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What women really want

2011 is set to be a very interesting year in the business world. Not least because the ongoing public sector cuts are likely to have a real impact on employment in all sectors. Which is why, a recent article in the Telegraph reporting on a study carried out by the Centre for Policy Studies, surprised us somewhat.

According to the Telegraph's article, [*What Women Really want: to marry a rich man*](#), the report concluded that a woman's dream is to marry *up* rather than to focus on a career.

What is interesting about *The Centre for Policy Studies*, is that one of its aims is to promote family values (i.e 'traditional' family values – the man goes out to work, the woman keeps 'house'). And in the actual report, *Feminist Myths and Magic Medicine*, the seemingly impressive list of references cite several pieces of the author's own work, and moreover, cite additional works that already 'prove' the reports' assertions. More worryingly, there is no mention of meta-analysis reviews carried out on previous work which is absolutely crucial if credible conclusions are to be drawn.

Anyone taken in by this report should have a quick search through Google for terms like 'business women', (which brings up numerous social platforms such as the 'Women in Business Network' or The Womens Business Development Agency) and 'working mothers' (which brings up sites like workingmother.com or motheratwork.co.uk). Clearly, there is still a high demand.

And what about the likes of so-called career women such as love-her-or-hate-her Cherie Blair, who could have quit her job and lived off Tony's earnings?, or the late Anita Roddick, Body Shop founder and environmental campaigner? or newsreader Fiona Bruce, to name but a few?

Yet, (certainly at present) there seems to be a surge of subscribers to what we call the 'Kate Middleton factor' where it has become many womens' dream to be like Kate: Marry up, live in luxury, live a celebrity lifestyle. But we'd strongly advise caution before you shout 'See? See? It IS what women *really* want.'

Let's look at this another way. What if the report *is* correct? What if, after a century of 'women power' women realise that actually, they don't want a successful career at all. What impact would this have on the economy? Where would businesses be if all that knowledge and skill left the workforce? Where would it

have left us, historically if women had not pursued their own careers?

Without Florence Nightingale, there would be no precedent for female nurses. Without Marie Curie, there would be no cancer treatment. Without Emmeline Pankhurst there would be no rights or votes for women, let alone careers.

Interestingly, we recently found an alternative viewpoint in Newsweek, written last year, which argues the total opposite: not only will women *take financial care of the men*, but it will be women [who will bring us out of the recession](#).

Such reports like *Feminist Myths and Magic Medicine* are unhelpful, especially in this economic climate. If more people embrace this way of thinking – men and women alike – it is dangerously likely that employers, needing to promote or recruit a member of staff – will be less likely to consider female candidates if they believe ‘its not what they really want’. It could become an excuse. It could become reality. We can’t afford to go down that road in 2011.

By PRinHR’s Annie Makoff

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