

Focus on women

Nurturing a family and a business

by Andrea Gottlieb

SPECIAL SECTION

Women-owned businesses are a major economic force in today's marketplace. Numbering 5.4 million in 1990, women-owned businesses are started at more than twice the rate of those begun by men. Their 75% success rate compares to a 20% rate for all businesses. Almost half of them record gross sales of over \$250,000.

Impressive statistics, to be sure. With such a compelling presence in business, do women have time for their families? Unquestionably yes!

"The task of being flexible is still in the woman's hands."

Elaine Levy-Kopf, founder and Director of Women In Focus (WIF), agrees. Although her husband helps more around the house, his work schedule readjustments around the children are rare. Levy-Kopf began WIF two years ago. Previously she was at home exclusively, taking care of her two children, now five and seven years old. Her reentry into the business world was an adjustment for her husband, who also owns his own business.

WIF provides support groups, counseling and education for women contemplating divorce or in the process of divorce. Levy-Kopf is also hoping to eventually develop a program for men. A former administrator for a comprehensive women's medical center, she has been representing women for the past 20 years, and has lectured nationwide on women's issues. A single parent for 10 years and now remarried, she has firsthand experience on the numerous issues women in transition face.

Set priorities first

To Levy-Kopf, prioritization is critical. "I prioritize at work and at home. Some things are lacking at home. If I can get help in the home, for example in cleaning the house, I will," she notes. Scheduling and organization are also very important. She holds most support groups during the evening, when her husband can watch the children. Saturday support groups proved too taxing for the family, so she discontinued them.



Elaine Levy-Kopf, founder of Women in Focus.

Levy-Kopf: Spend time with girlfriends, take a bath or a walk. You need to have balance.

Having children compliments her business, Levy-Kopf believes, allowing her to be more creative in the workplace. They provide her with a sense of vitality, which is beneficial for her business.

Finding time for the family and business also means finding time to nurture herself. "I spend time with girlfriends, or I take a bath or walk. You need to have balance," she stresses.