Balancing Work With the Rest of Your Life

July 20, 2001 – Everyone's talking about "work-life balance" these days and none of us have to look very far for the reasons. It seems the world of work has speeded up just as the workload has become more demanding. And more family members are in the workforce, which means new arrangements to look after, and share, the demands of home and civic participation.

The Director of the Family Network, Jane Jenson, recently gave a presentation on the subject to the Annual Conference of the Canadian Industrial Relations Association in Quebec City.

Jenson points out that work-life balance is an issue of time not money. This means that we need to look at how "times" - working time, family time, time for citizenship - are recognized and institutionalized in public policy.

Jenson finds that while both men and women experience the stress of the tension between demands of work and family, they tend to use different strategies for managing their time, and these strategies are reflected in public policy. Family policies, labour regulations and retirement and pensions all come into play.

She argues that we should "feminize" time management - making the strategies that have worked for women the basis of policies for both genders.

You can access or download a powerpoint version of Jane Jenson's presentation by clicking here.

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