

Having It All

These days, we want it all: the house, the career and the family. But as women are getting increasingly emancipated and catching up with men in the work place, our familial duties and maternal responsibilities remain the same. So, is it possible to have it all? By Grace Achire



PHOTO: RAY RAZZI © 2008, MODELS: CHANEL, ADAM & NOËMIE (HI KIDS)

family or career? The biggest dilemma of the 21st Century girl, a topic that draws equally high levels of passion among women's groups, irrespective of the side of the debate. On Oprah Winfrey's show, the subject has been discussed more often than any other issue. But at the end of the day, there is still no winner. Why does a woman have to choose? Why can't men also be asked to make a choice?

One of the rhetorics put forward was that "the most important time in human development is the first four years after birth. That's when the child's brain capacity develops. It's when the brain's "flash disks" can become either 126MB, 256 MB, 520MB or 2GB and so on," explained renowned Neurosurgeon, Dr. Omalinga of the Mulago Heart Institute. This conversation was over a drink one evening. However, while we ended up talking about the human development and little about business for most of the night, I remained mesmerised and asked for more explanations on the topic. He then clarified how the human brain only develops in the first four years of life. So, in essence, during that phase, the infant's brain is more or less equivalent to a developing factory; the child needs security and a peaceful environment, spelled in

the feminine dictionary under LOVE. "Do you ever wonder why God gave women fat, spongy, bouncy, juicy, succulent breasts and nothing like them, well almost nothing like them, to Adam or his offspring? Do you think for dispensing milk you needed to have all that fat?" Well yeah! I thought silently, the fat is to produce the milk. Isn't it?

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The female breast has three main roles to play, I was told. The first and primary function is to dispense milk for offspring, secondly to make you look good and attractive, but beside the two roles above, it's a reproductive organ and a cushion of protection for a child. Ever wondered about those women in the village and their naked children who seem to be in bliss when they have their head on their mum's breast! Well, well! Now I get the drift. It's not the pacifier, the bottle, the nice comfortable bed or the numbers of teddies around your child that will determine the capacity of his/her brain, which translates in to the quality of your child.

The child needs the mother more than ever during this phase. If you begin to look backwards (and this is my personal opinion), there is a feeling that the baby boom generation are not as adept in life-skills or common sense issues as the older generation, especially here in Africa, why? Because our mothers raised us! We, the current career women of today, have children with all the materials trappings, but lack time to nurture our own. Who is raising your child? It's most likely the nanny. How long do you spend with your child during the daytime, especially when the child is up and

about? Is it a wonder that we have so many difficult and mal-adjusted kids today compared to the past?

So the child is important, but let's look at the other side of the coin; the career woman has serious issues to consider too. What alternative does a woman have today, with men running out on women, leaving them with kids to care for, school fees to pay, medical bills. The most basic needs require money, while some of us care for the extended family and raise our siblings too.

»»» How does it profit a woman to bring home all the money if she has vagabond kids who become embarrassments to the family?