack of involvement in faith community impacted your life?
- What types of housing issues might you have encountered and how did they impact you?
- How have racial and gender integration or non-integration influenced you?
- What about a job search or loss and its impact on your life?
- And feelings about yourself?
- Have there been good things such as particular rewards, satisfaction, or recognition?

The fourth set of questions regarding future adulthood:

- Looking back at your life from this vantage point, and ahead to the future, what are your main concerns at the moment?
- Looking further out, what are your goals, hopes and dreams for the next few years?
- What problems do you hope to solve?

- Where do you hope to be a few years from now with respect to work or finishing graduate school?
- What are your hopes in regard to family?
- What are your expectations for your faith community?
- What about the community?
- What are your concerns around mentors?
- What about health?
- What type of concerns do you have around finances?

This fifth set of questions regarding:

- What coping strategies do you use to respond to concerns related to the plurality of roles?
- Have you ever felt pressured to choose between work and home?
- What made you think that you could do both successfully?
- Do you feel that your family life or work life have suffered because of your involvement in work or family?
- Have you felt any guilt related to either family or work?
- Are there times that you felt particularly successful at juggling the demands of both work and home? Why?
- Were you prepared for the demands of work and life balance? Why or why not?
- What strategies do you implement in your own life in order to remain balanced?

## **Validity and Reliability of Data**

Validity and reliability are qualifiers that ensure the rigor of research that is being done. “Without rigor, research is worthless, becomes fiction, and loses its utility,” (Morse, Barrett, Mayan, Olson & Spiers, 2002, p. 2). Kvale (1989) describes this process as investigation, questioning, checking and theorizing, which is integral to qualitative inquiry. In quantitative research, validity determines whether or not the research measures what it intends to measure and how truthful the results are (Golafshani, 2003). Reliability is described as the “extent to which results are consistent over time and an accurate representation of the total population under study” in quantitative research (Golafshani, 2003, p. 597).

In qualitative studies, reliability and validity are conceptualized as trustworthiness, rigor and quality (Golafshani, 2003). In order to establish reliability and validity for qualitative inquiry, the investigator must conduct verification strategies. The strategies used to ensure rigor in qualitative studies are investigator responsiveness, methodological coherence, theoretical sampling and sampling adequacy, an active analytic stance, and saturation (Morse et al., 2002).

For this study, the responsiveness of the investigator establishes credibility. It is important for the investigator to be open, use sensitivity, creativity and insight, and be willing to relinquish ideas that are not supported regardless of personal opinions (Morse et al., 2002). The investigator for this study is not a working mom and pursuing this research with the intention to learn. There are no previously held assumptions or ulterior motives. This is in congruence with the notion that the way to achieve validity and

reliability of research is to “eliminate bias and increase the researcher’s truthfulness of a proposition about some social phenomenon” Golafshani, 2003, p. 604).

The credibility of this research is also established by the abilities of the research team. Each researcher was trained on how to conduct professional interviews (Weber, 2011). Training included instruction on how to build rapport with the participant and ensure anonymity by reviewing the informed consent form and explaining the interview process up front. The names and identifying details were changed to protect the women being studied.

There are some challenges to having a research team, which can be overcome by a standardized open-ended interview process. “When a number of different interviewers are used, variations in data created by differences among interviewers will become particularly apparent if an informal conversational approach to data gathering is used or even if each interviewer uses a basic guide” (Patton, 1990, p. 114). The way to guard against this is to create a list of carefully worded questions in advance and train the interviewers not to deviate from the prescribed questions (Patton, 1990). The data being collected is still open-ended but there is less room for interviewer bias. This process of standardizing open-ended interview questions increases the legitimacy and credibility of the data that is collected.

Another activity that can ensure the validity and reliability of the data are methodological coherence. This demands that the research questions match the components of the method used. For this particular study, a theory was used that looks at pro-active versus reactive strategies, which matches the research question. Theoretical

thinking creates a process where ideas from existing data are reconfirmed in new data. This requires constant checking and rechecking, and building off of a solid foundation (Morse et al., 2002). A former qualitative study which utilizes Giele's (2008) life-course methodology is used for this research.

To verify that the sample being studied is adequate, this study consists of participants who best represent the knowledge that is being sought after. All the women chosen for this study are working mothers. This ensures "efficient and effective saturation of categories, with optimal quality data and minimum dross" (Morse et al., 2002, p. 12). In order to obtain sampling adequacy, and to collect sufficient data that will account for all aspects of the phenomenon, a large number of interviews will be collected from women of various ages, ethnicities, religions, and career paths.

The data analysis is considered active if it is being analyzed at the same time as its being collected. This forms a mutual interaction between what is already known and what one needs to know (Morse et al., 2002). This is strategy being used for this study, as the investigator continued conducting interviews at the same time as the coding and analysis is occurring.

In summary, the rigor of qualitative research should be "beyond questions, beyond challenge, and provide pragmatic scientific evidence that must be integrated into our developing knowledge base" (Morse et al., 2002, p. 13). All of these strategies build validity and reliability of this study, which ensure rigor. "There is no unified body of theory, methodology, or method that can collectively be described as qualitative research; indeed, the very idea of qualitative research is open to question" (Rolfe, 2006, p. 305).

## **Interviews**

This study of work-life balance among high-achieving women was done through qualitative methodology of intense life history interviews. The goal of the study is to explore the experiences (identity, relationship style, drive and motivation, and adaptive) that shape the life course of women which impact work-family life balance decisions. The methodology uses in-depth, semi-structured interviews of women to explore this topic of work-life balance. Socio-demographic data were collected to provide context. There has been a great deal of research done on this topic but there is a void of research on the topic of strategies that women use for work-life balance, This research focused on pro-active and re-active strategies that women are utilizing to respond to the demands of dual roles.

Prior to the data gathering process, all researchers went through interview training and were given the interview protocol (Appendix D). This training prepared the interviewer to conduct a professional interview which followed proper procedures. It is important to build a rapport with the person being interviewed and ask clarifying questions whenever they are needed. The interviewer needs to remain objective and neutral and stick to the format that is laid out. The research team read information in preparation for the interview process (Rubin & Rubin, 2005), and completed some pilot interviews before beginning the actual study. This opportunity developed their skills in listening, recording, probing, and establishing a rapport with the subjects (Weber, 2011).

Majority of the interviews conducted were done face-to-face with only a few of interviews done by phone. Interviews were held in offices, coffee shops, restaurants, classrooms and homes. These interviews lasted approximately 1 hour and were audio

recorded and fully transcribed. All interviewees were guaranteed confidentiality and the interviews were coded by using the mother's maiden name. Each maiden name was assigned a numerical value which is how we will track each subject. This anonymity ensured the women a space place to speak freely about their experiences and personal lives without fear of embarrassment or retaliation of any sort.

In order to utilize this database for this research, permission was gained by the IRB. This has been designed to be minimal risk for the subjects involved. Some of the questions had the potential to provoke an emotional response or painful memory, however all participants are given the option of refraining from these questions. These interviews were designed to be informal, allowing the women to share at their personal comfort level.

### **Proposed Data Analysis**

This is a phenomenological study explored strategies that women use for work-life balance. The theoretical framework offers a breadth of questions from the four dimensions of life course from the Giele (2008) study: identity, relational style, motivation and adaptive style. A variety of themes could emerge which will guide the analysis.

A two-step coding system was used by the Weber research team in the analysis of each interview. A software program called NVivo is used for this qualitative data analysis. First, the Giele (2008) framework was used to identify themes in each interview using the following guidelines:

Identity: How does A see herself? Who does she identify with as being like

herself? Does she mention her race, ethnicity, social class, [religion], or how she is different or similar to her family? What qualities does she mention that distinguish her—intelligence, being quiet, likeable, innovative, outstanding, a good mother, lawyer, wife, etc.?

Relational style: What is A's typical way of relating to others? As a leader, follower, negotiator, equal colleague? Taking charge: Is she independent, very reliant on others for company and support, has a lot of friends, is lonely? Nature of the relationship with her husband or significant other [and her children]?

Drive and motivation: Need for achievement, affiliation, power. Is A ambitious and driven or relaxed and easy going? Is she concerned to make a name for herself? Focused more on helping her husband and children than on her own needs (nurturance vs. personal achievement)? Mentions enjoying life and wanting to have time for other things besides work. Enjoys being with children, doing volunteer work, seeing friends. A desire to be in control of her own schedule, to be in charge rather than to take orders.

Adaptive style: What is her energy level? Is "A" an innovator and a risk taker or conventional and uncomfortable with change and new experience? Does A like to manage change, think of new ways of doing things? Is she self-confident or cautious? Used to a slow or fast pace, to routine and having plenty of time, or to doing several things at once. (pp. 401-402)

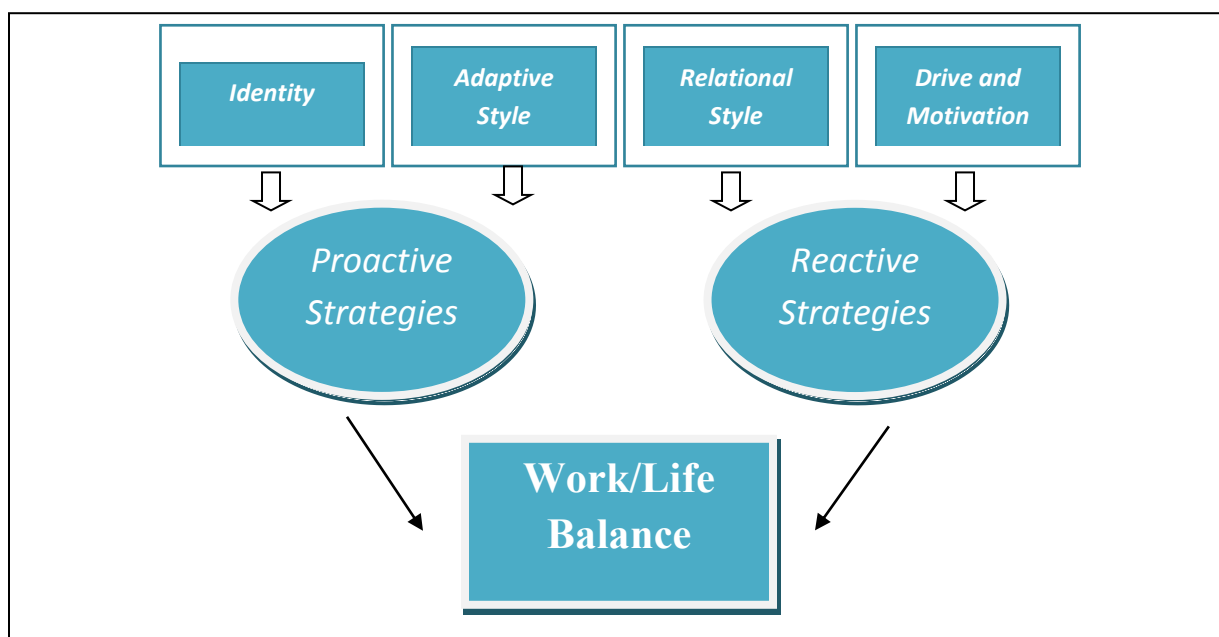
In this first phase, two researchers whom had not conducted any of the interviews went through several transcripts and identified themes which were given a code. Codes are terms that are used to categorize different themes found in the units of text (words, sentences or paragraphs). Using NVivo, codes were assigned to terms such as identity, relationships, and motivation. An emerging "tree" grew out of the numerous codes that were used for each interview. When quotes taken from the interview were relevant in multiple codes, they were assigned all relevant categories.

For the second step of the coding process, the research team agreed upon coding that was inductively derived from each interview (Weber, 2011). Together the team



agreed upon codes that would be used in the final analysis process and a composite profile of themes that characterize women was developed. An analysis of all the themes that emerge will be reviewed for internal consistency.

For this study, the interviews were coded which will identify passages that relate to strategies for work-life balance. The findings will consider similarities and differences of age, race, family background, currently family and emphasis on homemaker and career. The NVivo software was utilized in the analysis of each interview. NVivo is able to connect the socio-demographic data with the qualitative data.



*Figure 1.* Data analysis

### **IRB Process**

The Pepperdine Institutional Review Board (IRB) protects the rights and welfare of the human subjects that were interviewed for this study. In order to begin the research, the investigator wrote a cover letter to the IRB which confirmed that the study acted in

accordance of the ethical principles for human research protections. The cover letter explained that no copyright laws had been violated and all departmental requirements have been fulfilled.

The IRB forms were filled out and submitted to the dissertation chair for approval. The forms were then sent to the department chair and IRB according to the standard expectation of the IRB. An exemption was requested and granted, in order to use the already existing data set from the Weber (2011) research study called the *Digital Women's Project: Work-Life Balance Issues*.

### **Summary**

The goal of this qualitative study is to explore the competing demands of work and life among women who are juggling both. The life story method, modeled after Giele (2008) and Weber (2011) was used to explore the narratives of women who have been interviewed. This methodology used by Giele (2008) focuses on the identity, relationship style, drive and motivation and adaptive style of women.

The life-history interview process seems to be well respected and widely used in this area of research. Gerson (1985) used this design to study women facing hard choices about work and family, Blair-Loy (2003) used this method in her study of competing devotions, and Stone (2007) used it in her review of women who opt-out of their careers. This method looks at the choices a woman makes within the context of her work and family histories prior to those decisions. In qualitative studies, "the depth of information generated allows the researcher to detect deeper levels of meaning that the respondent herself may not be aware of, but which reveal underlying motivations that conventional

or initial accounts belie” (Stone, 2007, p. 254). A specific look at the strategies these women use for work life balance guided the study.

The sample being studied is an existing data set that was collected by the Weber (2011) research team. These interviews investigate women of all ages, ethnicities, religions, social classes, and career paths. A smaller sample was selected of women who are working and raising children simultaneously in order to create the most saturated data results. The investigation adheres to the interview protocol and ethical standards supported by the Pepperdine IRB. All of the women were protected by the anonymity and coding system which record each women by their mother’s maiden name. The investigator acted as an objective commentator and present the themes found among the information being explored.

## Chapter 4: Data Analysis and Findings

### Introduction

What strategies do you implement into your life for work-life balance? Do you wake up early every morning to spend time in meditation and prayer before you face the busy day? Do you stay active and energized by a walk or run? Or maybe you intentionally protect your weekends as time to relax and recharge. All of these strategies can lead to a more balanced lifestyle. There are countless proactive and reactive coping strategies that can be implemented in order to achieve balance including therapy, vacations, exercise and more.

The purpose of this quantitative phenomenological study is to explore strategies that women leaders are implementing into their lives for work-life balance. Although women have been a prominent presence in the workplace for over five decades, the struggles surrounding work-life balance still drives some women to opt out of career opportunities. This study seeks to explore the strategies that successful women leaders are implementing into their lives to remain balanced. This research is significant as it adds to the greater body of literature on work-life balance, but also provides emerging leaders with specific examples and resources for how to create a balanced life.

The data set being analyzed is from The Digital Women's Project (Weber, 2011), which utilized the Giele (2008) life-story framework to explore the identity, relational style, drive and motivation, and adaptive styles of women. From a database of over 150 interviews, 22 participants were selected. These highly successful women referred to a myriad of strategies they use for balance and some major themes emerged from this study. Chapter 4 highlights the findings from these interviews through identifying the

themes regarding strategies for work-life balance. An additional analysis was done by dividing the strategies into the categories of proactive and reactive to see if there were any significant findings.

