

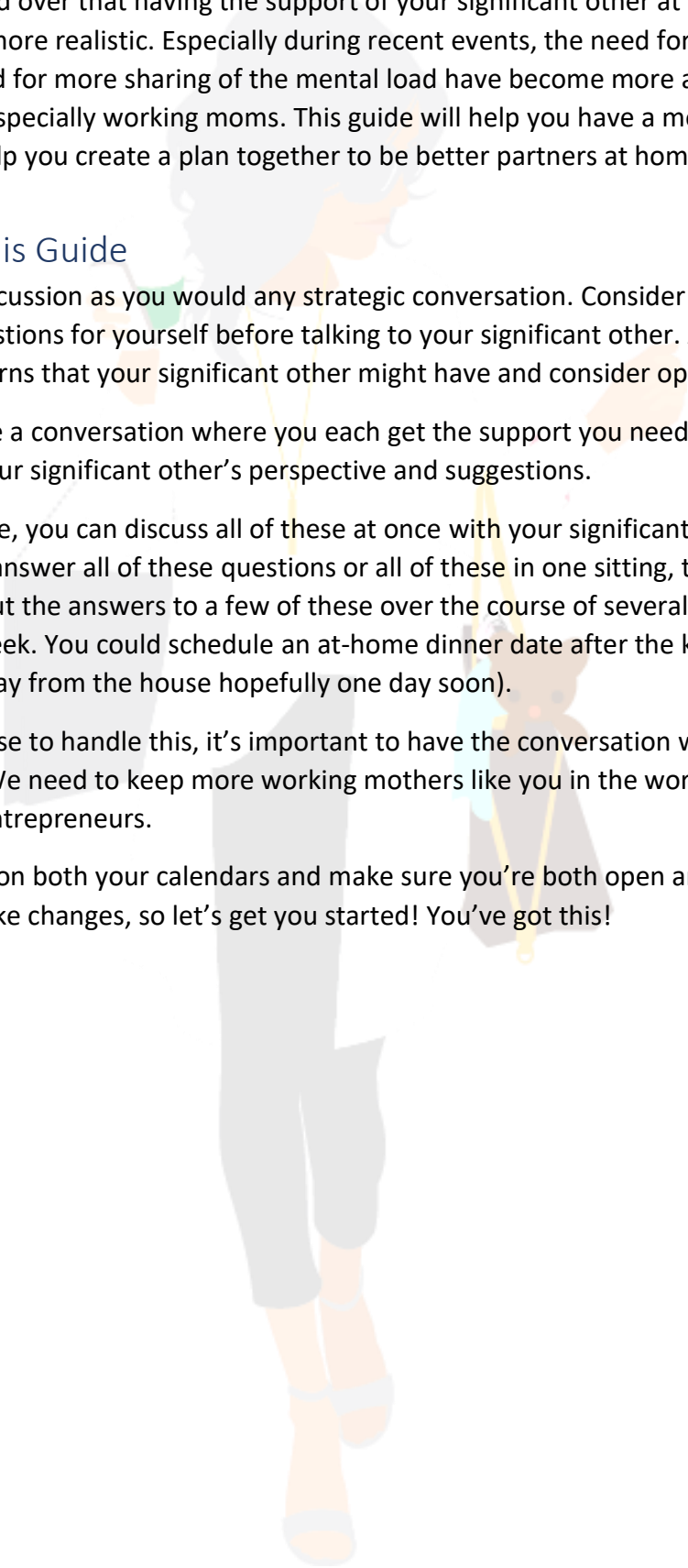
BECOMING BETTER PARTNERS AT HOME DISCUSSION GUIDE

HELPING YOU SPEAK WITH YOUR SIGNIFICANT OTHER ABOUT SHARING HOUSEHOLD AND CHILD-RELATED DUTIES TO BECOME BETTER PARTNERS AT HOME

By Suzanne Brown

A stylized illustration of a woman with long grey hair, wearing a white long-sleeved top and grey pants. She is holding a baby in a grey sling. The baby is wearing a blue shirt and has a brown teddy bear on its chest. The woman is holding a green phone in her right hand. The illustration is semi-transparent and serves as a background for the text.

