

## Fair Play: The Instruction Manual

**OBJECTIVE:** A rebalance in the division of labor where 100 cards of childcare and household tasks are dealt strategically between players in accordance with the households shared values and mutually agreed-upon expectations, as well as the individual's strengths and abilities. No player holds any cards by default, each person's responsibilities are transparent and explicitly defined, and every player set up to win.

### HOW TO PLAY: 7 Easy Steps

Step	Action
1	SET THE GROUND RULES
2	CUSTOMIZE YOUR DECK (Play for Value)
3	PREPARE TO ONBOARD
4	DEAL YOUR CARDS (Play for CPE)
5	ESTABLISH A MINIMUM STANDARD OF CARE
6	CLAIM YOUR UNICORN SPACE
7	TAKE A <i>NEWVOW</i>

**DURATION OF PLAY:** Deal the first round for seven days; ultimately, the game is designed to be played for a lifetime.

**TIP!** Stick with it. In time, you'll master the game.



## STEP 1: SET THE GROUND RULES

**Set Your Ground Rules** - How will you engage with each other and play fair?

**Create A Set of Agreements** (consider the following):

- We agree to - Listen to each other as we thoughtfully discuss all that it takes to run a home.
- We agree to—Consider our tone, brevity, and word choice as we share information and our individual perspectives.
- We agree to—Explore a new way to collaboratively work together as a team to create more efficiency and fairness in our domestic ecosystem.
- We agree to—Value each other’s time equally.
- We agree to—Keep our phones off the table and focus on each other.

**Add Your Own:**

- We agree to \_\_\_\_\_
- We agree to \_\_\_\_\_
- We agree to \_\_\_\_\_
- We agree to \_\_\_\_\_
- We agree to \_\_\_\_\_

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ & \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_



## STEP 2: CUSTOMIZE YOUR DECK

### Do not skip this step!

Before you start rebalancing the workload by divvying up and assigning cards, take the step to lighten your load!

Your family does not have to take on every card so take the time to first determine which of the cards are important to and benefit your household. Less is more! The fewer the task cards, the more manageable each person's workload, so playing with less is actually recommended!

### Review the cards one by one across all five suits.

Divide them into 4 groups:

**Group 1: Non-negotiables/ Daily Grinds** (noted with a coffee cup) These are the cards that are an everyday or highly repetitive occurrence and often happen at a very specific time, like feeding your children breakfast and getting them out the door to school. Also include cards that aren't as time-sensitive but are nonnegotiables for your family because everyone agrees they must get done. Ask yourself:

- Does this task have to get done by someone?
- Is it necessary to keep our home life moving forward?
- If so, then it's a valuable use of time, and isn't it fair that everyone shares in the workload?

**\*Value Declaration:** All-time is created equal. My Time is as valuable as your time. Fairness is playing with the non-negotiables and daily grinds.

### List Cards in Group 1:



**Group 2: Cards Everyone Values:** These tasks may not be essential to the functioning of your home, but your family values having them in your life; for example, “hosting,” “charity, community service, and good deeds (adults),” “electronics and IT,” and “social plans (couples)” may play to your individual contentment and creating a happy partnership.

Ask yourself:

- What does my family value?
- What cards can go? (Take this as your opportunity to stop running from activity to activity and feeling obligated to do it all)
- Get clear on the cards that stay right now? Why are they meaningful to your family?

**\*Value Declaration:** The cards that are important to us are in our deck and we will work together to be more efficient and thoughtful about how we manage the workload.

**List Cards in Group 2:**

**Groups 3 & 4: Cards One Person Values:** Create a pile for each person. If a card is important to that person, let that person hold the card! Ask yourself:

- Why is this important for me to hold for our family?
- Am I willing to take on full ownership?

**\*Value Declaration:** The hours of my life are as valuable as yours and we both get to make a choice on how we spend our time. I will hold these cards but will still include you in the planning.



List Cards in Group 3 (Person 1: \_\_\_\_\_):

List Cards in Group 4 (Person 2: \_\_\_\_\_):

Add your cards from Groups 1 & 2 together \_\_\_\_\_.

Count the cards you hold on your own: Partner 1 \_\_\_\_\_. Partner 2 \_\_\_\_\_.

Ask yourself:

- Is anything missing from your customized deck? Add here:

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- Take another look. Can anything be removed? Remember less is more!
- Finalize your cards to play (final count) \_\_\_\_\_

Congratulations You Now Have a Fully Customized Deck!

**\*\*TAKE A BREAK\*\*** Getting to this point is already a lot of work! If you need a break, take it, but schedule a follow-up date within 1 week to come back to the table.





## STEP 4: DEAL YOUR CARDS! (PLAY FOR CPE)

You are here! You are ready to deal the cards!

- Deal each card and place it in front of both of you. You are both working together to determine the best way to tackle this card!

Card 1: \_\_\_\_\_

- For each card dealt, agree on what each aspect means:
  - **Conception:** The behind-the-scenes mental load where you assess your family's overall needs and conceive of and define the task that will meet those needs.
  - **Planning:** This is where you research and create an action plan that outlines what is required to get the task done completely. This step may also necessitate management of the plan and possible modifications along the way. Planning also often includes consulting with other stakeholders (your partner, and perhaps your kids, caregiver, parents, in-laws, etc.) for their opinion and buy-in before finalizing this step.
  - **Execution:** This is the final step to get the job done at an appropriate time while meeting mutually agreed upon standards and explicitly defined expectations.

**Card 1 Conception:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Card 1 Planning:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Card 1 Execution:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_



- Agree, together, on which person will take ownership and hold the card until you re-deal. Determine how long you will hold a certain card. This could swap daily, weekly, or even multiple times a day!

Card 1 Holder: \_\_\_\_\_ For how long? \_\_\_\_\_

*Note: We encourage you to frequently re-deal the Daily Grind cards since those are particularly taxing. As one father said, "I don't want to be the family chauffeur the rest of my life!" Who does? Another mother admitted, "If I'm holding the 'watching' card for more than a few hours without a break, I start to lose it." No one should be stuck with any one card indefinitely.*

### How should we tackle our customized deck?

Just as you created your deck, start with:

- **Group 1: Nonnegotiable and Daily Grinds:** Dive right into a discussion about who is better equipped to handle full CPE of these cards based on individual capabilities and availability. These guidelines alone will mean that you or your partner will be ineligible to pick up some of the cards. For example, if you leave for work before the morning routine with the kids even begins, then this Daily Grind won't be your card this round. To be fair, early-to-work does not give you an all-around free pass. **There are 30 Daily Grinds and no one person should be responsible for them all. Each partner should hold a fair share of the Daily Grind cards, and at least one from each suit. This ensures that you are each digging into the most labor-intensive aspects of domestic life that cannot typically be done on your own timetable.**

**\*\*If you have a card where you "both do it" - put it aside or write them down here:**

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- **Group 2: Cards Both People Value:** Of the remainder of the cards in the Home, Out, Caregiving, and Magic suits, discuss who is better equipped to hold them based on your individual preferences, capabilities, and availability. Again, it may be clear-cut who will take which remaining cards.





- **Group 3 & 4: Cards One Person Values:** If a card is important to only one of you, claim it. Assign them to your respective piles.
- **The Happiness Trio: Self-care, adult friendships, and Unicorn Space.** Based on Rodsky's interviews, these cards are the most important to a couple's and individual's happiness, and they will create strong resentment between you and your partner if you do not both hold them. Both partners deserve dedicated time for all three.
- **Wild Cards:** If you are holding one of these life-changing cards like a job change, ailing parent, or you are the one taking the lead on your home renovation, ask your partner for some guilt-free support (which may mean asking them to hold a few extra cards) until circumstances alleviate or change.
- **Unassigned Cards:** If you are left with unassigned cards in your deck, it's likely you've fallen into a Both Trap. Do not leave cards unassigned! If you're unclear who in the partnership should take the CPE lead, refer to the Fair Play FAQ "What if we're stuck because we each do certain aspects of a card?" or work with your Fair Play facilitator to support you to reach a decision.

Congratulations you've dealt the deck!

However, don't stop! It's important to complete steps 5, 6, & 7!

## **STEP 5: ESTABLISH A MINIMUM STANDARD OF CARE**

In addition to clarifying what it means to CPE each card, your family will discuss the Minimum Standard of Care, along with your shared values for each card.

This step ensures you can both trust that all cards will be handled on time and with competence and care!

This step does NOT give any one player permission to elevate their standards and demand their partner reach them. Nor is this an opportunity to ask your partner to lower their standards.

Again, place each card in front of both of you. Collaborate on what is reasonable within your home and based on your family's shared values. Use these questions:

- Would a reasonable person (in this case, your partner, roommate, babysitter, caregivers, parents, and in-laws) under similar circumstances CPE this card in this way?



- What is the community standard, and do we want to adopt this standard within our own home?
- What's the harm for doing, or not doing, it this way?
- What is our “why” for doing it this way?

Struggling to agree? Work with your Fair Play facilitator and revisit your values through the Legacy Letter Activity.

## STEP 6: CLAIM YOUR UNICORN SPACE!

### Time for you!

Once you have negotiated and strategically dealt every card in your deck, the last step in your initial implementation of the Fair Play system requires everyone to play the Unicorn Space card.

This is an all-important card that each person must play. Unicorn Space is essential to your ongoing sense of self, the health of your partnership, and your ability to convey what a full life looks like to your children.

### One at a time:

Partner 1:

- What is your unicorn space? \_\_\_\_\_
- What is does it entail?
  - Time \_\_\_\_\_
  - Money \_\_\_\_\_
  - Coverage (e.g., Kids/Pets) \_\_\_\_\_

Partner 2:

- What is your unicorn space? \_\_\_\_\_
- What is does it entail?
  - Time \_\_\_\_\_
  - Money \_\_\_\_\_
  - Coverage (e.g., Kids/Pets) \_\_\_\_\_



Agreements:

- We allow each person Unicorn Space.
- The other partner doesn't get a vote on how time is spent on Unicorn Space.
- Our Unicorn Space is not self-care (we both deserve that too!).

## STEP 7: TAKE A NEW VOW!

**Congratulations!** You've now been onboarded to a new system that prioritizes collaboration over the competition; clarifies roles, responsibilities, and expectations; and enhances efficiency and harmony in the home. Now that you've redivided the domestic workload, you can begin to play fair. And as you do, make a vow to each other:

- I will—Let go of resentment about the past.
- I will—Play my cards with full Conception, Planning, and Execution (CPE).
- I will—Relinquish control of the cards that are not mine; no messing with your cards in the eleventh hour.
- I will—Adhere to our agreed-upon Minimum Standard of Care for each card I take; cut the criticism and nagging when things aren't done "my" way.
- I will—Re-deal individual cards as often as needed with clear and collaborative communication.
- I will—Claim my Unicorn Space, and support you as you take yours.
- I will—Make regular time to check in with you.
- I will—Make Fair Play an ongoing practice.

Our planned check in time/date is \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: (Partner 1): \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: (Partner 2): \_\_\_\_\_

