

Just a MOM?! Du-Hu?

I stood in line as a woman named Emily renewed her driver's license at the County Clerk's office and was asked her occupation. She hesitated, uncertain how to classify herself.

"What I mean is," explained the recorder, "do you have a job, or are you just a...?"

"Of course I have a job," snapped Emily, appearing a little embarrassed, "I'm a mom."

"We don't list 'mom' as an occupation but 'housewife' covers it," said the recorder emphatically. It sounded demeaning.

I forgot all about Emily until one day I found myself in the same situation, this time at our own Town Hall. The Clerk was obviously a career woman, poised, efficient, and possessed of a high sounding title like, "Official Interrogator" or "Town Registrar."

"What is your occupation?" she probed.

What made me say it, I do not know. The words simply popped out. "I am self-employed as a Research Associate in the field of Child Development and Human Relations and Executive Assistant to the CEO of my company."

The clerk paused, ball-point pen frozen in midair, and looked up as though she had not heard correctly. I repeated the title of my chosen field slowly, emphasizing the most significant words. Then I stared with wonder as my pronouncement was written by a hand that was proud to make my acquaintance. Written into the public record for all the world to see - it was in bold, black ink on the official questionnaire.

"Might I ask," she said with new interest, "just what you do in your field?"

Coolly, with a new sense of pride at the realization of just how important my purpose in the world really is, I heard myself reply, "I have a continuing program of research, (what mother doesn't), in the laboratory and in the field, (normally I would have said indoors and out). I'm working for my Masters, (the whole blessed family), and already have four credits, (all daughters) and I handle all aspects of the Our Company's business.

"My work is acknowledged as one of the most demanding in the humanities, (any mother care to disagree?), and I often work 14 hours a day, (24 is more like it). The lives I touch alter the course of history and my chosen career is more challenging than most run-of-the-mill jobs. The rewards are out of this world, much more than just money, prestige, power or 'success.'"

There was an increasing note of respect in the clerk's voice as she completed the form, stood up, and personally ushered me to the door.

As I drove into our driveway, buoyed up by how important my position is, I was greeted by my lab assistants -- ages 13, 7, and 3. Upstairs I could hear our experimental model in the child development program, (our new baby), testing out a new vocal pattern. I had scored a beat on the bureaucracy and the cloud our culture has put on Motherhood was erased forever!

I had gone on the official records as someone more distinguished and indispensable to mankind than, "just another mom." Motherhood . . . What a glorious calling! Even when there is no title on the door.

Now, Grandmothers and Grandfathers, recognize your importance as, "Senior Research Associates in the field of Child Development and Human Relations." Great Grandmothers and Grandfathers, accept with dignity your roll as, "Executive Senior Research Associates." Aunts and Uncles take your place as "Associate Research Assistants." And Dads, thanks for your part, your Love and support for the most important human grouping in the world, Our Family!

May your troubles be less, your blessings more, and nothing but happiness comes through your door and this be the best New Year yet of your Eternal Life!

Blessings, michael