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You'll read over and over that having the support of your significant other at home will make work-life balance more realistic. Especially during recent events, the need for a partnership on the home front and for more sharing of the mental load have become more apparent to working parents, especially working moms. This guide will help you have a more structured conversation to help you create a plan together to be better partners at home.

How to Use This Guide

Prepare for the discussion as you would any strategic conversation. Consider reviewing and answering the questions for yourself before talking to your significant other. Anticipate questions or concerns that your significant other might have and consider options or solutions.

You want this to be a conversation where you each get the support you need and want. Be open to hearing your significant other's perspective and suggestions.

If you have the time, you can discuss all of these at once with your significant other. Know that you don't have to answer all of these questions or all of these in one sitting, though. It might be helpful to talk about the answers to a few of these over the course of several days or even a few questions a week. You could schedule an at-home dinner date after the kids go to bed (or do a date night away from the house hopefully one day soon).

However you choose to handle this, it's important to have the conversation with your significant other. We need to keep more working mothers like you in the workforce, whether as employees or as entrepreneurs.

Schedule the time on both your calendars and make sure you're both open and honest. Now is a great time to make changes, so let's get you started! You've got this!

Motivation & Benefits

Let's talk about why and how this change can help our family.

Why am I interested in making this transition to more of a partnership on the home front (now)? Essentially, what is my motivation? What is driving the desire to make these changes? Hint: Be as specific as makes sense here. For example, I'm not getting enough sleep because I'm working on deadlines and managing remote school for kids while still trying to get dinner on the table and clean the house. (The Mompowerment *Know Your Why Guide* can help you uncover some of this and help you go deeper here.)

I want this change/these changes because...

My expectation is that if I make this change/these changes, the following will happen:

This matters to me because...

How will we both benefit from this/these change(s)? How will our family benefit? Hint: Be as specific as possible. (Chapter 3 of *The Mompowerment Guide to Work-life Balance* can be helpful here.)

Expectations

*Let's understand the changes in each of our roles at home that we want. (Chapter 6 of *The Mompowerment Guide to Work-life Balance* can be helpful with these questions.)*

As we make changes, what kind of support do I need from you? What kind of support do you need from me? (e.g., be patient with each other, have open communication, etc.)

What types of changes need to happen in our household to make this work? How does this change over time (e.g., financial vs. activities vs. scheduling types of changes)?

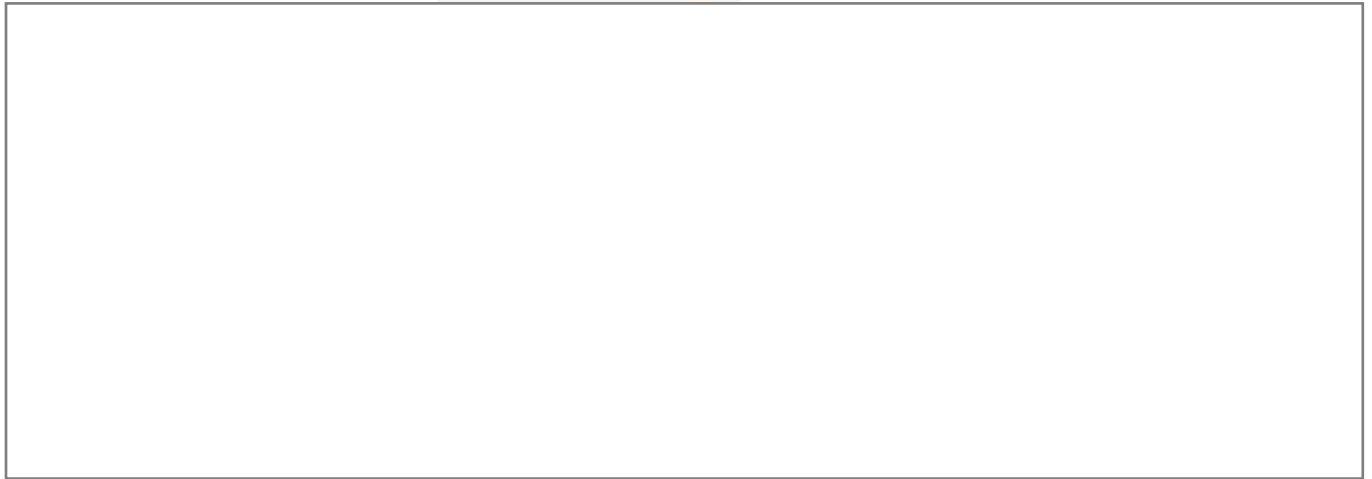
What are my expectations as it relates to this transition in the short-term and long-term? What are your expectations? (Chapter 6 of *The Mompowerment Guide to Work-life Balance* can be helpful here.)

