

The Future of Work podcast is a weekly show where Jacob has in-depth conversations with senior level executives, business leaders, and bestselling authors around the world on the future of work and the future in general. Topics cover everything from AI and automation to the gig economy to big data to the future of learning and everything in between. Each episode explores a new topic and features a special guest.

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**Jacob 00:30**

Hello, everyone. Welcome to another episode of the future of work with Jacob Morgan, my guest today, Joann Lublin, author of Power Moms: How Executive Mothers Navigate Work and Life. Joann, thank you for joining me.

**Joann 00:42**

Well, thank you so much for inviting me,

**Jacob 00:45**

Of course. And I'm very excited to talk to you because as I was mentioning, before we pushed the record button. My wife saw this book, sitting on my desk, and she's always talking to me about women and moms in the business world, and how different it is, and the challenges and that nobody's talking about this. And so she saw this book, and she's like, uh, what is that? And I said, Well, I'm interviewing Joann on my podcast, and she got very excited. And she's gonna be reading your book as soon as I'm done. So starting tomorrow, she's gonna be going through it.

**Joann 01:21**

That's great. How long have you guys been married?

**Jacob 01:24**

We have been married. Oh, my God. Alright, wait a minute. I want to get in trouble here. It's been over 10 years.

**Joann 01:32**

Wow.

**Jacob 01:32**

Yeah. So we have and we have two babies, a four year old and an eight month old

**Joann 01:39**

Oh, my gosh,

**Jacob 01:40**

Yes. So 10 years, hopefully going on a lot longer.

**Joann 01:46**

But 10 years, like going on what feels like 20? Right.

**Jacob 01:48**

Yeah, exactly. So this is a really, really fascinating topic. And very first question for you just very high level is why did you even write this book?

**Joann 01:58**

Oh, I wrote this book because I really felt there was a need for a book on this topic. And it grew out of the reporting I did for my first book, which is a book called Earning It: Hard Won Lessons from Trailblazing Women at the Top of the Business World. And I interviewed 52, high level corporate, female executives for that book, and was surprised that not only were a majority of them mothers, but among the predominantly overwhelming majority who had been experienced public company CEOs, that proportion was even higher.

**Joann 02:35**

And one chapter in that book was on this issue of juggling life and careers. And the title of that chapter was a quote from one of those women, which is manager moms are not acrobats. There's no such thing as work life balance. So that was sort of the genesis for saying, I wonder, you know what it's been like for executives who are mothers?

**Jacob 02:57**

Yeah. And it's interesting, because there are still actually very few women in fortune 500 CEO roles, I think, what is it like 8%? Or maybe 9%? Now of...

**Joann 03:08**

Well, we're actually at an all time high,

**Jacob 03:11**

Which is crazy to think about

**Joann 03:13**

Yes. Well, and it's even crazier. When you think about how recent it's been since the very first female CEO of a Fortune 500 company, because it's something I looked into when I was writing the first book, and it was Katharine Graham, who became CEO of The Washington Post, by default, you know, her husband died, and they made her CEO that was something like 1972.

**Jacob 03:35**

Wow, jeez yeah, it's, it's really crazy that this is, but you know, this is a topic that's also getting a lot of visibility and a lot of discussion nowadays. Why do you think that's the case? Why are we paying so much more attention to this now, as opposed to, you know, five, even 10 years ago?

**Joann 03:54**

Which topic women in the workplace or working moms?

**Jacob 03:58**

Well, both, I think,

**Joann 04:00**

Well, I think there's more of both categories. For one thing. And this was, you know, part of what I set out to try and find out in reporting this book, half of those 86 Executive mothers that I interviewed for this book, roughly half are baby boomers, my generation, women who entered the workforce in the 70s and 80s, and had their kids sometime after that, or around that time, versus women who are now the Gen Xers and millennials who have just recently become executives, and have children and you know, what has what is different?

**Joann 04:36**

Well, one of the things that's different for those younger moms, is that there are not a huge number of women as CEO, but certainly many more than existed when I entered the workforce. But more importantly, there are many, many more women in levels just below the CEO, senior management. And frankly, you know, a significant proportion, not exactly, we don't know exactly how many, are are mothers. And so you've got role models, and you've got mentors, and you've got sponsors. And you have a lot more attention being paid not just to working moms, but the working dads. And as a result of that parental leave policies are now generic. They're not just quote, a maternity leave.

**Jacob 05:23**

Do you think that as a result of COVID, there's been even more of a spotlight put onto this topic?

**Joann 05:29**

Absolutely. And fact, that makes my book I think, extremely timely. I turned in the manuscript the day before the country shut down. And I was like, so happy because I had been leading this hermit like existence for nine months of writing the book, and there I am in the middle of March. Now I can go outside and play and get on planes and take trips. And of course, none of that happened. And so what did happen is I ended up having to update and revise the book, not hugely. But in part, you know, to find out what had happened to a couple of those younger women that I had interviewed, who were already working remotely at the point when I interviewed them in 2019.

**Jacob 06:14**

On the book jacket, there was one particular phrase that caught my attention. And it was Lublin reveals how Trailblazer boomers, many now in their 60s often endured sweeping disapproval for the for their demanding management careers, even as their own daughters sometimes rejected their choices. So when you say sweeping disapproval for their demanding management careers, I always love stories, were there are some stories that that are your favorite from the book of this kind of example of sweeping disapproval for management careers.

