

Fair Play PDF (Limited Copy)

Eve Rodsky

A Game-Changing Solution for
When You Have Too Much to Do
(and More Life to Live)

FAIR PLAY



Eve Rodsky

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Fair Play Summary

Transforming Household Labor: Rebalance Responsibilities, Revive Relationships.

Written by New York Central Park Page Turners Books Club

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About the book

In "Fair Play," Eve Rodsky introduces a groundbreaking method to tackle the unequal division of unpaid, invisible work within households—an issue many families face. Drawing from her own experiences, Rodsky devised a practical system to help couples reevaluate and redistribute domestic responsibilities. Through interviews with over five hundred people, she pinpointed essential tasks that often go unnoticed and established four simple rules, along with a list of 100 household tasks, to promote a fairer division of labor. This innovative guide transforms the conversation surrounding household duties using an engaging card game format, which encourages partners to prioritize family needs while fostering deeper connections. "Fair Play" is not just about chores; it's about reclaiming precious time for personal passions and strengthening relationships. Are you ready to take the first step towards a more balanced life?

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About the author

Eve Rodsky is on a mission to transform modern marriage by tackling the ongoing imbalance of domestic responsibilities that frequently falls disproportionately on women. In her forthcoming book, **Fair Play: A Game-Changing Solution for When You Have Too Much to Do (and More Life to Live)**, she draws on her Harvard Law background and extensive experience in organizational management to present a gamified system for managing life. This innovative approach enables couples to share household duties more equitably, encouraging a renewed sense of partnership and purpose. With a B.A. in economics and anthropology from the University of Michigan and a J.D. from Harvard, Rodsky has spent over a decade advising families in philanthropy. Her experiences highlighted how her mediation and strategic organization skills could effectively foster change at home. Having been raised by a single mother in New York City, Rodsky currently lives in Los Angeles with her husband and their three children.

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Chapter 1 Summary: THE CURSE OF THE SHE-FAULT PARENT

Summary of Chapter 1 - Fair Play by Eve Rodsky

Introduction: The Case of the Missing Blueberries

The author recounts a frustrating episode involving missing blueberries, which serves as a metaphor for deeper issues in her marriage and her role as a mother. A defensive reaction to a text from her husband reveals an underlying imbalance in their domestic responsibilities.

How I Got Here

Reflecting on her childhood with a single mother, the author shares her determination to foster a balanced partnership in her adult life. After meeting her husband Seth while pursuing her career, she initially believed they had established an equal partnership.

The She-Fault Parent

As she became a mother, the author found herself evolving into the “default” or “she-fault” parent. Although her husband was involved, traditional gender

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roles resurfaced, leading her to shoulder most of the household and childcare duties.

Challenges of Invisible Work

The author addresses her struggles with the concept of invisible work, which refers to the unpaid and often unrecognized labor that women undertake at home. This encompasses mental load, emotional labor, and the "second shift" of domestic tasks, all of which have begun to strain her marriage.

Visibility = Value

Recognizing the imbalance in their responsibilities, the author stresses that making domestic work visible can foster appreciation and greater participation from partners. She initiates an effort to document her daily tasks in order to shed light on the scope of her invisible labor.

Creating a New System

The author compiles a list titled "Sh*t I Do" to clarify her responsibilities but realizes that merely having lists won't drive meaningful change. She aims to introduce a systematic approach to domestic work, with clearly defined roles and expectations, drawing on management principles from her professional background.



Game the System

Following discussions with her husband and adopting a collaborative mindset, the author develops the Fair Play system. This innovative approach uses cards to represent household tasks, promoting equal contributions from both partners. The goal is to enhance transparency and reshape the perception and sharing of domestic responsibilities.

Results and Implementations

The chapter concludes with the author expressing optimism about the Fair Play system's ability to transform domestic dynamics, alleviate stress, and improve relationship satisfaction. She emphasizes that teamwork can cultivate a more fulfilling family life.

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Chapter 2 Summary: THE HIDDEN COSTS OF DOING IT ALL

The Case of the Man on the Plane

Jessica and I found ourselves deep in conversation about the often unseen work that mothers undertake, especially while boarding a flight. Our minds were occupied with various tasks related to our families, bringing to light the mental load that women tend to carry.

Mental Load Disparity

As I glanced at a man seated across the aisle, I noticed he appeared free from burdens, dedicating his attention entirely to work or leisure. In contrast, Jessica and I were juggling multiple responsibilities. This observation led me to reflect on the imbalance and the notion of "dad privilege," which grants men a kind of mental freedom that women rarely experience due to the multitude of unseen domestic duties they shoulder.

