

THE Grace Paper

\$5.00

FAMILY, PARENTAL LEAVE & YOUR CAREER

Issue Three

The ART of MODERN PARENTHOOD

Jewish Museum CEO Rebecca Forgasz on
balancing curation, career and care



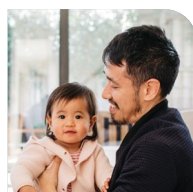
**THE SMILING
CEO**
How Sadhana Smiles
broke through the
double-glazed ceiling

Page 12



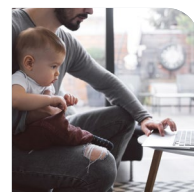
**AN APP TO
CLOSE THE GAP**
Meggie Palmer's high
tech plans to close the
pay gap

Page 15



**OUT-OF-OFFICE
SWITCHED ONG**
PwC's Christopher Ong
shares his parental
leave experience

Page 16



**A FIRM
APPROACH
TO FLEXIBILITY**
Is EY Australia's most
flexible workplace?

Page 21

WHAT IS GRACE PAPERS?

Grace Papers' award-winning platform is a driving force for gender equality.

We partner with some of the world's smartest companies to promote workplace inclusion and flexibility, and empower their employees to manage pregnancy, parental leave and returning to work - with grace.



@gracepapers
gracepapers.com.au



THINK OF US AS...

- ▶ Human rights advocates
- ▶ Working parents
- ▶ A trusted community
- ▶ Career coaches
- ▶ Legal experts
- ▶ Thought leaders on gender equality
- ▶ Supportive friends

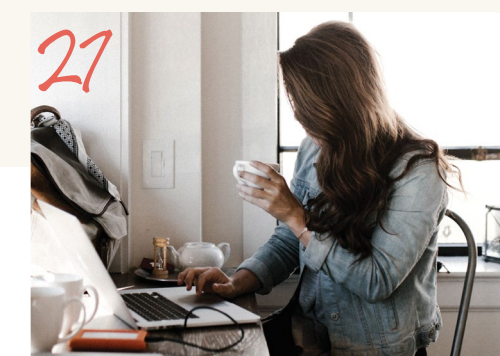


Contents

- 4 Editor's note**
The Grace Paper Issue Three
- 5 The results are in**
A review of *The Grace Way* model of empowerment
- 6 A force of nurture**
How Victoria Police supported Emma Bartel's parental journey
- 8 Supporting parental leave**
Practical tips for managers
- 10 Parental leave for pregnancy loss**
A Tabcorp and Pink Elephants partnership
- 12 The smiling CEO**
How Sadhana Smiles broke through the double-glazed ceiling
- 15 An app to close the gap**
Meggie Palmer's high tech plans to close the pay gap
- 16 Out-of-office switched Ong**
PwC's Christopher Ong shares his parental leave experience
- 18 Making history**
How Rebecca Forgasz balances curation, career and care
- 20 Victoria's secret**
How MinterEllison partner Victoria Allen made her workplace happier
- 21 A firm approach to flexibility**
Is EY Australia's most flexible workplace?
- 22 Making a job share work**
DHHS duo Kristyn Hanna and Claire Sherwill offer their top tips for a successful shared role
- 24 Morning madness: A Grace Papers' survival guide**
How simple neuroscience can help you manage the morning routine
- 27 Our Love List**
Paying it forward with our top picks for watching, reading and listening this season.



JOURNALIST | Siobhan Duck
LEAD DESIGNER | Vari Longmuir
EDITOR-AT-LARGE | Jessica O'Brien
LEAD PHOTOGRAPHER | Marie-Luise Skibbe
EDITORS & CONTRIBUTORS | The team at Grace Papers



After a decade of change: It's time to lead with Grace

So much can change in a decade.

We have seen legal protections for those with caring responsibilities, allowing them to seek workplace flexibility. We have been buoyed by the focus on directors' responsibilities in advancing gender equality on boards via ASX Corporate Governance Principles.

We also enthusiastically welcomed Australia's first paid parental leave scheme through the Human Rights Commission's National Inquiry and the Supporting Working Parents - Pregnancy & Return to Work Report.

We shed tears of relief and sadness as we witnessed a long overdue Royal Commission into family violence.

Through it all, the voices for change -- both male and female -- have only grown louder.

On social media, women found solidarity through the #MeToo movement. There were marches around the globe. And there was a surge in reports of workplace sexual harassment that saw men, like producer Harvey Weinstein, at long last held accountable for their abuses of power.

In the business world we welcomed leaders determined to drive a social change agenda - from mainstreaming workplace flexibility to the introduction of paid parental leave for dads.

Our children are now growing up watching a new generation of sporting heroes with the dawn of the AFLW and more emphasis on women's soccer, cricket and rugby.

We were able to enjoy movies and TV series such as Bombshell, Big Little Lies and Morning Wars. Stories about women for women that have been made by women.

Finally, we're still high fiving about the introduction of Gender Equality legislation in Victoria!

Yes, while there is much to celebrate going into this decade, there is also much work still to be done to change workplace systems and social expectations. Changes that will harness the full professional potential of women; afford men the freedom of embracing and showing vulnerability; and for empowered workplace cultures to recognise the contributions of carers regardless of gender.

Through our commitment to deeper listening, we have the great privilege of bearing witness to stories that are so often masked by statistics. Stories of discrimination, sexual misconduct, family violence and pay inequality.

In this edition of The Grace Paper, we share the stories from our tribe that will inspire hope for our vision for the world. From trailblazers like Sadhana Smiles and Meggie



Palmer to the workplaces which are transforming into places where working parents don't just survive - they thrive!

We also share the results of our partnership with the Office for Women (Victoria) and Macquarie University which validates our theory of change for gender equality to support working parents.

This work evaluates the impact Grace Papers' has had already and highlights opportunities to have an even greater impact, and represents a contribution to the evidence required to achieve gender equality.

At the end of the day, we don't want to just talk about the problems we face we want to help fix them.

Our hope is that the stories gracing this paper will inspire our leaders to see that gender equality not only makes the world a better place, it makes good business sense too, and personally commit to closing the gender gap.

As Nelson Mandela said: "It always seems impossible until it's done."

PRUE GILBERT | *Grace Papers Founder*
gracepapers.com.au
hello@gracepapers.com.au

Dismantling the Parental Wall:

Study confirms Grace Papers' gender equality intervention effective in supporting working parents

The evidence speaks for itself.

Workers who have access to the Grace Papers Program feel more supported by their employer, positive about their career trajectory and confident about juggling their family commitments.

Better yet, their employers also reap the benefits of a happier workforce.

In partnership with the Office for Women Victoria, Grace Papers commissioned Macquarie University to evaluate the effectiveness of its work across the Victorian Public Sector.

Participants at the Victoria Public Sector Commission, Department of Health and Human Services, Victoria Police and the Department of Education and Training were surveyed about the impact the program had on their personal well-being and outlook on their careers.

