



## The superwoman, interrupted

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Just when women were getting comfortable with the capes - managing home, office, family, support staff, girls night out, and KIDS - came the pandemic.

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The spring cleaning checklist remains unchecked.

For decades now women have bought in the multitasker tag without question and have been demonstrating how we can have it all with planning and practice and a tiny prayer!

For every working girl out there, she had it all mapped out: slaying at the workplace, attending school meetings, groceries, family functions, college reunions, occasional baking, the SPA therapy, and then some.

And then without warning her world changed. She is now the primary caregiver for children, the head chef, facility in charge, and a corporate presenter.

She still has to multitask but the equation has changed. Suddenly, the 24 hours seem less to do things when you don't even have to step out and actually saving on travel time. Now, home is the work station for women employees and they are taking each day as it comes. The Zoom meetings with colleagues clash with the Microsoft teams meeting kids are doing for digital learning and cooking is getting done by muting the video option. The dining table is the war zone and at any time houses: used utensils, clothes to be folded, "save mother earth" posters made by kids, and the spectacles buried under food delivery pamphlets.

Yes, sure the "what to wear today" problem got solved but life just got harder.

The efficiency in the workspace has quadrupled since the group meetings, coffee rendezvous, smoking breaks have evaporated. Since there is no concept of office time and work days anymore - everyone is working more each day, every day! The Netflix list is relegated to the "impossible" folder and the planned fitness regime has died an unknown death.

Stay at home moms are winning here - they are more adept at working in isolation and are used to being the fulcrum of the family, hence more in control. They have a plan and they direct their own movie. Their contribution to their family is immense and this lockdown will demonstrate their strength at close quarters.

While there is a shift in equations at home, at least as per social media stories, wherein we see men with mops and kitchen tools, it's still a big city phenomenon and that's not India. Preset notions on work division still exist and have come to fore in this quarantine. The elephant will stay in the room until we evolve ourselves as a community.

There is a new normal to adjust for the Superwoman. The crown is yet threatened again and she has to strive to redo the mind map and find her way to get it all together.

As we understand more and more about the nature of the animal, we realize its not an onetime thing - nature will rebel, and viruses will thrive over the next decade. There may be more lockdowns and quarantine and the human race will be forced to re-examine our beliefs, thoughts, ways of work, and culture as we know it. Expectations of gourmet meals and spotless floors have to be toned down at home and offices have to acknowledge there are kids and pets and older people at home and they have needs - there is a case for flexibility more than ever. Our rivers are cleaner, the air is better, the fauna and flora are flourishing and animals and birds have a new lease of life.

When all is done and dusted, we have to ensure something good comes out of it - a gender-equal future in every sense of the world. Every societal norm has to be examined in context and recalibrated.

Women don't need pedestals; they want equality and fairness and just sometimes remove the Cape!

Time to Re-Set...

Link - <https://www.peoplematters.in/blog/life-at-work/the-superwoman-interrupted-25452>