

Before reading *Fair Play*, I wondered what would happen to my children if I died. Would they grow up in squalor, never having their hair combed and teeth brushed, or clean clothes to wear? Would they never see the doctor or dentist again for their regular check-ups? After reading *Fair Play*, I realized that of course not...my kids would be absolutely fine, because my husband is a reasonable and smart man, and thus, he would simply remarry.

Simply stated, *Fair Play* is about equitably restructuring the domestic division of labor, a complex topic that has been discussed in-depth for decades, but without a revolutionary, systematic resolution, until now. However, before diving headfirst into the depths of this discussion, we would be remiss if we did not acknowledge that this topic of domestic workload overlaps multiple social constructs: sexuality, race, gender, and class. These varying degrees of intersecting socially constructed identities make for real life consequences and differences for those occupying these identities. For example, a white, wealthy, cisgender woman in a heterosexual marriage will have a very different experience than a black, impoverished, transwoman in a same gender marriage. In sum, when you add various social identities together, there are increased odds of having specific types of advantaging or disadvantaging experiences, producing inequity (oppression or privilege) that is compounded over time. However, these differences that our social identities bring into the equation are not what keep us divided. Our refusal to acknowledge these differences and the resulting differences in our oppressions in ways that motivate us to think about and to act against inequity maintains and widens the divisions. It takes compassion, self-awareness and critical consciousness to identify the similarities that exist within our lives across differences while also interrogating the inequities and injustices upon which this country was founded. The topic of domestic division of labor allows us to do both.

The opposite of oppression is equity, justice, or fairness, rather than equality. Equity is the result of a humanizing process that takes into consideration individual circumstances and the differential effects of sociopolitical contexts; whereas equality ignores precipitating, historical and causal factors and only focuses on equal input. Courage and honest dialogue with open-minded listening are required to step up to difficult conversations about past and current injustice, which is the first step out of inequity. Beware of deflection strategies that perpetuate the cycle of inequity. Deflection strategies divert attention from pertinent ideas and actions to irrelevant issues. One deflection strategy is the belief in myths such as the 24-hour woman or the work-life balance. We are taught to believe the impossible is attainable. Inevitably, when we fall short, we blame our shortcomings for failure. We believe there's something wrong with us rather than fault the myth. Setting the goal for perfection sets everyone up for failure: obviously, a no win situation. The main take away from *Fair Play* that I received is that we can all win if we play this game of life fairly. In an inequitable system of patriarchy men are more likely to receive systemic advantages over women that may increase their sociopolitical, economic standings to a 7 on the accomplishment scale of 1 – 10; and, women, because of systemic disadvantage, may be at a 4 on that same scale. If we partner to fight for equity, then we can all be at a 9. An equitable system benefits everyone. We all have something to gain and no one has to lose. Equity creates a win-win.



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There's a historical context and a sociopolitical climate that allows the current division of domestic workload to exist. *Fair Play* brings into focus the role that macro-systems (i.e., culture, norms, mores) play within micro contexts and the cyclical relationship between the public and private sphere, such that, private troubles become public problems and public issues become private struggles. Culture, systems, and policies manifest at the intrapersonal level – that is, within our individual thoughts and behaviors, such as prejudices and discrimination – as well as within our interpersonal relationships. External values invade our homes, controlling our way of domestic life, such that our homes are microcosms of American culture and society. Redistributing the domestic workload requires a paradigm shift from the inequitable practices that occur outside our homes to standards of equity within our homes. *Fair Play* gives us permission to create our own values that introduce equity into our households, creating an equitable shift in domestic workload, and setting examples for our children: that is the revolution.



The worst thing we can tell ourselves and our children is: “that’s just the way it is,” because the way it is, doesn’t have to be.

Once working towards equity in our private lives, then it's time to take the fight public to address the socio-structural issues that have squatted for too long in our homes, adversely possessing our minds, relationships and time. It's important to remember that the issue is not men against women or wives versus husbands. Our partners are not the enemy. It's not a revolution if we're fighting each other - rather the fight should be between us and the systems of inequity. Mothers and fathers can work together to transform the system. United households can advocate for affordable childcare options and employment policies that support families. “In a world of possibility for us all, our personal visions help lay the groundwork for political action” (Audre Lorde, p. 112). The sum of our individual differences should not divide us on issues regarding our collective liberation.

Fair Play was not written in a vacuum void of sociopolitical realities. The research in *Fair Play* was done with due diligence, remaining cognizant of the fact that social science research tends to have samples with people who have dominant social identities (e.g., heterosexual, white). Those samples seem to reflect the identities of those conducting the research. With this in mind, *Fair Play* had a respectable sample size of 507 people; 37% were people of color. Although *Fair Play* was not authored by a social science researcher, the sample is probably more diverse than many research studies about the gender division of labor, which suggests that *Fair Play* has a wider applicability. Although it is difficult to write for a broad audience, *Fair Play* acknowledges that we share similar experiences across social identities and the inequitable division of labor affects us all. Everyone's personal situation is nuanced and complex. Thus, the effect of this issue will be different, but the issue remains the same. Regardless of one's positionality on the social hierarchy, the *Fair Play* system can provide insight and apply to your particular circumstances. We can start a revolution within our households, sweep the public sphere clean of social norms and cultural mores that uphold inequitable domestic labor practices, producing a ripple effect to future generations, thus, transforming America one marriage at a time. The worst thing we can tell ourselves and our children is: “that’s just the way it is,” because the way it is, doesn’t have to be. We make the choice to maintain or change with every action or non-action. Here's a thought experiment for you while you read *Fair Play*: Imagine what could be different about you, your relationships and the world, if we collectively decided to play fair.