

Daddy's Home



All of the moms I know, work-at-office or work-at-home, suffer from the same lack of status. At the end of the day, no matter how present or absent Mom has been, it's Daddy's homecoming that gets the fireworks.

I figure it's a timeless dilemma, dating back way past the 'Father Knows Best' era, when Kitten and Bud would jump for joy as Mother, freshly coiffed and smiling, handed Father his martini. Maybe back to cave days, when Girl and Boy would grunt for joy as Woman stoked the fire and Man dragged home the mastodon. So it's a little ingrained, by now.

That doesn't make it right, though. The cost to replace a full-time, home-bound mom is hovering around \$140K now. And to replace an office-working mom would cost over \$100K, plus her salary. The bottom line is, moms aren't exactly cheap. So why do we still get treated like what's scraped off the bottom of a shoe?

I love that my kids love their dad. I love him, too. I love watching them run up to him, jumping and antic with hugs. I love the easy way he scoops them up and they swing, the way my son's eyes close in satisfaction and my daughter's little body folds against him, tight. It's a beautiful thing to watch, when Daddy comes home.

In our house, all of this homecoming drama is compounded by Daddy's travel. Our Daddy can be gone for a week or more each month, off to far away places with weird names, funny money, and strange foods. We get phone calls and emails and computer calls, but none of that can satisfy the true Daddy jones of his most adoring fans. Every morning and every night we have the same discussion: how many more weeks, days, hours, minutes?

So I can't really begrudge our Daddy his moments of glory. I have to admit he earns them. Even if he earns them in exotic locales and pricey hotel rooms, he earns them alone. And that's what I don't have to be.

Sure, I'd like, every once in a while, to be the celebrated one. I'd love to have some jumping and spinning upon my arrival now and then. I could scoop them up, too, and I'm pretty cushy in a hug-probably softer than him by far. I go out now and then and do some cool stuff... well, okay, maybe I don't do any cool stuff, but I go out. I mean, I'm actually gone sometimes, just like him. I deserve a little fanfare.

I deserve it, but don't expect it. My kids take me for granted, just like the kids of every other mom. Dad is the different one, the one left out, the one alone. But moms and kids are so connected, they're more like one entity; after all, they were one entity for a while. So in a way, celebrating mom is too much like patting themselves on the back-which, of course, we wouldn't want them to do. At least that's what I'm going to tell myself the next time I hear, "Daddy's home!" right after I hear, "Mom! What took you so long?"