Tellingly, most were shown to feel better able to be more strategic in assessing their career aspirations and devising strategies to achieve work-life balance because of Grace Papers' intervention. Significantly, the greatest impact was in building participants' confidence to speak to their manager about their concerns, something often challenging where there is a power imbalance and a minefield of biases to navigate.

The study also showed that organisations which support parents staying in the workforce have a greater chance of retaining talented and experienced staff down the track, which is beneficial to their bottom line and good for their culture.

Macquarie Business School's senior lecturer Raymond Trau says the study is living proof that organisations need to develop progressive parental leave policies and practices.

"The research on the Grace Papers Program has shown that implementing an effective gender equality intervention can boost positive career and work-life balance attitudes of parents, as well as effectively support LGBTIQ and culturally diverse staff," he says.

"In the long-term, these positive attitudes are not only beneficial to their well-being and career trajectory, but also to their employer."

Unfortunately, even though much has changed in the past decade to make workplaces more flexible for working parents, there is still a lot to be done to change cultural stereotypes and unconscious bias.

For instance, research shows that men are less encouraged to access flexible work and parental leave and women do far more housework and childcare than their male counterparts - even when they are the main breadwinner.

The research on the Grace Papers Program has shown that implementing an effective gender equality intervention can boost positive career and work-life balance attitudes of parents, as well as effectively support LGBTIQ and culturally diverse staff.

MACQUARIE BUSINESS SCHOOL'S SENIOR LECTURER
RAYMOND TRAU (PICTURED)



For Australian families' lives to improve, there must be a significant cultural shift.

But, make no mistake, this isn't just a social concern. It is a business issue.

Because tangible cultural change -- according to the Macquarie University study -- begins with gender equality interventions like those offered by Grace Papers.

KEY INSIGHTS FROM THE RESEARCH

- Increased confidence in seeking support for flexibility, parental leave or career issues
- Increased confidence in managing career and family
- Improved perception of organisation's culture in promoting gender equality

Parenthood no cop out

The force is with police officer Emma Bartel as she parents three young boys.

Whether it's at home or at work, Emma Bartel is accustomed to spending her days --and nights -- surrounded by boys in blue.

Already a mum to identical three-year-old twins, Eli and Chester, the Geelong senior sergeant welcomed a third son, Jude, last September.

You could be forgiven for thinking that, night shifts and dealing with the unpredictability of police work, Emma would be better prepared than most for early parenthood.

"Not at all," she laughs.

"I have always said that it's easier dealing with full cells [at the police station] than it is with twins."

Making her parenting juggle even more remarkable is the fact Emma did it solo via IVF.

"It was mum who came up with the idea of me doing it on my own. She did the research," she explains.

"My mum was a single mother who raised three kids. So, I have always believed that having a child with someone is a bigger commitment than getting married.

"At first I was worried how people would react. But I was lucky to have a lot of support around me from friends and family, and my boss was really understanding as well."

Emma says IVF was a long and difficult process. She would smuggle her fertility drugs into the police station in her lunchbox to inject herself in the bathroom.

"Although they were planned, I didn't plan on having twins," she explains.

"And then they came at 27 weeks so that was another surprise. I had been experiencing pains for a few days, but I didn't recognise them as being signs of labour.

"I went around to mum's place and asked her to make me a cup of tea while I rested and the next minute, I started delivering them on the bathroom floor.

"Mum kept me calm and called an ambulance. Four ambulances arrived. We always joke that there were four because we needed one for me, one for each boy and one for mum!"

Because of their early debut, the boys spent 59 days at the Royal Women's Hospital's Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) before being transferred to Geelong's St John of God Hospital for a further 23 days.

"When I delivered early, my supervisor at Brimbank CIU contacted The Police Association's welfare department on my behalf," she says.

"They offered a range of support including counselling, accommodation, taxi vouchers and financial assistance. I was very grateful and took them up on the offer to pay for my parking while the boys were in hospital. It was a very generous offer because over the course of 12 weeks, receipts for parking amounted to almost \$700."

To say the new mother was sleep-deprived would be an understatement. Feeding each baby took an hour and, because they arrived early, they had to be fed every three-hours.

Like many premature babies, Chester and Eli have had ongoing health problems that have required many medical appointments and added care at home.

Emma quickly realised returning to her old role --as a detective sergeant in Melbourne -- wasn't going to work for her Geelong-based family.

She applied for a job closer to home (with more family-friendly hours) in a role she was passionate about as the Family Violence Liaison Officer.

I now know that a member's value does not diminish when they become a parent and they can return to fulfilling and meaningful work that can also be in balance with family priorities.

Although her bosses were extremely accommodating of her unique situation, some peers were less supportive.

"A few people felt I was being given preferential treatment because I was a woman with kids and not working 24/7," she says.

"There were people who were critical of me to my face and behind my back."

Emma was bolstered by her superiors' advice to focus on what she could do rather than what she couldn't do.

"But the first three months were really tough," she says.

"I was back working full-time but the boys were still not sleeping through the night. I felt very isolated during that time."

Fast forward three years and there's been major cultural changes from the 2015 Independent Review of sex discrimination and harassment in Victoria Police.

It led to significant organisational changes to create a more gender-inclusive workplace, including the introduction of the Grace Papers digital support. Funded by the Victorian Government's Office for Women, Grace Papers has so far helped many working parents in the police force.

Through Grace Papers, Emma feels more confident about her future as a working mother-of-three. It's also helped inform her current role as the training officer for Geelong, Surf Coast and Colac Otway police service areas.

The first time Emma took a year's maternity leave, you could count on one hand the number of times she had contact with her workplace. This time around she plans to keep the lines of communication open.

She has also begun conversations with her superiors about her career trajectory within the force upon her return.

Although she's passionate about her current work, she doesn't see herself behind a desk forever. And she's open to returning to Melbourne when her family is ready.

"I now know that a member's value does not diminish when they become a parent and they can return to fulfilling and meaningful work that can also be in balance with family priorities," she says.

This time around Emma also has her partner, Idyll Winery owner, Andy Byers by her side to help share the load of nappy changing, settling and night feeding.

She's excited about what the future holds for the two things she holds so dear -- the family and the force.



[View this story online >>](#)

PARENTAL LEAVE

Tips for managing employees taking parental leave



With one in two women continuing to experience some form of pregnancy related discrimination, it's evident that in Australia employees taking parental leave are managed poorly. So here are some of our top tips for employers supporting pregnant staff members and those returning to work.

1. Be an effective Sponsor:

Sponsorship while a team member is on parental leave can be one of the most instrumental ways in which we can break down the systemic biases that parental leavers experience: invisibility, lack of ambition, gender pay gap, and missed career opportunities. So as your team member heads off on parental leave, now is a perfect time to explore their professional vision from the perspective of what is next for them, so that you can be their advocate while they are on

parental leave, ensuring not only that they don't miss out, but that your workplace has the opportunity to leverage their talent.

2. Beware of benevolent bias:

We all have biases and blind spots, and some are directed inward towards ourselves as well as externally. But it's important that you can recognise those biases and develop strategies for noticing and overcoming your own assumptions. Don't assume you know what your employee wants for her career now that she's expecting. Ask her about her professional vision, how she wants to manage family and career.

3. Manage your talent:

Businesses often make it so easy for their talented female staff to leave, especially if they focus solely on the "pregnancy" and "parental leave" aspects of the situation. But their real focus ought to be on how they are managing their talent. What is the employee's professional vision? What do they want from their career? What are their success stories, their strengths?

4. Keep in touch:

Just because your employee is on leave, doesn't mean they are not an employee anymore. Set up a

keeping in touch plan, and diarise to connect with them. This shouldn't just be six weeks before they are due back to work when you want to know if they are coming back!

5. Transition employees back to work:

Returning to work needs to be seen as a 'transition', with adjustments made to working terms so that parents and babies can adjust to the new world. For example, at some top-tier law firms, they are doing away with billable targets for lawyers returning from parental leave.

The end of parental leave isn't just a transition for the returning parent. It's a transition for the whole family - one that takes time and patience. Parents are able to experience as much separation anxiety as their babies, so be kind and don't start them back on a Monday!

6. Flexibility:

Make flexibility work, and if it includes a part-time arrangement, ensure that the role is properly restructured, not just five days crammed into three - nothing will lose your talent faster.



#GPINSPIRED

This statue represents #morethanakick, it symbolises a moment in time that can be remembered as a catalyst for change, a stand against online harassment and a reminder to women and girls that we deserve these opportunities.



@taylahariss, on the statue created of the culturally-defining image of her kick



Tabcorp on right track with leave

Tabcorp recognises that pregnancy and parenthood isn't always an easy ride with its approach to leave and workplace flexibility.

There's an elephant in the room at Tabcorp and they couldn't be prouder of that fact.

In order to better assist staff - both male and female - who are grieving a miscarriage or facing fertility struggles, the gambling entertainment group has partnered with one of Australia's leading support services for early pregnancy loss, Pink Elephants.

According to Pink Elephants' statistics, one in four Australian pregnancies typically ends in a loss. Given those numbers, chances are someone you know -- a friend, sibling, parent or work colleague -- has experienced this heartbreak.

And yet, Pink Elephants founder Samantha Payne says, miscarriage still remains an uncomfortable topic for many.

"People don't know what to say and so they say nothing," she says.

"That silence can be very isolating for those who are grieving the loss of a pregnancy. And it is

grief. Simply being able to take bereavement leave instead of sick leave when you have experienced a miscarriage validates the loss that you have experienced."

According to Pink Elephants, Fair Work Australia doesn't currently recognise a loss prior to 12 weeks, despite the fact that nearly 98 per cent of miscarriages happen in that first trimester.

"That translates as approximately 100,000 couples each year not receiving validation that their loss matters," she says.

Flexibility and trust in people – parents or not – allow us to deliver our best work beyond the standard nine to five, and it enables me to be the best parent I can be.

**TABCORP EMPLOYEE,
AMY KERR (PICTURED)**

"Tabcorp adopting our Fertility in the Workplace support program will make a huge difference to this issue by providing information, resources and support to staff who face this painful time."

It also allows Tabcorp employees to access bereavement leave to grieve for the baby they have lost.

She says these pioneering policy changes will provide support to staff who may have otherwise felt they had to suffer in silence. It will also help managers and colleagues



Amy Kerr (pictured)

feel better equipped to help someone going through this experience.

Tabcorp's Kelly Mitchell says: "As an organisation we want to support our people particularly when times are at their hardest.

"Clear policy provisioning for pregnancy loss bereavement leave provides that care for our people at what is a traumatic and emotional time.

"It means there isn't an uncomfortable conversation about leave eligibility and with the support of Pink Elephants, we can offer further resources to help."

Simply being able to take bereavement leave instead of sick leave when you have experienced a miscarriage validates the loss that you have experienced.

**PINK ELEPHANTS' FOUNDER,
SAMANTHA PAYNE (PICTURED)**



The Fertility in the Workplace Support program is just one of the ways that Tabcorp has amended its leave policies to better cater to the needs of Australian families.

As such, it's not just pregnant women who qualify for 18 weeks of paid parental leave.

Any primary carer – male or female – qualifies for the time off to care for their new arrival. Secondary carers get six weeks of paid leave.

Tabcorp also provides carer's leave to those who are expecting a baby through a surrogacy agreement, to foster carers and adoptive parents.

Tabcorp's senior manager of strategic treasury, Amy Kerr, says being able to combine her annual leave and parental leave entitlements allowed her to be at home for 12 months with daughter Morgan, when she was born.

"This was really important to me as a single mother by choice, it gave me the flexibility to stay home and bond with my daughter which was very important to me," she says.

Since returning to work, Amy has continued to feel supported in juggling single parenthood and her career.

"My general manager and I have been able to agree on a flexible working arrangement that allows me to work full-time while also having important time with my daughter each day," she says.

"I leave the office at 3.30 and pick her up by 4.30 and this allows me to be the best parent I can be for my daughter and a great role-model for her in the future.

"Flexibility and trust in people – parents or not – allows us to deliver our best work beyond the standard nine to five, and it enables me to be the best parent I can be."

It's not just new mums like Amy who are benefiting from Tabcorp's flexible work arrangements and leave policies.

The company was recently named one of the Best Workplaces for New Dads and has just been named an Employer of Choice for Gender Equality by the Workplace Gender Equality Agency for the fifth consecutive year.

What a winner!

Go to [MISCARRIAGESUPPORT.ORG.AU](https://www.miscarriagesupport.org.au) to find out more information about Pink Elephants.

Sadhana Smiles in the face of adversity

Harcourts International executive Sadhana Smiles reveals how she beat the real estate boys' club at their own game.

Sadhana Smiles likens rising through the ranks of the male-dominated real estate industry to breaking through a double-glazed glass ceiling.

Fijian-born Sadhana says she has had to face discrimination throughout her career not just because of her gender but also the colour of her skin.

But she has never let that stand in the way of her ambitions.

When she decided to return to Melbourne from Sydney -- where she had been working in a management position -- Sadhana found it impossible to get a foot in the door at one boutique firm.

"The recruiter told me they didn't think a woman would be able to deal with all the male egos in the room," she says with a knowing chortle.

Of course, Sadhana had the last laugh because just a short time later she was offered a job at Harcourts International after the Director saw her speak on stage at a conference and was impressed by her charisma and leadership skills.

"So, there we have two different male leaders with two different attitudes," she says.