The research questions which guide this study are:

1. What experiences (identity, relationship style, drive and motivation, and adaptive) shape the life course of women that impact work-family life balance decisions and strategies?
2. What pro-active strategies are women utilizing for work/life balance?
3. What reactive coping strategies are women using in response to the demands of dual roles?

### **Data Collection Procedures**

The female leaders have been selected out of the Digital Women's Project (Weber, 2011) qualitative interviews of doctoral students and professional women. The database was created using a sampling method called snowballing and now contains over 150 interviews of women. Snowballing allowed for the recruiting of subjects by asking each interviewee to refer acquaintances to participate. The pool of subjects continues to grow, which creates a snowball effect adding to the data. This kind of sampling ensures the diversity of experiences and perspectives (Stone, 2007). The women are of various ages, social classes, ethnicities, vocations, geographical locations, marital and parental status.

## Selection Criteria

From the vast amount of interviews, purposive sampling was used to narrow down and select the data that were used for this study. Purposive sampling is a technique used to study a specific “cultural domain with knowledgeable experts within” (Tongco, 2007, p. 147). In order to select the interviews that could voice the struggles and successes of work-life balance, women were first selected on the criteria that they reported raising a family while working full time. After removing women who did not have any children, 98 women remained who had reported having at least one child. Next, women who did not report working full time were removed from the data set, which left 91 interviews. This criterion was based on the premise that women who struggle to raise families while working full time, may have the most amount of expertise when it comes to work-life balance.

The stories of highly successful people and organization are recorded, studied and widely accepted as benchmarks for others who want to duplicate success. The next set of criteria was selected based on the desire to select women leaders who are successful in their careers. Most people have the desire to learn from the success of others. Successful companies and people are studied in order to emulate the practices and performances to replicate success. Collins in writing both best sellers *Built to Last (1994)* and *Good to Great (2001)* studied how great companies grow, attain superior performance and how good companies can become great ones. Isaacson wrote the best-selling book on Amazon.com for 2011 on the life and biography of the American businessman Steve Jobs, who is best known for his work as co-founder of Apple Inc. and Pixar Animation Studios. These books are popular because people want to learn from the best.

People often refer to jobs as making “six figures” in order to establish credibility. In order to select women leaders who are considered successful in their respective fields, only those who make more than \$100k annually were selected for this study. Determining success by a person’s annual salary can be a subjective process, so this is admittedly a limitation of the study. However, this was logically decided upon based on the fact that the average American household income for 2010 was \$49,445 annually (U.S. Census Bureau, 2004). For one woman to make twice that amount on her own (not household), would suggest that she was exceeding the national average in financial success. This number is also significant because women who make over \$100,000 a year are less likely to have children (US Census Bureau, 2004). These women come from a variety of occupations, which makes it difficult to ensure that \$100k of annual salary can imply a person’s success. However, this standard significantly narrowed the pool of applicants down. With this new criterion of annual salary, the number of interviews that had completed sets of recorded and transcribed data generated 22 interviews. These 22 interviews were then coded and analyzed to provide the findings described in this chapter.

### **Population Descriptions**

Before the 22 interviews were confirmed, a review was done to ensure the diversity of the sample pool. The selection represented various educational background, ethnicities, occupations, number of children and generations. This variety can support the generalizing of the findings which is crucial to the reliability and credibility of the study. Participants were selected by the following criteria: (a) must have at least one

child, (b) employed full-time while raising the family, and (c) make an annual salary of \$100,000 or more (this is personal income not household income).

These women vary in the number of children that they are balancing with their work. Four of these women only have one child, 11 of them have two children, six of them have three children and one woman has four children. Ethnic diversity is also very important to this type of study. Ten reported that they are Caucasian, five of the women are African American, two are Filipino and one is Middle Eastern. Three women chose not to report their ethnicity for this study.

These women represent different generations as well. Four women were born in the 1940s, three were born in the '50s, seven were born in the '60s and seven were born in the '70s. There was one participant who chose not to report any indication of age. It is no surprise that this group of highly successful women is also very educated. Six of them earned bachelor's degrees, four earned master's degrees, and 12 of them earned doctoral degrees.

The women selected also represent various geographical locations. There are 18 from the United States; five are from California, two from Kansas, one from Idaho, one from Illinois, one from New Mexico, one from New York, one from North Carolina, one from Ohio, one from Oklahoma, one from Pennsylvania, one from Texas, two from Wisconsin. There are several from outside of the US; one from Canada, one from Egypt and two from the Philippines.

Most of these women are married, although one is single and one is living with her significant other. Nine of these women work in the field of education, eight women



work in the corporate sector, two are therapists, one is employed at a non-profit organization, one is in the military and one is a lawyer. This is a wide representation of voices from women in various career settings.

Some women were not comfortable reporting their salaries, but indicated that they made over \$100,000 annually. We made sure to clarify that this was their personal salary, as opposed to their annual household income. The 22 interviews are recorded by number and pseudonym, so that all identifying information could be removed and confidentiality upheld. The demographics for this study are represented in Table 1.

### **Interviews**

This study consisted of what Patton (1990) calls standardized open-ended interview questions. A set of carefully worded questions were asked with the intention of taking each person through the same sequence of interview questions. By using the same set of questions, the possibility of bias from different interviewers was reduced. As the original data were collected by multiple interviewers serving on the Weber (2011) research team, consistency and structure was provided through a standardized open-ended interview process. Patton (1990) states three reasons for using this type of interview process:

1. The exact instrument used in the evaluation is available for inspection by decision makers and information users;
2. Variation among interviewers can be minimized where a number of different interviewer must be used; and
3. The interview is highly focused so that interviewee time is carefully used (p. 287)

Table 1

*Population Demographics*

	Education	Vocation	Ethnicity	Status	Children	Salary
#1	MA	Corporate	African-American	Married	2	\$100K+
#2	Dr.	Education	Caucasian	Married	1	\$100K
#3	Dr.	Education	Caucasian	Married	2	\$100K
#4	MA	Non-Profit	Caucasion	Married	2	\$100K
#5	Dr.	Corporate	Caucasian	Married	2	\$108K
#6	BA	Corporate	African-American	Married	1	\$265K
#7	Dr.	Education	Caucasian	Married	4	\$260K
#8	Dr.	Military	African-American	Married	3	\$100K+
#9	Dr.	Psychiatrist		Partner	2	\$175K
#10	BA	Corporate	Caucasian	Married	2	\$100K+
#11	MA	Corporate		Married	3	\$167K
#12	BA	Education	African-American	Married	2	\$100K
#13	Dr.	Psychologist		Married	2	\$100K
#14	BA	Corporate	Caucasian	Married	3	\$126K
#15	BA	Corporate	Caucasion	Married	2	\$150K
#16	Dr.	Education	Caucasion	Married	3	\$170K
#17	BA	Corporate	African-American	Married	3	\$100K+
#18	Dr.	Lawyer	African-American	Single	2	\$100K
#19	Dr.	Education	Filipino	Married	1	\$100K
#20	MA	Education	Middle Eastern	Married	1	\$100K+
#21	Dr.	Education	Caucasian	Married	3	\$110K
#22	Dr.	Education	Filipino	Married	2	\$100K+

The standardized open-ended interview process reduces variation among interviewers, and increases the legitimacy and credibility of the study (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2003). The research team was trained to not deviate from the prescribed questions that were carefully selected and worded in advance, as to preserve the consistency of the data collected. This open ended process allows participants to answer the questions with as much detail as they desire (Turner, 2010).

Although the questions are written out in advance in the exact way that the researcher is required to ask them, there is still room for probing. Probing questions are used as follow up for clarification and expansion and give the interviewer flexibility in the data collection process (Turner, 2010). These probes can be inserted throughout the interview as deemed appropriate by the investigator.

These semi-structured interviews were designed to explore the topic of work-life balance among high achieving female leaders. The interviews lasted approximately 1 hour in person, on the phone or via Skype (computer software program). The interviews were recorded and transcribed, then uploaded to Nvivo9 qualitative analysis software program for coding and analyzing. All participants were guaranteed confidentiality which is why the original names were removed for this study. Each interview was originally coded by the mother's maiden name and assigned a numerical value. For the purpose of this study, the participants will be referred to as the pseudonyms listed in Table 1. This allowed the researcher to be completely unbiased and unaware of any identifying information related to the interview subjects.

Participants filled out a consent form and demographic questionnaire prior to the interview. An explanation of the interview process was given and subjects were

reminded that they were not required to answer any questions that stretched beyond their comfort level. The researcher asked if the interviews could be recorded and then asked the questions that were laid out by the Weber (2011) study based on the life-story framework. All interviews that were selected for this study were transcribed and then coded several times in search for themes related to strategies used for work-life balance.

### **Data Analysis**

The interviews that were selected from Weber's (2011) dataset were recorded in order to capture the responses verbatim. These voice recordings were transferred into full transcriptions which were uploaded into the Nvivo9 software for coding. "Data interpretation and analysis involve making sense out of what people have said, looking for patterns, putting together what is said in one place with what is said in another place, and integrating what different people have said" (Patton, 1990, p. 347).

In order to make sense out of the data, it has been compiled and grouped together in sections, also known as themes or codes (Creswell, 2003, 2007). The themes consist of phrases that express an idea or thought. If a phrase, expression or idea comes up consistently, then it needs to be coded by the researcher (Kvale, 2007). The Nvivo9 software calls each theme that is coded a "node." Each of the 22 interviews was coded one time through in order to create a list of nodes. Anytime a subject mentioned any sort of coping mechanism or strategy that could be used for work-life balance, a node was created. The researcher had to go back through each interview a second time to ensure that no references were missed. This gave enough information to respond to the first research question.

To search for answers to the second and third questions, the researcher had to go back through the list of nodes (strategies) that were identified and divide them into two categories: proactive and reactive strategies. Some strategies qualify for both categories so there was some overlap. Overall the strategies for work-life balance that were identified seem to be profound in nature and comprehensive. Some strategies were referred to more often than others, but all strategies will be included in the findings as to give the reader a wide selection of resources to pull from.

## **Findings**

The first research question addresses the following: What experiences (identity, relationship style, drive and motivation, and adaptive) shape the life course of women that impact work-family life balance decisions and strategies? The questions pertaining to these four areas of each woman's life history, gave a very comprehensive look at strategies for work-life balance. Some strategies emerged through the discussion of identity or relationship style, while others surfaced at the description of personal drive and motivation or adaptive style. By far, the majority of strategies for work-life balance came from the fifth set of questions that specifically ask for coping strategies regarding the demands of the plurality of roles.

From the experiences (identity, relationship style, drive and motivation and adaptive style) which followed the Giele (2008) life story methodology, 96 strategies emerged. These were coded by nodes individually through the Nvivo software. Each interview revealed at least one new strategy (node), so the transcripts had to be reviewed several times for efficiency. The following table lists each subject, the number of nodes that are referenced followed by the amount of times a reference was made (Table 2). It

also gives us the word count and percentage of the interview that was coded. The average amount of strategies from each interview was 26.

Table 2

*Source Summary*

Name	Nodes	References	Word Count	% of Interview Coded for Strategies
Ada	12	17	2137	23.87 %
Beth	21	50	11298	43.77 %
Cary	30	82	13639	46.96 %
Debi	19	33	4754	40.30 %
Ella	26	46	3229	61.84 %
Fran	17	24	4670	52.37 %
Gale	27	63	8192	68.96 %
Helen	35	65	5506	72.47 %
Ira	27	47	4801	59.62 %
Jan	21	36	3633	45.95 %
Kim	25	68	5710	60.77 %
Laura	25	58	4563	74.90 %
Minnie	28	54	5187	56.38 %
Nicole	22	31	3040	47.15 %
Ola	36	62	5268	72.24 %
Penny	37	89	12454	48.18 %
Rose	26	48	9771	37.51 %
Sara	14	22	650	79.74 %
Tara	32	80	12441	47.72 %
Urma	44	103	11996	65.99 %
Veronica	30	41	3578	39.66 %
Whitney	19	31	4057	43.85 %

Every time a strategy was mentioned, a node was created to represent it. The 96 nodes are listed below in alphabetical order as the first list of strategies for work-life balance (Table 3). This table also gives the number of sources which refer to the strategy and the number of references that we made overall. This was the first stage of the coding process.

Table 3

*Strategies for Work-Life Balance*

Name	Sources	References
Accept responsibility and/or Apologize	2	4
Accepting challenges (constant)	15	23
Acupuncture	1	1
Affirmation at work	12	22
Alone Time	6	8
Anti-mentor (learning what NOT to do)	5	5
Babysitters	10	15
Balance	18	43
Be present. Quality time with family	6	7
Be resourceful	1	1
Being Honest. Talking to the kids.	6	7
Bounce back. Resilience	2	2
Break from work while kids are young	7	19
Calm	3	5
Children know how important they are	6	7
Clear expectations from employer	1	1
College Fund	1	1
Competitiveness	3	5
Confidence	18	40
Cooking	1	2
Courageous	8	12
Domestic Help	10	16
Don't Take Things Personally	2	4
Double dip: Multitasking	4	5
Drink wine	1	1
Driven	1	3
Education. Growth. Try new things	13	29
Efficiency	1	1
Emulate Men	1	1
Exercise	12	23
Extended Family	13	19
Faith	17	60
Flexible Work	10	22
Focus	3	5
Follow Intuition	4	5
Friends	10	19
Giving Kids Space	2	4
Goal Setting	15	28

*(table continues)*

Name	Sources	References
Guarded at work, professional and personal boundaries	1	2
Guilt is inevitable	14	19
Healthy eating	4	6
Hiring great people at work	4	5
Independence	5	8
Institutional Values	8	14
integrating work and family	5	7
Intentional parenting	1	2
Journal	1	3
Keep work and home separate	5	6
Laugh	1	1
Learn from mistakes	1	1
Letting Go of Perfection	12	17
Love Motherhood	5	5
Manage emotions	1	1
Massage	1	1
Meaningful work	21	71
Meditation Prayer	3	3
Mentor	21	58
Networking	2	4
Never look back	5	7
One Step at a Time	15	42
Organizational Skills	8	14
Organizations outside of Work	16	34
Patience	1	1
Peer support mentoring	8	11
Pensions. Retirement	6	7
Perseverance	2	4
Pet therapy	1	4
Planner	5	13
Play hard	12	24
Positive attitude	1	2
Preparedness	2	2
Prioritize	14	29
Prioritizing Important Family Events	19	61
Proximity of work and home/school	9	13
Reading	2	3
Rear view memories	1	4
Rest	1	1
Sacrifice. say no	13	24
Self-care	1	1
Spouse Time	13	27

(table continues)



Name	Sources	References
Supportive spouse	15	40
Stability	1	1
Start now. don't wait	5	10
Success of Children	15	33
Talk to other moms	1	1
Technology	7	11
Therapy	2	2
think outside box	2	2
Travel	10	16
Work Hard	19	42
Writing	1	5

There were some strategies referenced by multiple sources, which suggest significance for working women who wish to balance their competing roles. Several of the strategies could be compiled into overarching themes while some of them could be discarded as they were only referenced by one or two of the subjects being interviewed. In order to make more sense of the data, strategies that were similar were lumped together into one of 18 themes/strategies. These themes are listed below in the order of significance based on how many sources made references to each theme (Table 4). The subcategories are listed to give an idea of the strategies that were folded together.