Is this a short-term or long-term change and why? Will one benefit us more than the other when we compare multiple options? (Chapter 6 of *The Mompowerment Guide to Work-life Balance* and the Mompowerment Know Your Why Guide can be helpful here.)



Transition Plan Notes:

As you consider moving duties from one person to another, whether in your family or outsource, create a transition plan as necessary.



How will we transition the mental load as we make these changes? (Chapter 6 of *The Mompowerment Guide to Work-life Balance* and the Mompowerment Know Your Why Guide can be helpful here.)



When do we want this transition to begin or take place? Are there any major upcoming life events that we need to consider (e.g., having baby, shifting from nanny to daycare or school, school year starts, moving to a new city, etc.)?



Childcare

Let's talk through what changes we need to make as it relates to taking care of our child(ren).

What changes do we need (or want) to make related to our childcare responsibilities? (Chapter 6 of *The Mompowerment Guide to Work-life Balance* can be helpful here.)

What needs to happen to ensure a smooth transition for these changes? Hint: there might be things we need to do short-term to help us long-term. (Chapter 6 of *The Mompowerment Guide to Work-life Balance* can be helpful here.)

How do we deal with childcare emergency (e.g., child is sick or must be picked up from school/daycare for illness, nanny has emergency and cannot watch children, etc.)? (Hint: It could be helpful to plan this on a weekly basis as you plan your week.)

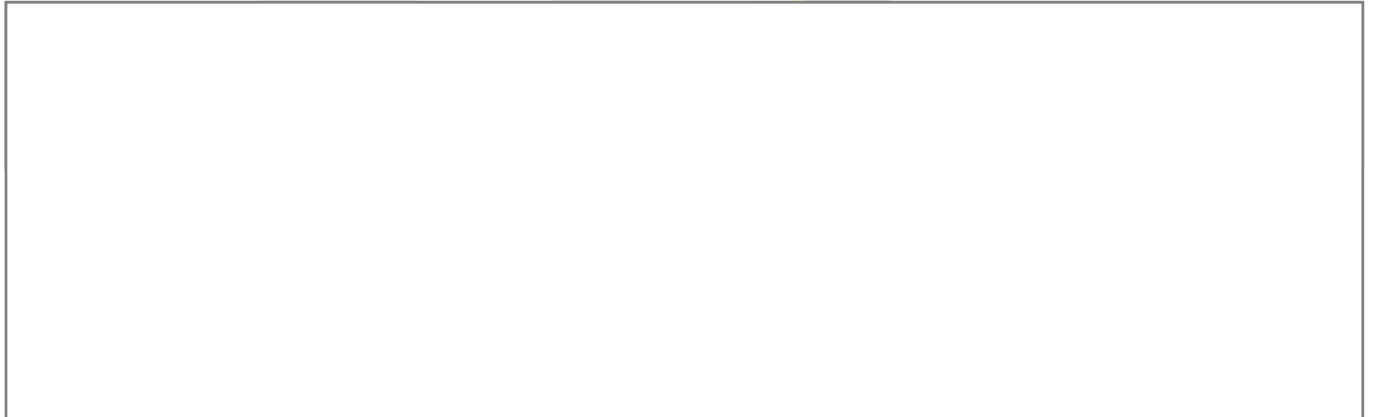
Outsourcing

Let's start to understand what, if anything, we can outsource. (This isn't an exhaustive list, but it will get your conversation started. Chapter 12 of *The Mompowerment Guide to Work-life Balance* can be helpful for these questions.)