**Joann 06:51**

Yeah, I think the most, you know, disheartening story among the baby boomers. And by the way separate from those 86 moms. I also interviewed 25 adult daughters of these boomers. And one of these boomers was the only woman at the vice president level in this real estate company where she worked in New York, when she became pregnant with her daughter. And none of the guys ever believed that she would come back to work after giving birth to her daughter. And she was bound and determined that she would prove to them not only that she could come back to work, in other words, be a working mom, but that she could still flourish as a VP.

**Joann 07:35**

And in fact, in the later stages of her pregnancy, they stopped sending business, you know, and clients her way, because they figured, well, you know, she's just gonna quit. And so to prove to them to prove to these misogynist men that they were wrong, she came back to work without taking a maternity leave. Literally a day or two after she got home from the hospital. She was so sore from giving birth, that she had to bring the little pillow along that they give you at the hospital up your sore after giving birth and sit on it in her office, if you can believe.

**Joann 08:11**

And then, you know, she later became a single mom when her daughter was fairly young. And so her daughter, when I interviewed the daughter, you know, talked about the fact that it was rare that mom was home in time for dinner on weeknights. And so the childcare provider, the nanny would make her dinner. And then the daughter would basically eat by herself. But here's the irony. Remember the song cats in the cradle? And so when I interviewed the daughter, it turned out that, due to her not making a lot of money, in her first job, she had moved back home with mom to the same apartment in which she had been raised.

**Joann 08:53**

And so now she was living with mom again. But working a lot later hours because mom was had a home based business. And so mom was eating dinner without the daughter and the daughter was coming home, eight or 830. And sometimes her mother was already asleep. Cats in the cradle, I don't sing very well, you get it.

**Jacob 09:15**

Interesting. Actually. I remembered and I don't know if you had some stories like this as well. But I remember speaking with a Barbara Hampton, who is the CEO of Siemens in the United States. And she was telling me that during her career as she was kind of going up the ranks. She had a lot of people tell her that basically you're gonna have to choose between your career and having kids and there's no way you're going to be able to do both. And she said a lot of the people who kept telling her this were, you know, older, older white men that said, Look, you you're not gonna be able to manage both. So now at this point in your career, you need to pick Do you want to try to become an executive or do you want to have a family and of course, sure enough, she had a family became very variable. Successful CEOs she was able to do both. Is that

**Joann 10:03**

But you know what, but you know what, it wasn't just the men who had those kind of stereotypical attitudes. You know, there's another story in the book involving this Boomer mom, who was working at Disney. And two older women at the company who did not have children, essentially told her she was going to have to choose between her career and staying married and having, you know, she already had a family at that point. But they essentially were telling her to sort of Chuck the family bit overboard, if she wanted to get ahead at Disney.

**Jacob 10:35**

Hmm, yeah, no, that's crazy. Do you find that this is a common conversation that a lot of women a lot of moms are in people tell them this a lot. You're gonna have to choose between your family or your your career.

**Joann 10:49**

I think that was the extreme manifestation of what the boomer experienced as they moved up in management. But I think in more kind of less sweeping and less radical forms, it was very prevalent. And so you kind of made sure that people did not think you weren't serious or committed to your job. You didn't display photos of your children.

**Joann 11:14**

Now, there's another Boomer mom in the book, who did not display photos of her kids until they were in high school. Because at that point, she was, you know, one of the top ranked women in a very large tech company. And so she had proven herself. And she didn't have to make excuses about this notion of somehow having conflicting priorities. Men, of course, are never challenged on that score, right?

**Joann 11:39**

And, and so while it's very, very different for those Gen X or millennial women, there are still lingering gendered stereotypes, that result in women, like one of those Gen X are comes back from work a couple years, from maternity leave, rather a couple years ago. And the first thing male and female colleagues say to her, how do you do it all? And she got very upset about this. And she's like, why are you asking me this question? You know, why aren't you asking my husband this question? He is totally, you know, my equal partner in this parenting gig. And in fact, when I interviewed her, she said, maybe you shouldn't include me in your book. I don't like the title.

**Jacob 12:23**

Really?

**Joann 12:24**

I was like, Okay, why? Because she said, it implies that the women have to do it all. You know, why aren't you writing about the power dads, I said, I am writing about the power dads Tell me all about your husband, and what uh, you know, help equal partner. It bring up your your child at that point, she only had one. And then she told me this, the story I just told you, and I brought her around. And so she's in the book

**Jacob 12:49**

Well, I'm glad you're able to bring her around. You know, early on in your book, you have a section called the motherhood penalty. Can you talk a little bit about what that is? Because it's obviously a very, very dramatic section heading. That I'm sure it's gonna catch a lot of people's attention. What do you mean by that?

**Joann 13:11**

Well, it reflects decades of research that has been done. That suggests that if you do blind resumes, just as has often been done to uncover racial bias, and which it's clear from one set of resume resumes that you are talking about a working mother and others, it's clear from the resume that there are no children in the picture, that hiring managers are going to give the interviews and are going to give the jobs to the women that don't have the kids. Now that research goes back a couple decades, but I suspect where it repeated today, there would still be some evidence of that.

**Joann 13:55**

The other aspect of the mother penalty, motherhood penalty has to do with pay. And this has been continued to be a persistent issue. And it's this notion that either because women take protracted breaks after having children or choose to go back to work, but on a reduced schedule. Their earning power suffers. And some cases that recovers In other cases, at least some of the studies I was citing in the book it they never kind of catch up to where they were before they became parents. Again, same issue does not happen with guys.

**Joann 14:33**

Men have other problems being effective parents and effective members of the workplace, but the fatherhood penalty is more of if they want to be involved. Fathers, they feel like they're penalized that their career is going to suffer, that they're not going to be a guy's guy. And so they're reluctant to take the parental leave, even if it's generous and paid, that their employer is offering because Because somehow they won't look like they themselves are committed to their career. So we need to change our image of what makes for a good parent and what makes for a good worker. From a gender and parenting standpoint

**Jacob 15:16**

Yeah. So I mean, so the motherhood penalty is basically like, if you're a mom, you're penalized in the business world, because pay wise, career wise. I mean, just in general, you, you are forced to make a very, very awkward and uncomfortable choice.

**Joann 15:35**

With exception, however, I think in general, that remains true. But I also think this was another difference between the generations, the boomers were so grateful that anyone was willing to let them work and have children that they were reluctant to job hop, I mean, the woman I was talking about, who is this Vice President at this real estate company, and why would she continue to work? It's such a horrible place, right?

**Joann 16:03**

Well, maybe because all the other places where she might have worked, she would have run into the exact same entrenched, sexist attitudes, whereas the Gen Xers and the millennials have lots of choices. And there are lots of workplaces and companies that get it. And if they don't get it, if they're working at a company, they vote with their feet, or in many cases, they start their own companies, where they can write the rules. And they can establish a corporate culture that doesn't penalize parents, men and women alike, that actually venerates and rewards what they're doing.

**Jacob 16:40**

So we're, I mean, what's the history of this? Like, why did this become the way it is? Does this all come from the you know, the general stereotype that men are supposed to be the workers and the women are supposed to look after kids? And that's, you know, we had a lot of that, unlike the 50s-60s, is it just kind of is that where all this came from?

**Joann 17:00**

I think it is a holdover of that but it's, you know, with each decade, and with each generation that is making progress, particularly for women. It's receding. But I also think it's a reflection of our culture as a country. Now we have a very individualistic culture in America, we believe in everyone sort of pulling themselves up by their bootstraps that you are responsible for, you know, making it work or making things happen. And

**Joann 17:31**

unlike many European countries, which consider to be the the government or the state, to have an overriding interest in the welfare of their citizens, and therefore, in the well being of their children, and their parents. We don't have paid family leave on a national level. We don't have subsidized childcare. You know, these are standard practices in many, many industrialized countries around the world.

**Jacob 17:54**

Yeah. What's even harder for entrepreneurs.

**Joann 18:03**

Absolutely

**Jacob 18:03**

I mean, my yeah, my wife is an entrepreneur, she does a lot of what I do, but focusing on different topics. And you know, for her, she gave birth to two kids as an entrepreneur, and there's no, nobody's paying you for everything if you're taking time. So it was very, very stressful her for her. She actually traveled to speak at a couple of conferences while she was pregnant. She didn't even want to tell the conference organizers that she was pregnant, because she thought they might say, oh, you're pregnant, like, you know, maybe we should. She even told me the story of how she went to go speak at one conference. And they said, oh, wow, you showed up. And she's like, What are you talking about? She's like, Oh, you we you know, we knew you were pregnant. We didn't think you were gonna show up. It was like, Really? So it's Yeah, I mean...

**Joann 18:50**

Which shows you that attitudes are slow to change.

**Jacob 18:54**

Yeah. Yeah. So I mean, I saw her go through a lot of this firsthand, and it's very, very stressful because you don't even have the maternity leave as an entrepreneur. If you work for yourself. There's nothing.

**Joann 19:05**

Well, depends how small your businesses you know, if you're a one woman band, sure, but if you've got a startup that has a couple 100 employees, yeah, you might put in such a policy. So the only non Boomer that I interviewed for the first book for earning it is a woman who makes it repeat appearance in this book Clara and when I interviewed her for Ernie it she was nine months pregnant with her first kid and running a pretty you know, successful startup at already had a couple 100 employees. But my first question was, and she was clearly ready to deliver any day. What kind of maternity leave policy do you have here? And of course, it turned out before she got pregnant as the CEO, they didn't have one. But when she got pregnant, she convened a task force and lo and behold, a now had four months of paid leave and she took three months.

**Jacob 19:54**

Yeah, it's fascinating. It just goes to show how naive, I mean, and I was very much in this boat as well, just very naive not aware and until you are like experiencing it or trying to educate yourself about this, you just don't know these things. And I quite honestly was completely clueless until my, my wife would constantly bring these issues up. It's honestly,

**Joann 20:20**

wait, what about you? Did you take parental leave? When your two kids were born?

**Jacob 20:24**

Um, sort of. I mean, I don't think there was ever a time where it was like, going for weeks without doing anything certainly slowed down. But I mean, even my wife, I'm trying to remember like if she actually took maternity leave where she did nothing. And I don't think she did. I mean, she always did even like when we came back from the hospital, she was always doing a little bit each day. I mean, whether it was responding to email, whether it was talking to some members of her team just checking in, I don't think she actually had like a complete maternity leave of disconnecting entirely. And I don't think I had that for paternity leave, either.

**Jacob 21:07**

Now, of course, we definitely worked less, but it's not it's obviously not the same. So I guess the answer to the question is not on official maternity or paternity leave. Because you know, in that situation, it's sort of like if you're not working, although we have a team who is helping us, you still need to be a little bit involved in some stuff, just checking in here and there. So that's how it was for a little bit, but not complete disconnection now, which I think is a little a little sad, I suppose.



**Joann 21:37**

I'm sure your children will turn out fine. Irrespective.

**Jacob 21:41**

Yeah, I mean, the benefit on the entrepreneurial side is that you get to spend as much time as you want with them, because you don't have to go into an office. And so we are very grateful for that. And, ironically enough, the pandemic, you know, we're not traveling at all. And we have an eight month old, we're spending all of our time with our with our kids. So it's been a little bit of a blessing and a curse. But yeah, it's, it's tough.

**Joann 22:08**

You can kind of summarize Parenthood exactly in the phrase.

**Jacob 22:12**

Exactly. Yeah.

**Joann 22:13**

It's a blessing and a curse.

**Jacob 22:15**

Yeah, I read by the way that you had a baby that was born in 1983.

**Joann 22:21**

I did

**Jacob 22:21**

What month?

**Joann 22:23**

January

**Jacob 22:24**

Okay, I was born in 1983 in August, so I was curious.

**Joann 22:28**

That's my daughter. That's my daughter.

**Jacob 22:30**

Okay. Yeah. 1983 is a good year.

**Joann 22:32**

It was great.

**Jacob 22:34**

Um, so. Okay, so we talked a little bit about the history of this. And so it sounds like there is some progress being made, which is, which is good. So let's talk a little bit about how to actually balance, work and life. I know there are a lot of people who are listening to this thinking, you know, I'm in a similar boat, what do I do? Where do I start? What do I think about it? Do you have any suggestions? And maybe let's start with the women, the mothers, the expectant mothers, and then we can talk about any advice you have for the dads out there?

**Joann 23:09**

Well, for one thing, I think you have to give up on the notion of balance, okay. It's, it's, it's an ideal that has been greatly overblown and can never be realized. I use the phrase in the book, it's like, you know, maintaining a yoga pose for 24 hours. You can't, can't do it. And so that's why I talk a lot in the book about a concept that I have never heard of, before called work life sway.

**Joann 23:37**

And I was introduced to this concept by the very first younger generation executive mother that I interviewed as like what are we talking about here? And, and the idea of work life sway is that you accept the I the belief that there is no such thing as balance. And you recognize that there are going to be moments in your day and in your life when you have to be 110% there for your job for your company, for your work. But family needs may intrude with out warning, and you have to be prepared and willing and able thanks to technology you can to sway the other way.

**Joann 24:21**

And in her case, she's a top executive at Philips, the auction house, she oversees their global photography collection. And she got a you know, a text with a live video when her older son took his first step, because the nanny knew she wouldn't want to miss it. But it happened while she was at the office. And so she obviously stopped what she's doing, watched him take his first step. And it made me wonder how many of those Boomer moms had I interviewed who not only did not see their child take his or her first step. But probably his or her first step was taken while at a childcare center or being cared for by a babysitter or nanny. And the mother was never told because the mother, you know, and dad wanted to see it for the first time themselves.

**Jacob 25:15**

Yeah, yeah, no, I totally agree. Well, you bring up an interesting point, this idea of getting rid of work life balance, and I am I completely agree. This has been a phrase that's been used for many, many years, this idea of balancing work and life and yeah, I don't think it exists anymore. I like the word...

**Joann 25:34**

And never did. That's why that that chapter in the first book was called manager moms are not acrobats. That was a quote from a executive mama in that book, who's come back by popular demand. And book number two, and I interviewed her daughter.

**Jacob 25:50**

Hmm, interesting. Yeah, work life sway work life integration is kind of like balancing, balancing both. So for people out there who are still believing in work life balance, I mean, how do you move away from this idea of compartmentalizing and saying, I'm only going to work nine to five, I'm going to have this balance. I don't care what Joann says, I'm going to do it. What do you say to those people?

**Joann 26:15**

Well, for one thing, I think that pandemic has proven that we don't have to be locked into going to the office every day. And we certainly don't have to be locked into working nine to five. The experiment that has happened on a national scale about working from home has proven to be extremely successful in terms of productivity, and satisfaction with work life issues, as hard as it been to keep, you know, the kid out of the frame when you're doing the zoom call. Parents, in many surveys report how much they've enjoyed having that additional time with their children and not spending two hours a day commuting or longer.

**Joann 27:03**

And in my case, I had during the time, I worked in the New York office for the journal, a commute that was anywhere from an hour to an hour and 45 minutes each way, depending on whether there was an accident in the Lincoln Tunnel that caused all the buses to back up until they could clear the wreckage. And so that was extremely annoying. But I also had a very understanding, empathetic managing editor, who, when I moved to New York offered me the chance to work from home on Fridays. And I took advantage of it. And I kept doing so for the next 20 odd years, until the last day of full time work at the Wall Street Journal, which was a Friday and they all said you got to come into the office on your last day.

**Jacob 27:50**

But doesn't having work life integration or sway also depend a little bit on the company because it seems like you need to be a part of an organization that has some flexibility too right where they say you don't have to work nine to five, you know, if you have a soccer practice, you know, leave you don't need to come in every day.

**Joann 28:06**

And and the way to make sure it is a company that actually practices what it preaches. Because there's countless companies that claim you know, we have lots of flexibility, flex hours, flex time, flex this flex that you need to find out what the usage is. But you more importantly, you need to see what the tone at the top is, you know, are people who are in senior management senior executives, actually doing what they claim is available to everybody else. And not only that, are they broadcasting this, I did a story for the Wall Street Journal a couple of years ago, wondering how corporate culture changed if the male CEO had two or more women as his direct reports,

**Jacob 28:50**

interesting.

**Joann 28:51**

So I didn't think it would make a difference if there's only one because we know if there's only one woman in the corporate boardroom, not much happens, the guys still go to the men's room to decide to sell the company and then come out and tell her later. Okay, but when there are two women in the boardroom, they can therefore put their heads together and the ladies room. And so that was my sort of working hypothesis.

