

Banking & Budgeting

Career & Work

College & Education

Family & Home

Insurance

Loans

Real Estate

Retirement

Taxes

TOOLS

Calculators

Experts

Glossary

Rates

How-to Guides

ALSO ON Y! FINANCE

Mutual Funds

Bonds

Currency

Business Videos

Stock Research

# Laura Rowley Money & Happiness



## Women, Men, and Work

by Laura Rowley

(61 Ratings)

Posted on Thursday, March 26, 2009, 12:00AM

Last Thanksgiving Ohio graphic designer Seth Grossi, 35, was laid off. His wife, DeAnna Starn, 35, works a full-time job in public relations. Their income has declined 25 percent, with unemployment and Grossi's freelance work offsetting some of the loss. But when the daycare center their son attended part time raised its rates this month, they pulled him out.

Grossi now cares for one-year-old Nicholas during the day and works at night, trying to build a freelance business, when Starn comes home. "The hardest thing about being laid off is that I want to work," says Grossi. "I've worked since I was 14, and this is a first-time thing for me, so it's a little odd. At the same time, I enjoy playing with my son more than I possibly could have imagined."

That scenario is playing out across the country. Since December 2007, more than 80 percent of the 2.5 million jobs lost in the U.S. were held by men, as industries such as manufacturing, construction, and finance bear the brunt of the recession, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics. Women make up 46 percent of the labor pool, but if current trends continue, they could soon be the majority.

### Slow and Steady Change

Past recessions have seen unemployed men rejecting new roles at home. A study of men cast out of the steel-belt industries in the 1970s, for example, found about half went into a tailspin, withdrawing from family life. "Men who have strong identities as breadwinners don't want to feel even further feminized, so they resist doing housework and childcare," says Stephanie Coontz, director of research at the Council on Contemporary Families, and author of 'Marriage: A History'.

But this time may be different. "I'm convinced from my studies that a substantial number of men and women will be able to handle this, and learn new ways to organize and share breadwinning, housework, and child care," says Coontz.

Time-use studies have found slow but steady change: Over the past three decades, men have doubled their contribution to household chores, and since 1965, they have tripled the time spent caring for children. But women still do about two-thirds of those activities.

### Expecting More of Men Now

"We expect more of women, but what we expect of men has grown," says sociologist Scott Coltrane, dean of Arts and Sciences at the University of Oregon and co-author of the 2008 book 'Gender and Families'.

Time-use diaries provide a coarse overview of household activity, Coltrane argues, and don't look at people in the same household. "When you drill down inside families, it's much more equitable," he says. "It looks more like divisions of labor we saw back in the 1800s, when men and women were more economically dependent on each other."

Coltrane has found that men share more family chores if their female partners work more hours, earn more money, and have spent more years on their education.

### When Gender Isn't an Issue

Grossi, for one, says gender roles aren't an issue. "I try to make it convenient, so when Deanna gets home she's not stressed about the house being a wreck," he says. "I have friends whose wives have nice jobs, and they stay home and take care of children, and also situations where the wives stay home and the husband works. If it's a good environment for the child, that's the most important thing."

Meanwhile, while men shoulder more responsibility at home, increasing numbers of women want to contribute to household income. "There has been a sharp increase in the number of women trying to establish themselves as breadwinners, and not being able to find them"

ADVERTISEMENT

### RECENT ARTICLES BY LAURA ROWLEY

#### Women, Men, and Work

Wed, Mar 25, 2009

#### Unemployment and the Sounds of Silence

Thu, Mar 19, 2009

#### How the TARP Should Work: A Prime Example

Mon, Mar 16, 2009

#### What's the Endgame?

Thu, Mar 5, 2009

View all articles from Laura Rowley

LIKE THE SOOTHING BALM THAT GETS THE JOB DONE RIGHT.

NIVEA FOR MEN VISIT OUR NEW WEBSITE

### More From Laura Rowley

#### Money & Happiness



Discover the secrets to financial happiness. Laura's book offers practical tools and positive strategies to create "the good life" in a meaningful way.

More about [Money & Happiness](#)

Learn to identify your values, banish debt, start saving, and investing; plus Laura's favorite online resources.

[Order your copy of Money & Happiness today and boost your financial well-being!](#)

### Recent Visitors to this Page



You!  
[Join My Community](#)



number of people trying to get jobs, especially women, and not being able to find them, says Heather Boushey, senior economist with the Center for American Progress.

