

Editor RITA DEMONTIS  
rita.demontis@tor.sunpub.com  
416-947-2247

TOMORROW  
DRIVING FORCE...  
Producer Lucy Hamlet  
showcases African-  
Canadian artists



Julie Bean-Sole with her daughter, Lexi

# Mommy Wars

To work or not to work ...

JOANNE RICHARD  
Toronto Sun

Home or work?

It's the mother of all dilemmas and literally tears apart most moms today. Do you stay at home with the kids or pursue a career?

It's an unrelenting conflict that brings out the inner catfight — and sometimes the outer catfight between working mothers and stay-at-home ones. It pits mothers against one another, but mostly against themselves, all in a desperate effort to keep it all together, says Leslie Morgan Steiner, mother of three children under the age of 10.

"Whether we're at home or at work, we all struggle," the *Washington Post* executive and author tells the *Sun*. "It's incredibly difficult; the internal torment is enormous."

Welcome to the Mommy Wars — and the battle is raging. "It's definitely one of the defining issues of our generation for women today — and everyone has an opinion on it."

According to Steiner, "Motherhood is fraught with defensiveness, infighting, ignorance and judgment about what's best for kids, family, and women — a true catfight among women who'd be far better off if we accepted and supported all good, if disparate, mothering choices."

She says it's constant open season on mothers — "everyone feels they have a right to weigh in on what makes a good mother. We always feel like we're being judged all the time, yet all we want is to be good moms."

"We're ultimately united

raise good kids but you wouldn't know it."

So Steiner decided to put motherhood in the spotlight with her newest book, *Mommy Wars: Stay At Home And Career Moms Face Off On Their Choices, Their Lives, Their Families* (Random House). It's a collection of 26 unflinchingly candid essays by outspoken real mommies on the state of motherhood today.

Her book focuses on every side of the war, from full-time stroller pushers to hard-driving executives, and moms in between, and reveals there's not only drudgery and missed opportunities whether you work or stay home, but definitely a jealousy

for those who seem to have it all at home.

Steiner, who was on the battlefield of juggling a full-time career and family for years, says she has finally found the perfect solution for

herself, one that has made life "immeasurably richer by combining motherhood with part-time work. It allows for fulfilling work and great second shifts with my family."

"I've worked hard to have these choices and my kids love it. My nine-year-old tells me I yell much less."

Yet while she relishes her profitable part-time position at the *Washington Post*, she embraces the full spectrum of lifestyle choices made by mothers today.

We're all in this together, she says. "Whether you're at home or at a desk, you risk your sanity when you become a mom, but it's totally worth it. It's part of the deal. Once you have a baby, it's not your life anymore — but it's the best thing in the world."

**"Whether we're at home or at work, we all struggle ... the internal torment is enormous."**

Morgan Steiner