The Costs to You

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I considered the ways this mental load impacts various aspects of life:

- **Cost to Partnerships:** Many women feel drained and resentful in their relationships due to unequal workloads. They often express a desire to escape or feel trapped in their roles.
- **Cost to Identity:** Mothers frequently lose touch with their pre-parent identities, leading to feelings of disconnect from their interests and passions.
- **Cost to Career:** The disparity in pay and opportunities is more pronounced for mothers compared to their male peers, underscoring societal biases against working mothers.
- **Cost to Wellness:** High stress and mental fatigue are common among mothers, stemming from the overwhelming nature of their responsibilities.
- **Cost to Society:** When qualified women leave the workforce, it creates a loss of valuable talent and hampers overall productivity.

Addressing the Imbalance

To bring about real change, we need both personal initiative and societal

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support. The ongoing fight for gender equality exists not only in workplaces but also within our homes.

The Solution Ahead

By gathering data on unpaid work and compiling the "Sh*t I Do" list, I aimed to shed light on the invisible labor performed by women, making it both visible and valued. The collective act of sharing these lists has revealed just how much work women accomplish that often goes unrecognized.

The Four Rules for Fair Play

To create substantial change, it is essential to establish clear expectations and shared responsibilities between partners. The next steps should involve defining and delegating roles effectively, which can help rebalance domestic workloads. This focus on creating a more equitable home life lays the groundwork for improved shared parenting and partnership dynamics.

Invitation for Transformation

Get ready for actionable insights in the following section, where I will

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outline the "Four Rules for Fair Play." These guidelines will provide the structure necessary to transform family dynamics and responsibilities for the better.

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Chapter 3 Summary: RULE #1: ALL TIME IS CREATED EQUAL

CHAPTER 3: THE VALUE OF TIME

The Drunk Guy's Jacket Incident

The author recounts an incident involving her husband, who left a drunk man's jacket and beer bottle on their lawn while she was away on a work trip. Upon her return, she discovered that her husband expected her to handle the cleanup. This situation led to her frustration over the unequal division of household responsibilities and the feeling that her time was valued less than his.

Time Discrepancy in Relationships

The author reflects on the pervasive belief that men's time is finite while women's time is considered infinite, particularly after having children. This shift often leads to a significant increase in the workload for women. The unfair distribution of domestic tasks adds to this imbalance, as many of these responsibilities go unnoticed and unappreciated, contributing to problems in relationships and diminishing personal fulfillment.

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Cultural Expectations of Time

Cultural norms further entrench unequal expectations regarding time management in relationships, with women frequently tasked to prioritize domestic duties and emotional labor. The author stresses the need for a change in this perception in order to attain genuine equality in partnerships.

Principle of Time Equality

The author introduces the principle that all time should be regarded as equal. She emphasizes the importance of both partners recognizing the equal value of each other's time. This perspective encourages couples to engage in discussions about their household workload, ultimately shifting their attitudes towards time and its management.

Unpacking Toxic Time Messages

The text explores various harmful messages related to time, such as the idea that “time is money” and “you don’t work, so you have more time.” These narratives contribute to the devaluation of women’s contributions at home. The author encourages couples to confront these beliefs and reclaim their time.

The Importance of Mutual Recognition

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Through discussions with other couples, the author discovers that achieving fairness in domestic responsibilities requires mutual recognition and valuation of each other's time. By redistributing tasks and sharing the burden more equitably, partnerships can experience improved dynamics.

Case Studies and Examples

- Camilla's story highlights the “Gavron warning” encountered after she left the workforce to raise her children, exemplifying societal expectations that women should carry the brunt of domestic responsibilities.
- The situation of Scott and Michelle illustrates the disparities in household duties, even in instances where both partners work equally outside the home.

A Call to Action

The author concludes by urging couples to engage in conversations about time management and to challenge cultural narratives that promote unequal labor distribution. By creating an environment that values both partners' time, couples can cultivate a more balanced and fulfilling partnership.

Final Thoughts

Recognizing time as equally valuable is crucial for fostering equitable



relationships. The author underscores the importance of ongoing discussions and reflections on how time is used, promoting respect and shared responsibilities among partners. This effort encourages the transformation of domestic life into a supportive and collaborative partnership.

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Chapter 4: RULE #2: RECLAIM YOUR RIGHT TO BE INTERESTING

Don't Get Lost in the Shuffle

The Case of the Forgotten Skis

Josie's enthusiasm for skiing has waned as she navigates the challenges of marriage and motherhood. Despite her early successes and passion for the sport, her responsibilities have gradually squeezed out time for her own interests. A much-anticipated ski trip turns disappointing when her skis are lost at the airport, serving as a poignant metaphor for the deeper loss of her identity and passions that she experiences while focused on family life.