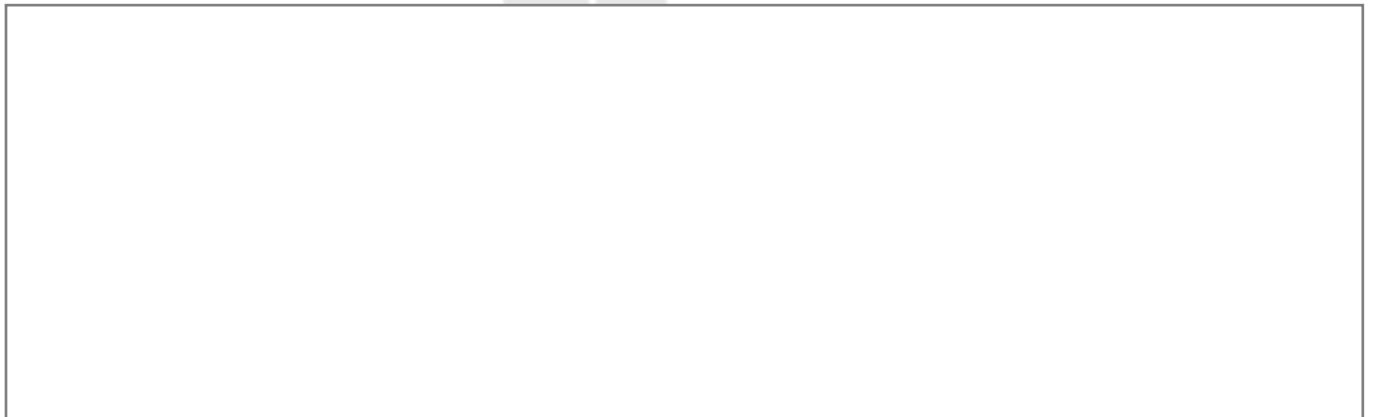
What tasks could we outsource and to whom?



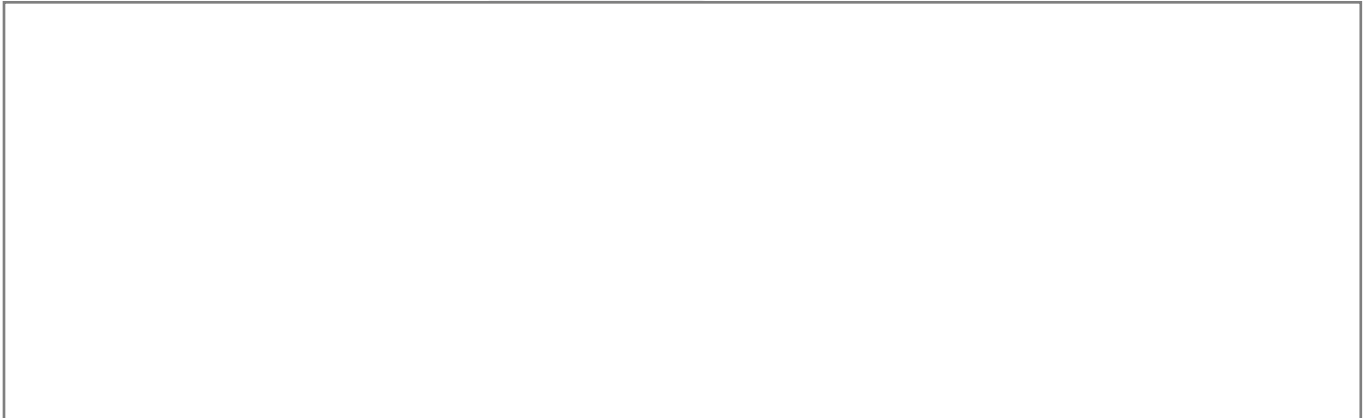
What impact will this have on our family budget? (e.g., if you pay a housekeeper to clean, will that take away money from a family activity?)