"I may not have been the right person for that other job, but I at least deserved an interview. That way they could see who I am and what I could do before making the call."

Just two years after joining Harcourts, Sadhana was named the 2013 Victorian Businesswoman of the Year. Sadhana says she "fell into real estate" by mistake. She started out as a "really bad receptionist" but found that she had a talent and passion for the industry itself.

Her passion for the field hasn't waned with time nor is she resting on her laurels since being named Harcourts International's CEO of Property Management. She even keeps her business plan fixed to the wall of the shower so that every morning she can take stock of her goals.

Sadhana says she often offers advice to younger women, particularly, those from migrant backgrounds on how to get ahead in their chosen profession.

Her community spirit also extends beyond the office. Sadhana tells Grace Papers she considers herself to be a mother of nine children!

In addition to having a son and a daughter from her first marriage, Sadhana has taken guardianship of five orphaned children in Fiji after both their parents died.

"It's not like a sponsorship arrangement, I don't just send them money," she explains.

"They are very much part of my family. We talk all the time on the phone. I visit them."

Her surname came from her first marriage but when they parted she told her husband that she intended to keep the Smiles: "It had become my trademark!"

Learning to play the game better and harder than any of her colleagues, she says, has helped her get ahead. But she's also mindful that she has a duty to help the women coming up behind her.

"I have worked with a lot of dickheads, but I have also worked with some really great men," she says.

"After all it was a man who first opened the door for me to get to the position I am in now. And now that I am here, I will hold that door open for other women too."



Getting the job was one battle, getting to a high salary level was quite another.

She isn't afraid to admit that she is really "pissed off" to hear excuses why women were being paid a lot less than male counterparts.

"I know that I am much better than anybody else at the table and it has taken me a few years to get to the point

"I say to women just learn to play the game and learn to play it better than they do."

That's what I did. I now know that my success and what I have done for businesses speaks more volumes to the fact that I'm a woman."

of earning equal --or more than what they do --and I did that on performance," she says.

"Again, I went in and I said: 'I want a bonus structure attached to my performance.' In our business you get a bonus target, but you also get a bonus structure if you exceed target as well.

"And so, I tied my remuneration to my performance. 'I think that's a really good way to do it particularly if you are in an industry where you can link a portion

of your bonus to your performance and make sure that that bonus is something that will create a huge significance in the pay that you get."

Sadhana moved to Melbourne from Fiji as a teenager to attend school in 1983.

She says she's taken the best parts of both her Fijian heritage and her adopted homeland and wrapped them up into one unique package for herself.

She remains frustrated that fewer than two per cent of people in senior leadership roles in Australia come from migrant backgrounds, arguing that diversity is not only an asset but an essential in today's marketplace.

"I quite often tell leaders: 'Look around your organisation and tell me if the colours of the community are actually reflected in it.'

"If you are a very white-looking organisation then you are already in a huge amount of trouble in a world that is so global."

Sadhana is pushing for change at the highest levels of her industry.

But she also encourages women to follow her lead by backing themselves and pushing for promotions and pay-rises.

"We need to change the system," she says.

"So, stop asking for the system to be changed and start changing it internally yourself because revolutions start at ground level."





#GPINSPIRED

I remember saying to my boss, 'I'm going to return to work and I'm not going to be as smart or good.'

And he said, 'You will have more empathy for and connection with people, and better time management skills. You'll be a much better practitioner as a result of having a family.'

I didn't believe him at the time, but looking back I feel calmer and more confident than I ever have.

CASSANDRA SMARRELLI

*People and Culture Manager,
Woolworths Group*

[View this story online >>](#)

Meggie's mission to close the pay gap

Aussie journalist Meggie Palmer has gone global with her fight for equal pay. Her tech business aims to boost women's confidence and negotiating powers.

Meggie Palmer is an expert at turning a negative into a positive.

Frustrated that she wasn't paid as much as her male counterparts, the award-winning journalist made the leap from the newsroom into the tech sphere four years ago by launching [PepTalkHer](#), an app designed to bolster women's workplace negotiating skills by helping them gather the confidence and evidence to lobby for better pay and conditions.

"I think injustice is a big part of what fuelled me to become a journalist," Meggie explains from her office in New York, where she's fine-tuning new features on PepTalkHer for International Women's Day.

"And it's that same frustration at inequality that now drives me as an entrepreneur and the founder and CEO of a tech company. Our mission at PepTalkHer is very much about closing the gender pay gap.

"I was motivated by my own experience in a workplace where my pay and conditions were treated very differently to that of my male colleagues. And when I raised it, the company didn't want to hear it and wasn't willing to treat the situation fairly."

Although it's primarily designed for women, Meggie says PepTalkHer has also helped men get career validation too.

"Every week dozens of people message us saying that, as a result of using the app and tracking their success regularly, they've negotiated sizeable pay increases.

"We've had one user who negotiated a rise of more than \$80,000 as a result of tracking her wins. That's pretty remarkable.

"Then there are the benefits that we weren't expecting when we built it. For example, we've had a couple of gay men reach out and share with

"If you don't believe in your skills and ability, it's hard for other people to believe in you. You've got to be your own biggest cheerleader."

us their experiences of imposter syndrome (a feeling of inadequacy that persists despite success) and how they found that the PepTalkHer app really helps them tackle that."

In addition to the app, Meggie works with Fortune 500 Companies to fund start-up businesses to help them retain diverse leadership.

But her chief mission is to close the pay gap, which, she explains is caused by the sorts of jobs women have traditionally chosen and the fact that they usually do the lion's share of caring roles at home.



"But when you look at these gender pay gap figures globally, there was still a percentage of the gap that exists that researchers cannot explain," she says.

"You know, it's not explained by the data, so they put it down to unconscious bias and discrimination."

It is that outdated prejudice that Meggie hopes to stamp out through PepTalkHer.

"One of my mentors said to me, 'People pay the price that you put on yourself,'" she explains.

"And I think that that's really true.

"If you don't believe in your skills and ability, it's very hard for other people to believe in you.

"And so, I think you've got to be your own biggest cheerleader. I know that it's not natural for Australians to talk themselves up.

"And I'm not saying you need to walk around shouting loudly all the time.

"But shout loudly to yourself, because you're the one that's listening to yourself every day. You may as well be giving yourself positive affirmations about the wonderful work that you're doing and all the amazing effort that you're putting into your life."

[View this story online >>](#)

PARENTAL LEAVE

Parental leave isn't child's play

Parental leave was quite the shock to the system for Christopher Ong.

The new father naively thought he would spend his days strolling in the sunshine. Or going out for coffee while his baby daughter Ava slept soundly in her pram.

Instead he often found himself at home alone while his tiny daughter screamed for hours at a time.

It was lonely. It was boring. And it was stressful.

But he has no regrets because the 15 weeks he spent at home as Ava's primary carer allowed him to better bond with his daughter and have his eyes opened to what so many new mothers struggle with every day.