Reclaiming the Right to Be Interesting

Like Josie, many women find that their identities diminish after becoming mothers, as they take on roles that overshadow their personal interests. This chapter emphasizes the importance of recognizing that all time holds equal value, encouraging readers to reclaim their right to be both intriguing and engaged. This idea is exemplified by Ellen, a woman who sacrificed her design career to support her husband and family, ultimately losing a sense of herself in the process.

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The Permission Paradox

Ellen's journey sheds light on the struggle women face in seeking permission to explore their personal interests, a freedom often relinquished due to societal expectations. It becomes clear to Ellen, too late, that she must assert her right to be interesting. Following her divorce, she rediscovers her passion for interior design and reinvigorates her sense of self.

But He Told Me to Quit My Job

Interviews with various women reveal that many husbands do not intentionally suppress their partners' interests. Instead, it seems that the assumption of resistance often exists. This chapter examines how mothers frequently find themselves in roles that obscure their individual identities, leading to a diminished sense of self-worth outside of motherhood.

Find Yourself Again

The pressing need to reclaim one's interests is emphasized through the concept of "Unicorn Space," a term representing the unique and precious time dedicated to one's passions outside of parenting duties. This chapter highlights that creating such space is essential for a fulfilling life and healthy partnerships, necessitating intentional effort.



The Role We Play

Many women undergo an identity shift after having children, often defining themselves solely by their roles as mothers. It is vital to acknowledge one's self prior to parenthood, as neglecting this can result in feelings of insignificance and a diminished sense of purpose beyond raising children.

Are You Proud of Me?

Exploring male perspectives indicates that husbands frequently equate pride with their wives' roles as mothers. This chapter underscores the importance of recognizing and supporting each other's passions and interests, fostering mutual excitement and encouragement in relationships.

Self-Worth, Not Monetary Worth

Unicorn Space is about engaging in interests that enhance self-worth, independent of financial gain. Personal fulfillment through hobbies not only complements family roles but also highlights the necessity of individual happiness within relationships.

Unicorn Space: Not Reserved for the Rich

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The quest for personal fulfillment transcends financial status. Regardless of one's economic situation, everyone needs the time and space to rekindle their interests, cultivating a sense of pride and self-worth in their lives. The chapter concludes with a call to embrace personal passions as fundamental to achieving happiness and fulfillment.

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Chapter 5 Summary: RULE #3: START WHERE YOU ARE NOW

Chapter 5: Start Where You Are Now

Introduction: High Stakes

For couples pursuing Fair Play—an enriching relationship marked by happiness and fulfillment—grasping the importance of reclaiming time and mental space is vital. Before progressing, it’s important to evaluate both self-identity and intentions within the partnership.

Marital Mash-Up

Start with the Marital Mash-Up, a self-reflection tool designed to explore your personal involvement in household tasks.

Being a Game Changer

Every individual has the power to spark change in their marriage, even if the task feels daunting. Often, one partner must take the initiative to declare “enough” regarding feelings of resentment and imbalance. Change starts with your commitment to redefining the relationship.

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The Fair Play Cards

The essential framework of Fair Play revolves around recognizing the various tasks, or “cards,” involved in managing a household with children. These tasks are grouped into categories: Daily Grind, Happiness Trio, Home, Out, Caregiving, Magic, Wild, and Unicorn Space. Being aware of these cards highlights the breadth of daily responsibilities.

Understanding Card Ownership

In the Fair Play system, owning a card entails managing the tasks' Conception, Planning, and Execution (CPE). This structure promotes efficiency, minimizes nagging, and empowers partners to fully engage in their roles.

Personality Types in Fair Play

Individuals often align with one of four Fair Play personality types, determined by how many cards they currently manage:

1. New Superwoman
2. Accidental Traditionalist
3. Intentional Traditionalist
4. Collaborator



Identifying Your Partner's Role

Your partner also embodies a distinct personality type, which shapes their approach to domestic responsibilities. Understanding these roles enhances communication and cooperation.

Clarifying Your Intention

Clearly express your intention for participating in Fair Play, whether it's to feel less resentment or to carve out more time for personal pursuits.

Starting the Conversation

When initiating a discussion about household dynamics, it's crucial to frame it thoughtfully. Establish a welcoming context for your partner, ensuring a collaborative spirit.