**Joann 29:13**

So one of those high tech companies where there were two women who were direct reports to the CEO. One of them was the head of HR, who decided to actually make an example of what they viewed as flexibility about leaving work early. And so when her son entered his last year of high school, she decided she would leave work every Thursday at 5pm. She didn't care if the world was coming to an end because she wanted to take him out to dinner, and essentially bond with him because he was gonna fly the coop.

**Joann 29:43**

And she wrote an essay about this and posted it on the company's internal website. So it was broadcast worldwide. And she essentially said, if you're looking for me after five o'clock between September and next June, you're not going to be able to find me I'm not gonna be checking email. I'm not gonna be responding to text messages. This is my time to bond with my son. It made a huge impact in terms of sending the message that this isn't just lip service. And so you need to pick companies and workplaces and employers where they don't just have flexible policies, but where they have flexible cultures and flexible role models.

**Jacob 30:24**

Hmm. It reminds me of. So I interviewed This was while ago, Ellyn Shook the Chief Human Resource and leadership Officer of Accenture. And she, I think it was

**Joann 30:35**

I have interviewed her too, for a journal story.

**Jacob 30:37**

Okay. Yeah, I think it was Ellyn, who's telling me this, if I'm not mistaking, but it was either her or Pat Wadors, who's now the she used to be the CEO of LinkedIn, and she's at another company now. But they were telling me how they think it was Ellyn, how she has a smartphone. And she also has what she calls a dumb phone. And what she would do is when she would get off of work, she turns off her smartphone. And she has this flip phone. And only a couple people have the number the flip phone her family. And you know, some of her top executives at the company said if there's an emergency, and you know, the the bat phone rings, she'll pick it up.

**Jacob 31:15**

But aside from that, she's not checking her email, not looking at the smartphone, nothing. But if there's an emergency and that flip phone rings, she'll pick it up. Same thing, if she's in a meeting at work, and she has her flip phone with her. She knows that if somebody's calling, it's probably family, and it's an

emergency. And everybody knows that. If that phone rings, she's gonna step out of the meeting and say, I'm sorry, it's an emergency. It's my family, I have to go. And she set that expectation. And everybody was okay with it.

**Joann 31:44**

But see, that's, that's a wonderful story. But the most critical thing that you said, Jacob, was the setting of expectations. And too often, and I think women are guiltier of this than men. They're afraid to set expectations. Okay, they're afraid to ask for what it is that they need. They're afraid to ask for what they want. And in turn managers, men and women alike, particularly while we're continuing to be locked down and predominantly working from home, are not asking the people who report to them enough. You know, are you getting what you need? You know, is this working for you? Is there any other way we could help you meet the issues that you're dealing with?

**Joann 32:26**

So for instance, some companies are setting aside protected time. And they're saying between x and y, each day, you know, we are not going to schedule zoom calls, because we know it's an important time of day, particularly for parents who are trying to help their kids be educated from home. I've had other comments I've read about at least a couple days a week, have been setting the end of day as corresponding to when schools are over whether the kids are back in school or or again, learning from home, just to be mindful of the fact that the parenting hat kicks in probably at 330 or four.

**Jacob 33:10**

So how, how do you ask for what you want? Do you have any suggestions? Because I'm sure there are a lot of people out there working for organizations listening to this and saying, you know what, I'm going to take John's advice, I'm going to talk to my leader, my manager, my boss, and I'm gonna ask for what I want. How do you? How do you do that? First of all, and how do you even figure out what it is that you don't want to make it sound like it's a hostage situation, and you're like, you know, listener demands? How do you approach it?

**Joann 33:39**

Well, for one thing, I don't think you should make it a solo act. Particularly if it's an issue that you're grappling with that you're convinced that there are other parents, men and women alike at your workplace who are going through the same experience? You know, how do we deal with the fact that I've got a first grader who has been told that he's got to learn on a computer and he doesn't even know how to use a computer, whatever the issue is, you should do some homework, you know, play journalist here, do some research and find out whether it's through, you know, Facebook groups or you know, some of your internal work chat groups, as to whether there are other people who are experiencing the issues you are experiencing.

**Joann 34:27**

And also find out if you've got some ERG's, if you've got employee resource groups, a lot of companies initially were creating employee resource groups for black employees, for Hispanic employees, for gay employees, for female employees. And now they've gotten segmented even more narrowly, you know,

they they created them for the working mothers then they expanded and then the other way a lot of them now have him for working parents.

**Joann 34:53**

And so one of the younger power moms who I interviewed when she first went back to work after The first of her three kids was born, was traveling because it's a management consultancy. She was on the road all the time. But she was still nursing. And so she was hauling breast milk that she had refrigerated, you know, on her business trips. Through airports, she had one suitcase with her clothes on one suitcase with all these bottles of frozen breast milk, which invariably, the case would get knocked open and all the milk would spill. And so when she got back, she talked to a client who was at a law firm, they said, Well, you know, we pay to ship back the milk of nursing moms who have to travel.

**Joann 35:34**

And she thought, well, that's an interesting idea. And she knew that they had a, I guess, at that point, a brand new working parents group, she went to the executive sponsor of that group, who happened to be an older woman at the company, a mother. And they agreed to a pilot. And the pilot not only was successful that they rolled it out nationwide. And then they went one step further, they extended this benefit to the wives of men at this consultancy who had to travel for work, and needed to ship home their breast milk.

**Jacob 36:13**

Interesting.

**Joann 36:14**

And this was an issue that had not been solved with her first return from work. But by the time she came back from her second maternity leave this was now you know, she set the ball in motion, just before she gave birth a second time and was able to take advantage of it when she came back. Now, if you don't have an employee resource group, then it seems to me you need to still do a little bit of what we say in journalism is legwork and find out how approachable your manager and bosses are around the issue before you go to them.