"It was a beautiful experience, but I also really struggled to cope at times," he confides.

"I found myself getting angry for no reason which isn't something I would usually do.

"I felt so isolated that I decided to join my wife's mothers' group. But I couldn't really identify with some of the things they talked about, like breastfeeding, or the changes they were experiencing in their bodies.

I obviously couldn't join in those conversations."

Being an involved and present father has always been important to the PwC employee. From the moment Ava was born he has been a completely hands-on dad. When his wife, Sharon, had to be taken off for surgery soon after Ava's delivery,

“There are a lot of dudes right now at work who are about to go on leave and it's important for them to know that, while it's worth it, it's not going to be all sunshine and rainbows.”

a midwife handed him Ava and said: "Here dad, you look after the baby!" For the next hour, father and daughter were left alone to bond.

"My dad wasn't around a lot when we were growing up because he was always working," Christopher says.

“It was a beautiful experience, but I also really struggled to cope at times.”

"His idea of being a good father was to work hard and be a good provider. I love my dad, but I don't have any memories of us kicking the football together in the backyard.

"I want to be able to play football with my daughter and go to her school concerts or piano lessons. It's important to me to have those experiences with her."

One of the reasons Christopher joined the PwC's digital services team two years ago was the fact that the company is so supportive of employees striking a balance between work and family life.

Men are encouraged to take parental leave and are provided with support and guidance from Grace Papers.

Christopher also found a terrific role model in his workplace coach (PwC's term for manager), Simon Doukas, who is a big advocate for working fathers at the firm and has only just returned from parental leave himself.

After 15 weeks at home with his daughter, Christopher acknowledges he felt some trepidation about returning to work full-time.

"I can't imagine how it must feel to come back after 12 months away," he says.

He points out that the regular contact from Grace Papers' executive coach and facilitator Genevieve Simkiss, while he was at home, helped get him through some of the tougher days of looking after a newborn.

"Those conversations with Genevieve were really beneficial," he says.

"I cannot speak highly enough of the initiative Grace Papers take with mums and dads to help them when they go on leave.

"There are a lot of dudes right now at work who are about to go on leave and it's important for them to know that, while it's worth it, it's not going to be all sunshine and rainbows.

"But when I get home from work now, Ava puts her arms out and says: 'Dadda!' I am not sure we would have as strong a connection if I hadn't had all that time with her at home. So that's special."



Q&A

Making history: her story

Rebecca Forgasz is indomitable. Associate Professor, climate activist, and mum to two small sons, she simply gets things done. Today we speak with Rebecca about her path to the peak of her profession, grace versus gravitas, and the interchangeable approach to parenting she practices with her partner, Debbie Kertesz.

Can you tell us a bit about your path to becoming Director and CEO of the Jewish Museum of Australia? What would you say is your professional vision?

Giving a full response to that question might not be wise! I've worked at the Museum on-and-off for a long time; I've always loved this place and felt committed to its mission of engaging people with Jewish culture. But for me, the Museum has never quite realised its potential, so my professional vision, in a sense, is to really see that happen. For the Jewish community and all Victorians, our educational role is more important than ever. I also think when you become a leader of an organisation, it becomes less about your personal achievements and more about a shared culture and vision that enables everyone to do their best to achieve the organisation's mission.

You said you've been at the Museum on-and-off for a while. Can you tell us a bit about your path to directorship? I started when I was a student; I had a part-time job working with the Education Officer. Then I got invited to curate an exhibition - I had absolutely no idea what that entailed, I had zero thoughts around curatorship, I was taking women's studies! But I thought to myself, 'that sounds like fun and, if they reckon I can do it, I'll give it a go.' I got completely hooked on how exhibitions combine the creative and intellectual, so I stayed on for a number of years, essentially as a curator, and realised that was what I wanted to do. I had never been ambitious regarding my career. I had no clear idea about what I wanted to do, or where I wanted to go. I didn't apply for jobs all that often; I'd be offered an opportunity and, if it was interesting, I'd take it. After leaving to work in exhibition management for a couple of other organisations, it dawned on me that I'd love to lead the Jewish Museum one day - my love for and belief in the place never left.

After that, I became a bit more strategic. I knew I had the curatorial piece, and I'd done a lot of teaching, so I had the education piece too. But that didn't feel enough. One of the fundamental pieces missing was fund raising. So I went out quite deliberately and sought opportunities around that, starting at the Australian Centre for Jewish Civilisation at Monash University, then in the greater university's advancement division in donor relations. Then quite unexpectedly, the director of the Museum - who had been in the role for 27 years - announced her resignation. I thought, 'Damn, it's too early for me!' But I applied and got the job, aged 35. It's been nearly nine years, with two parental leaves, since then.

Your sons, Felix and Levi, are now aged five and two. How have you worked to marry such a big role with care for your family - and what you'd like your parenting legacy to be? Before I had kids, I quite regularly worked 10 or 11 hour days; I rarely do that now. I went into starting a family really clear on my priorities, particularly around the time I'll never get back. So when I don't do drop-off, I get in early, and always leave at 5pm so as to be home for the end of the day. We live nearby and, if work accumulates, I'll come back into the Museum after the boys are in bed; I try to keep my work and home contexts separate. Very occasionally, I'll work late or on Sunday. The other thing is, when I had both babies, I took seven months of maternity leave, and Debbie did the same. We were at home together that whole time, which was massive in terms of setting the tone around how we wanted to parent. From the very first day, we shared everything.

That's incredible - many partners only take one or two weeks! I know, a lot of friends had dads at home for days or weeks; it's then so hard to understand the rhythm of the baby's day. If you're the primary carer, you know what needs to happen. And that applied to both of us -

we knew our babies equally, when they needed to feed and sleep. We talked through everything, bouncing ideas off each other, and never felt alone.

The idea was to be completely interchangeable for our kids. Of course, they have stages they go through where they prefer Mama to Mummy, and as they get older they develop different relationships with different people. But we've always known that one of us could be reading before bed and, if something happened and we had to get up and go, the other could take over and it would make no difference.



How did you manage those seven months financially? Through a combination of government-provided and employer-provided parental leave, savings and, for the first time with Felix, Debbie had a lot of long service leave she used. The second time without the long service leave, we were just pretty broke and arranged to make interest only payments on our mortgage. We were very lucky we were able to make it work but also just accepted changes to our lifestyle while we had reduced income. We also did take quite a lot of time figuring out exactly what our entitlements were (which is not easy to do!) and how they could be used flexibly.

