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FAMILY

Mom, Please Come Home

Fulltime parenthood is back in style

Motherhood may be the most controversial career you can have these days," opens this manual for stay-at-home moms. Staying Home is the result of the authors' own career woman-to-full-time-mom transition and their survey of a thousand others who did the same. The book is a highly practical guide to making a transition from a double-income, no kids, yuppie, "me first" lifestyle to that of a single-income family raising sons and daughters. It is astonishing to read the kind of obstacles these women faced--often from other women. "A 28-year-old mother reported her sisters-in-law criticized her for giving up her professional career, and even told her that their own children were better off in day care than her son was at home with her, since she is not a trained child-care worker." Motherhood is held in such low esteem these days that the book suggests answers to the dreaded query, "What do you do?" with something more substantive than "I'm a mom."

Only 47% of American mothers are fulltime homemakers, although that percentage is now slowly increasing. Many women begin a career, then have children in their thirties and face the tough decision whether to put their career on hold and devote themselves to their family, to continue working or

to do something in-between. When the New York Times assessed this book, their reviewer cynically observed that the average US marriage lasts just 9.1 years, and any woman reckless enough to completely give up her career for her children may be unable to face both a husbandless and jobless future. Yet, for the family that stays together, Darcie and Martha make a persuasive case that--with proper financial planning, smart shopping and fewer indulgences--kindred can indeed live on one income. In fact, the second income is much overrated. "Unless you are making over \$60,000 a year, it is cheaper to stay home, especially with two children," Darcie told Hinduism Today.

One option for moms-at-home is to start some kind of home-based business, as the authors did--which is the subject of their next book.

Staying Home (240 pages, softcover) is available from Himalayan Academy Publications, 107 Kaholalele Road, Kapaa, Hawaii, 96746-9304, USA. Price including airmail shipping is US\$13.95 for the USA and Canada; \$19.95 for everywhere else.