Effective Communication Techniques

Employ considerate communication strategies to promote engagement in Fair Play while minimizing defensiveness or resistance from your partner.

Preparation for the Shift

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Get ready for a productive first conversation by carefully timing your approach and crafting an inviting invitation to discuss redistributing domestic responsibilities.

Invitation to Fair Play

Propose a specific date, place, and time for in-depth discussions about collaboration, emphasizing the creation of a partnership that respects and nurtures both individuals' needs and aspirations.

By fostering understanding and open dialogue, couples can move toward a more equitable division of household responsibilities, ultimately enhancing their partnership and overall happiness.

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Chapter 6 Summary: RULE #4: ESTABLISH YOUR VALUES AND STANDARDS

LEVEL THE PLAYING FIELD

ESTABLISHING YOUR VALUES

To engage in Fair Play with your partner, it's essential to identify your values and standards. Letting go of the belief that you must handle everything on your own is important—especially if you're feeling overwhelmed. Many people experience "errand paralysis," which can lead to burnout. Instead, concentrate on what truly matters to you and your partner by consciously deciding which tasks add value to your family life.

THE FAIR PLAY MINIMUM STANDARD OF CARE

Inspired by legal principles, the Fair Play Minimum Standard of Care involves creating a collective understanding of how to manage household responsibilities. Couples often find themselves in conflict over tasks due to differing personal standards. By defining your family's standards together, you can reduce disagreements and pave the way for smoother collaboration.

WHAT'S REASONABLE?

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Establishing a Minimum Standard of Care entails discussions about what is reasonable in your home. For instance, if a partner forgets important tasks, consider whether their actions align with your family's agreed-upon standards. If you disagree, revisit your shared values and come to a consensus on how tasks should be executed.

FAIR PLAY MSC TEST

When conflicts arise concerning the Minimum Standard of Care, ponder the following questions:

1. Would a reasonable person in similar circumstances act as I have?
2. What is the community standard, and do we want to adopt it?
3. What are the consequences of doing or not doing it this way?
4. What is our “why”?

WHAT IS YOUR “WHY”?

Understanding the motivations behind household responsibilities is pivotal in defining your expectations. This involves discussing the values that matter to your family and setting standards based on those discussions.

TRUST WINS

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By clearly establishing a Minimum Standard of Care, couples can reduce disappointments and cultivate trust within their relationship. This creates an environment where partners feel safe and supported rather than criticized or controlled. Collaborating effectively to define household responsibilities empowers both partners to tackle tasks with confidence.

This chapter highlights the significance of establishing shared values and standards to foster a balanced and trusting household dynamic.

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Chapter 7 Summary: THE 100 CARDS OF FAIR PLAY

Set Yourself Up for Success

Before starting the Fair Play game, take some time to go through the “100 Cards of Fair Play” and tailor them to reflect your household values. The game consists of 100 task cards organized into five categories: Home, Out, Caregiving, Magic, and Wild, along with the essential Unicorn Space card. Familiarize yourself with the purpose of each card to customize your deck effectively.

Tip! For detailed descriptions of each card and guidance on executing tasks, visit the online resource at fairplaylife.com.

100 Cards of Fair Play by the Numbers:

- 60 cards: Designed for couples without children
- 40 cards: Designed for couples with children
- 30 cards: Daily tasks distributed throughout the deck

The Home Suit

The Home suit encompasses the numerous responsibilities of managing a household with children, focusing on tasks that require Conception,

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Planning, and Execution (CPE).

- **Childcare Helpers:** Coordinate caregivers, including scheduling and communication.
- **Cleaning:** Organize regular cleaning schedules and supplies.
- **Dishes:** Manage the routine for washing, drying, and loading/unloading the dishwasher.
- **Dry Cleaning:** Track garments and coordinate with dry cleaners.
- **Garbage:** Oversee trash disposal and waste supplies.
- **Groceries:** CPE includes managing inventory, creating grocery lists, and shopping.
- **Home Furnishings:** Regularly maintain basic household needs.
- **Home Goods & Supplies:** Replenish essentials like detergent and batteries.
- **Home Maintenance:** Handle repairs and contractor management.
- **Home Purchase/Rental, Mortgage & Insurance:** Oversee all real estate management and related paperwork.
- **Hosting:** Plan events and ensure enjoyable experiences.