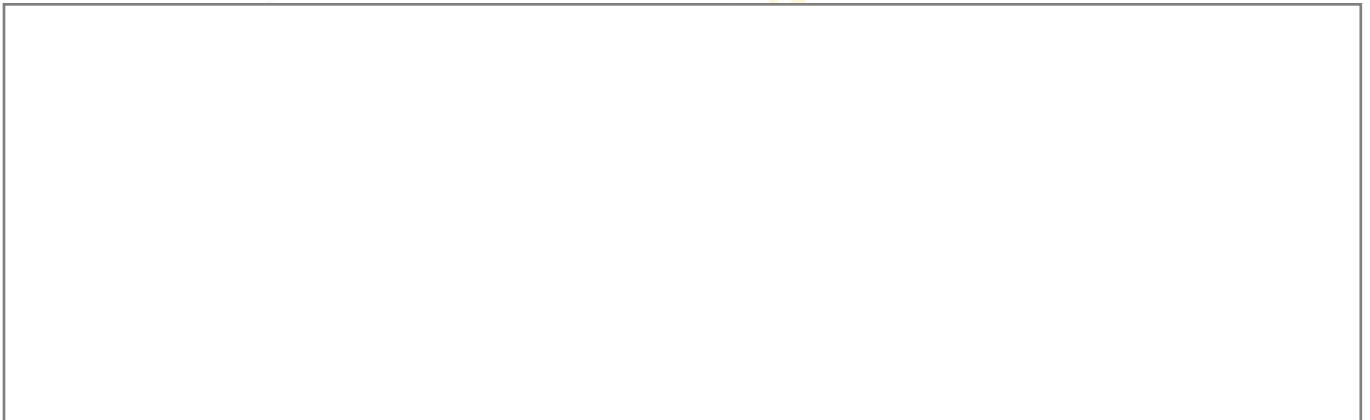
What adjustments, if any, do we need to make to family activities, based on these changes?



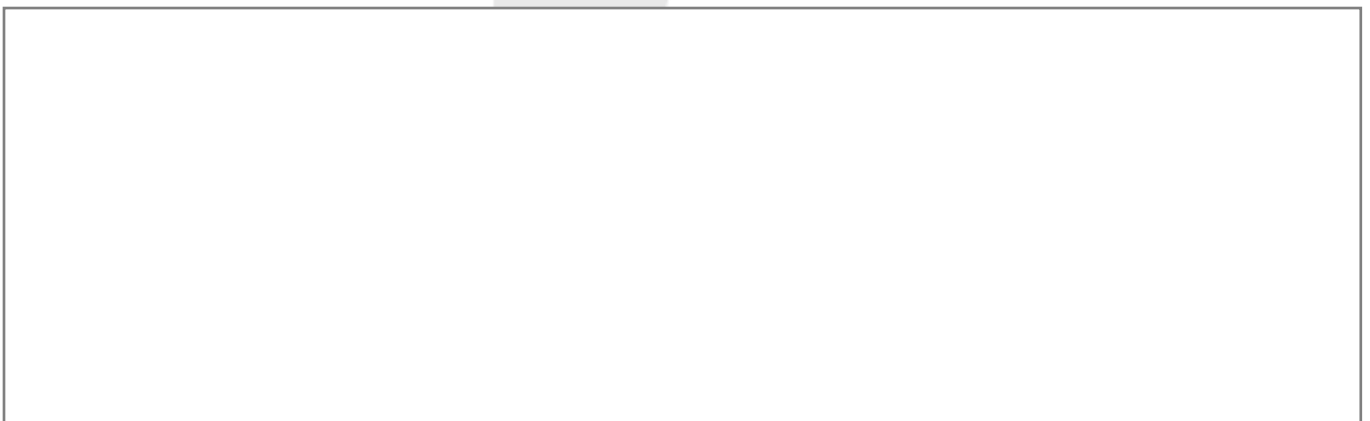
How will this impact our short- and long-term goals? (e.g., vacation, buying a home, retirement, etc.)



What are the tax implications, if any? (Hint: if you're hiring someone to watch your children, this could have tax implications.)



What questions, if any, do we have for a financial advisor or tax accountant?



Addressing Challenges

What trade-offs, if any, do we need to consider? How will they impact our family? How will they impact our careers? (Chapter 6 of *The Mompowerment Guide to Work-life Balance* can be helpful for these questions.)

What are my concerns about these changes? What are your concerns? How can we address these concerns?

