

The 5 Types Of Part-Time Working Mom Guilt

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After I found out I was pregnant with my third child, I decided to approach my boss about reducing my hours at the hospital where I work as a labor and delivery nurse. Her reaction, after subtly and offensively also quizzing me on my age? (27, in case you're wondering.), was as follows.



"I don't care if you go part-time," she told me. "But I want you to know that if you do this, everyone will hate you. People will say you're not a team player..."

According to the U.S. Congress' Joint Economic Committee, over 35 percent of part-time workers are mothers. Mothers who work part-time often enjoy the benefits of added time with their families, while still staying present and engaging their passions in the work force. They may choose part-time work as a way to solve the "having it all" dilemma by striving to find a solution of work and family that works best for them. Or, they may find that many companies, in an attempt to save financial resources, offer more part-time work without benefits, such as health insurance.

With the benefit of my husband's insurance, (a luxury I am well aware not everyone has) working part-time has worked well for me in this season of my life when my children are young. With kids aged five, three, and 11 months, I have dedicated myself to being home with them as much as financially possible, supplementing my income as a part-time nurse by working at home as a writer. I've found that the mix of part-time work and flexibility has been perfect for me, both financially, and to preserve my sanity.

But working part-time has also come with a price.

1. The co-worker guilt.



First of all, I struggle with major feelings of guilt when it comes to my co-workers at the hospital. Although I can't say for sure if any of them hold my part-time status against me, I definitely feel guilty for not working more to help them out. The very nature of working as a nurse in a hospital setting means that basically, they are always working short-staffed and there is always an emergency of some sort. So when I can't—or won't—work any extra hours, I feel like I am hurting my co-workers. And taking a day off or switching hours for myself? You can forget that.

(photo: [fifthconspiracy](#))

2. The boss guilt



It's hard to work up the courage to have a conversation with your superior about going to part-time hours. Women, especially if they are mothers, who wish to go part-time are often viewed as slacking at their jobs or not being dedicated. Clearly, a lot of bosses feel the same way, as my cousin found out the hard way. After listening to Jacquelyn present the assets her part-time hours could provide the company (same amount of work from her, less money paid in benefits, less paid sick days), she also mentioned the importance of more flexibility to spend time her family.

"I'm sorry," her boss, a man whose own wife stays home full-time with their son, replied. "There are just times when you have to put work before family. Period."

(photo: [markleggett](#))

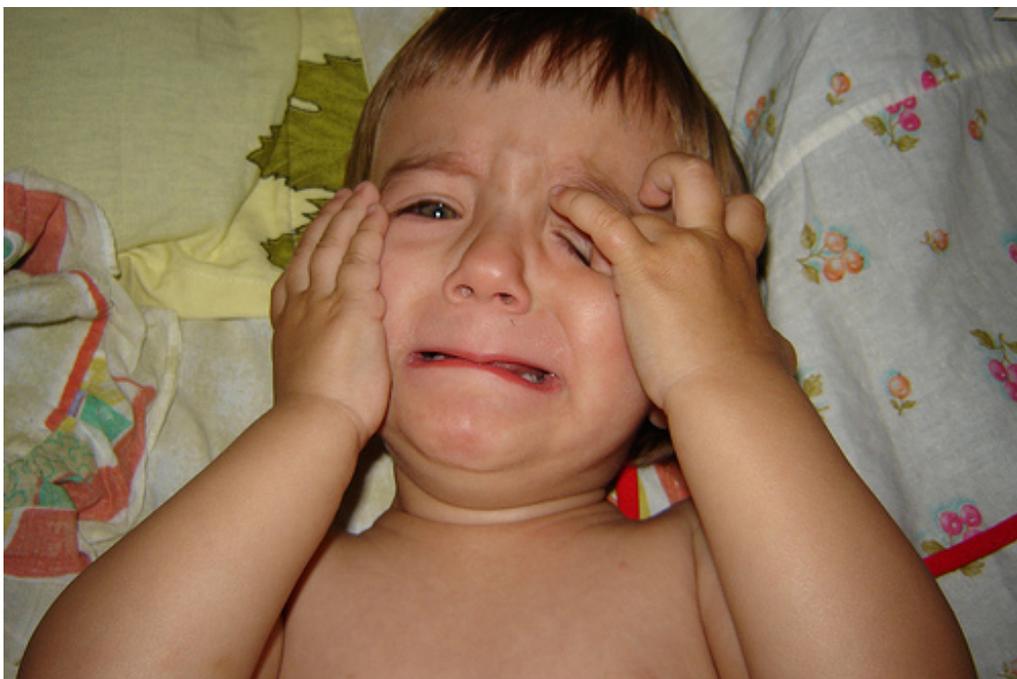
3. It's not "real" work guilt



Women who work part-time, again especially if they are mothers, are often readily dismissed by other mothers. The old, “*Well, you’re not really working*” sentiment definitely feels true here. My part-time work, whether at home or at the hospital doesn’t take priority—I am still viewed by my peers as a stay-at-home mother without a “real” job and with all the free time in the world.

(photo: [cbowns](#))

4. Time management guilt



Part-time doesn't mean part-time hours. As any part-time working woman knows, part-time in hours doesn't exactly translate to a part-time work load. More often than not, working part-time simply means fitting a full-time job into part-time hours. I guess that's one way to look at having it all, right?

(photo: [clujulcopiilor](#))

5. Marriage/partnership guilt



It can be hard on a marriage. I tread this topic lightly, because obviously every marriage is different. But strangely enough, I have found that when I was working full-time, doing the kid and marriage thing was actually *easier*. Why? Simply because my husband had no other choice rather than to pitch in, whether that be taking care of the house so he'd have something to wear to work or driving the kids to the sitter's if I had to be in early. Without me and the kids home all day, every day, there was less cleaning and grocery shopping to do as well. (Do anyone else's kids eat all day long? No? Just mine?)

Although I have an amazing and supportive husband, I've found that when I work part-time, it really is harder on my marriage because I lose that support from him, simply because I'm at home more and he's not. It feels like more to do with less help.

(photo: [izzydv](#))

Working part-time has presented challenges that I never anticipated, but I definitely feel like I have made the choice that works best for me — right now. I like to know that the decision of working part-time when I have young children at home is not a life sentence. Situations change and I may very well enter the world of full-time work someday in the future again.

But for now, you will find me slogging along, cobbling together hours spent at home, writing, and in the hospital while trying to avoid my guilt and counting the days until my next paycheck.

I still consider myself a team player. I'm just playing for a few sets of teams these days.