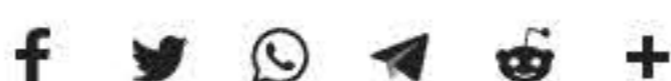


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## Do you and your partner share the household work equally?

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When you want your family to take on their fair share of home duties, your communication style is vital. In the end, chores are a means by which we convey our feelings toward household dynamics. In relationships, household responsibilities are a shared responsibility between family members, not an assistant and a supervisor. This means that, while you should not have to ask for help, you should also respect autonomy in terms of responsibilities, refrain from excessive criticism, and insist that your family members do things your way.

Dr. Malini Saba, a psychologist, human and social rights activist, and founder and chairman of the Anannke Foundation, discusses ten effective strategies to divide domestic duties among family members:

**Lead with your emotions:** Trying to force your family to do anything rarely succeeds in the long run, even if it is successful in the moment in getting what you want (or maybe need). Instead, talking with your family about how you are feeling, the sources of your stress and anxiety, allows them to show up for you instead of feeling defensive about what they haven't been doing. As an alternative to making this about how they have failed you, ask for what you need to feel the way you want to feel. What would increase your sense of equality and support?

### Communicate and hold gender-specific conversations

Properly communicate the significance of housework. However, take care not to appear sanctimonious when discussing the significance of housework with your family. Demonstrate to your children how to argue, listen to, and respect the perspectives of each family member, as well as how compromise and moderation are used to make decisions regarding domestic tasks. When you do your fair share of work, you should believe and project that this is significant and meaningful, not just another chore, and that everything in the family is divided equally.

**Plan on how to manage family needs, activities, and major events:** There is no better time than now to check in with your family members and obtain a performance review of your household help. And when they tell you that you need to do more, don't become defensive; figure out how to be more effective. The preparation of mental lists, especially by women for their families, is another sort of cognitive labor. Check-in with your spouse, children, and other family members to see how they can support each other with things like grocery shopping, cleaning, holidays, birthdays, children's school requirements, clothing, medications, pets' needs, laundry, cooking, etc. Be honest about your schedule and availability so you can prioritize your personal, family, and professional obligations to find inner peace.

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### Make lists

This is the most objective and constructive technique to distribute household chores equally among family members. After discussing the importance of responsibilities, sit down together to make a chore list. A chore list that takes into account the interests of each family member and includes instructions on how to complete each activity efficiently is an excellent approach to staying on top of all household obligations.

### Share care giving and break stereotypes—including your own

Set the standard by splitting housework, such as eldercare and child care, equally in your home as well. Include boys in caregiving and housework from a young age, alongside girls! Social conditioning plays a significant role in gender stereotyping and the early indoctrination of children's minds in the name of "accepted behavior." It is essential to establish dialogues about gender roles at a young age and to challenge the assumptions associated with gender at home and in society. Set comparable key performance indicators (KPIs) for your tasks as you do for your work. This will assist you in self-monitoring and being the parent and partner you wish to be.

### Make an effort to make your responsibilities enjoyable

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As much as each member of the household is responsible for the disarray, few are eager to perform undesirable tasks. Use a favorite playlist or small television in the kitchen to add excitement to household chores. Rewarding with a date night after a deep clean, meal planning for the month, trying something new each week, betting a small amount of money on who can complete the most chores in the shortest amount of time, folding laundry in the living room while watching a movie, and so on. Chores can also be an excellent way to spend quality time with a loved one while completing a task.

Stop claiming that men or women are "naturally" superior at this: You've probably heard a variation of the following: "Well, men are great with child discipline!" Women are similarly responsible for cleaning, organizing, and meal preparation. Women are not naturally superior to men when it comes to household duties. Similarly, since the father may have been spending less time with his children, it is possible that they desire his attention. Discuss household tasks with your family members, and if they do not already know them, provide them with the opportunity to learn them. Include this in family discussions. Acknowledge aloud how unjust gender roles are damaging your relationship (and your own personal well-being) and concur that it is worthwhile to battle against them. Make equality a transparent priority.

### Avoid gate keeping

A significant hurdle to an equitable allocation of labor can be gatekeeping. This can take the form of continually criticizing how your family performs specific activities, swooping into "correct" the completed work, or monitoring them as they perform the chores because you don't trust them to do it "properly." These practices inhibit initiative and active participation. Trust your family members to complete the task and try not to criticize or fight with them about the "proper" way to do things if something goes wrong; doing so can produce defensiveness and frustration instead. Use positive encouragement instead of complaining. Instead, describe why you care about a certain method of completing a task. For instance, sorting the laundry by color protects your delicate whites; wiping the dishes immediately after use prevents a buildup, which is the source of your tension; etc.

### Be adaptable

Be adaptable to whatever plan you devise for family-friendly household tasks. It is acceptable for unforeseen jobs and extraordinary circumstances to materialize without warning. Occasionally, it is permissible to switch jobs or deviate from the game plan. Be respectful, kind, and forgiving. Above all, be patient.

### Keep checking in

One conversation is insufficient to resolve tasks. You will need to revisit this topic until everyone in the family is entirely at peace and comfortable. Establish a weekly check-in time to determine how each family member is doing and how they feel about executing their assigned tasks. Scheduling these check-ins may also encourage them to take things seriously and make a true commitment to making changes. Remember: "You and your family are in this together; you and your family are not enemies."