What could negatively impact our ability to make these changes (e.g., job requirements, increase in travel for work, children's habits, physical location of your home, etc.)?

How will we define success? (Hint: make sure you agree or closely align on this aspect.)



Conversation Starters

Sometimes you need to get the conversation started to cover all of these topics. A few conversation starters that might help.

We'll both benefit if we make this change/these changes by...

I'd like to be able to.... and realize you would like to....

You'll be able to ... if we make this change/these changes or...

I would like to schedule XX time a day/week/month to do (activity)...How can we make that happen?

Let's set up both of us to succeed this school year...

I'm feeling overwhelmed and I need your help with...

We're feeling overwhelmed at home and work and we both need a break...

I've got a few suggestions to help our family be/do/become...

Now that we are/have... (some event or change e.g., kids can stay home alone), we can...

I've noticed the kids really enjoy spending time with you. How can we make XXXXX activity happen more often?

Let's tap into your natural talents. I miss your cooking/grilling/name a talent...

What are changes we'd like to make as a result of what's worked/not worked during the pandemic?

I have some ideas of changes we can make, based on what I'm noticing from our time working at home during the pandemic...

Tips to Help You Create More of a Partnership at Home

I'm sharing some tips that help my husband and I have a stronger partnership at home:

Compare your schedules. Figure out if it's better to share on a weekly basis or a daily basis or even both. Make sure you take this step, though. We do this weekly. The idea is to know when we need the other's help. During a normal school year, this could mean I ask my husband to pick up our kids from school and/or take them to a weekly afternoon activity.

With both parents working from home during the summer or while managing remote learning, there were moments we absolutely needed the other to be paying more attention to our kids. For example, if I'm being interviewed for a podcast or giving a training, my husband takes care of kids' needs. If he's doing a client presentation, I'm the one who is managing our kids.

Take time to connect. I often hear about making time for kids, but we also need to make time for our significant other. Having simple moments when you connect can be really helpful as you try to be better partners on the home front. Even 10-15 minutes a day can help.

This is a time of mixed emotion for all of us. Taking time to connect and listen to each other's challenges can make a difference. As you make changes, praising each other for wins in a meaningful way will go far as well.

And taking time without kids around matters. While it can be hard to do a date night away, what about something like an at-home date night. One of our favorites is to get some yummy cheese and bread from the store (you can include this in your order) and open a bottle of wine and simply chat. Kids are in bed and we can focus on each other.

Release the mental load. I focus part of chapter 6 in *The Mompowerment Guide to Work-life Balance* on the mental load. The mental load goes along with a task. It's not about delegating a task and still managing the process or ensuring it gets done. Empower your significant other to fully own something. They're now accountable for it. And hold him accountable. Be OK with it looking a bit different than you might do it, though.

Set measurable goals. As you make changes, set goals you can measure. Saying "I need you to help more" doesn't really help. Choose specific duties (e.g., cooking) that you can point to or indicate specific time during which you need help (e.g., 30 minutes each day to exercise).

Divide bedtime and dishwashing duty. This is a simple, yet helpful change. In our house, whoever washes dishes doesn't put kids to bed and vice versa. There might be times when one of us does both, but it's rare. If you think about it, doing both bedtime and dishwashing can take hours out of your evening. Instead, it takes us both less than an hour usually.

Say thank you. As you're both making changes and making effort, acknowledge the changes with a simple thank you. Often, knowing your efforts are appreciated can go a long way. And, as a bonus, it's a great example for your kids.

Now that you've had the conversation with your significant other, begin to address the concerns that came up for either or both of you. Start to develop your plan for making changes on the home front.

If that plan includes a proposal for your manager or senior leadership to change when or how you work (e.g., transition to full-time work from home or shifting which hours you work), email me at info@mompowerment.com and I can send you the proposal template if you didn't grab it already from the www.mompowerment.com/booktemplates page. The ball has started rolling and you want to keep up that momentum. You're already on the path to making things happen to create more of the work-life balance you're looking for.

If you realize during this process that you want to propose a part-time role, don't forget to get your copy of the award-winning *Mompowerment: Insights from Successful Professional Part-time Working Moms Who Balance Career and Family* and let me know if you need the subsequent book templates.