In December 2007, some 1.1 million women reported a change in status from the previous month -- from being out of the workforce with no desire for a job to being "unemployed" -- meaning they were actively seeking work and couldn't find it. One year later, 1.3 million women reported a similar change of status.

### Motivated by Money

Allison O'Kelly, founder of MomCorps, a placement firm for highly skilled workers (mostly stay-at-home mothers) seeking flexible assignments, has found a majority of applicants are now motivated by money. In a recent survey of the 35,000 women in her database, 63 percent reported they were seeking work because of the economic crisis.

"In the past, they wanted a little extra money or to keep their minds busy or keep their skills fresh," says O'Kelly, adding that 5 percent cited "loss of partner's income" as the reason they registered with her firm. "What we're hearing is, even if their partners haven't lost their jobs, women are starting to think they're really putting family in a vulnerable position if they don't have the opportunity to work."

Caren Cohen, 36, an Atlanta mother of two, is feeling that pressure. Her husband, Reese, 39, works in the mortgage industry. Cohen runs an online business, Djbabyclothing.com, selling washable, hand-painted denim and T-shirts. She got the idea two years ago when she began painting on her son's clothes so she could pass them on to her daughter. She sells new items and repurposes old denim that clients supply.

Cohen used to run her own public relations agency, earning about 30 percent of the household income. Her contribution is now negligible as she tries to grow her business. Cohen, whose kids are now 6 and 4, recently signed on with MomCorps to do PR work 10 to 20 hours a week.

"We don't know where [my husband's] industry will be in six months, so this is something I can do that will give him breathing room," says Cohen, adding that there is no financial urgency at the moment. "We have never been people who live on credit. But if opportunity comes up and I can bring in income, it's less worry."

### Childcare: A Sticky Issue

Childcare can pose sticky issues as men and women transition in and out of the workforce. A 40-something New Jersey publishing executive who asked not to be named is facing that dilemma. She left publishing after her son was born and ran a small retail business, where he could be by her side while she worked. She sold her stake in the business just after her husband lost his finance job.

He had been out of work for six months when she accepted a full-time job in publishing. "My offer came through and he didn't have one, so he was going to take care of our son," she recalls. "But hours after I accepted my offer, he got one, too."

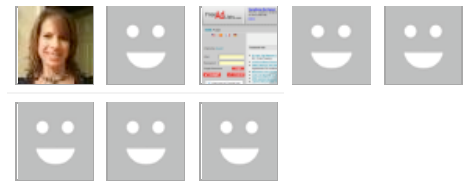
She didn't back out: "I was afraid I wouldn't get another chance with the economy changing." She also wanted to help repair the damage to their retirement portfolio.

"I feel positive that I was able to quickly get my stuff together and hit the road and get a good-paying job," she says. "But my son is in care from 7 a.m. to 6 p.m. I never worked more than part time since he was born, so it's been a real adjustment. My son has had a lot of problems this year; I keep getting phone calls from school, and that has added a lot of stress. But it's been slow for [my husband] at work; it would be great if he could have more security and I could have more freedom."

Coltrane says that, while many working women want egalitarian households, they still struggle with relinquishing control. "What we find is there is not a negative impact of putting children in daycare, but women still feel there would be," he explains. "They feel more responsible if the kids are dressed funny, or the house is not clean -- that it's a reflection of themselves, whereas men haven't integrated that into their psyches."

Both Starn and Grossi agree that the right attitude is the key to making their situation work. "It stinks, but it could be worse, so we just hang in there -- we don't have a doomsday attitude," says Starn. "Nicholas is getting the opportunity to bond with his dad, and Seth is able to work on something that he might never have taken the risk to start."

Adds Grossi, "Even the bad days are good ones if you look at it the right way."



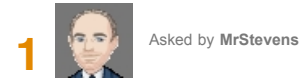
[View Reader Community](#)  
[Join this Community](#)

(provided by MyBlogLog)

### TOP 5 QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

Ask a financial question and get answers from real people on [Yahoo! Answers](#).