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- **Laundry:** Manage washing, drying, folding, and putting away clothes.
- **Lawn & Plants:** Care for outdoor spaces and indoor plants.
- **Mail:** Develop an efficient system for sorting and handling incoming mail.
- **Meals (Weekday Breakfast/Dinner):** Prepare and manage routine family meals.
- **Memories & Photos:** Organize and curate the collection of family memories.
- **Money Manager:** Oversee budgeting, debt management, and savings goals.
- **Storage, Garage & Seasonal Items:** Keep inventory and organize storage areas.
- **Tidying Up, Organizing & Donations:** Manage clutter and donate unused items.

The Out Suit

The Out suit focuses on activities outside the home, requiring thorough CPE to manage children's extracurricular activities and social commitments effectively.

- **Auto:** Oversee car maintenance, registrations, and insurance logistics.



- **Birthday Celebrations (Other Kids):** Handle RSVPs and logistics for children's parties.
- **Calendar Keeper:** Maintain family schedules and coordinate events.
- **Cash & Bills:** Manage payments and cash needs.
- **Charity, Community Service & Good Deeds (Adults):** Engage in community involvement and giving back.
- **Civic Engagement & Cultural Enrichment:** Plan and communicate community events.
- **Electronics & IT:** Manage household technology issues and needs.
- **Extracurricular (Non-Sports/Sports):** Coordinate children's extracurricular activities.
- **First-Aid, Safety & Emergency:** Prepare for safety protocols and emergency supplies.
- **Packing & Unpacking:** Organize family logistics for daily needs and travel.
- **Travel:** Handle planning for family vacations and trips.
- **Tutoring & Coaching:** Oversee arrangements for academic support and sports coaching.
- **Weekend Plans (Family):** Coordinate family social events and



activities.

The Caregiving Suit

The Caregiving suit highlights the emotional and practical aspects of nurturing children and supporting family success.

- **Bathing & Grooming (Kids):** Regularly supervise and assist with children's hygiene.
- **Beauty & Wardrobe (Her/Him):** Manage personal grooming and wardrobe needs.
- **Bedtime Routine:** Ensure peaceful nighttime routines for children.
- **Birth Control:** Plan and make responsible choices regarding contraception.
- **Clothes & Accessories (Kids):** Oversee children's clothing needs and organization.
- **Dental (Kids):** Manage dental healthcare and appointments.
- **Diapering & Potty Training:** Lead diaper changes and potty training efforts.
- **Estate Planning & Life Insurance:** Ensure family security through careful planning.
- **Friendships & Social Media (Kids):** Monitor and facilitate children's

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friendships and online safety.

- **Grooming & Wardrobe (Him):** Take charge of responsibilities for your partner's personal care.
- **Health Insurance:** Oversee family healthcare logistics.
- **Homework, Projects & School Supplies:** Manage academic support and necessary resources.
- **Medical & Healthy Living (Kids):** Ensure pediatric health management and nutrition.
- **Morning Routine:** Support getting kids ready for the day.
- **Parents & In-Laws:** Manage relationships and communication with extended family.
- **Pets:** Handle pet care responsibilities and logistics.
- **School Service:** Participate in school-related volunteering opportunities.
- **School Transitions:** Navigate the logistical challenges of school applications and transitions.
- **Self-Care (Her/Him):** Ensure both partners prioritize personal well-being.
- **Special Needs & Mental Health (Kids):** Adapt to support children with special requirements.
- **Teacher Communication:** Keep open communication with educators



about children's progress.

The Magic Suit

The Magic suit emphasizes the importance of nurturing family relationships and creating lasting memories through bonding experiences and shared activities.

- **Adult Friendships (Her/Him):** Prioritize maintaining adult relationships.
- **Birthday Celebrations (Your Kids):** Organize and manage your children's birthday parties.
- **Discipline & Screen Time:** Set and enforce family boundaries around discipline.
- **Extended Family:** Strengthen ties within the extended family unit.
- **Fun! & Playing:** Ensure quality family time for recreation and enjoyment.
- **Gestures of Love (Kids):** Create meaningful moments to express love to children.
- **Gifts (Family):** Plan and give thoughtful gifts for family occasions.
- **Gifts (VIPs):** Manage gift-giving for significant people in your family's life.

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- **Hard Questions:** Engage openly with children on difficult subjects.
- **Holiday Cards:** Oversee the logistics of sending holiday cards.
- **Holidays:** Manage preparations and celebrations during holidays.
- **Informal Education:** Invest time in teaching essential life skills.
- **Magical Beings:** Cultivate imagination through special traditions involving magical themes.
- **Marriage & Romance:** Nurture romance and connection in your partnership.
- **Middle-of-the-Night Comfort:** Provide support during night-time emergencies.
- **Partner Coach:** Support each other's personal and professional growth.
- **Showing Up & Participating:** Commit to being present at family events.
- **Spirituality:** Shape your family's spiritual practices and framework.
- **Thank-You Notes:** Encourage gratitude by writing notes to important figures.
- **Values & Good Deeds (Kids):** Foster a culture of values and community service.