What kind of work does Debbie do? She's a social worker and now works part-time after taking 13 months off with both our sons. So she's home with them a little bit, they're at kindergarten and childcare, and we have grandparents helping out a lot too. When it comes to the day-to-day household stuff, Debbie does more, but we try for balance; like with drop-offs and pick-ups, on the days she works I do those. And emotionally we're both there in the same way. In terms of my parenting legacy, that's what we've really worked towards, to be equally present for our children. That's not to say I want them to think they are my whole world; I think it's good for kids to know their parents work and do other things out in the world, for them to understand and feel pride and find meaning in that. But I don't want them to feel like they're a distant second.

What are your observations on gender equity - do you have a vision for this at the Museum? Our workplace is pretty much a hundred per cent female, though we've got male security guards as well as volunteers. Our board is 50/50. That said, I've definitely encountered inequality. One situation with an influential stakeholder went very badly, and part of what I felt was going on was the way he reacted to me as a woman, and a younger one at that.

There's definitely a double standard around behavioural expectations in the professional context, and that's been a big learning curve for me, to lead with grace when encountering *gravitas*, and adjust as there's some battles you just don't fight. And of course, that can equally apply to women.

How do you and Debbie share the emotional load at home? We've always talked a lot; our entire relationship is founded on talking! So that's just continued, as parents communication is so essential. But the other thing we do is use a family organiser app called Hub that enables us to share calendars and lists for everything like Aldi, Bunnings and Chemist Warehouse. The other thing is just knowing what each other's strengths are. I'm the researcher; when we didn't know what to do with sleeping, I went off and did tons of reading, then wrote it all up and came back to Deb with a digest. Then we talked it all through and made a decision together. It helps to know who does what well.

And how do you 'share the grass' And how do you promote and support balance and flexibility with your team at work? Most of the people I've worked with at the Museum have been mums of young children, so the culture of the place before I even got here was flexible. If someone needs to leave immediately because their partner can't do pick-up at the last-minute or a child is sick, they just go.

We had a treasurer once who said, 'this is not the emergency room of a hospital, nothing should ever be that urgent.' I'm conscious of taking sick leave and not returning until I'm ready to come back, in the hope that the team feels comfortable in doing the same. I think it's about modelling and perspective and understanding people's lives outside of work - but also a sense that if you give that to people, they will want to give back. Which ultimately is what our Museum is all about.

Victoria's secret to success

MinterEllison partner Victoria Allen believes flexibility – when handled with honesty and respect – makes for a happier and more productive workplace.

Victoria Allen has brought to the law firm offices the friendship and support parents usually leave behind at the school gate.

The MinterEllison partner started a mother's group so that the women could lean on each other and seek advice on how to balance their family's needs with their demanding careers.

"It's really egalitarian," she says.

"We talk about how we are tracking and share hacks for getting things done as well.

"The group can also help those who have just returned from maternity leave to see that there's a light at the end of the tunnel."

This isn't the only way that Victoria has made MinterEllison warmer for women.

After becoming one of the firm's small number of female partners more than 12 years ago, the proudest achievement of Victoria's impressive legal career is bringing two more women into partnership.

She has also pushed for more flexible work conditions, believing people don't have to be chained to their desks until midnight to get jobs done well.

"It's all about communication and respect," she enthuses.

"I can't expect people to accommodate my needs if I don't show them the same respect and flexibility.

"So, if someone says that they can't do something on a particular day because they have to pick their child up from school, or because of another family commitment, we will do our best to organise ourselves around that for them."

This isn't just for the women in the office.

"I had one junior male come into my office to say that he had a date that he really wanted to go on," she laughs.

"I told him not to worry and that we would make sure he went on that date. Everybody has different things going on in their lives that are important to them."

Victoria's honesty policy has also given staff the confidence to solve problems together.

"There is no policy to tell you what to do when a client wants something done urgently by 5pm and your child's school

VICTORIA'S TIPS FOR FLEXIBILITY

1. *Commitment to flexibility, under all circumstances, not just when easily accommodated*
2. *Having flexibility front of mind all the time, so work is constantly planned and prioritised around everyone's needs*
3. *Communication, communication, communication!*

calls to tell you they are sick and need to be picked up," she explains.

"There's no clear way to fix that dilemma. You have to consider what your relationship with the client is like, how urgent the matter really is, how sick the child is and whether someone else could collect them."



With two children – son, Jack, four, and daughter, Lucy, 10 – Victoria leaned heavily on her parents when she returned from maternity leave the first time.

When she had her son, she took nine months off despite having been just promoted to lead the Sydney mergers and acquisitions team. Her husband, Anthony Lloyd, also a Minter's partner, then took the baton to be a stay-at-home father for three months.

Now the couple manage the juggle by sharing responsibility for the children's after-school activities. Victoria also sits down once a week (with a glass of wine) to make a meticulous calendar plan on her phone's Wunderlist app.

This way, she laughs, she's never caught short when it's pyjama day at school.

Of course, Victoria admits that despite her best efforts, sometimes the wheels come off for her too.

She recalls trying to oversee two huge deals while hosting her daughter's eighth birthday party while her husband was in hospital.

"Most lawyers tend to have type A personalities, so we like to be in control," she says.

"But there are some things you just can't control. You just have to ride those days out."

A firm approach to flexibility



Research shows that employees who can balance their lives are happier and more productive, with organisations like EY leading the way.

Striking the balance between work and family life has never been harder.

Being a present parent whilst climbing the corporate ladder and making time to stay fit is a struggle for many working Australians.

Grace Papers' NSW head of client relationships, Amanda Meehan says flexibility enables workers to care for themselves, the community and others.

"Everybody at some stage in their lives will have a need for flexible work hours," Amanda says.

"That might be in the shape of parental leave, or to care for an elderly parent or disabled family member.

"But it is also important to take into consideration the need for self-care. If you are working full-time there is an expectation that you will stay well. So, it's important that people have the flexibility to prioritise their well-being in the same way that a working parent can work around their childcare arrangements."

Amanda says there's a strong business case for flexibility because "studies show that employees who are able to balance their lives, and live their values are more productive."

Organisations like EY have recognised the growing need for flexibility.

COMMON FLEXIBLE working arrangements include:

- Flexible hours of work
- Compressed working week
- Job sharing
- Part-time work
- Purchased leave
- The four-day work week
- Time-in-lieu
- Unpaid leave

The accounting firm offers up to 12 weeks 'life' leave, each year, so that staff can take time off when their family needs them. Or simply to take an extended break, recharge and see the world.

The bold move even attracted the attention of US talk show host

Seth Meyers, who joked: "While in Australia you can now get 12 weeks life leave at EY to take a holiday and relax, companies in America will give women a half day off if they gave birth at their desks."

Major news organisations also covered EY's ground-breaking arrangement, which enables employees to take an additional eight weeks of self-funded leave on top of the standard four offered as a baseline.

EY has also introduced "term time" to allow staff to work five-days a week during the school term and take leave when their children are on holidays.

EY Oceania People Partner, Kate Hillman says its new policy wasn't designed simply with working parents in mind. It also caters for employees who might want to spend time volunteering, trekking through Nepal or participating in training programs.