#### Is a Reverse Mortgage a safe loan?



Asked by MrStevens

- [Want ideas for US vacations for couple with a 3 year old boy?](#)
- [How do you do a job search without your current company knowing?](#)
- [Should we cancel our vacation in the midst of a recession?](#)
- [How do you get into buying foreclosed homes or homes at auction?](#)

### Ask a new question

### MOST POPULAR ARTICLES

[Why We Like Brazil](#)

ETFguide.com - Thu, Mar 26 - 11:58am ET

[GM says 12 percent of UAW workers take buyouts](#)

Reuters - Thu, Mar 26 - 11:54am ET

[IBM not bidding for Satyam; Spice Group undecided](#)

Reuters - Thu, Mar 26 - 11:50am ET

[Government Comments Send Chinese Solar Stocks Soaring](#)

Indie Research - Thu, Mar 26 - 11:34am ET

### View more popular articles

### Rate This Story

Good (61 Ratings)

### 28 COMMENTS

Showing comments 1-5 of 28 [Next >>](#)

[Sort: first to last](#)

**El Viejo** - Thursday, March 26, 2009, 12:21PM ET [Report Abuse](#)

Overall:

one thing remains ... most women will not 'marry down' ... men remain the breadwinner and women's salaries are for 'fun' vacations and toys ... it is not fair !

**Brad K** - Thursday, March 26, 2009, 11:50AM ET [Report Abuse](#)

Overall:

The forgotten story is how many companies choose men for layoffs because of less risk legal risk. That being given, it is time we put as much effort into male teenagers as girls. We've taken our daughters to work and we've set a youth society that cheers girls success while only rewarding boys athletic success.

**Yahoo! Finance User** - Thursday, March 26, 2009, 11:48AM ET [Report Abuse](#)

Overall:

let me summarize & translate this into plain language: "Since December 2007, more than 80 percent of the 2.5 million jobs lost in the U.S. were held by men." ... TRANSLATION: Men make more money on ave and are therefore the prime corporate targets for outsourcing, offshoring, and getting visa workers to take their jobs. "Slow and Steady Change" ... "Over the past three decades, men have doubled their contribution to household chores, and since 1965, they have tripled the time spent caring for children." ... TRANSLATION: Men are being marginalized, feminized, and made our home culture is being made Unisex. If being a full time professional career person is your male goal, this has been made much, much harder during the last 30 years. "Expecting More of Men Now" ...When you drill down inside families, it's much more equitable," he says. TRANSLATION: Men, earning less, out of work more often, have no choice if they want to keep their families together. If unemployed, underemployed or frequently out of work, you gotta put the apron on. Or else. "When Gender Isn't an Issue" ... " Grossi says. "I have friends whose wives have nice jobs, and they stay home and take care of children." "Meanwhile, while men shoulder more responsibility at home, increasing numbers of women want to contribute to household income." TRANSLATION : Families have no choice, Men with higher salaries are being fired and become Mr. Moms. Women who make less, get hired easier and then wear the pants. And then exploited by corporate America. "Motivated by Money" ... "a majority of applicants are now motivated by money." TRANSLATION: Women working is about family survival now. In the 60's and '70s, it was about a hobby, about replacing earning power husbands were losing. Now its an all out struggle for families to survive. "Childcare: A Sticky Issue" ... ""But my son is in care from 7 a.m. to 6 p.m. I never worked more than part time since he was born, so it's been a real adjustment. My son has had a lot of problems this year" "Coltrane claims he finds there is not a negative impact of putting children in daycare, but women still feel there would be." TRANSLATION: 2 working parents who warehouse their own kids in day care all day long, damage the children. Coltrane is wither a liar or is wrong. "Both agree that the right attitude is the key ... "It stinks, but ... Adds Grossi, "Even the bad days are good ones if you look at it the right way." TRANSLATION : DENIAL, it sucks. American life is going down the drain.

**HR Dir** - Thursday, March 26, 2009, 11:47AM ET [Report Abuse](#)

Overall:

I'm female - MBA, executive, mother of two and I take on the burden of most of the child care and household issues. It isn't easy, but I do it. Lately I've even joked around that if I had to do it all over again, I want a "house husband" because I love my job, my kids, my house, but I'm too tired half the time to enjoy time with the kids, sitting around in the house after a stressful day. Every evening is laundry, dishes, cleaning, dog stuff, kids stuff, activities... plus some extra work-work when the kids are tucked in bed because I don't have the luxury of spending extra hours in the office. AND I'M NOT A SINGLE MOTHER! It is hard. Even if my income was necessary for survival and I was back behind a cash register, it is HARD for women because most, like me, find that if we don't do something, it doesn't get done and the household suffers. For me, that is failure which is not an option. So... I'll keep on doing what I'm doing...