Several sources referred to certain strategies more than once, but for this study we will look at the amount of women who utilized a certain strategy for work-life balance. The strategies are listed below in order of the frequency (according to the largest amount of references made by each participant). The next section describes each theme, with examples taken directly from the transcribed interviews to further explain.

Table 4

*Themes of Strategies for Work-Life Balance*

Meaningful Work Affirmation at Work
Mentor Peer-Mentor Anti-Mentor
Work Hard Competitive Driven
Prioritize Prioritizing Important Family Events Goal Setting Sacrifice and Say “No” Spouse Time (Date Nights) Organizational Skills Planning Ahead Focus Preparedness Multi-tasking
Confidence Courage Independence
Faith
Organizations Outside of Work
Support System Spouse Support Extended Family Domestic Help Childcare
Philosophy One Step at a Time Accepting Challenges Letting Go of Perfection Never Look Back Start Now. Don’t Wait. Jump In. Follow Intuition Accept Responsibility Think Outside the Box Don’t Take Things Personally Bounce Back. Resiliency. Perseverance. Learn from Mistakes. Rear View Memories.

*(table continues)*

Themes of Strategies for Work-Life Balance	
Intentional Parenting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Benchmark: Success of Children</li> <li>Be Present. Quality time with children.</li> <li>Being Honest. Talking about work/life issues.</li> <li>Children know how important they are.</li> </ul>
Education/Professional Development/Try New Things	
Self-Care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Exercise</li> <li>Alone Time</li> <li>Healthy Eating</li> <li>Meditation/Prayer</li> <li>Therapy</li> <li>Pet Therapy</li> <li>Rest</li> <li>Acupuncture</li> <li>Massage</li> </ul>
Play Hard	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Travel/Vacation</li> <li>Time with Friends</li> <li>Drink Wine</li> </ul>
Hobbies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Traveling</li> <li>Reading</li> <li>Cooking</li> <li>Writing/Journaling</li> </ul>
Work Strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Flexible Work Schedules</li> <li>Hiring Great People to work with</li> <li>Clear Expectations from Employer</li> <li>Institutional Values</li> <li>Networking</li> </ul>
Proximity of Work to Home/School	
Technology	
Take Break from Work while kids are babies	
Integrating/Segregating Work & Family	
Manage Emotions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Love Motherhood</li> <li>Calm</li> <li>Guilt</li> <li>Patience</li> <li>Laugh</li> <li>Positive Attitude</li> </ul>

***Find meaningful work.*** Women must be doing work that they find truly meaningful. This makes the journey of working while raising children worth all of the effort that it takes to do both successfully. The number one strategy that women referenced was having meaningful work, with 21 sources referencing it 70 times throughout the study. This is significant in that women who choose to work while raising a family usually do so because they believe in the work they are doing. If their work is significant, then their children benefit from the investment they make at work in addition to home. Here are some comments regarding this strategy of meaningful work (all quoted materials are based on personal communication with participants in this study):

Kim: So, I always knew that I wanted to help people and everything that I've done since college, that I've really enjoyed, has been helping people in some capacity.

Laura: I really got involved in the teaching and I loved it and I thought let me get my certification and leave the police department and just teach full time. Because I really wanted to be off on weekends, and I wanted to have a life. When I worked for the police department, I was always at work at night and I just wanted a 9 to 5 situation, a quality of life change and at the same time enter something that I was passionate about. So I basically started teaching at that time.

Minnie: I feel really excited about my career like it's all I feel like I am at the beginning of really big things, even more happening, which is really exciting. So I am just like energized I guess the feelings for myself are like I am so excited and energized and that is really what I feel.

Ola: I was just---I don't know I think I'm meant to work. And I think I'm meant to be creative and to provide that energy and to share that with others.

Penny: It's incredibly rewarding to be a superintendent because you have such impact on an organization in a positive way. I mean, when people know you care and that you're for them and that fundamentally we're here for one reason: That's to further the life experiences for children.

Rose: I think that I am meant to be where I am because I am meant to help people connect with people build certain relationships do other things for other people and that's fine but wanting to find somewhere that I am so proud you know probably being proud of what I am doing and tell my daughters this is what you

came for in life this is kind why you do this school and try to structure so you do something that you really like to do that really is going to affect other people.

Tara: But it was – I didn't have somewhere to go. I didn't have purpose. You know, where are the people I'm supposed to be helping today? Who are the people I'm supposed to be interacting with today? It literally took me a month to get over the job loss.

Urma: I think this made me very determined that I was going to do something meaningful. That I was going to show them that this investment whatever it was, of time of money of energy, was worthwhile.

Meaningful work also includes the strategy that was originally labeled “affirmation at work.” There were 12 sources that made 23 references to getting some sort of affirmation at work. This affirmation included praise, promotions, rewards, recognition and other satisfaction that was derived from these accolades. The assumption could be made that women who receive affirmation from work find their roles more meaningful, and therefore find more success at work-life balance.

***Obtain a mentor.*** The second theme that surfaced most frequently was mentoring. Having a mentor is a strategy that women employ in their lives as they juggle issues of balance. These mentors serve as a support system and model the balance of work and home. Of the 22 interviews, there were 21 subjects who referenced mentoring as a strategy for work-life balance, and it was referenced a total of 58 times throughout all the interviews. Beth stated:

I then went back to get my PhD, and I just was so fortunate to have some faculty mentors who really, helped, sort of shaped where I've gone. There were individual people at each step of the road that encouraged me or made me think differently about what I would do with my career, or opened doors for me that were huge. And so I really have a great appreciation for – not – some of them were mentors but some of them were just friends who saw something in me and encouraged me to do something. They encouraged me to do things I might not

have done otherwise, and gave me opportunities to do, you know, be in leadership roles in ways I might not have.

Cary shared: I had some female mentors that I really appreciated having some pretty personal dialogues with, even about this issue. How do you handle your kids, what did you do? And then as a young faculty, I think I had a pretty good department or program chair who was helpful on a practical level. And then different pieces of mentoring, it's not like I'm not open to feedback, but financial stuff comes from these people, you know just sort of how are you going to deal with empty nest is with these people who are a few years older.

Ella stated: I think mentors have really helped me sort of think outside the box and not in such a straight line and that's been very valuable, and I am trying to do that with my daughter as well as encouraging her to think outside of the box.

Helen had a similar experience with a mentor: I would go in and sit down with her and you know she kind of shared things with me and encouraged me just really help me as far as thinking outside the box um and kind of directing my career aspirations in that way.

Fran suggests: You got to get somebody, get under somebody's wing and let them help you through it or you just got to be a quick study.

Ola stated: My first (Mentor) was at, and still good friends, her name is Joan. And at the time she was a single mom and she was running a business. And just—she was sort of my first glimpse, actually take that back my mom actually had to go back and teach and ended up running the household and get me through school and keep my head above water and all that so that was a profound impact. But in the business side of things its mainly been this one lady individual that I just saw what a great sense of female attributes that she still carried. She was still a woman, she was still a female but she was holding her own on the business side. And she wasn't trying to play like a man would play, she was just herself. And that was a great impact on me. She was also the first one to give me some great opportunities. So I think she saw stuff in me I didn't know I had. So she's probably my greatest one that I would think of. And now it's sort of why I do what I do is so I can mentor others.

Veronica shared: I have had mentors. And there has been a mentor recently that I have had, that I have admired greatly and I would like to emulate based on her ability to balance family and career and her moral and ethics as well in handling difficult work related situations with honesty and integrity.

There were several sub-categories that ended up under the umbrella of mentoring. There were eight women who referred to peer-mentors who encouraged them in their journey. These were co-workers or friends who gave advice and served in a mentor-type role. The peer-mentor strategy was not significant enough to highlight on its own so it was consolidated into the mentor category. Another strategy was referred to by one source as the “anti-mentor” or someone who was in an influential role but was teaching lessons about what not to do in leadership. There were five sources who referred to have this type of “anti-mentor” in their life who taught them about work-life balance in a more indirect way.

***Work hard.*** One thing that makes these women successful is that they work hard. Some of them even said that they work harder than everyone else around them. Having a strong work ethic is the third most referenced strategy for balance, with 19 sources referring to it 42 different times. Several sources referred to being competitive and or driven. These characteristics are similar to having a strong work ethic and wanting to achieve, so they were merged together. One of the participants, Jan, explains this strategy here:

This is a very hard role um, the juggling of uh family and um and work. And I think it's harder for women than for men. Um men often have a wife who does, I would say, more than half of the work at home. I didn't have a husband who did more than half of the work at home. I was really doing a lot of both. Uh I guess, just working very very hard and wanting to do it. Um I wanted to have children, I wanted the family, and I wanted the job. So it it's a driver, it makes you work very very hard. And I do like working hard, I like being busy and I always have. So I think there's a certain high energy level that you have to have to um achieve a successful balance.

Ola explained: I've always known how to work hard. But I didn't know the demands that having kids would have. I hadn't a clue. Still, I'm always still

shocked. I have one other like, close kind of mom friend that's in the neighborhood. And she doesn't work. But we still say the same thing every night at 9 o'clock. You know, like "Oh thank god the kids are in bed and I can breathe, and are you watching *Parenthood*?" And you know what I mean? It's still kind of that, even though I work and she doesn't work it's that same feeling every day where no matter what you do it all goes by so fast. And there's so much to do, um, so was I prepared? No, I don't think anybody's prepared. I think people that prepare are the ones that end up being so surprised that their schedule they laid out for exactly when their baby is going to nap and exactly that their baby is going to be potty trained at this time, that's not going to happen (laughter).

Urma said: It occurred to me when I was working a 23 hour day and burning out in my job, but I don't think I recognized it then as a work life balance. It's not just about a balance, it's a reward. To me it's a cost/benefit thing. I think if you're working hard at work or school, maybe a parenting and maybe just having fun. There's a certain level of effort you put in and the point is do you feel like the activities you're investing in are rewarding for you enough. I don't think I am working any less than what I probably did, between the demands of parenting, going to school, being a wife, working, whatever; my days are long and hurried, but they're rewarding. It's the right mix and that's where the balance is. If I did 18 hours just of work, or just fun to be honest, it wouldn't do it for me either. I don't think people really talk about balance from that perspective. It's not that I want to do 50/50, it's that it's the right balance, the right mix, I like that word, the right mix better than balance...I think that's the right word because balance implies that it is equitable...

Veronica: There has been equal work opportunity as long as we want it, we're willing to work for it and prove to others that we can do it, the work has been there. I've always been very strong and when somebody tells me that I can't do anything, the likelihood is minimal; it makes me want to work harder.

***Prioritize.*** The fourth most popular strategy was intentional decisions to prioritize important family events. Nineteen women referred to this 61 times in the study. These women have learned to put important events on their calendar and protect them against anything work-related. Many of these women learned this strategy the hard way, and shared stories of missing a child's birthday party or showing up late to a school play.



These circumstances have driven working moms to make it a top priority to be at important family functions.

Beth: Things for my daughter, you know, she's a pretty serious volleyball player, so I put her volleyball tournaments and games on my calendar. I just got information today about her eighth grade graduation coming up. So you put those things, and you protect some of those times. You can't do everything that you want to there, but you just have to decide if it's enough of a priority and you have to calendar for it and plan for it and you have to just make it happen.

Ella: My daughter is a competitive figure skater and she never misses practice and we're always at her performances and her costumes are made and you just sleep less and buy less and it works. I think the creation of outlook, you're going to laugh, but the creation of outlook has really helped me be successful at juggling, because I've now set my mother up on outlook and my husband is on outlook and so I can create events. John has open house Hannah has an ice skating private, whatever it is I can set those up, and so we can manage the calendar between the 3 of us. I think we do a fairly good job.

Helen: I've been doing it for years, sometimes things fall by the wayside, you don't get a chance to accomplish them, and if you plan your time right those things (that) will fall by the wayside are things that you didn't necessarily have to do anyway they were things that you wanted to do. If those things that fall by the wayside are the priorities of the important things there is an imbalance, there is some reprioritizing that needs to take place in one's life but if you plan right you get all the big things done, the important things done, the critical things done, things that matters, and the things that don't matter they can fall off your plate, they can be done later, or not at all because they don't really matter.

Laura: Our kids are very accustomed to having either me or my husband at all of their activities and events. All the kids know, my kids at the school, all their friends and staff know that we are going to be there. If I'm not there then my husband is going to be there. Those types of things that balances out for me. That's why I continue to work.

Prioritization was a major theme for women striving to achieve work-life balance.

There are several sub-categories to prioritizing that should be noted here. Several sources (14) mentioned the need to prioritize in order to stay balanced, 15 sources mentioned the importance of setting goals (priorities), 13 sources mentioned the need to sacrifice and say 'no' to extra things after looking at priorities, 13 sources mentioned making their

spouse a priority. Eight sources referenced the need to be organized and five sources referred to themselves as “planners.” This breakdown is demonstrated in Table 6.

Table 5

*Break-down of Prioritizing Strategy*

Prioritize Strategy	# of Sources	# of References
Prioritizing Important Family Events	19	61
Goal Setting	15	28
Sacrifice/Say ‘No’	13	24
Spouse Time	13	28
Organizational Skills	8	14
Planner	5	13

***Increase confidence.*** Confidence can help women who are trying to balance multiple roles. Any insecurity might interfere with one’s ability to juggle everything, but confidence is the key to maintaining equilibrium. Confidence was a strategy that 18 women referred to 40 times in this study. Other personal traits these women referred to less frequently are courage (8 sources) and independence (5 sources). Confidence was described as:

Cary: And all of us are like whatever, take on the world kind of deal. So overall I would say I was very confident, and you know I have my own introspective, kind of thinking through oh what was that about and why did I do that, but overall I felt pretty able to do what I wanted to do, and I’m grateful.

Debi: I think I’m pretty self-assured. I don’t feel the need promote myself, which I think sometimes come from not being secure in who you are. If I don’t understand something I can apply myself and learn what I need to learn to understand it. You know I think where you probably, where I have the most self-doubt is as a mother, you know am I doing everything that I can as a mother, are they where they should be at this age, and all of that. Having kids throws your, your self-assurance for a loop but um, in the work world and in and things like that I guess I feel more secure, you know?

Gale: I always for whatever reason had the confidence that I could do whatever came my way. I don’t know, it’s just sort of an innate confidence, and I don’t know where I got it but all my sisters have it.

Laura: I am more confident. I love me some me.

**Faith.** Another strategy that women are using to remained balance is faith. Out of the 22 women who were interviewed, 17 of them referred to their religion or faith 40 separate times. This shows that faith can be a great strategy for women who are thinking about taking on several roles simultaneously.

Beth: You have to trust God in those situations that these things work out for a reason. I continue to sort of grow and develop in my faith and as a Christian and in how that influences what I do on a daily basis.

Cary: But it's true, whatever is crazy with work or with this or that, in the greater scheme of things, so the faith piece is a huge, huge anchor. And huge anchor for my family, both keeping things in perspective but the faith community is there.

Debi: And I have a high internal sense of accountability because I feel like the work that I do is a calling in my life, and so I have to do it to the very best ability because not because I report to a board of directors or you know to make my parents proud, but really to serve God. That's why I feel like I have to show up and be very ethical in my decision making. And uh, do my best every day.

Gale: I know I will never quit being a church person. I'll never quit being a person of faith.

Kim: There again it's that whole belief with the new found relationship with God- he's going to take care of me, and so, I'm not really worried about that. Exercise and God have been the two pieces that I use to make sure that I'm balancing myself and doing what I need to do to stay stressed than I would otherwise be.

Minnie: I'm spiritual you know more religious in a way you know not super but you know we're spiritual I would say.

Penny: I'm a very faith-based and there's a plan for everything. And I think life is a series of little reminders.

Whitney: You know recently with a family member going through a lot and didn't realize how strong my faith was. It's sad to say that I do not go to church as opposed to every Sunday and (I) may not pray every day but I my faith in God and everything that I do and everything that happens to me and all my decisions I know is based on a conversation or this belief that it's meant to be. And I know I get my strength from God. And just in talking with the family more it didn't occur to me how strong I was because I think I have always just taking it for granted.

***Organizations outside of work.*** Do you have a life outside of work and home?

These highly achieving women actually make it a point to be involved in other organizations in order to remain grounded. From volunteering, professional associations, and serving on the PTA (parent teacher association), these women are finding ways to get involved in other things. 16 women referred to these organizations and here are a few examples:

Debi: And we started volunteering with habitat and I really enjoyed that and kind of moved into that as a full time career at some point in my life. Just involved in kids school, in I sit on a couple board of directors.

Urma: We probably have a community work function at least once a month if not more. That becomes our date nights.

Helen: I was on the board of director for the women shelter, I also serve on the board of directors (at) the Sage Community Health Center which is a medical center that offers free medical support to family that can't afford medical care. And so I serve on that board of directors as well right now, I am a member of the action committee that the Mayor established to help fight bullying within our community.

It does seem odd that women would engage in this as a strategy for work-life balance. Why would a woman who is extremely busy with both work and family life choose to take on extra responsibilities and commitments? The answer could be that these organizations give women an outlet for engaging in meaningful work. As the most important strategy is to find work that is significant, it could be that if a woman does not find meaning in the work she is doing at the office, then she will find meaningful work outside the office. This could also just be an outlet for women to connect with others and find a support system. This brings us to the next strategy.

***Support system.*** Almost all of the women interviewed were married (20 out of 22), so it is no surprise the 15 of them referenced the importance of having a supportive spouse to make work-life balance possible. In fact, the support of a spouse was

referenced 40 times by these 15 sources. Here are some segments of the interviews that expressed this as a strategy:

Beth: I have a really amazing husband, who without him I couldn't do the job that I do. He is extremely supportive, he is a full partner in our marriage and in our raising our child and in taking care of the house stuff and life stuff. So coping strategies, let's see. Well, I married well. That's my most important coping strategy. Uh, and I mentioned this earlier, my husband is, as I said, we are very much partners in our life experience, and if it weren't for that, I'm not sure I could do what I do professionally and feel like I sort of have a balanced home life if he didn't carry as much of the load as he does, so for me, having married someone who views us as equals in the experience and who full supports what I do and values what I do, and has made some sacrifices in his own career and life that he probably would've chosen to differently if I did something different, has been huge. And, uh and makes it completely possible for me to do what I do.

Cary: Yeah, and I would give him a lot of that credit. Like he was probably more feminist minded or whatever you want to call it, when we were first even dating. Like he saw that in me, he saw my strengths, he saw my leadership, he's not threatened that, he's really grateful for that.

Ella: I'm really fortunate that I'm married to a wonderful man who picks up the slack when it needs to be picked up.

Helen: My husband took on more responsibilities doing house work, cooking and paying the bills and things that I would normally be responsible for so that I can concentrate solely on my studies, so I went to work came home and immediately I just hit the books so he took on a large load.

Kim: I have a supportive husband, so anyone who is doing this by themselves, God love em!

Laura: I think the family life may suffer sometimes, but because my husband is equally as committed to his job and the family, I think we balance it out between the two of us. I think what makes it work is having two people that understand it because my husband has equally demanding job but thankfully his job isn't always as demanding and mine isn't either.

Minnie: I think the biggest coping strategy is leaning on my husband, I think that's what I do most of the time, if I'm struggling with what I'm doing is I reach out to him and he helps me make decisions. I think what made me think I could do both successfully is my husband. You know I wouldn't have even ventured in doing what I'm doing or continue to increase my working or reach for those higher goals without my husband and a partner. That's really the honest answer.

Nicole: My husband is very supportive and he is pretty tired when he gets home so I don't think he cares too much that I work late. And he's very proud of me and of my accomplishments, so that's good that I have that support, I think that's very very important.

Ola: So as far as coping I think I have a great partnership with my husband in that it is not, I don't feel like I'm super mom. I feel like it is definitely a partnership. I take them to school, he picks them up. It's not that I'm trying to do everything and if I have a late meeting he knows and he covers. That type of thing. So there's a great partnership and a great balance that I'm very lucky to have because I know women that don't have that. Um, so coping I think would just be that I have a good partner.

Tara: I think my husband's support has a lot to do with I shouldn't say ability but makes it easier for me to cope. Because I'm a human being too and there are days when I just have a hard time. And he has found in – hopefully in a lot of marriages you find ways to support each other – he has found what he needs to say to me sometimes or what to do to kind of get me through it. Gary has always been very supportive of me in my career and he has an equally demanding job. So I think we both learned how to be supportive of each other and we recognize that we have what we have because of our jobs.

Whitney: There are a few times when I felt like I was trying to do too much with full-time work, two kids and school but I think that's where I talked to my husband and just asked him to step in a little bit more but just being a vulnerable enough to say I can do all this, that's was a very big step for me. There was a few times when I looked around and the house was dirty and I was like no I can't do this. I think that I don't really like to show my weakness but those couple of times just being open with my husband and saying I can't do all of this.

There are other forms of support systems that these women are relying on.

Thirteen of the sources referenced the support of extended family 19 times. Eleven women made reference to different types of support through domestic responsibilities such as housekeeping. Ten sourced made a reference to childcare that was needed to help with work-life balance. All of these strategies are there to create a support structure for women who want to work while raising families, whether it is spousal support, extended family, or outsourcing for childcare and domestic responsibilities.

***Work-life balance philosophy.*** Although there is not one consistent philosophy amongst working women who are striving for balance, many of them referred to some sort of philosophy or worldview which helps them achieve it. Tara explained it well in her interview, “there’s always a price to the choices that you make, but there’s always a benefit too. So I think if you can frame your mind appropriately it doesn’t seem so bad at the end.” These women are creating frameworks or philosophies which help them adjust to the pace and demands of dual roles. Fourteen different theories or philosophies emerged, although only four of them were mentioned by a significant amount of sources. Below is a list of all fourteen philosophies, with descriptions of the top four theories which were referred to by 12 or more sources (see Table 6).

Table 6

*Framework for Work-Life Balance*

Work-Life Balance Philosophy	# of Sources	# of References
One Step at a Time	15	42
Accept Challenges as Constant	15	23
Letting Go of Perfection	12	17
Start Now. Don’t Wait.	5	10
Never Look Back	5	7
Follow Intuition	4	5
Don’t Take Things Personally	2	4
Accept Responsibility. Apologize.	2	4
Perseverance	2	4
Bounce Back. Resilience.	2	2
Think Outside the Box	2	2
Rear View Memories	1	4
Learn from mistakes	1	1

The first philosophy these women shared was taking things “One Step at a Time.” There were 15 different women who mentioned this type of strategy with a total of 42 references made. It stood out as a way of viewing life and therefore contributes to work-

life balance. Women who take “one step at a time” do not hold too tightly to their future plans and goals. They really focus on taking the step that is in front of them and making decisions for the next season of life.

Cary: Well like I said, the one step at a time thing, I never thought I was going there, you know like, faculty stuff so that was a surprise, but then once I was there I never thought I was going to leave either. So everything was a surprise. I wasn't one to like plan my wedding, plan my babies, plan my you know as a kid... I don't think I had a particular experience so again this kind of one step at a time, like we had Josh. it was one step at a time kind of thing, you don't realize how hard its going to be but that's just as well. I have often likened it to labor. Especially the doctorate, it's a huge under taking and do you really know, like if somebody would have said you will write this many papers, spend this many clinical hours, spend this much of your life doing research, would you really want to do it, probably not. But you do this thing and then you do this thing.

Gale: Oh I didn't expect any of it. If you would have asked me, even after I went to law school, that I would end up being a federal judge or a law school dean or all the things I ended up doing, I would have laughed because there were none on the horizon. But all that changed. So you know, I never have, this is probably a terrible admission, but I never have really made plans and there are all these people that talk about life planning and oh my gosh, if I'd have done that I would have been jettisoned a long time ago. I kind of waited and saw what opportunities were out there and I will say with a fair amount of courage took them. Because if you don't take them when they come along, they may not come along again. I really didn't want to become a judge, I became a judge at 39 years old with a brand new baby. But, my senator said to me if you don't take it now, you may never get the chance again and he was absolutely right. So, um, it was a good thing I did. And it turned out to be a great decision.

Laura: With employment, I didn't expect to be an assistant superintendent. I did not see that coming for me. When I first began my education and I started my masters degree, I really was limited in thinking that I would be happy in becoming a principal. That was it for me. I never knew that I would move further after I became a principal. After I was in that position for a year or two then I did think that maybe I had aspirations for other things. So that was kind of surprising. That is something that again, my goals shifted once I had achieved one level of accomplished.

Rose: And as far as family and lifestyle, I knew I wanted to get married eventually and I knew I wanted to have children but I never had a plan for that. Like such and such years I will work then I will stop and have a family. I didn't plan it that way. And so, what ended up happening is that I graduated and I got pregnant. So is kind of doing this concentrated effort without a plan because I



never had a plan so is kind a day to day what's to do next maybe short term goal we can handle those.

“Accepting Challenges as Constant” is the second most referred to philosophy.

These women acknowledged the fact that raising a family while working full time is difficult and there will be constant challenges. There were 15 women who mentioned the need to accept the difficulty of work-life balance 23 times. These women have come to accept challenges which have helped them in their endeavors.

Beth: Even as long as I've been doing administrative things, just the challenges that go along with running an organization and trying to lead the people in the organization, you know, you think maybe they sort of get easier, they sort of become routine and they just don't, you know? So it's just sort of ongoing opportunities and challenges in that regard, and even though that's my academic field and my expertise in that respect, I think that's where you see the biggest challenges – at least for me in an organization and some of the greatest joys too, in terms of what you do. But I would say in a way it was a little surprising that it was as challenging and there's sort of always new challenges in that regard.

Jan: When I had young children, it was all the time, the pressure was enormous. Between spending time with my children and the long hours that I was working, I mean, there's no easy answer to it. Of course I was pressured.

Penny: When you get thrown curve balls over which you have no control that is the frustrating piece. And you just have to – you, you come to learn – you learn to live with it because it's what happens.

Veronica: I don't know that anybody is ever prepared for what having children and having a full-time job is. There are always times that you're busier than others. But that's expected.

“Letting Go of Perfection” is the label given to this next strategy. This philosophy describes the process of reevaluating and adjusting the expectations that women place on themselves. Women often measure their success by whether or not they can put in 100 % effort and energy at all times at their roles as mother, wife, and employee. However, this standard of perfection is not realistic for the working mom.

Expectations need to be adjusted and a new definition of perfection is created. A new way to measure success is prescribed. These women have been able to let go of that unrealistic standard, and move towards a tangible way to feel successful at juggling the demands of competing roles.

Jan: I wasn't sure I could or did do both successfully. I just wanted them both and tried very very very very hard. I can't claim that I was perfect at either.

Kim: Only pressure from myself. I've never felt outside pressure to be at home more, I've only felt my own pressure to be superwoman. I can't pin it on anybody else except me because you know I want to be able to have a nice house and to be able to have dinner on the table and I want to be good at my job.

There are other frameworks that women suggested, but they did not have as many sources or references so they will not be described at length. However it is important to highlight additional themes that were mentioned. One woman in particular described the tactic she uses as having no regrets and the ability to “never look back.” This helped her in decision making and in creating a peaceful outlook towards her choices. Other women described “Start Now. Don't Wait” as the ability to take risks and jump at opportunities right away. Several women described the need to “follow intuition.” Two women described the need to accept responsibility, acknowledge mistakes and apologize to people when needed. This goes along with another framework which was to “learn from mistakes” which yet another woman referred to as “rear view memories.” Several other themes that surfaced are “think outside the box,” “don't take things personally” and the final “bounce back/resiliency/perseverance.”

***Intentional parenting.*** These women are able to balance work and home because they are putting some intentional parenting into practice. The more frequent theme that came out of this strategy was the amount of references women made to how they measure

their success. Fifteen subjects talked about their children being the most meaningful part of their lives and that they have found success in the fact that their children are being raised well. This is a great strategy as working women learn to be more intentional about their parenting skills.

Beth: If you've raised your children well, a lot of other things, you know, are sort of insignificant.

Cary: I think their life has been busy sometimes, haven't gotten exactly what they've wanted sometimes but they're doing great. So part of the strategy is look at the outcome, they are fine and they're happy.

Gale: My proudest thing is my children and their lives and who they've become. So that, I guess, is the unexpected thing about old age. You can look back and say Wow, those are my kids.

Ira: What have I achieved? Well, firstly I've raised two great daughters, one's gonna graduate, a senior at Yale my other is a freshman at UC Davis and they are smart and loving and spectacular kids and I'm very very proud of them and we have a good relationship. I am a psychiatrist and I went to medical school and I'm a doctor and I still say having kids is the best thing I ever did.

Jan: I guess when things worked out reasonably well, at the end of it all, I felt that I had done it reasonably successfully because it all worked out. I was successful in my career and my children turned out to be both very nice people.

Ola: The first thing that would come to mind would be my kids. I mean, that's the greatest reward and of course there's accolades that come with your job and when you're in it that's exciting. And it's nice to see the positive things that come about but that's the greatest part, is my kids.

Whitney: personally I think my family is an achievement. I have two great kids and my husband is wonderful, I don't know if I really achieve that but it's more of a blessing.

It is also important for these women to "be present." When at work, they focus on all they have to do there, but when they are at home they are fully present and available to their families. This speaks to the importance of quality time over the quantity. The women who referenced this have suggested that the amount of time spent with the

children is not as important as the quality of that time. If a parent is home all day long, but is distracted and not paying attention, the child would not feel any more loved or supported than a child who has a fully engaged parent who also works.

Helen: I decided to go back to work but to juggle in a way that nobody suffered, the job isn't suffering you know because I have three children, my children aren't suffering because I have a job, you know, trying to make sure when I am with them my time with them is for them and so they don't feel that you know I am putting them second or putting less emphasis on my time with them try to make them feel as important as my job um so it took some effort it was hard but I tried to do my best so that nobody suffered.

Ola: When I'm here, I'm here. I'm not typically doing home life stuff when I'm at work. I rarely am scheduling dentist appointments or anything when I'm here. They tend to not cross over because I just figure this job deserves my undivided attention. For the most part when I'm here, I'm here but when I'm not here I try not to be here. Sometimes it takes me a day to get off the blackberry kind of thing. But then Monday is kind of my "mom day" but then that's a full mom day. Sunday is family day, because I work on Saturdays. So Tuesday-Saturday is my schedule. So they know that Saturday is daddy day, Sunday is family day and Monday is mommy day. And even though they go to school, or sometimes my youngest doesn't go to school and they are with me, they kind of know the role of each day so I try to pay homage to that and I – I don't schedule work on those days unless I absolutely have to.

