



Mama, PhD: Women Write About Motherhood and Academic Life

Elrena Evans

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Every year, American universities publish glowing reports stating their commitment to diversity, often showing statistics of female hires as proof of success. Yet, although women make up increasing numbers of graduate students, graduate degree recipients, and even new hires, academic life remains overwhelming a man's world. The reality that the statistics fail to highlight is that the presence of women, specifically those with children, in the ranks of tenured faculty has not increased in a generation. Further, those women who do achieve tenure track placement tend to report slow advancement, income disparity, and lack of job satisfaction compared to their male colleagues.

Amid these disadvantages, what is a Mama, PhD to do? This literary anthology brings together a selection of deeply felt personal narratives by smart, interesting women who explore the continued inequality of the sexes in higher education and suggest changes that could make universities more family-friendly workplaces.

The contributors hail from a wide array of disciplines and bring with them a variety of perspectives, including those of single and adoptive parents. They address topics that range from the level of policy to practical day-to-day concerns, including caring for a child with special needs, breastfeeding on campus, negotiating viable maternity and family leave policies, job-sharing and telecommuting options, and fitting into desk/chair combinations while eight months pregnant.

Candid, provocative, and sometimes with a wry sense of humor, the thirty-five essays in this anthology speak to and offer support for any woman attempting to combine work and family, as well as anyone who is interested in improving the university's ability to live up to its reputation to be among the most progressive of American institutions.

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