**scannerwcbp** - Thursday, March 26, 2009, 11:38AM ET [Report Abuse](#)

Overall:

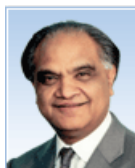
I agree with a lot of the posts here and give it 5 stars because it stimulates thoughtful discussion. I agree with "Butch" (see reference below) in that women HAVE outcompeted men in a lot of ways in the workforce (I am a man). (although sometimes, in jobs like firefighting or physical jobs, the woman is often a "token" female). But at the same time, I agree with the posters that women are discovering it isn't all "jollies" out in the workforce, that being a stay-at-home parent is actually, in a lot of ways, easier than going out to work everyday and having a boss nag you. The feminists have indeed won. Claim your spoils - the job in the cubicle packaging up CDO's and shipping them overseas for sale, LOL. Bring a tear to me' eye.

Showing comments 1-5 of 28 [Next >>](#)

## MEET THE EXPERTS



**Harold Maass of The Week**  
The Best of Today's



**Ram Charan**  
What Every Company  
Should Know

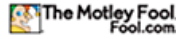


**Charles Wheelan, Ph.D.**  
The Naked Economist

[» View all experts](#)

The columns, articles, message board posts and any other features provided on Yahoo! Finance are provided for personal finance and investment information and are not to be construed as investment advice. Under no circumstances does the information in this content represent a recommendation to buy, sell or hold any security. The views and opinions expressed in an article or column are the author's own and not necessarily those of Yahoo! and there is no implied endorsement by Yahoo! of any advice or trading strategy.

## MORE FROM YAHOO! SOURCES



## SPONSORED LINKS

[Free Forex Trading Education](#)

GFT Makes FX Trading Sweet with Free Educational Resources. Try Now.  
[www.GFTforex.com](http://www.GFTforex.com)

[Earn From 2.73% to 3.04%](#)

With GE Capital Corporation. Not An Offer Of Securities For Sale.  
[www.geinterestplus.com](http://www.geinterestplus.com)

[Personal Finance Magazine](#)

Kiplinger Personal Finance Magazine - How to manage money and prosper.  
[Kiplinger.com](http://Kiplinger.com)

[Do You Know Your Credit Score?](#)

Want a New Car or Home? First Get a 100% Free Credit Report Right Now.  
[TriFreeCreditReports.com/free](http://TriFreeCreditReports.com/free)

[\\$100K+ Finance Jobs](#)

Find Job Listings For Executives. Search for a \$100K and more Career.  
[www.TheLadders.com](http://www.TheLadders.com)

[Medical Practice Financing](#)

Equipment and Practice financing, Acquisition loans, Working Capital.  
[www.gehealthcarefinance.com](http://www.gehealthcarefinance.com)

## YAHOO! FINANCE

Banking & Budgeting  
Currency  
Calculators  
ETFs  
Experts  
Investing

Insurance  
Market Stats  
Message Boards  
Mutual Funds  
Personal Finance  
What's New

## ALSO ON YAHOO!

Autos  
Finance  
Games  
Groups  
Health  
Hot Jobs

Mail  
Maps  
Movies  
Music  
My Yahoo!  
News

Shopping  
Sports  
Tech  
Travel  
TV  
Video

[» All Y! Services](#)

## THINGS TO DO

**NEW!** Read Our Blog  
Send Feedback  
Check Stock Quotes  
Search Homes for Sale  
Check Home Values  
Find a New Car  
Search Jobs Across the Web

Copyright © 2009 Yahoo! Inc. All rights reserved. | [Copyright/IPP Policy](#) | [Terms of Service](#) | [Help](#) | [Send Feedback](#)

NOTICE: We collect personal information on this site. To learn more about how we use your information, see our [Privacy Policy](#)

Historical chart data and daily updates provided by [Commodity Systems, Inc. \(CSI\)](#). International historical chart data and daily updates provided by [Morningstar, Inc.](#) Fundamental company data provided by [Capital IQ](#). Quotes and other information supplied by independent providers identified on the Yahoo! Finance [partner page](#). Quotes are updated automatically, but will be turned off after 25 minutes of inactivity. Quotes are delayed at least 15 minutes. Real-Time continuous streaming quotes are available through our [premium service](#). You may turn streaming quotes on or off. All information provided "as is" for informational purposes only, not intended for trading purposes or advice. Neither Yahoo! nor any of independent providers is liable for any informational errors, incompleteness, or delays, or for any actions taken in reliance on information contained herein. By accessing the Yahoo! site, you agree not to redistribute the information found therein.

Yahoo! Answers is provided for informational purposes only, and no Q&A is intended for trading or investing purposes. Yahoo! shall not be responsible or liable for the accuracy, usefulness or availability of any Q&A information, and shall not be responsible or liable for any trading or investment decisions based on such information. [View Complete Answers Disclaimer](#).