Whitney: It's not the quantitative time that you spend with your kids but it is the quality of time. I definitely hold onto that especially the last few years being in school. You know you can spend a whole day with your kid and not mean anything and then you can spend a few hours and fully be present with your kids.

Open communication was a key component to intentional parenting. Moms who described this strategy talked about the necessity to "be open and honest with the children" about the struggles of work-life balance. By explaining the demands of life, the children will better understand the dynamics and even learn about balance as a by-product. It was also maintained that "children need to be told how important they are." Kids need to know that they are more important than any career responsibility, and if they know they are loved and valued, then they should turn out okay.

Urma: I find that the most important thing I can give my child is time so, he doesn't really care if the... he just want to put the gummy worms on top. He's not going to care whether I made the cupcakes from scratch or not... so, I go to the 99c store, get the cupcakes, and that's our activity for the night. So, just remembering that it could be that simple, and that I don't have to beat myself up over that.

**Self-care, play hard, and hobbies.** The women in this study know how important it is to care of themselves in order to remain high functioning and well balanced. Some of these women explained self-care strategies which lead to a healthy lifestyle. Other women used the expression "I work hard but I also play hard" while describing strategies for play. And finally some women described hobbies that they take on to keep their lives from being too consumed with issues at work and home.

Twelve women referred to exercise as a strategy that helps them remained balanced. "It is scarcely news that inadequate nutrition, exercise, sleep, and rest diminish people's basic energy levels, as well as their ability to manage their emotions and focus their attention" (Schwartz, 2007, p. 65). Six women mentioned the need to carve out alone time away from others. Four women referred to healthy eating as a strategy, while three women alluded to meditation and prayer as a strategy. Two women mentioned the use of therapy, while another woman specified pet therapy as a strategy. Several others were mentioned once by someone in the study including: acupuncture, massages, getting nails/hair/eyebrows done, and rest.

Fran: I am going to go get my nails, going to get my manicure, my pedicure and get my hair done and get my eyebrows waxed. I started going to hot yoga which is amazing. Amazing how you feel, that calming spirit of the yoga class, and trying to remember to do those kinds of things so I can rebalance. I have what I call re-group time. You have to regroup some times, sometimes things can get kind of wacky on you. You must sit back and regroup yourself and you also have to that yes, you must take your vacation time. You have to, or you are no good to

anybody including yourself and you have to plan that out to do it. So that's what that is always my goal. To pursue that.

Helen: I think some of the strategies I do when I go out and to my R&R taking time off for me so I don't get burned out, frazil, or stressed out. It is kind of a de-stressor when I go out and I have you know a spa day or I go off and take a mini vacation on a long weekend or making sure I have a plan.

Minnie: I have my own therapist, I work out, I try to eat well, um and I mediate like I do all.

Urma: The other thing too and I like my quiet time. To me my favorite place is my bed so if I can just sit in my bed for 10 or 15 minutes with the lights down, in peace and quiet, TV is off, no stimulation, phone is off, kid has been put in bed and those 15 minutes are so precious to me and I know if I don't get them, I'm not a happy woman. ...so if there's just too much noise going on, I need that... Cooking is a creative outlet, if I am doing too much analytical stuff, I get sort of a creative and the other way around. So sometimes you just need to make a pizza or something... to get that going. That's probably really my strategies to balance.

Women who work very hard at work and at home need to know how to "Play Hard." Ten women mentioned that they carve out time for vacations and traveling as a strategy. Ten women said that they spend time with friends in order to remain balanced. Others strategies were mentioned once or twice like taking a mini-vacation, enjoying a glass of wine, protecting the weekend, etc.

Cary: I work really hard, I play really hard. Like we have a lot of fun in our family, so we travel as a family.

Jan: I do take vacations, I always have. My husband and I like to travel and we've traveled extensively with the children before they moved out of the house and we've continued to do that. So the vacations are helpful.

Minnie: I really want to have fun with my husband and my kids so I make that a priority.

Urma: I try to schedule something on the weekend that's fun and not awful...at least 2 vacations a year and 2 smaller trips so quarterly doing something doesn't matter what, I just have to be out of this element.

Hobbies are another outlet for women. There was no theme that surfaced consistently. Each woman mentioned a different hobby. Several hobbies that were mentioned are traveling, reading, cooking, reality television, singing, retail therapy/shopping, writing and journaling.

**Work strategies.** There were 11 women who mentioned the value of having “flexible work schedules” which allowed them to work from home, or leave early to attend a child’s dance recital, or participate in meetings via phone/Skype. Four subjects mentioned the strategy of hiring great people at work who can make life easier and more efficient. Two of the subjects mentioned networking as a tool for working and one person mentioned the importance of obtaining clear expectations from a supervisor in order to make work-life balance work. The most significant work strategy that surfaced by a significant amount of people was the flexible work schedule.

Ella: I chose (my workplace) because I could balance both. When you’re a criminal defense attorney and you’re in trial there is not a single human being in the room that cares if your child is sick. (My workplace) is going to allow you to be home and to you know go to the turkey feast in second grade on a Thursday. I definitely think if I didn’t have kids I would be way further along in my career, I think I also wouldn’t be working at (my workplace). I think management expectation is huge, your supervisor can really determine how much work life balance you can achieve. I’ve been really fortunate that I’ve always had supervisors that have allowed me to have it and I think part of it too is that I established that at the beginning that this is what I expect from them. I also make a really concerted effort to never be late on assignments I get things done; so, showing them that it’s possible.

Ira: I was able to fortunately work part time when my kids were little 20-25 hours a week and be able to be home a lot.

Kim: And, I also had a supportive environment to do that, which you know, my boss here has always been under the opinion that you work when you need to work, and if you don’t need to be here, you go home. So, if you need to be here

because we have a special group until midnight, fine, but that's not every night. So, just having that perspective has allowed me to have that balance, but it hasn't always been that way at all.

Laura: My mother has battled health issues and fortunately I have a position that I have now, that if I need to go and take her to a doctor appointment, I can have that flexibility. I don't have to worry about punching out and taking time, I don't have a boss that says okay you have to mark that out because that's personal time, so I don't have that situation. So I have been fortunate that I am in that situation now. And the same thing with the kids, I have a ton of flexibility. So those things have been great, in the career.

Urma: If my son in the morning wants me to spend a few extra minutes to get him ready and put him in the car, then I will do it. If I'm late, I'm late. Like, that's okay. I know that not everybody has that luxury, but I think if I had a job that didn't allow me to do that, I don't think I could do it. There's only very few times when this has conflicted, I don't think I've ever had to miss anything important, but, there's just a place where, I'm just not going to stress myself out, getting him out the door, or being someplace on time. I'm just going to do this at a pace that is reasonable for everybody involved.

Veronica: And so I don't really have any strategies that really help me to remain balanced other than to make sure that I am not worried about what's going on at home. But (my workplace) allows me the flexibility to do that if issues do come up.

Another strategy for work is finding an institution that values family. "People tap into the energy of the human spirit when their everyday work and activities are consistent with what they value and with what gives them a sense of meaning and purpose" (Schwartz, 2007, p.68). Eight women referred to this strategy of aligning personal values with the values of the institution that they are employed by. Several women described this strategy:

Beth: I'm in a place, that values family a lot and I think respects, you know, trying to find balance more than some places would. So I think that the context of the organization I'm in is helpful. And I think the other thing, I try to give my folks who work for me that freedom as well, so that they know that that's valued.



And I think it sort of makes them all more productive and happier with their experience as well, but they know I trust them enough that if they need to make some of those choices, they can. So those are probably the two things that are most important.

Tara: My supervisor and the institution are so supportive. They have this – they call it a – what do they call it? It's a...I forget what they say but it's just a very caring place to work. And so for me to be out this long, you know I'm using up my vacation and sick time and things like that. But they hired a substitute for me which they are having to pay extra for.

***Proximity of work to home/school.*** There were nine respondents who referred to the strategy of “proximity.” These women have found that work-life balance is possible when place of employment is close in proximity to home and childcare. This allows women flexibility to drive home for lunch or to pick a child up quickly. This is a strategy that all women should consider as they are looking for a job that will coincide with their life as a wife/mom. Proximity is a great strategy for work-life balance.

Cary: but my kids when I was faculty, went to the laboratory school that was associated with the university. So we drove to school together. Yeah think about my, since my kids have been born, so that one we drove to school together, here's my office, here's my school. I could see there playground from my school. We drove home together. If they want moms to help with reading program, whatever, I could go help. So I wasn't like supermom, some of these moms are like there all the time, I was never that mom. But I could occasionally go and we definitely rode together. So we, that was our routine, we went together and came home together. So that was all those years and then here we have lived right here so you know the kids could go back and forth and their school is just down the road, or was right at the bottom of the hill. So that's a strategy too I think

Gale: Now I can't imagine how some of the people here do it, they have kids in school in thousand oaks, they have jobs here, they are on that freeway all day. We chose to live in Kansas, in many ways on purpose because there was no place more than 15 minutes away, so if a kid has to go to the doctor or has a school recital, we could do it and be back to work in really quick time. Or go home for lunch or whatever, I nursed all of my kids the whole time, that was long before those fancy breast pumps. So location actually counts in terms of ease of doing things.

Laura: I've had job offers without even applying to other school districts but I don't want to leave because my kids are right there. And I want to be able to say if there is a program and I know anything about it, I'm running to the school. If the kids need something, they forgot an assignment. I want to be able to say okay let me run home and get this for you and come back. And so that has been the take that I have been able to have, having this job in our community right there with my kids in school.

Ola: But there's a lot in it that works, as far as with my family and financially and how the proximity to their schools and all of that.

Tara: I would say, you know, one concern is balancing motherhood and my career now. Because of my commute. If I worked just down the street I won't worry so much about it, But that's three hours out of my day that I'm gonna be missing with my child. Um, so my concern is I'm hoping that, you know, of course that we're gonna be able to move closer to my work in the next couple years.

Veronica: I sort of have naturally received a good balance but I think that this has mostly been since I had children. We made a conscience decision to purchase a home closest to my employment so that I could um leave at lunch time and take care of home things or go to kid's activities at school or help out in school and the community.

**Technology.** Technology has advanced tremendously in the past decade, and is now a tool for helping women with work-life balance. Burke (2004) states that the “advantages of technology have made it possible to work twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week” (p. 1). Only seven women referred to this strategy, but technology seems to be expanding as more people are exposed to its advantages. Women are using this to keep themselves organized, to be in two places at once through teleconferencing and Skype, as well as increasing their ability to multi-task. They can be working on their emails while supporting their child at a basketball game, etc.

Ella: I think one of the things is mobile devices, phones, you know laptops, Ipads those have really made the juggling easier and I don't have a work phone I have my own phone but I do work on it, and I have it configured so I can get into the

firewall and people don't get why I would pay for that on my own, but for me it makes my life possible. I think the creation of outlook, you're going to laugh, but the creation of outlook has really helped me be successful at juggling, because I've now set my mother up on outlook and my husband is on outlook and so I can create events.

Laura: It's about people too in my life, those that are important to me, those are my priority. I make sure that we communicate, it may be a text, an email, we may sit down face to face. But I make sure that the people who are a priority in my life, that I give them some time.

Nicole: my other suggestion is you got to keep up with technology today, if you don't keep up with technology today you are going to be loss.

Whitney: I have had a couple of people that I have supervised who e-mail me every once in a while and say this is what I'm thinking what do you think? I never really thought of myself as a mentor but I think in certain situations like that where they actually remembered me as a person or resource that is kind of nice and I wouldn't mind having more of an influence or being available to more people. I would like to start teaching again I'm actually teaching in January at it's an Internet-based college so after I finish this doctoral program I would like to look into more opportunities to teach and maybe face-to-face. I think I might like that better than online.

***Break from work.*** Although only 6 of the 22 women decided to take a break from work while their children were babies, it is important to list this strategy. All of these six women who decided to “opt out of their career” did return to work and ended up being successful in their careers. All women need to know their options, and one option would be to take time off of work, while other women stick to maternity leave and return right away to their careers. The women who decided to take some time off to be with their babies describe their experiences here:

Ella: I think something that I didn't expect as far as family is I think initially we didn't plan having a second child, he was planned but we didn't really expect it, I think. I think I had a really difficult pregnancy with him, I only worked 5 weeks of the 9 months I was pregnant and I think that stalled my career I think it set me

back, I think I'd be in a different place now, but I lost almost a year, so I think that was an unexpected change. I don't regret it, I mean I'm glad he's here, but I think that was an unexpected change.

Helen: I quit my job and we were on a single income for a while which was very hard with three children. I stayed home for little bit and I couldn't take it, it was not enough for me and so I decided to go back to work but to try to juggle in a way that nobody suffered.

Jan: We moved to Rochester, New York from Washington for about five years. Um and I didn't work during that time. I was raising my two children. I wouldn't say I suffered any of those, though the seven years that I that I didn't work, when I had my two children, I was always looking forward to getting back to work. I had stopped working when um my daughter was born. And I went back to work when my son entered kindergarten. I guess you never feel as though you've spent enough time with your children or your family. The years with them go so quickly and, because of my working, I always felt that, perhaps, I didn't give them enough time. Now I did take off seven years, till they were both my children were in full-time school, so that the years that they were home, I did spend the time with them and I never regret doing that. So maybe I lost some time in my career. I never looked back and thought that was ever a mistake. But even when I went back, when they were about five and seven, it that was the hardest years, when I went back to work and you know you always felt I should be home and I should be giving more time to my job, though I did work long hours at both.

Kim: One of the reasons I've chosen to stay home with Luke, moving forward, or for the next couple of years is I can't justify giving up the only time he's going to be a baby for something that I don't enjoy one hundred %, because I know I like that. I spent the first four months eating that up and so you know, I know that that's great.

Laura: When I got pregnant I immediately stopped working and stayed home and did not work at all for about 7 years. So that was not what I thought I would do in my plan. I thought I would be working part time maybe in community mental health um which is what I had been working in before, but I just really wanted to stay home with my, live with the baby. I didn't really want to work, so that surprised me and then the fact that it went on and on for years of not working surprised me.

Kim: Well since college I got married, I've had kids. I then stayed home a lot and that was very great and very frustrating at times. I think the biggest achievement for me right now work wise is going back into work after 7 years of not working

and working in a totally different way than I ever did, which is going into private practice and being a writer and doing media, that's what I do now so. my career which was right at the tail end, when the kids went into elementary school.

Nagel: When my children were young I did not work at first until they went into junior high and then I worked part-time so that I be home when they were home from school

*Integrate/segregate work and family.* Although 10 women had an opinion on whether or not you should integrate or segregate work and family, they were completely split. Five women believe that you should try to integrate work and family, in order to remain balanced. These women check email while they are on vacation, take children to work functions and make doctor's appointments while they are at work, etc. These women talk about their work around the dinner table and invite co-workers to family functions. This is a seamless life where women live out a calling that is consistent both at work and home.

