



FREE SAMPLE

The Fair Household

How to Stop Fighting About Who Does More, and Start Working as a Team

FAMILY FAIR PLAY

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This is a free sample of The Fair Household: the opening of the first chapter, with a watermark and without printing.
The full book has no watermark and may be printed for your own household.

The family in the examples (Marek, Lucia, Adam and Ema) is illustrative. Any resemblance to real households is coincidental.

This book is general information, not medical, psychological or legal advice. If you or someone close to you is struggling with exhaustion, sleep or mood in a way that is severe or lasting, please speak to a qualified professional.

CHAPTER

01

You Are Both Overloaded. And You Are Both Right.

Two tired people, two true feelings

🕒 8 MIN READ



By the end of this chapter you will be able to name the thing that has been making you angry without your being able to say why – and you will understand why you both feel unappreciated in the same household, even though neither of you is lying.

Tuesday, 9:47 p.m. The kids are finally asleep. The kitchen is more or less tidy, the last pot is drying on the rack, and you drop onto the couch with that odd feeling of a tired body and a head that is still running.

And then you see it. The laundry basket is overflowing. The dishwasher needs unloading. And your partner has just opened a laptop to "finish one quick thing for work."

Something in you rises. *It's all on me. Again.*

In that second a whole list unrolls in your head. You planned the week's meals today. You remembered that your mother-in-law's birthday is in three days and a gift has to be bought. You signed the child up for the after-school class before it filled up. All of that on top of an ordinary day that nobody saw.

But across the room sits a person with exactly the same feeling. *I vacuumed today, took out the trash, paid three bills – and this is the worst week at work in six months.* They are falling apart too. They also feel unappreciated.

And now the hardest thing to admit, there at the laundry basket:

You are both right.

...

This is not about one of you lying

If one of you were lying, this would be easy: lay out the evidence and the argument ends. But you really did what you remember doing, and your partner really did what they remember doing. The trouble is *what each of you carries away from the day in your head.*

It is called **availability bias** – the brain's tendency to judge things by how easily and vividly they come to mind. And nothing comes to mind as vividly as your own effort. You feel your own tiredness from the inside, in real time, with the tension in your shoulders. You see another person's tiredness, at best, from the outside – as a fact they tell you, not as something that hurts you.

So each of you holds a precise list of your *own* contributions and only a hazy idea of the other's. That is not ill will. It is how the brain is built, in both of you equally. When the two lists meet, you get two overloaded people, each sure they pull more.

⊗ **Myth vs. fact**

Myth: "If they really did as much as I do, I would see it."

Fact: You will never see a large part of what your partner does – not because they don't do it, but because that work has no visible shape. And exactly the same is true of you.

...

Work you can't see, even when you're standing next to it

Take the after-school class. What did arranging it actually involve?

First, someone had to *notice* that enrollment was opening and spots were filling fast. Then they had to *think it through* – which day fits the schedule, whether it works with the other child's timetable, what it costs, who will do the drop-off. And only at the very end came the part you can see: filling in the form and tapping "send."

Those five minutes at a phone are the only part a camera would catch. The days of *noticing* and *thinking* behind them go unrecorded. Often you do not count them as work yourself, because they "just ran in the back of your head."

Housework has two layers. The one you can see – cooked, vacuumed, taken out. And the one you can't – tracked, planned, held in mind so that nobody forgets. The first we call work. The second we have long had no word for, because it has no shape. Here we will call it **invisible work**, and it is the quiet reason you are exhausted in the evening even on days when you "didn't really do anything special."

VISIBLE

ends when you put the cloth down

cooked · vacuumed · taken out · signed · sent

what a camera would catch

INVISIBLE

runs at 3 a.m. too

noticed that enrollment opens · remembered the birthday
planned the week's meals · decided which day fits
checked that it happened · kept it all in mind

Two layers of the same work. Only the top one usually gets counted.

Physical work ends when you put the cloth down. Invisible work has no end. It runs through the weekend, on holiday, and at three in the morning, when you suddenly remember that the school planner needs a signature tomorrow. This is the load that wears you out – not the cleaning itself.

The body rests from work. A head that must not forget anything never rests.

And this is why the usual "let's just split it down the middle" so often fails. If you only split what is visible – you vacuum, I do the dishes – it can feel fair and still leave one of you at the bottom. The whole invisible layer, that endless *remembering for the entire family*, stayed unsplit. It landed on one person, and nobody counted it, because nobody saw it.

The first step is not to divide. It is to see.

You may be about to say what everyone says at this point: *fine, so let's split it fairly*. Not yet. You cannot divide what you cannot see, and so far each of you has seen only your own half. The first job is to get the invisible layer out of your head and onto paper. Without that, every debate about fairness is a contest between two lists, and the louder person wins.

KEY IDEA

You cannot divide what you cannot see, and so far each of you has seen only your own half.

Start small, tonight.

☑ Try today — The One-Evening Test

Take your phone or a piece of paper and, before you fall asleep, write down everything you did today to keep the household running. With one extra rule:

☑ **Next to every item, add the invisible part around it.** Not just "bread rolls," but the whole chain behind them: notice they're running out → remember it → stop by on the way home → buy them. Four steps, not one.

Don't write down only what a camera would catch. Write down what ran in your head all day – what you thought about, what you held so that nobody else would have to.

Don't show it to anyone yet. This list is only a first look into the layer neither of you has seen until now.

Done honestly, this produces one of two surprises. Either you find how much you carry in your head and have never counted. Or, if you carry less of it, you see in black and white what falls to the other person. Both are the start of a shared language, and that is what this book is for: not deciding who is right, but seeing the whole household the same way.

Your practice for this chapter

🕒 Exercise – Back to back (10 minutes, together)

Sit back to back on the floor or two chairs. One of you talks for three minutes about everything you did today for the household, *including what only happened in your head*. The other does not speak, then turns around and repeats back three things they did not know. Swap. No discussion afterwards, just thank each other. Sitting back to back makes it easier to talk without watching the other's face for a verdict.

📖 Challenge – Ask for their list

Ask your partner one question and write the answer down without comment: "*What are the two or three things about how we run the household that have bothered you for a long time?*" While they answer, do not explain, defend or correct. Say "thank you" and nothing else. If they want to, swap roles. Over the next week, pick **one** item from the list you were given and change it, without announcing it. One at a time is the whole method.

Continue with the full book

You have read the opening of chapter 1. The full book has twelve complete chapters, each with an exercise to do together, a notebook page or challenge, and one page for your partner:

Chapter 2: The Work Nobody Sees, Even When They're Looking Right at It

Chapter 3: A Short Trip Inside Your Partner's Head

Chapter 4: The Quiet War Over Standards

Chapter 5: Why an Even Split Can Still Feel Unfair

Chapter 6: From "I Feel Like It's Me" to a Shared Map

Chapter 7: Ownership, Not Help

Chapter 8: Twenty Minutes a Week That Save a Hundred Arguments

Chapter 9: Kids Are Not Guests, They Are Teammates

Chapter 10: When One of You Burns Out

Chapter 11: Plan B: When One of the Team Drops Out

Chapter 12: What to Do With the Time You Suddenly Have

Plus a 30-day plan, and a companion workbook with every exercise and worksheet on printable pages.

www.familyfairplay.com/en/ebook.html