

“Do Great Mothers Make Great Leaders?”

By: Keli Goff

I am reminded of how in awe I am of the countless people who not only get themselves out the door every morning without a hiccup, but manage to get an army of little ones out the door too, and manage to do so with the precision of a military operation. Recently I discussed this undervalued skill set with a group of moms. They noted that while Michele Bachmann has gotten a great deal of attention for being a foster parent to 23 children, and has been praised for what that choice seems to say about her generosity, they pointed out that her ability to effectively manage a household with so many children -- at one time while also juggling a demanding career -- also speaks to her organizational capabilities, something she hasn't gotten as much credit and praise for.

Is the skill set required to *effectively* manage a home all that different from the skill set required to be an effective manager in the workplace or in government? I'm not suggesting that giving birth automatically makes someone an effective leader, but I am suggesting that the skills required to excel at managing one domain are transferable to another, yet we rarely treat them as such.

Are the skills required to run a successful small business, really that different from the skills required to run a home? To succeed at either you have to effectively manage others, know how to budget and execute finely tuned schedules, to name just a few qualifications. (Some of the people I know with small kids in multiple activities, could run circles around some of the professional campaign schedulers I know.)

This is not to assume that every parent or homemaker out there is good at his or her job. But this is to say that as a society we seem to do a pretty lousy job of providing any incentive for people to invest as much in those "jobs" - such as being a good parent and raising children who will become good people, as in jobs outside of the home.

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