Cary: One is that I always integrated the children, like the lines aren't totally clear. You know what I mean, like for example, in other words, I bring them into it. When I was a faculty member, my graduate students who I spend a lot of time with, and it's different when your teaching graduate school versus undergrad, like you are mentoring them, you are traveling with them, you are helping them work on their project that they are going to present, you know in addition to teaching a class. But my children would know them, and they might, hopefully not in dual role kinda things, but some of them might babysit my children, or my children would go to the parties that we would have with all of them. We would go to their weddings and things like that. So they get it that this is not a just a job, these are people that I'm investing my life in. And it goes both ways, you know they think Children are adorable and they are so happy to be around families and stuff when they are away. And my kids benefit from all these nice psychology type graduate students.

Jan: Um I don't recall ever cancelling a vacation that I had planned. Um but certainly sometimes worked during the vacations.

Urma: What I have found is that my life has bled together, there is no line personally or professionally...it all blends together. If I get on email almost every

other working mother on this floor is on at the same time. That's when we have time to continue our work or whatever, usually its work. So at 8:30 to 10 or 11, is when some of that work is getting done. Then in the morning, I'm taking (my son) to school, packing his lunch, I may not be able to get here at 8:00. I'm probably closer to 8:30 and then it's blending all together... so I have to ... this childcare seat that's happening here, I need to book his doctor's appointment, that's happening in the car, my phone is always on because the daycare may call an he may be sick. Moms are texting me, do you want to have a play date after school? That's happening while I am at work. ... early in the morning sometimes I get up at 6, that's another time to catch up on some work. I'm finding that there isn't this sacred space per se. Computer comes home all the time.... It doesn't matter if it's my work computer. I use my personal computer to email, or work on a project on my work computer... same with my community events. Events at work, my husband's events and mine, we probably have a community work function at least once a month if not more. That becomes our date nights. For example, there's an event going on here and I'm volunteering to man this thing... we're making it into a family day out like, that mom and Nathan are coming over and they're going to go do something themselves. I find that it all bleeds together.

Another group of women strongly encourage work and family to be completely compartmentalized. They suggest that it is easier to remain balanced if you leave work at the place of employment, and focus on family outside of the workplace. They suggest that you give 100% at the workplace, being completely presented and invested.

However, when they are not at work, they are not even thinking about work. They are able to focus and invest in their families and home life outside of work.

Helen: When I am at work, I am at work and I concentrate on work, when I am at home, I am at home, and I make a separation to concentrate at home quality time with family I am not trying to do work; work and I am at home now and I am depriving family of time because I am still busy doing work I am at work trying to handle family issues you know mixing everything in at the same time I try not to do that or doing homework while I am at work or my class work trying to divide okay this time I am going to carve out for my family, this time I am carving out for my homework or school work or to concentrate on something other than family and it's work for me not trying to juggle elephants, there is a book out juggling elephants and it talks about prioritizing and the fact that to juggle elephants is impossible, and is something you are going to be unsuccessful and eventually you are going to drop one and it will probably land on you, so learning how to um you know be present in the moment enjoy the time that I have with

family enjoy my the school work or the reading or whatever assignments I have, carving out the time so I have separate time for each one of these and I can focus on them you know, individually.

Ola: I don't know I do tend to – when I'm here, I'm here. I'm, I'm not typically doing home life stuff when I'm at work. I rarely am scheduling dentist appointments or anything when I'm here. They tend to not cross over because I just figure: this job deserves my undivided attention. And don't get me wrong, it's not like my husband and I don't talk and you know, talk about what we're gonna have for dinner or whatever. Um, for the most part when I'm here, I'm here but when I'm not here I try not to be here. Sometimes it takes me a day to get off the blackberry kind of thing. But then Monday is kind of my “mom day” but then that's a full mom day. Sunday is family day, because I work on Saturdays. So Tuesday-Saturday is my schedule. So they know that Saturday is daddy day, Sunday is family day and Monday is mommy day. And even though they go to school, or sometimes my youngest doesn't go to school and they are with me, they kind of know the role of each day so I try to pay homage to that and I – I don't schedule work on those days unless I absolutely have to.

Sara: I rarely bring work home because that is where I need my personal down time. I set boundaries; there are times when I don't answer the phone. I don't have a problem locking out technology. I put things in pockets; schedule things; make time to pray and listen to worship music. This is one way I create balance.

As these women seem to be divided on this issue, it seems that a woman will need to look at her own personal style and preference and make a decision on how to maintain balance. For some women, it will be by integrating work and life fully. For other women it will be more beneficial to keep them separate. However, ten women referred to one of these themes so it should be noted as a significant strategy that might assist in the quest for balance.

***Manage emotions.*** Several women referred to different emotions that help them with work-life balance. “When people are able to take more control of their emotions, they can improve the quality of their energy, regardless of the external pressures they're facing” (Schwartz, 2007, p. 65). The most prevalent emotion that was mentioned was guilt. Fourteen women referred to this emotion 19 times. It is very important to

“acknowledge the guilt” that comes along with being a working parent. This is not exclusive to women as males can also feel a certain amount of guilt when it comes to work-life balance. Sometimes the guilt is related to neglecting family time while other times it is directed at the workplace. Fourteen of the women who are being studied mentioned the guilt that comes along with dual roles and it was referred to 19 times. This is fairly significant and by naming this “guilt” these women help normalize and prepare others to expect this emotion.

Ada: I did have tremendous amount of guilt having to leave my children for extended period of time but it was one of the things I needed to do in order to provide a better life for them. Um, I try to balance that with giving them opportunities that they would not have had if I would not provide the financial stability, so that was the trade of at the end it all work out well, as I look back I feel satisfied that I did the very best that I could, given my situation, and in order to remain balance I have to weighed things and do what’s best for me at the time.

Debi: I think you can let yourself feel guilty, I think its better to acknowledge it and say “this is the pull.”

Ella: I do feel guilty sometimes, sometimes I feel like I'm not putting enough attention to my job and sometimes I feel like the kids aren't always getting what they need, but I think as a general rule we're pretty successful

Gale: Every working mom has some guilt. You just necessarily do. But because I made the conscious choices, it never kept me home.

Laura: I have definitely had guilt. And I continue with the guilt. I think as a mother, as a parent, we are never guilt free.

Although this is a framework that a lot of women live by, it is important to note that all moms do not feel the guilt. In this study, Urma states, “I look at non-working moms and I don't find that they do anything that I don't do. I don't feel like their kid gets anything more than my kid does. So, I don't feel guilty. Maybe I should, but I don't feel guilty.” So although fourteen of the women in this study do express guilt and are coming to terms with this emotion, this framework does not apply to all working women.



Five women talked about how much they love motherhood, which suggests that the emotion of love could help in the efforts to balance work and home. This coincides with the first strategy mentioned of finding “meaningful work.” Loving motherhood is similar to loving one’s work. By finding meaning in the role of mother as well as the career roles, women find the drive and energy that they need to balance them both. Three women mentioned that they try to remain calm and peaceful in order to stay centered. The emotions of patience, laughter and maintaining a positive attitude were also referred as strategies for work-life balance. Schwartz (2007) states that, “most people realize that they tend to perform best when they’re feeling positive energy” (p. 68).

Ada: The main thing that I use when there is a conflict I try to stay calm, and then way the issues between what I have to do, what things I can differ, and just try to do the balancing the best I can, and the calmness is what I think makes me most successful with that.

Ira: I wanted that baby and I never, never regretted even with the biggest temper tantrum or poopiest diaper, I loved being a mom so I was definitely prepared for the kid thing.

Urma: Sure, family I didn’t expect that I would love motherhood as much as I do and that I would really immerse myself in it as much as I do. I wouldn’t change that for the world.

### **Additional Findings**

The second and third research questions revolved around the categorization of coping strategies. Hall (1972) categorized coping strategies into proactive and reactive. Proactive strategies tend to focus on the long-term conflict relationship and satisfaction, whereas reactive strategies respond to the situation itself (Hall, 1972). Emotion-focused coping strategies attempt to eliminate stress by managing feeling and emotions while

problem-focused coping strategies define the problem and seek to circumvent the distress that is caused (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984).

**Proactive strategies.** The second research question for this study is: What proactive strategies are women utilizing for work/life balance? Proactive coping strategies attempt to reduce stress before it actually occurs. This form of coping incorporates an approach to dealing with stressors through the use of positive psychology (Greenglass, 2002). Proactive coping is forward-looking and integrates quality of life management with self-regulation and goal attainment.

Pro-active strategies help women to adopt, modify, or reject norms that are set up in order to create new terms (Schwartz, 2007). These create conditions for work and family life that will be successful and fulfilling. They help people to accumulate assets and prepare for the challenges in life (Hambrick & McCord, 2010). As stated in Chapter 2, proactive coping has three distinct characteristics (Greenglass, 2002):

1. Future-oriented- promotes personal growth and overcoming challenges
2. Goal management instead of risk management
3. Takes initiative- actively faces the stressors in life, and mobilizes resources for work life balance.

Of the 18 strategies for work-life balance, 14 of them could be categorized as proactive strategies (Table 7). These focus on overcoming anticipated challenges that could arise. They are all goal-oriented and strive to create a positive environment for balance to occur. While several of these could also be used as reactive strategies, they are categorized as proactive for their ideal usage.

Table 7

*Proactive Strategies*

Proactive Strategies for Work-Life Balance
Take Break from Work while kids are babies
Develop Confidence
Education/Professional Development/Try New Things
Faith
Self Care/Play Hard/Hobbies
Intentional Parenting
Meaningful Work
Mentor
Organizations Outside of Work
Proximity of Work to Home/School
Support Systems
Technology
Work Hard
Work Strategies

**Reactive strategies.** The final research question is “What reactive coping strategies are women using in response to the demands of dual roles?” There are situations where people have no ability to change their environment related to stressors, but they can adjust how they respond or deal with the stress. People typically deal with stressful situations through the use of emotion-focused reactive strategies. They deal with stressful situations that have already occurred. Reactive coping attempts to alleviate stress from a taxing and stressful situation. Individuals who use reactive strategies often view stressors as setbacks in life and utilize the available resources to make decisions about how to manage stress (Amirkhan & Auyeung, 2007). Of the 22 strategies for work-life balance that came out of this study, only four of them were identified as reactive (see Table 8).

Table 8

*Reactive Strategies*

Reactive Strategies for Work-Life Balance
Integrating/Segregating Work and Family
Manage Emotions
Philosophy for Work-Life Balance
Prioritize

**Summary**

The qualitative research presented in this chapter explores data from a phenomenological study conducted with interviews from a diverse group of 22 women in leadership. The study utilized the life-story methodology to gain the personal experiences and wisdom from these women who are striving to achieve work-life balance. The study revealed 96 suggestions or nodes that were then compiled into 18 themes. Each of the 18 themes represents a strategy that women leaders can implement into their own lives to achieve work-life balance.

## Chapter 5: Conclusions

Women are not making it to the top of any profession worldwide according to the COO of Facebook, Sandberg (Speech, 2010). In a 2010 “Ted Talk” Sandberg spotlights the problem with the facts that out of 190 main heads of state in the world only nine are women, out of the parliaments in the world only 13% are female, women in the corporate sector make up 15-16% Board members and C seats (CEO, COOs, etc), and not-for-profit organizations only have 20% women at the top. Forbes magazine reported 1,226 billionaires in 2012, yet only 21 of these are women (Carlyle, 2012). Out of the 400 wealthiest Americans, only 42 are women (O’Connor, 2011). Out of the 500 largest companies, 17 of them have a woman at the top (DeCarlo, 2012).

This void of women at the top does not make logical sense in a world where more than half of the workforce and students at universities are comprised of women. It raises the question about equity of opportunity at all levels of organizations. Hearing from the few women who have already made it to the top would be useful to other women. Strategies for work-life balance may help women who are striving for these top seats across the globe.

Sandberg (2010) gives us three suggestions for work-life balance: sit at the table, make your partner a real partner, and don’t leave before you leave. “Sitting at the table” is about ambition. She is encouraging women to fight for the top roles and be confident in their ability to sit at the table and be heard. Making your partner a real partner is about sharing the domestic responsibilities with a significant other. “Don’t leave before you leave” is a strategy for women who are thinking about staying home with children while

they are young. She suggests “keeping your foot on the pedal” and going full force until that time when you need to leave. Often women will start to pull back in their careers knowing that at some point they will want to take time off, however she is saying that this becomes very detrimental in the end. In order for women to be truly happy at work, they need to be in meaningful positions that they can enjoy and these seats can only be reached by working hard. Women should work very hard to get to those positions at the top, which will make work-life balance easier in the end. If women are not being challenged, they will find themselves bored and unsatisfied.

All of the strategies mentioned by Sandberg also surfaced through this study of women leaders. In addition to the three strategies that Sandberg mentioned, 15 more emerged, with a total of 18 strategies for work-life balance. These strategies can be shared with women who are striving for balance as they reach for the top of their career ladder.

### **Overview/Summary of Study**

The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore the personal narratives of women in leadership, specifically looking at the phenomenon of work-life conflict and strategies for balance. “Work-family conflict has been found to be associated with more negative work, family and individual well-being outcomes” (Burke, 2004, p. 3). Women who do not have balance have less job satisfaction and are more likely to quit, and they have higher levels of emotional exhaustion (Allen, Herst, Bruck, & Sutton, 2004).

Some women choose to respond to work-life conflict in a negative way. “Most of us respond to the rising demands in the workplace by putting in longer hours, which

inevitably take a toll on us physically, mentally, and emotionally,” according to Schwartz (2007, p. 64). This leads to less engagement, increased distraction, high turnover rates, and soaring medical costs among employees (Schwartz, 2007).

However, there are many women who are implementing strategies in their lives that lead to well-balanced and fulfilled lives.

To achieve this balance, individual coping efforts should be implemented (Burke, 2004). Coping strategies vary from woman to woman, however this study uncovered strategies that surface more frequently than others for successful women leaders. For this study, 22 female leaders shared experiences from their personal and professional life which led to a series of strategies that can be implemented for work-life balance. Chapter 5 presents the summary, conclusions, limitations to the study and recommendations for future research regarding these strategies that women leaders use for work-life balance.

### **Findings Related to the Research Questions**

From a data set of over 150 interview, 22 highly successful women leaders were selected for the analysis. The study utilized the Giele (2008) life-story framework to explore the identity, relational style, drive and motivation, and adaptive styles of women. From these interviews a myriad of strategies for balance emerged.

The research questions for this study are listed:

1. What experiences (identity, relationship style, drive and motivation, and adaptive) shape the life course of women that impact work-family life balance decisions and strategies?

2. What pro-active strategies are women utilizing for work/life balance?
3. What reactive coping strategies are women using in response to the demands of dual roles?

**Demographics.** Each of the participants in this study have at least one child, were/are employed full-time while raising the family, and make an annual salary of \$100,000. They all have children: four have one child, 11 have two children, six have three children and one woman has four children. Ten of the subjects are Caucasian, five are African American, two are Filipino and one is Middle Eastern (three are unreported). Four women were born in the 1940s, three in the 50s, seven in the 60s and seven in the 70s (one unreported). Six of the women have bachelor's degrees, four have master's degrees, and twelve have doctoral degrees. Twenty of these women are married, one is single and one is living with her significant other. Nine women work in the field of education, eight are in the corporate sector, two are therapists, one is employed at a non-profit organization, one is in the military and one is a lawyer.

**Findings.** The first research question asks: What experiences (identity, relationship style, drive and motivation, and adaptive) shape the life course of women that impact work-family life balance decisions and strategies? From the interview questions which followed the Giele (2008) life story methodology experiences (identity, relationship style, drive and motivation and adaptive style), 96 nodes/strategies emerged. On average, 26 strategies were coded from each interview.



