



Achieving 50/50 at Home

By Gloria Feldt

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Getting to equality and shared power between intimate partners is a critical quality-of-life issue. And men have been captive to power of the toxic kind as much as women have borne the brunt. I was deeply moved by Dale Allen's exhaustive study, *In Our Right Minds*. She lays out the case for rebalancing the masculine and feminine parts of our thinking and therefore our perceptions of how power should be used:

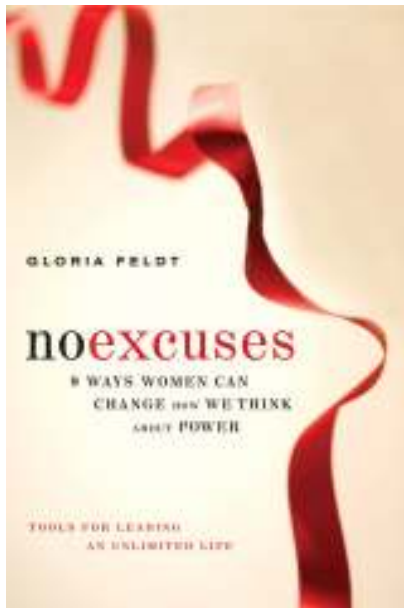
"We call war human nature, and peace an impractical ideal," she observes. And yet, "We sing praises of women's traditional work of nurturing. Yet those who do the work of caring for children or the infirm or elderly are relegated to the lower economical, social, and political rungs." And further, she says, as a result, "We can hardly view sex and sensuality as holy expressions, for we have come to perceive sexuality through the lens of the left brain with its themes of dominance, power, and ownership."

With women in the workplace, changes inevitably come in the home. And as more men become involved in caregiving at home, more traits that have been historically sorted into false masculine and feminine binaries become rebalanced into healthier human beings. As I have seen more and more men struggling with strollers in subways and carrying their babies in their Bjorns on the street, I find the trends heartening to witness, and very hopeful.

When George Stephanopoulos was announced as the new *Good Morning America* anchor to succeed Diane Sawyer (Sawyer's move to anchor the *ABC Evening News*, thus joining Katie Couric at CBS to make women anchors a two out of three majority on prime network evening news shows, is yet another gender-significant part of this tale) in December 2009, he rejected the suggestion that he also keep his Sunday morning show, *This Week*. Stephanopoulos, according to the *New York Times*, "expressed regret that he would not be able to keep both jobs permanently. 'I just can't do both jobs for long and also help raise a family,' he said." This is another example of the ways in which men and women can work together toward parity.

There are rewards for men as well as women who are willing to say no to grueling schedules in order to honor their family time. Sharon Meers and Joanna Strober, authors of [Getting to 50/50](#), a

book chockful of advice on how couples can share the load at home as well as financially, cite a 2006 survey of 360 married men that found that men who did more chores at home had better sex. According to the survey, "The more satisfied a wife is with the division of household duties, the more satisfied a man is with his marital sex life." Previous studies had already found that women with more egalitarian attitudes about gender roles have better sex. The time is ripe for a great feminist wave of women and men determined to change the workplace so both can achieve balance in their lives and have more fun while they do it. Go for it.



[Editor's Note: This post is an excerpt from Gloria Feldt's new book, [*No Excuses: 9 Ways Women Can Change How We Think About Power*](#) (Seal Press).]

About Gloria Feldt

[Gloria Feldt](#) is a nationally renowned activist and author, whose passion for social justice has propelled her life's work. Her new book, *No Excuses: 9 Ways Women Can Change How We Think About Power*, was published by Seal Press in October 2010. It

reveals why women are stuck at 18% of top leadership roles and, through both inspirational stories and practical tools, shows how women can redefine power, lead themselves with intention, and reach parity from the boardroom to the bedroom for good—their own and society's.

People Magazine calls Feldt "the voice of experience." A teen mother from rural Texas, Feldt served as president and CEO of Planned Parenthood Federation of America, the nation's largest reproductive health and advocacy organization, from 1996-2005. Feldt's passion for bettering women's lives remains her driving force as an independent commentator on women's issues, politics, media, and leadership. Feldt teaches "Women, Power, and Leadership" at Arizona State University and serves on the board of the Women's Media Center.