**Jacob 36:48**

It sounds like you need to approach this very much like you would kind of a business case.

**Joann 36:54**

Absolutely.

**Jacob 36:55**

Which is interesting, but also a little sad at the same time that you need to because it's not, you know, it's you know, it's about being a mom, it's about taking care of kids. So the fact that you need to present that as a business case, I think already in a lot of corporations says something negative about how we think about it, but you need to,

**Joann 37:16**

well, yes and no, because, you know, companies are going to flourish to the extent that they have low employee turnover, and high employee satisfaction. So that's the business case, it seems to me. And there have been lots of studies have shown that, you know, family friendly workplaces do tend to have low turnover. And high retention. And so there's your business case, right there.

**Jacob 37:42**

Yeah. Well, what I mean, the fact that you even need to create a business case as a mom to present to your leadership team to try to convince them for why you should be able to get these things, in and of itself is sort of weird.

**Joann 37:56**

Right? And if frankly, you feel like you're butting your head against the wall in doing this, now's the time then to vote with your feet.

**Jacob 38:03**

Yeah. Okay. So I love that approach. Okay, so let's say you gather the research, I mean, you have you have some things that you want to present. I mean, do you present it like a formal case? I mean, do you take your manager out for coffee? Like, how do you even bring these things up in a way that it's

**Joann 38:20**

Jacob, it's totally employer specific, okay, because every company has a different culture. You know, my daughter and son both work in state government. And in reading the book, because I interviewed them both for the book, they both commented on the fact that the workplace norms are different in a government or a nonprofit setting than in a for profit.

**Joann 38:44**

In my son's case, when he got into management, he was presented with a huge dilemma from his own employees, because people who had very young children are just come back to work at parental leave, wanted to bring the babies to work. And the other half of his workforce who either never had children didn't plan to have children or had grown children, said No way, this would be hugely disruptive. And my son being the good son that he is, and the feminist son that he is, of course, reached out to his mother and said, Mom, what should I do?

**Joann 39:23**

And I was like, Well, you know, what's the what's the example for this? You know, is there any precedent for this and any other agencies with the government and you know how much you know, taking of temperatures? Have you done it? You know, are you just listening to the people who are yelling the loudest? Or are you actually trying to, you know, really sort of survey what everyone thinks about this? Now, you're gonna say What happened? I know what happened, but I don't know how he got to that conclusion. But I do think he gave it serious thought and decided it would be too disruptive.

**Jacob 39:56**

Yeah. Okay, so what happens if you do this, and you're you're company, your leadership team is not receptive. They say, you know, we'd love to unfortunately, it's not gonna work out or you know, there's not enough moms or women on the team, you're the only one, you know, whatever the reason might be

**Joann 40:14**

Sure, at that point you do what I've often advise people to do in writing a career advice column for the journal for many decades, you propose a pilot, you know, it's just like, if you get hired, and they don't give you the pay raise, or the title that you were expecting would be part of that new job. You say, Okay, I will come in for 10% more than I was making before. But let's set some very specific criteria by which I'll be measured. And I want to be reviewed not after a year, I want to be reviewed at different benchmarks that we agree on three months, six months, nine months, whatever it is that people can agree on. And then you also agree on what's going to be measured.

**Joann 40:57**

And by the same token, when it comes to some kind of parenting, accommodation, whether it's, you know, I'd really like to work from noon to four, and then maybe finish what I need to do, you know, after my kids are in bed, and why any employer wouldn't agree to that, especially when people are working remotely, I don't know. But, you know, if you think that I really need to be available for those morning meetings, blah, blah, blah. You know, let's try it my way, you know, for some set period of time, and then have some kind of measurements to see how it's gone.

**Joann 41:31**

And then frankly, if it's not working, you suggest some alternate approaches don't give up. But also don't feel like you're having to win this battle alone. There are so many online, you know, outlets like your own but support groups of one kind or another, that just frankly, didn't exist when you know, my kids were little.

**Jacob 41:53**

Yeah, couldn't agree more. And I suppose worst case scenario, you always get the heck out of there, if it ends up being not a good place to be a part of. I wanted to talk a little bit about dads. So I'm a dad, you know, a lot of people listening to this are dads, we talked a lot about power moms. What about the power dads out there? I mean, what, what have you been seeing there? I mean, what should dads do to become more supportive? I mean, any any advice for the dads?

**Joann 42:20**

Well, I think the biggest advice I have for men who want to be power dads, is to not try to be supportive, but instead try to be equal partners, with their wife, or life partner, or husband, for that matter. And, and so, you know, once again, our nomenclature is tripping us up here. We all want supportive, dads, you know, we want supportive husbands. No, I think what women who want to be successful in their careers and have children want is they want co parenting.



**Joann 42:56**

And, frankly, the time to talk about that is not when you've gone 24 hours straight, with not much sleep, because you're at each other's throat. And Gosh, darn it, I changed the diaper, the last time the newborn woke up, you need to kind of come to some meeting of the minds, frankly, at the start of your commitment to a long term relationship. If you want to have children, you should talk about that we should also talk about who's going to stay home when the kid is born, who's going to stay home when the kid is sick, whose career is going to take priority, as these kids are growing up is one of us willing to be a stay at home parent for a couple of years, is the other one willing to be the stay at home parent the next couple years. You know, before there was anything called paternity leave, men had no opportunity to be involved in Parenthood. And once paid paternity leave became more of a fact of life. I started at the Wall Street Journal see men not only take it, but the take it after the wife had gone back to work.