The 96 nodes were narrowed down and categorized into 18 final themes/strategies. The 18 strategies are listed here in order of the frequency (the largest amount of references). Each category has subcategories with the other strategies that were listed. If a strategy is referenced by more than five different sources, it is mentioned below (Table 9).

Table 9

*Strategies for Work-Life Balance*

Strategies for Work-Life Balance
1. Meaningful Work
2. Mentor
3. Work Hard
4. Prioritize
5. Confidence
6. Faith
7. Organizations Outside of Work
8. Support System
9. Philosophy
10. Intentional Parenting
11. Education/Professional Development/Try New Things
12. Self-Care. Play Hard. Hobbies.
13. Work Strategies
14. Proximity of Work to Home/School
15. Technology
16. Take Break from Work while kids are babies
17. Integrating/Segregating Work & Family
18. Manage Emotions

**Other findings.** An additional analysis was done by dividing the strategies into the categories of proactive and reactive to see if there were any significant findings.

While the strategies were placed into a category based on its ideal situation, many could fall into both categories depending on the situation and motivation of the source. For example, while therapy is often used as a reactive approach to dealing with stress, it

might also be implemented into someone's life as a proactive strategy (depending on the motivation of the person).

The second research question for this study is: What pro-active strategies are women utilizing for work/life balance? Proactive coping is forward-looking and attempts to manage stress before it occurs or escalates. Fourteen strategies (Table 10) were categorized as proactive strategies:

Table 10

*Proactive Strategies for Work-Life Balance*

Proactive Strategies for Work-Life Balance
Take Break from Work while kids are babies
Develop Confidence
Education/Professional Development/Try New Things
Faith
Self Care/Play Hard/Hobbies
Intentional Parenting
Meaningful Work
Mentor
Organizations Outside of Work
Proximity of Work to Home/School
Support Systems
Technology
Work Hard
Work Strategies

The third and final research question is “What reactive coping strategies are women using in response to the demands of dual roles?” Reactive strategies attempt to alleviate stress from an already stress-filled situation. There were four strategies that were considered to be reactive (Table 11).

Table 11

*Reactive Strategies for Work-Life Balance*

Reactive Strategies for Work-Life Balance
Integrating/Segregating Work and Family
Manage Emotions
Philosophy for Work-Life Balance
Prioritize

**Implications, comparisons, and contrasts.** The implications of this study are clear. The 18 strategies for work-life balance can be replicated by anyone who is striving for more balance in their lives, especially as they seek to raise a family while working full time. If these women can maintain a high profile career, making great money while raising children, then other women can as well. The implications for each strategy are listed here, along with connections to the literature review.

**Meaningful work.** Women need to work hard to get into careers that align with their passions. They cannot settle for entry-level positions where they are not making a significant impact. Women at the top of their organizations are finding a lot of meaning and satisfaction in their work, which makes work-life balance easier. Smallen-Grob (2003) suggested that women should select work that resolves around passions and desires. Work needs to be fun and fulfilling (Smallen-Grob, 2003) and women need to pursue their passions (Goodchild, 2006). Blair-Loy (2003) describes women who are driven by single-minded allegiance and purpose.

**Obtain a mentor.** Although leadership is often referred to as being a lonely, these women have someone that they are looking up to. Finding a mentor has helped these women think through the issues of juggling multiple roles, and even given them a role

model in some situations. Emerging leaders should look for mentors in the field.

Mentoring was a strategy listed in the literature in Chapter 2 (Eagly & Carli, 2007; Gallagher, 2000; Nelson & Michie, 2004; Smallen-Grob, 2003; Wirth, 2001). All could learn from what Laura said in this study,

I have learned to be assertive and say I admire you and I want you to mentor me because there is a lot I can learn from you. I was not that intentional earlier in life but now that I'm older in life I have learned to do that because I think that honors that person and that person needs to know that you admire them and I've done better about that.

***Work hard.*** Juggling multiple roles is not easy. Women who are hoping to work and raise children will need to work really hard to maintain balance. It can be done, but it is going to take some effort. Wellington and Spence (2001) stated that women should become indispensable at work by working harder than everyone else. Women need to develop an excellent level of competence (Eagly & Carli, 2007)

***Prioritize.*** Time management, multi-tasking, and organizational skills will help in the pursuit of balance. Women need to decide what is truly important and put their effort and energy into those things. Anything that is not a priority will need to be sacrificed in order to avoid burn-out and overexertion. Several strategists described “getting focused” and “getting organized” as two strategies for balance (Molloy, 2004; Sachs, 2005), while Finnigan (2001) suggested establishing clear priorities, and setting limits. Learning to “say no” was mentioned in the literature a few times (Finnagan, 2001; Henderson, 2006; Molloy, 2004). Goodchild (2006) tells women to identify what is most important and

allocate time and energy to those things. Multi-tasking was mentioned a lot in the literature review but was not a major result of this study (Lerner, 2010).

***Confidence.*** Women will need to work at overcoming insecurities in order to remain balanced. It takes courage and hard-work, but it cannot be achieved if there is no confidence. Women need to be more ambitious and confident in their abilities. The literature review mentioned several strategists who felt that building confidence was essential for work-life balance (Mendell, 1996; Smallen-Grob, 2003; Wellington & Spence, 2001; Wirth, 2001)

***Faith.*** A little faith can go a long way. Women who believe in something greater than themselves are using this as a means to balance it all. Anyone can look into various forms of faith and spiritual direction in order to remain balanced including (but not limited to) prayer, meditation, signing worship songs, and participating in a faith community. Faith was mentioned in the literature a few times (Wellington & Spence, 2001)

***Organizations outside of work.*** Women need to find ways to get connected to communities outside of work and home. These organizations should bring meaning to life and serve as an outlet for relationship building and developing passions. Wirth (2001) described this by saying that women executives balance career and personal life by developing networks outside of employment.

***Support systems.*** Women need to intentionally design a support system so that they are not on their own. Just like the African proverb says “it takes a village to raise a child.” Women need to employ domestic help, build a true partnership with their spouse

and rely on family and friends to assist in the journey towards balance (Gallagher, 2000). This was reflected by Hattery (2001) who stated that women can be successful in their roles when they are supported by partners, family, friends, child care teammates, and co-workers. Hochschild (2003) also suggested seeking help from others for housework, childcare, and help with administrative tasks like bill paying. Women should strategically select a life partner (Finnigan, 2001; Eagly & Carli, 2007); childcare assistance (Lerner, 2010; Molloy, 2004; Rockler-Gladen, 2007; Sachs, 2005; Wirth, 2001) and other support systems (Smallen-Grob, 2003).

***Philosophy.*** Developing a framework for how one will achieve balance and overcome challenges will get women through the difficult times. The literature review covered several similar topics. Foley (2005) states that women should not take things personally. Letting go of perfection was a popular philosophy from the literature (Majstorovic, 2006; Sachs, 2005) and seeing challenges as constant (Campbell, 2006).

***Intentional parenting.*** It does not just naturally happen. A parent needs to think through a strategy for how to raise children to be healthy successful and productive people. This strategy will make work-life balance all the more manageable.

***Education/professional development/try new things.*** In order to stay engaged, a woman needs to remain challenged. If she is not getting that at work or at home, she will need to take matters into her own hands and seek opportunities for growth. Women attend workshops, conferences, and engage in professional associations (Eagly & Carli, 2007) and learn new things (Smallen-Grob, 2003).

***Self-care. play hard. hobbies.*** Women are going to start making their health a priority. In order to stay energized and excited about work and home, women need to build self-care into her daily routine. Henderson (2006) suggested many of the same tactics that surfaced through this study: exercise, meditation, taking holidays, and having “do nothing days” once a week. Jeffries (2006) integrates good food, good rest, and good play as a strategy for balance and suggests planning down time, booking vacations in advance, and enjoying the moment. Self-care was listed by many as a great way to balance life (Goodchild, 2006; Campbell, 2006; Postans, 2006). Time with friends was a major theme in the literature (Carlson & Perrewe, 1999; Gallagher, 2000; Rockler-Gladen, 2007; Wills, 1990)

***Work strategies.*** Women can start looking for ways to manage stress in the workplace. By aligning institutional values, hiring the right people and building in the right policies, women can succeed in the workplace. Several work strategies were mentioned in the literature such as networking (Eagly & Carli, 2007; Foley, 2005; Wirth, 2001), hiring the right people (Foley, 2005), choosing the right company (Gallagher, 2000; Wellington & Spence, 2001) and flexible work schedules (Finnigan, 2001; Hewlett, 2002; Mason & Eckman, 2007; Nelson & Michie, 2004; Wirth, 2001).

***Proximity of work to home/school.*** It is difficult to remain balanced if you are spending a lot of time commuting to work. Women can be more selective when accepting a job or choosing a school based on the proximity. This will allow for more time to invest in work and home.

***Technology.*** Balance can be achieved more easily now than just a few years ago. Women can work from literally anywhere and should continue to utilize technology to make life easier. Technology will only keep advancing and so women will need to stay on top of the latest trends and usage in order to capitalize on this strategy. This strategy was mentioned in the literature review (Burke, 2004; Hall, 2009).

***Take break from work.*** Women should keep their foot on the accelerator up until the moment that they have to leave. This means that women should stay invested and work hard to get to the top, even though they anticipate taking a few years off for children. Women seem to find more satisfaction in positions at the top, so women should strive for these even though there may come a time when they need to take a break. This strategy was mentioned a few times in the literature as well (Eagly & Carli, 2007; Warner, 2005).

***Integrate/segregate work and family.*** Each person needs to decide for themselves which style works better for them. If it is easier to integrate things then they should move forward with a seamless career and family life (Lerner, 2010; McMillan et al., 2011). However, if it is easier to compartmentalize, then women should create boundaries between personal and professional life (Campbell, 2006; Rockler- Gladen, 2007; Sachs, 2005). This will depend on personal preference and vocational expectations.

***Manage emotions.*** In order to make life easier, women should learn to manage their emotions, and embrace calm and peaceful ways of dealing with stress. They should also embrace positive emotions such as love, laughter and joy as a way of life. Molloy



(2004) talked about “not getting stressed.” James (2006) stressed that a women must give up any guilt she feels, choose a peaceful mood, and find energy. Several other strategists mentioned the need for women to give up the unhelpful guilt (Campbell, 2006; Majstorovic, 2006; Rockler-Gladen, 2007).

*Proactive/reaction strategies.* The division of these strategies into categories of proactive and reactive is difficult to do without knowing the motivation and intended use for each strategy. However there are strategies that are commonly used proactively and ones that are widely accepted as reactive strategies. The findings for this portion of the study are significant for two reasons. The list of pro-active strategies can encourage women to implement balance into their lives before the stress becomes a reality. Stress is inevitable in every person’s life, so the list of reactive strategies can be used in response to the difficult situations that arise. This study has clearly explained the use of both proactive and reactive strategies that can be used as tools in creating work-life balance.

### **Limitations of the Study**

This research project has its own limitations. Only 22 women of those interviewed were selected for this specific study. Due to the nature of quantitative research, one cannot estimate the rate or incidence of these patterns in a larger population. They are helpful strategies and suggestions, but they cannot be accepted as universally applicable. This research project only analyzed female leaders, so the strategies that surfaced might not be applicable to women in general.

The purpose of this study is exploratory and the use of qualitative methodology is to develop insights about the dynamics of the phenomenon under study, in this case

strategies for work-life balance. This method seeks generalizations that attach meaning to the phenomena observed, unlike quantitative research, “which seeks to generate precise estimates based on a sample that can be generalized with estimated degrees of error to a larger population” (Stone, 2007, p. 248). Due to the nature of qualitative research, one cannot estimate the rate or incidence of these patterns in a larger population. Longitudinal field studies are useful in predicting causal relationships (Havlovic & Keenan, 1991). This study was only done with the subjects once and does not have the ability to predict these causal relationships.

This study is being done through collection of self-reports. This introduces potential common method variance or personal bias (Somech & Drach-Zahavy, 2007). Future studies should explore alternative designs that could provide objective data collection.

### **Recommendations for Future Research**

There are several opportunities to broaden this study in the future. According to the findings in this study, there are a significant number of strategies that can be used for work-life balance. Further investigation on this subject could only strengthen the pool of resources for working parents. Men and women alike can benefit from the lessons these highly effective women leaders have learned in regards to the struggle for balance.

A parallel study should be conducted with men to identify the strategies they use for work-life balance, with a compare and contrast to the findings from this study. The study analyzes females only, so the strategies that surfaced might not be completely transferable across gender. Some of the strategies are capable of applying to both males

and females, but there is no way to ensure that men would respond the exact same way as the women in this study. It would be interesting to see if the most frequent strategies for balance remain the same across gender lines.

This sample for this study was intentionally selected based on the parental status, employment status and social class (a salary higher than \$100K annually). Studies could control demographic variables such as age, length of time each respondent has been married and organizational factors such as family-friendly policy (Somech & Drach-Zahavy, 2007). Future studies could also take different demographical information and compare/contrast with this study.

The women in this study were highly educated, so another study might include women who did not complete any form of higher education. An additional study could be to explore the strategies that women use in specific industries and organizations, as this study looked at women with a variety of occupations. These additional studies could generate rich data to equip women and men for the challenges of competing roles.

## **Conclusion**

Many researchers have explored the phenomenon of women in the work place and all of the issues surrounding work-life balance. However there remains a void of research on coping and work-family conflict, which means that very little is known about how individual coping styles might relate to work-family facilitation (Heraty, Morley, & Cleveland, 2008). The Hattery (2001) study mentioned in the first chapter made reference to the need for future studies to conceptualize the strategies that women use to combine work and family in order to move past the notion that women cannot “do it all.” This phenomenological study adds important and applicable information for women who

seek to create balance in their lives by exploring the various coping styles and techniques that are used.

Women hold a prominent place in the workforce while the highest offices in the nation are still being filled primarily by men. Yet, the possibility and promise of women in leadership is on the rise. The strategies found in this study that help with work-life balance intend to encourage women to shoot for the stars and aspire to be at the top of their careers, no matter how many children and family members are waiting for them at home. Hattery (2001) stated it best that “women can be successful professionally as well as in their roles as mothers when they are supported by partners, family, friends, child care teammates, and those in their work place in their efforts to seamlessly weave work and family” (p. 187).

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## APPENDIX A

## Common Reservations about Hiring/Promoting Women

- \*Women switch jobs more frequently than men. This “fact” has not been statistically proven. One legitimate explanation for why people move is that they are no longer challenged or given an opportunity for advancement.
- \*Women take jobs away from the family breadwinner. Viewing males as the primary breadwinner is no longer the rule. Single, widowed, and divorced women are also the main breadwinners.
- \*Women would not work if economic reasons did not force them into the labor market.
- \*Training of women is wasteful when they leave work for marriage or children. This attitude appears to be more of a scapegoat reason than a valid reason to discriminate. Men leave companies at a comparable rate to women.
- \*Neither men nor women prefer to work for a woman.
- \*Women fall apart in a crisis.
- \*Women are too concerned with the social aspects of their jobs and cannot be trusted with important matters.
- \*Women are more concerned than men about working conditions. This attitude, though thought of as negative, is theoretically beneficial to the working environment and can promote motivation.
- \*Women, in contrast to men, do not require their jobs to be self-actualizing.
- \*Women are less concerned with getting ahead, with success and with power. These attitudes are changing as women become more educated and look at their work as an important part of their existence.
- \*Women cannot take executive jobs because they must be available to relocate with their executive husbands.
- \*Women are not prepared to travel extensively for a company.