"We're innovating so we don't lose these people while they pursue passions outside of work," she explains.

"Millennials are also driving demand for flexibility as their preference for diverse and stimulating career experiences overrides traditional workplace structures and timelines.

"By next year, 80 per cent of EY's workforce across the globe will be millennials, so this is a particularly significant consideration for us."

Two heads can be better than one

Kristyn Hanna and Claire Sherwill share everything at work from their strong work ethic to their recent salary negotiations.

Just like the cast of *Friends*, who famously lobbied to be paid exactly the same amount while starring on the hit 1990s sitcom, Kristyn and Claire wanted an equal fiscal playing field when they began job-sharing at the Victorian Department of Health and Human Services last year.

“It was really important for us to be on a completely equal foundation when we started,” Claire says.

“We wanted to make sure we were on the same salary because we would be doing the same role.

“Talking about your salary can be an awkward conversation but it was something that was important to us.”

Both mothers with young children, Claire to daughter Eloise, almost two, and Kristyn to son Riley, eight, and daughters Lucy, six, and Phoebe, four, the pair were already working part time when they saw an opportunity to progress their careers by teaming up.

Already friends who had worked well together in the same team, the pair decided to apply together for the role of manager of employee wellbeing and support.

Throughout the application process and beyond, Claire says Grace Papers had been an invaluable source of support and guidance.

“Grace Papers were speaking a language that was appealing to us,” Claire explains.

“All their material, their approach and their guidance resonated with the journey we were on. They were able to provide coaching and support both in preparing us for interview (including an impromptu coaching session on Collins St when I randomly ran into [Grace Papers’ chief] Prue!) and helping us transition into the role as a job-share team. Their support has been relatable, easy to navigate while also being thought provoking. Once engaged with Grace Papers we felt we are part of a family.

“They have helped us to own our professional vision and not let flexibility get in the way of progressing our careers.

The women’s manager Nicole Fauvrelle says that although the Department supports flexible work arrangements, she had never seen a joint application for a management position.

“I was really excited about the idea and the opportunity this presented, not just for Claire and Kristyn to continue their professional journey but for the whole team,” Nicole says.

“In the current environment of budget constraints, a job share arrangement involving an overlapping day took some effort and advocacy to get the business side of things across the line.



“But we work in the People and Culture branch, if we can’t make this work then who can?”

Nicole plans to work closely with Claire and Kristyn to help them find their groove in the new arrangement. All three are optimistic and determined to make the job-sharing work not just for themselves but to pave the way for others.

“People need to stop apologising for working part time,” Nicole says.

“I hear it all the time, people saying: ‘I ONLY work two days’ or, ‘I ONLY work three days.’ Stop saying ‘only!’ You work part-time. That doesn’t mean you are any less capable.”

Nicole says having Claire and Kristyn share the role will be a benefit to their team because, while they share similar skills sets, they bring different strengths to the table as well.

“We work in a very similar way, although Kristyn takes organisation to a whole new level,” Claire laughs.

“As a mother of three she has to be organised, so I am learning from her.”

Both women now work three days. Kristyn takes the front end of the week and Claire the latter half. On Wednesday they are on site together, sharing the same desk.

“But we don’t sit on the same chair,” Kristyn jokes.

“It’s fine because we work on laptops so one of us will find a spare desk to sit at on Wednesday.”

There have been a few teething problems to the new arrangement. For starters, the department’s payroll and HR systems weren’t designed for job-sharing that involves two people job sharing on a three-day each basis to one

position number. But any problem they have faced has been dealt with together, with determination and a good sense of humour.

“I don’t think it would be possible to do a job like this with someone who you didn’t have complete trust in,” Kristyn says.

Claire agrees (of course).

“You must have transparency as well as open and honest communication. You need to have a genuine relationship with the person you are working with.”

The pair add that their arrangement works because it is a true job share.

“I think you both need to be working three days a week for it to be 100 per cent equal,” Claire says.

“If one person is doing three days and the other is doing two it provides an opportunity for one person to take the lead. That easily becomes unbalanced.”

The main downside of their new arrangement, both women lament, is they don’t get to spend as much time together in the office as they had previously.

Luckily, they make up for that in text messages, emails and afterwork socialising like true *Friends*.

Kristyn Hanna and Claire Sherwill’s tips for an Effective Job Share Model

1. Open communication: be sure to have a system in place to tell each other everything that is going on

2. A level playing field: Make sure everybody is working the same number of days for the same pay to avoid conflict down the track

3. Rapport: Working with someone is different to working alongside someone. Make sure the person sharing the role is someone with whom you have a genuine relationship

4. Patience: There can be teething problems at the start of any new working relationship so try not to let it wear you down



Morning madness: a survival guide

The Grace Papers' team share the secrets and the science for stress-free start to the day.

Ask any working parent and they'll tell you that getting out the door in the morning takes planning, patience and perseverance. It also takes a cool head -- only that's not always possible when you're cajoling kids to make their beds, marshalling fights between siblings and trying to pack everyone a healthy lunch.

Grace Papers head of digital coaching, Tegan Sturrock, says there's a very sound biological

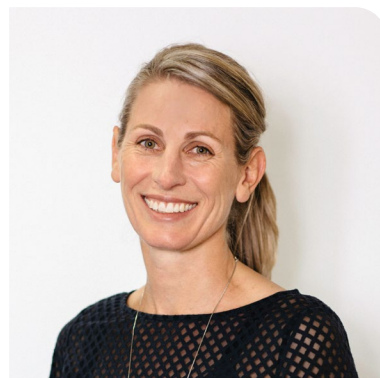
reason for why breakfast time chaos often causes people to snap.

"Over millennia, our brains have evolved to release cortisol in stressful situations," Tegan says.

"This cortisol inhibits rational, logical thinking but potentially helps you to survive out there in the 'wild'.

"As we sometimes just 'survive' the 'wild' morning mania, here's what is happening in your brain and your body: your brain senses a potential 'battle' and triggers the release of cortisol into your system. With this release your heart rate increases, your blood pressure rises, and your body's stress levels become elevated.

"The increased level of cortisol suppresses a part of your brain, your hippocampus, which in turn makes it more difficult for the brain to store and retrieve information -- making the morning turn to chaos both in the brain and inside the house!"



Tegan Sturrock

Tegan says understanding the neuroscience behind morning meltdowns can help prevent them or, at the very least, make them far more manageable.

"Imagine your brain as a house with two levels, a downstairs and an upstairs," she says.

"Downstairs is where all the basic functions happen (breathing, strong emotions of anger and fear and our fight or flight impulses) while upstairs is where all the higher functioning (empathy, planning and decision making) happens.

"Most meltdowns happen when the downstairs brain loses connection with the upstairs brain. The lower part of the brain, the amygdala, which processes the big emotions, takes over and hijacks the upstairs brain.

