



**Mark Freed**  
CEO

## Working Families Case Study – Male Allyship/Paternity Leave

**“Today you have the choice and the opportunity. If you don’t take it today, you may regret it forever. If you take it today you will make a difference, not just to the lives around you but of the men and fathers of future generations who will follow in your footsteps.”**

Up until the 1960’s it was quite common, in fact usual, for women to leave their jobs just before their wedding day. In fact, most employment contracts allowed employers to terminate a woman’s employment upon marriage. The practice was made unlawful in the UK in 1975. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Marriage\\_bar](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Marriage_bar). A woman’s place was in the home and bringing up the family and a man’s was to earn the money and have a successful career.

Today we have more choice and more opportunity than we had even ten years ago. We no longer need to comply with those old fashioned, outdated and limiting stereo types. Whatever our gender, and however we identify, we can be the type of partners & parents we choose to be. We can also have the type of career that we want or even chose not to have a career. Social, legal and HR policy has changed to give us these freedoms.

I want to reach out to dads- to-be at this point and ask you to think seriously about the choices that you have now. Don’t have regrets or fears.

When my wife went into labour with my daughter almost 30 years ago, I had to turn down my bosses offer of a drink to wet the baby’s head and rush to the hospital to be by my wife’s side for the birth. Most men who have experienced the birth of their children will agree it is one of the most amazing events in one’s life and something that we take for granted today. My paternity leave amounted to three days taken out of my annual leave.

After her birth, I spent the next 10 years cheating and lying to my bosses so that I could be there for those important moments in life like the nativity play, the odd sporting event, the important doctors appointment. Eventually I did the right thing and set up E2W. Being my own boss gave me the flexibility to be the type of father (and husband) I wanted to be.

Today I talk to my contemporaries about their lives and regrets. I hear it told again and again that they wished they had spent more time with their family, with their children, that they had been there more.

For most men, sharing partnership with the mothers of their children leads to happier, healthier and more successful men, fathers, husbands, partners and colleagues. Today you have the choice and the opportunity. If you don't take it today, you may regret it forever. If you take it today, you will make a difference, not just to the lives around you but of the men and fathers of future generations who will follow in your footsteps.