## APPENDIX B

## Interview Protocol

Brief Introduction of the research study: The purpose of this study is to explore the narratives of women's lives as they balance their work activities with the demands of marriage and motherhood. It is to understand how educated women's lives are changing. To accomplish this, we are interviewing females in leadership roles in an array of organizations.

This interview will take about an hour. We will begin with reading the consent form and obtaining your signature that you wish to participate in the study. The questions at the beginning are very brief to get a snapshot of you, your present work, your education, and your living arrangements. Then I will ask four big questions that are designed to help you recall several different periods of your life. I would like for you to tell me what stands out as being significant about them. Most people find this an interesting and enjoyable conversation. If, however, at any time you would rather not answer, you are free to decline.

Administration of the consent form: In order to continue with the interview, we need your written consent on this form, which has been approved by the IRB at Pepperdine University, and which assures you that there is no major risk to you in answering any of the questions. If you are uncomfortable with any question, you may decline to answer it, and you may terminate the interview at any time for any reason.”

The interviewer goes over the form with the respondent and answers any questions.

Interviewer collects the form and leaves a copy with the interviewee.

Background questions: I would like for you to fill out some basic information about yourself on this form that will accompany the interview. It includes information about occupation, marital status, age, etc.

The interview instrument [turn on tape]

Conclusion [turn off tape]

Do you have anything to change or add, or any questions or suggestions that you would like to offer? If something comes to mind later on, we would be glad to hear from you. You can find a mailing address, phone number and email address on the initial letter and on your copy of the consent form.

Thank you so much for your time. I appreciate very much what you have told me and your valuable contribution to this research.

## APPENDIX C

### Informed Consent

The following information is provided to help you decide whether you wish to participate in this research study. The purpose of this study is threefold:

1. What experiences (identity, relationship style, drive and motivation, and adaptive) shape the life course of women that impact life balance decisions?
2. How do socio-demographic variables (education, age, ethnicity, family composition, profession, marital status, spouse education and profession) influence work-life balance decisions?
3. What are the relationships between influencers (family background, mentoring and faith) and career goals on life balance decisions? The results of this research study have significance for women and men, as well as organizations as we seek to understand more about the life balance issues facing individuals and families today. The results could help in providing women with better understanding of coping strategies both for career and family life; policies that might be more family friendly; as well as contribute to the body of knowledge that supports women pursuing their dreams.

The research study follows the life story method. The study will consist of personal interviews with the entering female students in the doctoral programs in Education and Psychology. The first data collection will consist of an one-to-one interview. It is anticipated that the interview will require about 60 minutes of your time. Graduate Research Assistants will be completing the interviews and your name will be coded so that your responses will be confidential and anonymous. The second data collection will be focus groups of 5-6 participants to explore in greater depth issues for strategies of support. The anticipated timeframe for this study to begin is mid-September, 2009. It is anticipated that all interviews will be completed by mid-November. All individuals that participate in this study will receive a copy of the findings.

There will be minimal risk. However, some of the questions could be sensitive and provoke an emotional response (i.e. Workplace discrimination, questions about family). Additionally, given that the request for participation in the study comes from me, the Dean of the School, there might be a perception of indirect coercion. The interview process has been carefully developed to minimize the concept of perceived coercion. Graduate Research Assistants will conduct all of the interviews and will de-identify the data. Each of the Graduate Research Assistants have had special training in the interview process.

In order to use the data from the study, I would like to ask your permission and if you would agree with the following arrangements. Please initial the appropriate line:

\_\_\_\_\_ I agree to participate in this research and would allow appropriate quotes to be used in publications. These individual responses would not be associated with my name or workplace, and would be referred to only by a pseudonym.

OR \_\_\_\_\_ I agree to participate in this research but do not wish for any of my quotes to be used in publications.

In either case, you should be aware that the foreseeable risks or potential discomfort to you as a result of participating in this study are minimal. Your participation in this study is voluntary. You are free to decide not to participate or to withdraw at any time without it affecting your relationship with me, the University, your program, or any other entity. Upon your request, I will provide a copy of any published papers that take place as a result of this study.

The researcher plans to use the data collected in this project for subsequent analyses and would like to share the raw data with other researchers. Before doing so, all personally identifying information will be removed from your interview transcript.

\_\_\_\_\_ please initial if you consent to these plans. If not, please leave the line blank.

The researcher may like to contact you at a future point in time to invite you to participate in follow-up studies regarding the same topic as this study. Longitudinal studies can provide some important additional understandings to life histories.

\_\_\_\_\_ please initial if you consent to these plans. If not, please leave the line blank.

With your permission, interviews will be recorded electronically, and then stored as computer files.. The interview content will then be transcribed. All data collected will be confidential. We are asking you for your mother's maiden name and will code each interview with that name. A schematic will then ascribe a numeric code to each interview randomly. This is to be able to associate the series II focus groups with series I interviews. The schematic will not be associated with the interview. All relevant data collected within the jurisdiction of the investigator, including interview notes, recordings, transcriptions, and the computer files will be placed in locked cabinet and destroyed after all interviews are transcribed.

Please feel free to ask us to stop or resume taping this discussion at any point in our conversation. Please initial below if you are comfortable with the format of the interview session.

\_\_\_\_\_ May I record this interview? If no, please rest-assured that no one will be recording any portion of the interview.

\_\_\_\_\_ May I take notes during the interview using a personal computer?

Please feel free to ask any questions about this study before we begin or during the course of the study by contacting the Graduate Research Assistant that is/did conduct the interview or by contacting me, Margaret Weber, Principal Investigator, at 310.568.5616 or by email at [margaret.weber@pepperdine.edu](mailto:margaret.weber@pepperdine.edu). For any general information regarding your rights pertaining to this study, please contact Dr. Doug Leigh, IRB Chairperson at Pepperdine University's Graduate School of Education and Psychology at 310.568.5600 or by email at [doug.leigh@pepperdine.edu](mailto:doug.leigh@pepperdine.edu).

At this point, I want to inquire if you fully understand these statements and if so, to sign this form.

Signature

Date

## APPENDIX D

## Demographical Information

**Socio-demographic Questions:****Mother's Maiden Name**

\_\_\_\_\_

Birth date \_\_\_\_\_ Place of birth \_\_\_\_\_

Occupation \_\_\_\_\_ Employer \_\_\_\_\_

Marital Status \_\_\_\_\_ Year \_\_\_\_\_ Spouse (partner) birth date \_\_\_\_\_

Husband's (partner's) education and occupation \_\_\_\_\_

Children (gender and year of birth) \_\_\_\_\_

Mother's education and occupation \_\_\_\_\_

Father's education and occupation \_\_\_\_\_

Siblings (gender and year of birth) \_\_\_\_\_

Percentage of total household income that you earn \_\_\_\_\_

Health, illness, accidents, disability \_\_\_\_\_

Religious background \_\_\_\_\_

Second language(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Lived in foreign country (name of country(ies)) \_\_\_\_\_

Travel outside of the US (name of country(ies)) \_\_\_\_\_

## APPENDIX E

### Interview Questions

Now you are ready for the actual interview. It is time to turn on the tape. If the interviewee refuses to allow you to tape the interview, then you will have to take notes quickly and in detail to be able to interpret the response. Indicate there are four major areas for the questions.

First, ask for the interviewee to give their mother's maiden name so that we will have the interview coded for matching purposes. You might also say your name, so that it is included in the interview data and give the time and date for the interview.

#### **Question #1: Early adulthood**

Our first question is about the period in your life immediately after college or your early twenties. Some background questions first:

What was your major? Name of your college where you completed your undergraduate education? What year did you graduate? What about graduate education? Where did you attend? What was the area of study for your degree? And what year did you receive your degree? What did you think you would like to become in terms of occupation and type of lifestyle or family life? What were you thinking then and how did things actually turn out?

#### **Question #2: Childhood and adolescence**

This next question concerns period in your life before college and the goals that you and your family held. What was your family's attitude toward women's education? What did they think about you going to college? What did they think about what you would become? What was the effect of your parents' education on your attitudes? What about brothers and sisters? What were their influences on you? What about family finances and their impact on your attitudes? How about you or your families' involvement in a faith community? What were these influences? What about your families' expectations and their impact on your attitude? How was your education different from or similar to that of your parents and brothers and sisters?

#### **Question #3: Current Adulthood**

Since college, what kinds of achievement and frustration have you experienced? What type of mentors have you had? What has happened that you didn't expect in employment? What about with family? What about your faith? How about furthering your education? What type of work opportunities have you had? How about equal work opportunities? Have you had children and how have they influenced your life? How have changes in marital status impacted your life? How have any lifestyle changes influenced

yourself or a family member? What about moves, how have these influenced you? What about your memberships in the community? How has your involvement or lack of involvement in faith community impacted your life? What types of housing issues might you have encountered and how did they impact you? How have racial and gender integration or non-integration influenced you? What about a job search or loss and its impact on your life? And feelings about yourself? Have there been good things such as particular rewards, satisfaction, or recognition?

**Question #4: Future Adulthood**

Looking back at your life from this vantage point, and ahead to the future, what are your main concerns at the moment? Looking further out, what are your goals, hopes and dreams for the next few years? What problems do you hope to solve? Where do you hope to be a few years from now with respect to work or finishing graduate school? What are your hopes in regard to family? What are your expectations for your faith community? What about the community? What are your concerns around mentors? What about health? What type of concerns do you have around finances?

**Question #5: Strategies for balancing life**

What coping strategies do you use to respond to concerns related to the plurality of roles? Have you ever felt pressured to choose between work and home? What made you think that you could do both successfully? Do you feel that your family life or work life have suffered because of your involvement in work or family? Have you felt any guilt related to either family or work? Are there times that you felt particularly successful at juggling the demands of both work and home? Why? Were you prepared for the demands of work and life balance? Why or why not? What strategies do you implement in your own life in order to remain balanced?

Conclusion [turn off tape]

Do you have anything to change or add, or any questions or suggestions that you would like to offer?

If something comes to mind later on, we would be glad to hear from you. You can find a mailing address, phone number and email address on the initial letter and on your copy of the consent form.

I do have one last question. We plan to conduct another series of interviews in focus group style to share results of this study and probe about the future. We are hoping to be able to discuss strategies that you use in your work, in your family, and in your education that help you balance your life. Are you willing to participate in that interview?

Thank you so much for your time. I appreciate very much what you have told me and your valuable contribution to this research.

End of Interview. Thank the interviewee. Feel free at this point to enjoy conversation about other topics if appropriate. Now it is time to take a deep breath, jot down any thoughts about the interview that come to mind, any observations.

When you complete each interview, you should have a copy of the Socio-demographic Questions, a cover sheet with the Interviewee and Interviewer information recorded, and a tape of the interview. Be sure to clip these together carefully.

## APPENDIX F

## EDOL Course Integration

Course	Instructor
EDOL 714: Organizational Behavior Theory & Design	Rhodes
EDOL 740: Personal Leadership	Madjidi
EDOL 729: Information Literacy and Scholarship	Davis
EDOL 700: Leadership Theory and Practice	Lincoln
EDOL 724: Ethical Leadership and Social Justice	Hyatt
EDOL 734A: Data Analysis and Interpretation	Imholz
EDOL 754A: Economic and Political Systems	Madjidi
EDOL 754B: International Policy Experience	Madjidi
EDOL 758A: Consultancy Project	Stephens
EDOL 734B: Data Analysis and Interpretation	Madjidi
EDOL 756: Leading Educational Programs	Allen
EDOL 758B: Consultancy Project	Stephens
EDOL 730A: Research Methods and Evaluation	Davis
EDOL 759: Law and Dispute Resolution	Tobin
EDOL 762: Transforming Organization in a Global Community	Hyatt
EDOL 730B: Qualitative Research and Analysis	Davis
EDOL 757: Entrepreneurship	Caesar
EDOL 753A: Management and Policy Development	McManus
EDOL 753B: National Policy Experience	McManus
EDOL 787: Comprehensive Examination	McManus



## APPENDIX G

## IRB Approval

# PEPPERDINE UNIVERSITY

## Graduate & Professional Schools Institutional Review Board

March 9, 2012

Kerri Cissna-Heath  
24255 Pacific Coast Hwy  
Malibu, CA 90263

**Protocol #: E0212D16**

**Project Title: *Women in Leadership: Strategies for Work-Life Balance***

Dear Ms. Cissna-Heath:

Thank you for submitting your application, *Women in Leadership: Strategies for Work-Life Balance*, for exempt review to Pepperdine University's Graduate and Professional Schools Institutional Review Board (GPS IRB). The IRB appreciates the work you and your faculty advisor, Dr. Margaret Weber, have done on the proposal. The IRB has reviewed your submitted IRB application and all ancillary materials. Upon review, the IRB has determined that the above entitled project meets the requirements for exemption under the federal regulations (45 CFR 46 - <http://www.nihtraining.com/ohsrsite/guidelines/45cfr46.html>) that govern the protections of human subjects. Specifically, section 45 CFR 46.101(b)(4) states:

(b) Unless otherwise required by Department or Agency heads, research activities in which the only involvement of human subjects will be in one or more of the following categories are exempt from this policy:

**Category (4) of 45 CFR 46.101**, research, involving the collection or study of existing data, documents, records, pathological specimens, or diagnostic specimens, if these sources are publicly available or if the information is recorded by the investigator in such a manner that subjects cannot be identified, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects.

Your research must be conducted according to the proposal that was submitted to the IRB. If changes to the approved protocol occur, a revised protocol must be reviewed and approved by the IRB before implementation. For any proposed changes in your research protocol, please submit a **Request for Modification Form** to the GPS IRB. Because your study falls under exemption, there is no requirement for continuing IRB review of your project. Please be aware that changes to your protocol may prevent the research from qualifying for exemption from 45 CFR 46.101 and require submission of a new IRB application or other materials to the GPS IRB.

A goal of the IRB is to prevent negative occurrences during any research study. However, despite our best intent, unforeseen circumstances or events may arise during the research. If an unexpected situation or adverse event happens during your investigation, please notify the GPS IRB as soon as possible. We will ask for a complete explanation of the event and your response. Other actions also may be required depending on the nature of the event. Details regarding the

timeframe in which adverse events must be reported to the GPS IRB and the appropriate form to be used to report this information can be found in the *Pepperdine University Protection of Human Participants in Research: Policies and Procedures Manual* (see link to "policy material" at <http://www.pepperdine.edu/irb/graduate/>).

Please refer to the protocol number denoted above in all further communication or correspondence related to this approval. Should you have additional questions, please contact me. On behalf of the GPS IRB, I wish you success in this scholarly pursuit.  
Sincerely,

Jean Kang, CIP  
Manager, GPS IRB & Dissertation Support  
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Graduate School of Education & Psychology  
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Los Angeles, CA 90045  
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cc: Dr. Lee Kats, Associate Provost for Research & Assistant Dean of Research, Seaver College  
Ms. Alexandra Roosa, Director Research and Sponsored Programs  
Dr. Yuying Tsong, Interim Chair, Graduate and Professional Schools IRB  
Ms. Jean Kang, Manager, Graduate and Professional Schools IRB  
Dr. Margaret Weber  
Ms. Christie Dailo