"Stress hormones take over the body and as a result there is

virtually no part of the upstairs brain that is fully functioning. So, saying someone 'totally lost their mind' or 'flipped their lid' can be pretty accurate neurologically speaking."

So how do we prevent our wild side from

taking over? For Tegan, getting up ahead of her family to enjoy her morning exercise routine, or to quietly plan for the day ahead, makes her feel calmer and more in control. She has also encouraged her three kids, aged eight, 11 and 13, to take responsibility for packing their own bags and getting themselves ready for school.

But it's not just Tegan who has devised strategies for her morning routine. Other Grace Papers staff have also shared some of the ways they get their days underway:

Amanda Meehan, NSW Head of Client Relationships: My husband and I divide and conquer. There are tasks he doesn't mind doing (sorting out breakfast, making or encouraging the kids to make the bed) and there are things I don't mind doing (lunches, packing away and putting washing on and out). So, we choose what we want to do, and we share the rest. The one thing that made a big difference was letting him know that I was not going to be a backup for the tasks that he owned. If he didn't make sure the kids were fed - whether by him or themselves - the kids would go to school without food. We worked through this the hard way.

Family meetings at the beginning of the week help us ALL to know when someone else has a big day ahead or something that might cause a bit of worry. We know in

Stress hormones take over the body and as a result there is virtually no part of the upstairs brain that is fully functioning.

advance and we're all mindful of each other. I always have UNO cards ready for a game (sometimes a REALLY, quick game) to pull a child out of a worry moment. We play a lot of quick games. The card deck lives on the bench. Table tennis also helps.

The kids know when I am getting uptight about getting out the door and I'm often reminded to pick up the pack of cards or play first to five in table tennis. Four minutes later and we are much happier.

Kate Gilson, VIC Head of Client Relationships: Despite the fact my children are older (11 and 13), I still love to wake them up gently, so we have some happy connection time early in the day.

Helping to create independence in my kids has been a game changer. I found checklists great when they were younger. I get them to lay out their clothes the night before. I also try to make sure they put their clean clothes away each Sunday, so they know where things are. I can still remember my combined feeling of joy and sadness when they rode to school by themselves for the first time, but this is now the default.

Kate McCormack, Head of Marketing: I try to exercise three or four mornings a week. This is good for everyone because life is more peaceful when I am at my best. Full disclosure: for the past couple of years I have had a nanny before and after school because I am working full-time, and my kids are still too young to get themselves to school. Frankly, I'd pay a million bucks for that 1.5 hours being outsourced sometimes! That is slowly changing though as the kids become more independent.



Jackson Bates

walking. I find it helps me clear the head for the day ahead and gives me clarity and focus. Then, when the breakfast meltdown happens, I'm in a better place to respond positively (it doesn't always work). As they say, put your own oxygen mask on first -- so I try to do that exercise.

Working for an employer with a flexible culture is also a game-changer for alleviating stress.

Jackson Bates, Software Engineer: My family would struggle if I didn't have excellent flexibility in my job with Grace Papers. The key to our mornings is planning and teamwork. The hardest day for us is our Tuesday morning. My wife works full time and is locked into a rigid school timetable. I'm working in the office in Melbourne. My son is at childcare, and my six-year-old is at school. Having prepped three sets of lunches the night before, I get up first (hopefully alone - sometimes my son has

a differing opinion), have a quick breakfast, prep the kids' breakfasts and start a little work from home.

My wife gets up with the kids and gets them fed and mostly dressed before she must rush out the door. I finish them off, and then drop both kids at their respective activities. I'm running late enough at that point that I can comfortably do a little more work on the train into the city. That works for one day a week for us - frankly if I was locked in to a more rigid workplace myself I can't imagine how it would work -- unless the kids were in 10 hours of care a day -- and we'd all be run pretty ragged!

Kristy Macfarlane, QLD Head of Client Relationships: For me the best way I can set myself and the family up for a great day is exercise. My ritual is 5 to 6am is "me time", whether that's Pilates, running or



#GPINSPIRED

There is a piece there around, from a male perspective, opening the aperture... being a more active dad than perhaps stigma dictates around what's normal.

There is also more in it for the workplace. If you balance this out a little bit more you end up... with a more diverse working environment.

NATHAN FAY

Exxon Mobil Australia Chairman



Love list

Who we are admiring...

Sanna Marin – At 34, Marin has become the world's youngest serving Prime Minister after winning election in Finland. The daughter of a single-mother, Marin is the Nordic country's third female PM. Soon after being elected, Marin's government equalised family leave so that both parents will qualify for seven months paid leave from 2021.

What we're listening to...

The Imperfects Podcast - Hugh van Cuylenburg from The Resilience Project teams up with Australian comedian, Ryan Shelton, to chat about how perfectly imperfect we all are. A variety of celebrities bravely share their struggles with mental health and their imperfections.

How's Work? With Esther Perel - The format of Esther's newest podcast will be familiar to fans of the Belgian psychotherapist *Where Should We Begin?* Each episode follows Perel as she counsels a pair of individuals who work together—sometimes coworkers, sometimes boss and employee—about issues in their relationship.

What we're downloading...

Morning Wars – Jennifer Aniston and Reese Witherspoon not only star in this fictional account of the cutthroat world of breakfast television but they also served as producers. Aniston won a Golden Globe for her role as a veteran TV host who is left reeling when her co-host and close friend is accused of sexual harassment. This is girl power at its finest.

What we're reading...

The Mother-In-Law - Sally Hepworth's book is a brilliant read about how one woman's complicated relationship with her mother-in-law ends in murder. But, don't worry, if you're more of a watcher than a reader, this a new series based on this book has just been piloted by NBC, to be produced by none other than Amy Poehler.

What we're singing...

Choir – Guy Sebastian's song has been nominated for APRA Song of the Year. On the surface this song sounds like a great party anthem, but it is also a tribute to his best mate who died. The song is a reminder to value people while they are here.

What we're buying...

Headbands – If only our 10-year-old selves had kept all those hair accessories from the 1990s!

What we're watching ...

Bombshell – Aussie actors Margot Robbie and Nicole Kidman join Charlize Theron as three women who were sexually harassed by Fox News' CEO's Roger Ailes. Controversial journalist Megyn Kelly (who Theron plays in the film) and other female employees say the film is a very close account of the toxic culture of masculinity at the network under Ailes.

What we're dancing to...

J Lo and Shakira – The Superbowl half time show has reminded the world how fabulously talented these two women are. At 50, Lopez in particular, is still at the top of her game and has enjoyed career success in an industry which generally celebrates youth rather than experience.



*“Grace” is not just our name,
it’s deeply connected to our purpose.*

We imagine a world where we approach
culture – and each other – with grace.

A world where it’s not just what we do that
matters – it’s how we make people feel,
that is, empowered and able to
live a fulfilled life.