**Jacob 44:04**

So and I suppose the same advice can apply for dads I mean, if you're part of an organization and you don't feel like, right, these same things are there, you can create the case, ask for it, ask for what you need. Same approach,

**Joann 44:18**

But also look for role models at the top of the house. As you may recall, you know, I have a final chapter that looks at a handful of companies that I think are going above and beyond. You know what is kind of standard practice in terms of catering to the needs of working parents.

**Joann 44:34**

And one of those is American Express, which not only has very generous parental leave paid 20 weeks, but they go out of their way to make sure that men take it and to make sure that this is accepted, you know behavior, but they go one step further and they make sure that bosses noses don't get bent out of shape, because these people keep disappearing for 20 weeks at a time. Men and women alike. And so I think that is so critical to offer temporary replacement allowances to bosses who are suddenly short handed, because people are disappearing for new new babies.

**Jacob 45:13**

Yeah, no, I think that's the other thing I you bring up an interesting point is that ultimately you work for your manager or your leader. And so even if the organization has a certain policy, if your leader is going to make your life, hell, if you take advantage of it, you're not going to take advantage of it. So making sure that the managers the leaders are supportive of it, encourage it, embrace it, I think is a crucial component there.

**Joann 45:35**

And the way that happens to a greater degree is if senior executives walk the talk. As you may remember, one of the younger power moms I interviewed is Jen Hyman, who is the co founder and CEO of Rent the Runway, again, very generous, family friendly benefits, which she extended from salary to hourly workers a couple years ago. But she also was seeing relatively few fathers take the paid parental leave. And then when her chief technology officer was about to become a new dad, she insisted that he takes the full paid leave. And she told me that since he came back to work, and of

course, this was widely broadcast within the company, every single new dad has taken his full parental leave. So the role models and the you know, emulating has to start at the top.

**Jacob 46:31**

Yeah, no couldn't agree more. I also want to talk to you a little bit about the role that technology plays. And you talk a little bit about that in the book as well. But maybe we can look at sort of like, before and after. So before, you know, we had so much technology and so much connectivity, I'm wondering if it was easier to separate and to focus on the paternity or maternity leave versus now because now you're always connected. And because you're always connected, you feel like you always need to be available.

**Jacob 47:02**

Like you can't shut out even when my wife and I, you know, when we had our kids, you're always connected. Somebody can always get in touch with you. And it's literally unless you destroy the Wi Fi in your house. People can reach out to you. Where's

**Joann 47:15**

Ah, but see you have to follow the example set by Ellyn Shook with the Wi Fi

**Jacob 47:20**

Exactly. But you know,

**Joann 47:21**

And that's a big problem. It's a big problem. You know, it's, I devote a very substantial chunk of the book to this issue being always on. Yeah, you know, we can be reached 24. Seven. But that doesn't mean we have to be reachable. 24. Seven, I think entrepreneurs have a very hard time disconnecting

**Jacob 47:42**

Oh, I couldn't agree more. I mean,

**Joann 47:43**

because their business is their baby, as well as their real babies.

**Jacob 47:47**

Yeah. And I mean, I always try to say and tell myself and my wife that connectivity doesn't imply availability, you know, you could still be connected and not be available. But I mean, if you were to look back 20 years ago, was it? Would you say it was easier to make this kind of separation between your life and your work?

**Joann 48:05**

In some respects, Yes. Because frankly, dial up was incredibly slow. In the 80s. And, on the other hand, because the technology wasn't there, you were more inclined to stay late at the office. Because it wasn't gonna be easy to get hold of you. When you got home.

**Jacob 48:26**

Yeah. But now, I suppose we could also use technology to our aid, right?

**Joann 48:33**

Absolutely. It's how we've been able to have this natural experiment in working from home.

**Jacob 48:39**

So any suggestions on how power moms or power dads can use technology to help them instead of always feeling like they're having to be available?

**Joann 48:49**

Yeah, I think the smartest thing is to turn off your phone, particularly your work phone, and even have two phones. Maybe one of them isn't as old fashioned as a flip phone. But you know, your second cell phone is basically your personal phone. And when you're not working, the work phone is literally not available to you. There were some power moms whose kids had a rule that basically said when mom walked in the door, there was a basket by the door where you put your dirty rubbers and your your wet umbrella. And that's where she had to leave her phone. turned off. But on the other hand, there were other women who would sneak into the, you know, walk in closet, talk on the cell phone on the weekend or whatever.

**Jacob 49:36**

I think it requires a certain level of discipline, right?

**Joann 49:39**

Absolutely. And that's hard. But guess what, you know what the world can get on without you even though we think the world could not possibly get along without us. And so it does take a certain amount of reminding ourselves what our personal priorities are.

**Jacob 49:55**

Yeah, I couldn't agree more. So maybe last two questions, because we just have a couple minutes left. Does any of this have to and you know, looking back at a kind of history, my wife reminds me of this sometimes. And she says, you know, women and men or boys and girls were also raised very different. And so women are, for example, she's always reminding you that women are told to say yes, to be polite, to not oftentimes Speak up, because you don't want to be perceived in a negative way. You're taught to not necessarily always ask for what you want.

**Jacob 50:29**

And guys, it's very much the opposite, right? Like, it's okay, you know, go out there be aggressive. Is there something to that as well? As far as why this situation may be the way it is? Just, you know, how boys and girls men and women are raised?

**Joann 50:45**

Yes. And that's why I think as parents, it's so important for both parents to be highly involved with raising their children. Because I think that sets a role model for the children, that mom and dad are

equal parents. And not only that, that it's okay. You know, if mom does dad like things, and it's okay, dad does mom like things.

