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## The Giant Invisible Scoreboard

By Samara Fabrick, LCSW



Do you find yourself fighting with your husband about who changed the last poop diaper? Are you battling over whose going to the farmers market to get the organic produce for your homemade baby food? Are you feeling like you are carrying the lion's share of the responsibilities in your family? You are not alone.

One of the most common complaints in families with young children is the frustration with all the responsibilities that arise with having a family and the endless list of tasks that have to be taken care of. I hear couples reminisce about the good old

days, before children, when it felt like the household duties almost took care of themselves. So why do things change so dramatically when babies come along?

I attribute the tension and stress about responsibilities to The Giant Invisible Scoreboard. Unbeknownst to you, before you return home from the hospital with your beautiful new baby, fairies come into your living room and deposit an invisible scoreboard that you and your spouse start using to keep score of who does what. You may not even be aware of the scoreboard in your home (it is invisible) but you find yourself keeping track of the things you have done and that your spouse hasn't. You start fighting about things you never dreamed of being an issue in your marriage and, you may even start feeling resentment about how much you are doing and your partner isn't. What's the solution? Remove the scoreboard from your life. Here's the best way to deal with the onslaught of new responsibilities that comes with each new child.

1 Choose a project manager – Each family benefits from having one person that can manage the family and delegate to others what needs to be done. If you have a project manager, it can avoid confusion, feeling bossed around and a misappropriation of tasks.

2 Split up responsibilities based on strengths – We are all better at certain things and therefore enjoy them more. If you love to go to the market, take that on as your responsibility. If you find folding laundry to be meditative, it's yours. Try to split up the tasks by choosing things you like to do before having to play rock, paper, scissors for the stuff that you don't like.

3 Use Sweat Equity – Sweat Equity is the concept that you don't have to do the same things for there to be equality in the relationship, you just have to do both be sweating equally. If you don't feel that your partner is sweating as much as you, the best solution is to talk about it. Communication is the key to success.

4 Don't Keep Score – If that Giant Invisible Scoreboard sneaks back in to your home, trash it. Keeping score leads to frustration, resentment and overall misery in a relationship.

Remember, the best way to get things done as a family is to embrace your responsibilities and appreciate the things your partner does as well. The more you work as a team, the easier things will be.

Samara Fabrick, LCSW, is a licensed psychotherapist in Beverly Hills, specializing in life issues surrounding relationship, marriage and family.

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