- **Watching:** Stay engaged in children's activities for their safety and emotional support.

The Wild Suit

The Wild suit addresses unexpected and significant life events that require urgent CPE.

- **Aging/Ailing Parent:** Manage caregiving responsibilities for elderly family members.
- **Death:** Navigate the logistical and emotional tasks surrounding a loved one's passing.
- **First Year of Infant's Life:** Tackle the challenges of supporting a newborn's first year.
- **Glitch in the Matrix/Daily Disruption:** Address unforeseen disruptions in daily life.
- **Home Renovation:** Manage tasks related to home improvement projects.
- **Job Loss & Money Problems:** Navigate the complexities of employment and financial challenges.
- **Moving:** Organize the logistics involved in relocating.
- **New Job:** Balance household responsibilities while adjusting to a new job.

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- **Pregnancy & Baby's Birth:** Prepare for and manage the physical and emotional demands of impending parenthood.
- **Serious Illness:** Provide care and support during serious medical issues within the family.

Unicorn Space

Unicorn Space represents your pursuit of personal passions and interests beyond family duties. It's essential to prioritize activities that inspire and fulfill you without needing permission or feeling guilt. Both partners should engage in this pursuit for personal growth and mutual support.

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Chapter 8: PLAYING THE GAME

Summary of Chapter 8: Fair Play

Introduction to Fair Play

Congratulations on grasping the Four Rules for Fair Play, understanding the significance of time, and preparing to embrace a collaborative approach to your home life. This chapter encourages partners to reshape their relationship by committing to meaningful dialogues and sharing responsibilities.

Trial Run

Think of the upcoming week as a trial phase to apply the principles of Fair Play and evaluate their effects on your relationship. If you haven't yet introduced this conversation with your partner, this chapter includes a heartfelt note to inspire their participation.

Thank You Note

Eve Rodsky expresses gratitude for your partner's involvement in the Fair Play initiative, recognizing their readiness to collaborate in creating a

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happier partnership and family life.

Exploring New Conversations

Partners are invited to work together to establish a framework for discussing household responsibilities, shifting from competition to collaboration. The goal is to simplify household management without adding extra burdens.

Benefits of Fair Play

Embracing Fair Play brings a wealth of benefits, including:

- Improved communication about home life
- Clearer roles and expectations
- Empowerment to lead and manage responsibilities
- More time for personal interests, ultimately enriching partnership and parenting experiences

What You Stand to Lose

If partners don't engage in Fair Play, they may experience feelings of nagging, competition over tasks, and emotional stress.

The Fair Play Instruction Manual

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The manual provides a game-like structure for dividing household tasks between two players:

- **Players:** 2

- **Objective:** To fairly distribute 100 cards representing household and childcare tasks based on shared values and strengths.

How to Play: 7 Easy Steps

1. **Set the Ground Rules:** Establish agreements for respectful communication and collaboration.
2. **Customize Your Deck:** Identify and prioritize household cards that reflect your family's values.
3. **Prepare to Onboard:** Organize and visualize your task lists for greater clarity.
4. **Deal Your Cards:** Assign responsibilities strategically according to each person's strengths and preferences.
5. **Establish a Minimum Standard of Care:** Agree on what defines acceptable performance for each task, ensuring fairness in expectations.
6. **Claim Your Unicorn Space:** Make sure each partner sets aside time for personal interests outside of household responsibilities.
7. **Take a New Vow:** Commit to a collaborative experience, emphasizing mutual respect and shared responsibilities.

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Fair Play FAQs

This section answers common questions about implementing the Fair Play system, such as understanding CPE (Conception, Planning, Execution), determining how long to hold cards, managing task requests, and balancing household responsibilities.

By following the steps outlined in this chapter, couples can redefine their domestic dynamics, focusing on collaboration, clear communication, and mutual support to create a harmonious home life.

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I've learned. Highly recommend!

Alex Walk

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Chapter 9 Summary: RE-DEALING THE DECK

Stay in It to Win It

Congratulations on launching the Fair Play system! You've distributed responsibilities based on your values, fostering time equality, efficiency, fairness, and equity. Now, it's essential to maintain effective communication.

