

Motherhood

Motherhood is the condition of being a mother, a condition with powerful role expectations, varying with different cultures but by any evaluation consequential for the society in which the mother leads her life. While it is a commonplace, in many expressions of the western industrialized world, to attribute social priority to father rather than mother—father is ‘the breadwinner,’ father ‘makes the decisions for the family,’ father ‘goes to war to defend the fatherland’—those assumptions are just in our day giving way to more realistic evaluations of women’s and mothers’ roles in society.

Advances in the care of infants and young mothers have substantially lessened the maintenance time the mothering process requires from a young woman today. Furthermore the young mother is likely to undergo the mothering process today at a stage in life when she is more advanced in educational and career terms than would have been the case with her mother or grandmother; today’s mother gives birth in much closer proximity to her work-social life than did her mother, with the result that today’s woman gives birth in closer proximity to her presence to her culture’s workplace. The resultant life-energy flow—birthing to skills-contribution—deploys itself into a benign organic continuum between birth giving and social skill sharing. It goes without saying that, as we learn more about the formulae for outstanding motherhood, we learn more about the indispensable component of motherhood in a healthy society.

Fatherhood might seem to have the jump on motherhood, when it comes to relative usefulness for the creation of a working society. Here appearances may be deceiving. Women exceed men in intuition and human savvy, in comprehensive and global thinking, and have in several advanced countries, both in Europe and in the Americas, proven themselves outstanding leaders on the highest level. While women and mothers are not the same category, the rich overlapping of the two groups requires no arguing here.