Good News & Bad News About Stay-at-Home Moms

by Phyllis Schlafly Apr. 21, 2004

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When Time Magazine runs a cover story called "The Case for Staying Home," and Reuters reports that housework is good for women because it can help prevent ovarian cancer, you know the feminists are on the run. Stay-at-home moms are coming back in style.

Time reports that there has been a dramatic "drop-off" in workplace participation by married mothers with infants less than a year old. The figure fell from 59 percent in 1997 to 53 percent in 2000, and the drop was mostly among well-educated women over age 30.

How about that word "drop-off"? The big news is the increase in the numbers of mothers dropping off of the corporate or professional ladder and the decrease in the number of babies dropped off at daycare.

According to a new Australian-Chinese study published in the International Journal of Cancer, moderate exercise such as housework decreases the risk of ovarian cancer in women. The more and the harder the housework the housewife does, the more she benefits.

The same week, attendees at a meeting of the American Association for Cancer Research in Orlando were told that a study at Women's Hospital in Boston showed that modest amounts of exercise can substantially improve women's chances of surviving breast cancer and help them to live longer. The doctor who presented the findings recommended the exercise of walking (but neglected to suggest walking behind a vacuum cleaner).

Why you won't read optimistic news like this in the major women's magazines is entertainingly explained in a new book by Myrna Blyth, who was editor-in-chief of Ladies' Home Journal for two decades. Her book is called Spin Sisters: How the Women of the Media Sell Unhappiness and Liberalism to the Women of America.

The Spin Sisters are the high-profile women in the media, both those who control the profitable women's magazines and the anorexic female hosts on television. They are all busy selling American women the ideology of victimhood, the attitude that women's lives are full of misery and threats, and that they suffer from a constant state of stress that keeps them unable to cope with life's ordinary irritations.

The whole premise of female victimhood is false. American women today live longer, healthier lives than ever, filled with a multitude of opportunities for education, travel and employment.

The feminist movement flowered in the 1970s, powered by Betty Friedan's invitation for fulltime homemakers to be liberated from an oppressive patriarchal society and the home she described as a "comfortable concentration camp." The purveyors of such radical rhetoric have grown old and tiresome, but their thesis has been eagerly espoused by the Spin Sisters, who have learned how to market victimhood for rich profits and their own luxurious lifestyle.

Women's magazines of the 1950s and 1960s were helpful and hopeful; we didn't need Zoloft or Prozac. Ms. Blyth's magazine, Ladies' Home Journal, built its original circulation on the positive slogan "Never underestimate the power of a woman."

Today's Spin Sisters tell women that they are living in a treacherous stress-filled world, confronted by threats from everything from abusive husbands to contaminated foods in their refrigerator.

Women's worry list of fears and woes includes everything from the weight of the world's problems to the weight of extra fat on themselves. A very typical article in a woman's magazine is "The Health Hazard in Your Handbag."

Ms. Blyth describes how the Spin Sisters on the different networks (Barbara, Katie, Diane, Connie, etc.) are not really rivals but are a Girls' Club with a mission. Abortion is their bonding factor; the Spin Sisters will never allow any challenge to it to emerge on their television screens or their magazine pages.

The Girls' Club orchestrated a media campaign to promote their favorites Rosie O'Donnell, Hillary Clinton, and Jane Fonda, and used the same skills to vilify Katherine Harris. Liberalism is also a large part of what women's magazines are selling, and now the Spin Sisters are now ganging up to defeat President Bush.

Bernard Goldberg lifted the curtain on the how the media peddle the feminist promotion of daycare in his best-selling book Bias. He wrote that "the most important story you never saw on TV" is "the terrible things that are happening to America's children" because "mothers have opted for work outside of the house over taking care of their children at home."

If you want to know why it's daycare babies (rather than their employed mothers) who are subjected to real stress and misery, and why fulltime motherhood is coming back in vogue, you can read Suzanne Venker's new book "7 Myths of Working Mothers: Why Children and (Most) Careers Just Don't Mix." (Spence Publishing) It's no surprise that the Spin Sisters at Glamour magazine are advising women NOT to read this helpful book.