The All-Important Check-in

Schedule a check-in within your first week of implementing Fair Play. Regular feedback is crucial for ensuring fairness in your partnership. Treat this check-in as a highly anticipated event—don't overlook it! Couples who check in frequently tend to experience greater happiness and more successful outcomes.

The Power of Feedback

Feedback is vital for growth at home and work. Use your weekly check-in to clarify roles and responsibilities, enabling you to tweak the Fair Play system

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for ongoing improvement.

Wait for It

Refrain from giving immediate feedback during tense situations, as it can disrupt the collaborative spirit of Fair Play. Instead, wait for more relaxed moments to thoughtfully discuss any issues, which will enhance communication and ease stress.

Big Feelings

Change often stirs strong emotions. Recognize feelings of resistance, fear, and anxiety as normal. Remember, navigating these emotions is part of the journey and essential for growth.

Your Weekly Check-in

1. **Set a Check-in Date:** Choose a consistent weekly time when both of you can focus.
2. **Take Stock:** Review assigned tasks to see if they still make sense.

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3. **Re-Deal or Hold:** Discuss which tasks might be swapped or adjusted.

4. **Plan Ahead:** Anticipate upcoming events and adjust responsibilities as needed.

Step 1: Set a Check-in Date

Make sure to meet one-on-one to discuss Fair Play issues. Establish a regular time that works for both of you to enhance communication and teamwork.

Step 2: Take Stock

Review each partner's assigned tasks, recognize accomplishments, and identify any tasks that may need reassigning or updating.

Step 3: Re-Deal or Hold

Evaluate shared tasks and determine if any have become both a trap or a source of contention, addressing any failures in execution or care.

Step 4: Plan Ahead

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Look ahead to the week's demands and adjust tasks or assignments accordingly. Discuss any events that might impact task management and delegate responsibilities as necessary.

Stay the Course

The Fair Play system emphasizes progress over perfection. Focus on your shared values and standards while staying open to adjustments. Celebrate milestones to reinforce your commitment to Fair Play.

How Will You Keep Yourself in a Long-term Mindset?

Adopt a long-term perspective by establishing clear rules, envisioning your future together, and rewarding teamwork. Create small incentives that keep you motivated, highlighting the benefits of shared responsibilities.

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Chapter 10 Summary: THE TOP 13 MISTAKES COUPLES

THE TOP 13 MISTAKES COUPLES MAKE—AND THE FAIR PLAY FIX

Overview

Fair Play, an organizational system designed for couples, is rooted in extensive feedback from real-life experiences. This chapter outlines common mistakes that couples encounter when implementing Fair Play, along with practical solutions to promote a harmonious partnership.

1. THE CPE BREAK-UP

Mistake: One partner neglects critical task execution, resulting in project management failures.

Fix: Assign a single person to each task card to oversee conception, planning, and execution (CPE). During weekly check-ins, ensure clear communication around any scheduling conflicts that may arise.

2. THE RAT F*CK

Mistake: Assigning Random Tasks (RATs) without context breeds



resentment and forgetfulness.

Fix: Avoid spontaneous requests. Instead, negotiate task assignments during check-ins to ensure both partners are informed and accountable.

3. THE CPE DOUBLE-UP

Mistake: Both partners assume responsibility for the same task, leading to confusion and inefficiency.

Fix: Clearly define responsibilities for each task card to prevent duplicated efforts and promote accountability.

4. THE ELEVENTH-HOUR VETO

Mistake: Last-minute decisions from one partner undermine the work of the other.

Fix: Gather input during the planning phase and agree on changes to avoid derailing previously established plans.

5. GOING ROGUE

Mistake: One partner makes unilateral decisions about shared tasks without consulting the other.

Fix: Involve your partner in the planning stages of all tasks, particularly those that affect both of you.



5A. THE HERO FAIL

Mistake: Well-meaning actions may contradict your partner's earlier plans.

Fix: Always consult your partner before making decisions that affect shared responsibilities.

6. STANDARDS SLIP

Mistake: Failing to maintain agreed-upon minimum standards for tasks.

Fix: Regularly reassess and redefine these standards during weekly check-ins to sustain consistent expectations.

7. BLOWING DOWN THE HOUSE

Mistake: Venting frustrations outside of scheduled discussions leads to ineffective communication.

Fix: Choose deliberate times to address issues, ideally during check-ins, and incorporate positive reinforcement in your discussions.

8. TOXIC TIME MESSAGES



Mistake: Perceptions of unequal time investments result in one partner neglecting tasks.

Fix: Acknowledge that both partners contribute equally, and ensure responsibilities are shared fairly during check-ins.

