

knew how much anyone else made. But then I fell in love with a co-worker whom I'd hired, trained and had five years seniority over. Because of the relationship, I found out he was making about 8 percent more than me! But what could we do? They would have fired us if we'd said anything."

So obviously there is a problem. Women are not making as much as men, and the problem isn't isolated. The figures speak for themselves.

"Women's salaries still lag about 28 percent behind men," Maret says. "This is for women who work the same amount of time, in the same types of jobs as men. If you look at the overall workplace, the discrepancy is near 40 percent."

But wage discrepancy is only one problem women face in the work force.

Another problem is sexual harassment. Everyone has heard of the casting couch. That is supposedly how many women get parts in Hollywood movies. But according to the Cosmopolitan survey, many women experience harassment on the job, no matter what the field.

Several women say they were told to "bend over" when they asked their boss what they could do for him that morning, some told of being chased around the copy room and some told of being "accidentally" brushed against time and time again.

But what are women to do? Many women don't want to report "accidental" brushings because they don't want to sound like babies. Others are afraid of losing their jobs. But one woman who answered the survey came up with her own

ingenious solution.

"One man stared at my boobs so long while speaking to me that when I finally got a chance to answer, I bent over and talked to his zipper!" the woman wrote.

Once women actually make it into the working world, they face the added challenge of coordinating their home and work lives.

According to the Cosmopolitan survey, the majority of the women surveyed say working has either helped (34 percent) or not had any effect (37 percent) on relationships.

One woman says, "The financial strain has been lifted, so life is more enjoyable now." Another adds, "Working makes me feel better about myself, and as a result I have a better attitude."

A third woman concludes, "Since I am so busy, I am less inclined to be angry that he (my mate) travels so frequently."

But working out the husband/wife relationship is only half the battle. The working woman must also consider her relationship with her children.

Everybody has heard stories of "latchkey children" and day care scandals, but of the women who answered the Cosmopolitan survey, about half say their job is beneficial to their children.

Working mothers say their children learn to be self-reliant, and that they themselves are better mothers because they are happier. Women also say the increased income provides more advantages for their children.

However, the other half of the women answered the survey differently.

Sixty percent of the women

who say working has a bad effect on their children say they are too tired at the end of the day to spend time with their children. And many worry about leaving their children alone or with strangers.

It seems there are quite a few problems women encounter when they enter the work force — problems they often feel are forced on them.

One woman in the Cosmopolitan survey puts it this way: "No female should be expected to make a choice between job and family: men don't have to."

But no matter how unfair, the problems are there, and Maret says time won't necessarily bring a solution.

"I don't think time is the answer," she says. "I think it will take some concerted, obvious effort to correct the inequities."

Maret says the answer doesn't lie in the law, but in those who are in charge of carrying out the laws.

"I think the legislation exists," she says. "The letter of the law as well as the spirit of the law must be upheld by the people who have the power to do it."

Maret says administration is the key to change.

"Attitudes do not do as much as one member of administration deciding to correct the situation," she says. "As long as the situation exists, administrators are guilty of the infraction. It's not people's attitudes that are to blame, because you and I have no control over pay scales."

"The administrators have the control and the responsibility, and until they are willing to accept the responsibility and correct the inequities, the inequities will continue to exist."