#### **Joann 51:10**

My son was bragging greatly a couple weeks ago, because his wife had just installed a new thermostat for their house. But he also made sure that their three kids knew you know, how great mom was at rewiring. And by the same token, you know, encouraging little girls to not act the way little girls have always been taught. It's uncommon that men set that example for their daughters, not just that the moms set that example for the daughters. And so to the extent that we have co parenting and less gender stereotypes in the home, then there'll be less pressure on the kids to behave that way. There's still gonna be huge pressures either way, of course. But But things are getting better. I'm a, you know, the glass is half full type of person

#### **Jacob 51:58**

Optimist. Yeah, I love it. So last topic, or theme that I wanted to look at, which is a big one, and you have quite a few pages devoted to this. And this is really around guilt. Because this is something I mean, even my wife experiences this quite a bit. So I see it firsthand. And a lot of women, a lot of moms experienced this. You have this guilt that you feel. And in the book, you talk about 10 life hacks for basically getting rid of guilt, I probably don't have time to go over all 10. But what are some of your favorite ones that you think we can practice as far as not feeling guilty about working, not feeling, you know, guilty about doing these things that we need to do?

#### **Joann 52:41**

Well, I think, as a premise, you have to accept the notion that guilt is frankly, a waste of your precious time and energy. doesn't really get you anywhere. And the way you get past that, is by again, looking at the other end of the telescope. You know, the woman who coined the title for that Earing It chapter that I told you about, is also the one who gave me the idea for having this chapter about ditching working mother guilt and ditching working father guilt for that matter.

#### **Joann 53:13**

And so she pointed out, rather than browbeating and beating up yourself about the fact that once again, you know, you're not sitting down for dinner until seven o'clock, you know, with your spouse and your children, celebrate the fact that you're able to have dinner with your spouse, and your children. So look at it from the opposite end of the telescope. You mentioned Ellyn Shook, at Accenture, I interviewed one of their top executives for the book, Mary Hamilton. And she had a great example of a hack. She takes off two or three days of vacation time every quarter. And the each one of those days is a mama day for one of her three kids. And the kid gets to decide the day's activities. And you know, from morning till night, they have mama to his or herself.

#### **Joann 54:08**

And the kids love this. I actually tried doing something like that when my kids were little and we were living in London. I gave each one a you know, I took a vacation day and gave each one their choice. what they wanted to do. The problem is each one wanted to spend the entire day in a toy store.

**Jacob 54:28**

Yeah, I mean, I'd probably want to do the same. You also had the two that I thought were very interesting is give children a voice in your work life. So maybe you can touch on that one really quick in I mean, I think a very other important one that we don't do a good enough job of is carving out time for yourself, which I view going very much hand in hand with taking strategic breaks, which is something that my wife and I try to do on a regular basis. We do breaks in the form of like no meetings Monday, Wednesday Friday, so We have a whole degree, or we can do something where we're just going to take a couple days off or even a week off and not do any work. And I think it's so important, especially for entrepreneurs to do that. But how do you give your children a voice in your work life?

**Joann 55:13**

Well, the way you give your children a voice in your work life is to make sure that they are fully informed of what's going on. And to the extent that the children can have a say, in, you know, which days you're going to be out of town for a business trip, or which days, you cannot come to school for a particular program. The kids will feel much more involved.

**Joann 55:35**

There was one Boomer mom, who at the beginning of every school year, starting when her daughter was in kindergarten, this one daughter would essentially have the daughter pick out a half a dozen or so school events that were absolutely, you know, didn't want mom to miss. And then the executive would make sure those were blocked out six or nine months ahead of time on her work calendar. And they were, they were sacrosanct. She didn't care if the CEO needed to talk to her, she was going to be at the mother daughter, you know, baking class or whatever. And in terms of taking time for yourself, you know, there are a lot of people who seem to think that self care is selfish care. And it's not

**Jacob 55:58**

Oh, I couldn't agree more.

**Joann 56:22**

Self Care shows that you care for others by caring for you.

**Jacob 56:26**

Yeah, I love that. Well, any last parting words of wisdom before we wrap up and ask you where people can get your book and learn more about you?

**Joann 56:35**

Well, my biggest parting wisdom would be to choose wisely in three ways. You should choose the right partner should choose the right employer. And you should choose different mentors and different sponsors at different points in your career.

**Jacob 56:52**

And this is applicable for men and women

**Joann 56:54**

Men and women alike. Absolutely.

**Jacob 56:57**

That's wonderful advice. Well, Joann, where can people go to learn more about you and grab a copy of your book? It's a brand new book. So anything that you want to mention for people to check out?

**Joann 57:08**

Sure. Well, my website Joannlublin.com has lots of details about me my career at the Wall Street Journal, my two books, and it also gives you six easy links to online book retailers. Anyone who buys a hardback version of power moms and would like it autographed, personalized bookplate just needs to email me the snail mail and I'll get it to them.

**Jacob 57:34**

Very cool. So literally, anybody who buys it, you're gonna send them that?

**Joann 57:37**

Absolutely.

**Jacob 57:38**

I love it. I love it. And you got some great endorsements on the back here from people like Meg Whitman. Stewart Friedman, so I love Yeah, I mean, this is Oh, Doug Conant is on here as well. Yeah, I know, Doug. So this was a fantastic book. I had a lot of fun reading it. I know my wife's gonna enjoy this as well. So Joanne, thank you so much for taking time out of your day. Really appreciate it.

**Joann 57:57**

You're welcome, Jacob.

**Jacob 57:59**

And thanks, everyone for tuning in my guest again, Joann Lublin, author of Power Moms: How Executive Mothers Navigate Work and Life. Check it out. It will be worth your time. See you next week.