9. BELIEVING SYSTEMS AREN'T FUN

Mistake: The belief that organizing household tasks stifles spontaneity.

Fix: Recognize that organization fosters fun and enhances relationships by reducing chaos.

10. PLAYING BY THE NUMBERS

Mistake: Counting tasks can foster competition rather than collaboration.

Fix: Prioritize fairness over task tallying. Agree on what feels equitable to ensure both partners feel valued for their contributions.

11. CURRENCY OF CONSEQUENCES

Mistake: Using penalties for unfinished tasks can harm intimacy.

Fix: Substitute punitive measures with discussions that reassign tasks



based on each partner's strengths and mutual standards.

12. RESENTMENT OF THE HAPPINESS TRIO

Mistake: Ignoring self-care and personal joy leads to resentment.

Fix: Support each other in making time for friendships, self-care, and personal interests, which are essential for overall happiness.

13. SKIPPING THE VALUES STEP

Mistake: Rushing through discussions about values results in misaligned expectations.

Fix: Give priority to discussions on values to clarify which tasks and responsibilities should take precedence, ensuring agreement from both partners.

BONUS ROUND: PLAY FOR LIFE

Mistake: Falling back into old habits after initially adopting Fair Play techniques.

Fix: Commit long-term to the system. Regular check-ins will help refine responsibilities and promote ongoing collaboration, strengthening the partnership over time.

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Chapter 11 Summary: LIVING IN YOUR UNICORN SPACE

The Real Win: A Happier, Healthier You

Claim Your Unicorn Space

After you've balanced domestic responsibilities and found harmony with your partner, the next step is to reclaim or discover your personal passions—what the author calls "Unicorn Space." This space is all about nurturing the unique qualities of yourself that contribute to a fulfilling life. However, achieving this can sometimes be a challenge.

What Unicorn Space Is Not

Unicorn Space is not simply about self-care or leisure activities such as exercising, catching up with friends, beauty appointments, binge-watching, or even demanding work. Instead, true Unicorn Space is focused on deeply connecting with personal interests that serve a greater purpose.

Step 1: Identify a Passion

Begin by giving yourself permission to dream about the passions you wish

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to pursue. Think about activities you've wanted to revisit or new interests you'd like to explore. Use prompt questions to help brainstorm and choose one passion to focus on.

Pop Quiz: Is My Job Unicorn Space?

Take a moment to assess whether your job brings you joy or if it feels more like a chore. A job that fuels your passion can indeed qualify as Unicorn Space.

Step 2: Plan to Share It with the World

Consider how you can share your interests with others. Transitioning from individual pursuits to shared experiences makes engagement more fulfilling and connects personal joy with a sense of community.

Meet Individuals Rediscovering Their Passions

Look at those who have re-engaged with activities like running, cooking, community service, and music. Each story shows how sharing your talents with others can restore purpose and fulfillment in your life.

Responding to the Question of Sharing

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Pursuing activities solely for personal enjoyment may not provide the same happiness as those that involve community engagement. Connecting with others while following your interests enhances your overall satisfaction.

Step 3: Set a Goal

After identifying a passion to pursue, commit to a specific timeline and share your goals with others to ensure accountability. For instance, plan a social event where you can showcase your talent.

Signal Seriousness

Create a sense of urgency by establishing clear timelines and commitments to help you avoid procrastination. Letting others know about your aspirations can encourage support from your partner.

Step 4: Face Your Fears

As you pursue your goals, fear may arise, but don't allow it to hold you back. Empower yourself by recalling past achievements and seeking support from friends.

Beware the Passion Gap

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Women, in particular, might find themselves increasingly distant from their passions after starting families, leading to anxiety when trying to re-engage with their interests.

Step 5: Get Your Partner's Support

Both partners should openly communicate their Unicorn Space goals and discuss how to share household responsibilities. It's essential to respect each other's time.

Dodge the Same Space Trap

Avoid choosing the same passion as your partner; instead, focus on your unique interests. Emphasizing your individual journey is crucial.

Beware of Unicorn Space Gone Wild

Be cautious of extreme or escapist pursuits that could negatively impact your relationship. Both partners need balanced participation; if one dominates their Unicorn Space, it can lead to resentment.

Step 6: Stick to Your Schedule

Honor your scheduled Unicorn Space and don't let guilt or household

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responsibilities interfere. Commit to yourself as a way to enhance your personal satisfaction, which may have suffered in the past.

Concluding Thoughts

Claiming your Unicorn Space enriches not only your own life but also positively affects those around you, including your partner. This journey is about finding joy in being a unique individual while harmonizing personal and shared experiences in life.

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