

MARRIAGE EXERCISE #3 - TEAMWORK

WHO DOES WHAT LIST

Rationale

Running a home is a complex endeavor. Thousands of tasks and responsibilities, but there's no job descriptions, no org chart, and usually no discussion around who wants to do what, who's best at what or who's best suited for which jobs. This exercise is to help you have a collaborative conversation with your wife to bring clarity to some of these roles and responsibilities.

Challenge Assignment

There's usually tension in a marriage over 'home'-work. Some guys fully participate at home, some just do what their daddies did and never lift a finger. Guys will often think they do a lot, while their wives see it very different.

In this exercise, you'll print out two copies of the following 'home'-work items, one for you and one for your wife. Each of you will go through the list and put "him" where you believe you do the task and then either "him" or "her" in the Ideal column. For example, if you wash the windows you'd write 'him' in the now column. If you believe you *should* wash the windows, you'll write "him" again in the ideal column. If there's a task you're doing, but think your wife would do in an ideal world, you'd write "him" in the Now column and "her" in the Ideal. Conversely, if there's something your wife is doing that you should take on, you'd write "her" in the Now column and "him" in the Ideal column.

After you've finished, set a time to sit down and leisurely talk about the list. Compare your answers and collaborate so both you and your wife have a clear understanding of who's to do what. Jot down your final answer by each task so you'll each know what you're on the hook for. It's good to revisit your lists annually as circumstances change and you'll be shifting tasks constantly.

And **don't** fall into the 'that's not my job' temptation. This is intended to help you clarify who *has the lead* on these things . . . not who always does them. You're both responsible for your marriage and your home.

A few other cautions . . .

WHAT RADICAL HUSBANDS DO

1. The length of your lists isn't important. It's the clarity of who's got the ball and overall agreement that matters. Resentment comes from unmet (and unspoken) expectations.
2. Some of these tasks are clearly shared. Lean into those in particular. When two people are responsible, nobody's responsible. Try to agree who's the quarterback in as many of these tasks as possible.
3. While this list is exhausting, it's not exhaustive. Feel free to add anything that needs to be added for your household. Or skip anything that doesn't apply to your family. But be sure to talk about it.

Come to your group ready to discuss what happened as a result of this exercise.

*Adapted from Gottman, John; Nan Silver (2002-02-04). *The Seven Principles for Making Marriage Work*. Random House, Inc. Kindle Edition.

Debrief

Everyone was to complete the Who Does What List exercise from the separate handout distributed last month. This might have been a fight-starter . . . or an eye-opener. Lead a conversation about the exercise, not about who does what in the home, but about how it went with your wife and with theirs. What hotspots were uncovered and how did you move beyond them? Encourage each guy share the results of the exercise. Most guys will be surprised by the number of duties involved in running a household. Some may even be shocked by how much their wives do. A few might even wake up to realize how little they do to help their wives with these tasks.

Encourage everyone to engage at home . . . to carry a share of the load. Challenge men who are prideful and think they're too good to do stuff around the house. Maybe the most important outcome of this exercise is the honest dialog with your wife *about the things that affect her every day*. Don't ignore her need for help with the house and with your kids.

WHO DOES WHAT LIST**Task List**

Running errands	Now:	Ideal:
Taking clothes to the cleaners	Now:	Ideal:
Washing windows	Now:	Ideal:
Planning the food menu	Now:	Ideal:
Going grocery shopping	Now:	Ideal:
Cooking dinner	Now:	Ideal:
Setting the table	Now:	Ideal:
Clearing the table after dinner	Now:	Ideal:
Cleaning the kitchen	Now:	Ideal:
Cleaning the bathrooms	Now:	Ideal:
Keeping counters clean	Now:	Ideal:
General tidying up	Now:	Ideal:
Getting the car serviced	Now:	Ideal:
Paying car insurance, tags and taxes	Now:	Ideal:
Sorting incoming mail	Now:	Ideal:
Paying the bills	Now:	Ideal:
Balancing the checkbook	Now:	Ideal:
Buying greeting cards	Now:	Ideal:
Writing and sending cards	Now:	Ideal:
Keeping the family address book	Now:	Ideal:
Handling phone messages	Now:	Ideal:
Returning family calls and emails	Now:	Ideal:
Saving money	Now:	Ideal:
Taking out garbage and trash	Now:	Ideal:

WHAT RADICAL HUSBANDS DO

Recycling	Now:	Ideal:
Doing the laundry	Now:	Ideal:
Folding the laundry	Now:	Ideal:
Ironing	Now:	Ideal:
Putting the clean clothes away	Now:	Ideal:
Sweeping kitchen/eating areas	Now:	Ideal:
Mopping and waxing floors	Now:	Ideal:
Changing light bulbs	Now:	Ideal:
Managing repair of appliances	Now:	Ideal:
Making the beds	Now:	Ideal:
Cleaning and defrosting refrigerator	Now:	Ideal:
Shopping for clothing	Now:	Ideal:
Planning travel	Now:	Ideal:
Doing home repair	Now:	Ideal:
Remodeling	Now:	Ideal:
Doing/managing home maintenance	Now:	Ideal:
Buying furniture	Now:	Ideal:
Redecorating home	Now:	Ideal:
Buying items for the home	Now:	Ideal:
Buying new appliances	Now:	Ideal:
Sewing and mending	Now:	Ideal:
Straightening kitchen cabinets	Now:	Ideal:
Doing yard and garden work	Now:	Ideal:
Maintaining lawn, trees, and shrubbery	Now:	Ideal:
Running errands to the bank	Now:	Ideal:

WHAT RADICAL HUSBANDS DO

Caring for houseplant	Now:	Ideal:
Straightening and rearranging closets	Now:	Ideal:
Getting house ready for guests	Now:	Ideal:
Making party preparations	Now:	Ideal:
Buying your kids' gifts	Now:	Ideal:
Taking kids to school	Now:	Ideal:
Picking kids up from school	Now:	Ideal:
Coordinating childcare after school	Now:	Ideal:
Making kids' meals and lunches	Now:	Ideal:
Helping the kids with homework	Now:	Ideal:
Bathing the kids	Now:	Ideal:
Disciplining the kids	Now:	Ideal:
Putting the kids to bed	Now:	Ideal:
Dealing with a sick child	Now:	Ideal:
Handling kids' crises	Now:	Ideal:
Dealing with a kids' emotions	Now:	Ideal:
Attending teacher conferences	Now:	Ideal:
Dealing with the schools	Now:	Ideal:
Special children's events	Now:	Ideal:
Kids' birthday and other parties	Now:	Ideal:
Kids' lessons	Now:	Ideal:
Kids' play dates	Now:	Ideal:
Shopping for kids' stuff	Now:	Ideal:
Buying presents for kids' friends	Now:	Ideal:
Keeping in touch with family	Now:	Ideal:
Preparing for holidays	Now:	Ideal:
Planning vacations	Now:	Ideal:

WHAT RADICAL HUSBANDS DO

Planning getaway	Now:	Ideal:
Planning romantic dates	Now:	Ideal:
Planning quiet evenings at home	Now:	Ideal:
Planning weekends	Now:	Ideal:
Initiating lovemaking	Now:	Ideal:
Planning dinner out	Now:	Ideal:
Planning family outings, drives, picnics	Now:	Ideal:
Financial planning	Now:	Ideal:
Major purchases (cars, etc.)	Now:	Ideal:
Managing investments	Now:	Ideal:
Talking about the relationship	Now:	Ideal:
Get-togethers with friends	Now:	Ideal:
Keeping in touch with friends	Now:	Ideal:
Doing the taxes	Now:	Ideal:
Legal matters (e.g., wills)	Now:	Ideal:
Coordinating family's medical care	Now:	Ideal:
Prescriptions and other health areas	Now:	Ideal:
Exercising and fitness	Now:	Ideal:
Leading recreational outings	Now:	Ideal: