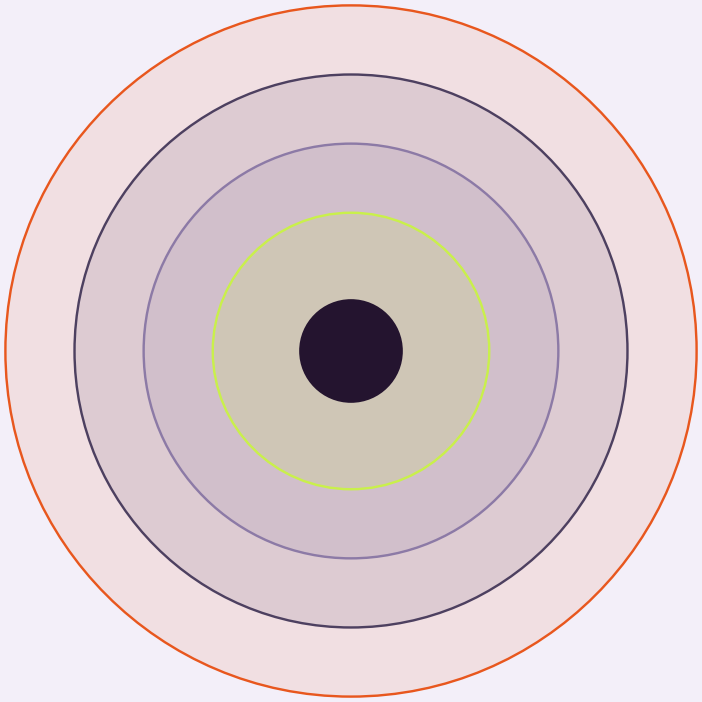


The Fair Play Deck

A reading of the book by Eve Rodsky (2020)

1. ACTION BOOK

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ABOUT THIS EDITION

This is HourLife's reading of The Fair Play Deck, in our own words. It is not a substitute for the book.

BEFORE YOU START **01**

The book in a minute

The Fair Play Deck is a card deck by Eve Rodsky, published by Clarkson Potter in October 2020 and based on her book Fair Play. It turns the work of running a home into cards that a couple can sort and share between them. The publisher describes a single sitting of about an hour: the two partners lay out the task cards, keep only the ones that apply to their household, and take turns choosing the tasks each of them will own completely. They also claim Unicorn Space cards, which stand for time for each person's own pursuits. Owning a card means holding all of it, which the system calls C.P.E.: Conception, Planning and Execution. There is also a card for maintaining the Fair Play agreements themselves. One independent reviewer, Donna Zuckerberg, recommended the deck with notes, observing that it assumes a two-parent household. Rodsky holds a BA from the University of Michigan and a JD from Harvard Law School, worked in foundation management at J.P. Morgan and then founded the Philanthropy Advisory Group. She lives in Los Angeles with her husband and three children.

Below are the 9 ideas HourLife readers vote up most, each in our words with a note on what it asks of you, and then the steps that put them to work.

WHAT READERS KEEP

The takeaways

1 HOURLIFE TAKEAWAY

Owning a task means holding all of it: noticing it, planning it and doing it.

The deck calls this C.P.E., for Conception, Planning and Execution. Whoever holds a card holds all three parts of that task. Doing a chore while the other partner remembers it and plans it leaves the invisible part of the work exactly where it was.

2 HOURLIFE TAKEAWAY

Half a card is still someone else's worry.

If one partner does the shopping but the other has to notice the fridge is empty and write the list, the second partner is still carrying the task in their head. C.P.E. is a way to name that gap out loud instead of resenting it quietly.

3 HOURLIFE TAKEAWAY

Start by deciding what your home actually needs.

In the publisher's description, the couple lays out the task cards and keeps only the ones that apply to their home. Setting cards aside is part of the work: a task nobody needs done is one nobody has to own.

4 HOURLIFE TAKEAWAY

Divide the work in a planned sitting, not in the middle of an argument.

The publisher describes the couple sitting down together for about an hour. A set time with the cards on the table is a calmer place to settle who does what than the moment a task has just been forgotten.

5 HOURLIFE TAKEAWAY

Taking turns makes each task a choice, not a default.

The partners take turns choosing the tasks they will own completely. Turn-taking means every card ends up where it is because someone picked it at the table, not because it drifted to whoever noticed it first.

6 HOURLIFE TAKEAWAY

Time for yourself belongs on the table with the chores.

The deck's Unicorn Space cards stand for time for each person's own pursuits. Claiming them in the same sitting as the household tasks treats that time as part of the agreement, not as whatever is left over.

7 HOURLIFE TAKEAWAY

The agreement needs an owner, like any other task.

Donna Zuckerberg's review notes that the deck includes a card for maintaining the Fair Play agreements themselves. A fair split drifts unless someone keeps it up, so keeping it up is work too.

8 HOURLIFE TAKEAWAY

A deck is a starting point, and not every home fits its shape.

Zuckerberg recommended the deck with notes. She found that it assumes a two-parent household, and she questioned why the woman ends up holding the card for maintaining the agreements. Both are worth raising at the table rather than accepting as given.

9 HOURLIFE TAKEAWAY

A card count is not a time count.

Reader reviews say that close to half the cards concern children and that cleaning is a single card. Cards vary a lot in size, so an even number of cards in each hand does not guarantee an even load.

PUT IT TO WORK

Your action book

Do the setup steps once, then keep the habits going. The setup changes your week; the habits keep it changed after the first good one.

The download puts this whole reading and a printable action book in one PDF: the setup checklist, then a page of real calendar days for each habit, starting on the day you choose.

SET UP ONCE

- [ ] Book the hour
- [ ] Sort before you deal
- [ ] Say C, P and E out loud
- [ ] Name your Unicorn Space
- [ ] Choose who keeps the agreement

KEEP UP DAILY

- ◯ Hand over whole tasks
- ◯ Hold a short weekly check-in
- ◯ Guard each other's Unicorn Space

30 days · Nov 13 - Dec 12, 2026

Part two, after the reading, prints each of these as a page to fill in by hand.

THE LAST WORD

Before you go

Pick one step from the action book and do it today. An idea from a book starts to count once it changes what one ordinary day looks like.

PART TWO

The action book

Change the setup once, then keep it up. 5 setup actions to do once, and 3 habits to mark each day for 30 days.

Nov 13 - Dec 12, 2026

Print it, or write on it in any PDF app.

SET UP ONCE

The setup checklist

Each of these is done once. Do one a day, and check it off when it is done.

☐ SETUP 1

Book the hour

Put one hour in both calendars for the first sitting, at a time when neither of you is tired or rushing.

Phones away, cards on the table.

MY VERSION

DONE ON

☐ SETUP 2

Sort before you deal

Go through the tasks together first and set aside every one that does not apply to your home.

Only then start choosing.

MY VERSION

DONE ON

☐ SETUP 3

Say C, P and E out loud

For each task you take, say what noticing it, planning it and doing it means in your house.

If a part stays with your partner, you have found a half-owned task.

MY VERSION

DONE ON

☐ SETUP 4

Name your Unicorn Space

Each of you writes down one pursuit of your own and a regular time for it.

Agree how the other will cover home duties during that time.

MY VERSION

DONE ON

☐ SETUP 5

Choose who keeps the agreement

Decide together who holds the task of keeping your agreement up to date.

Make it a choice you both make, not the role one person falls into.

MY VERSION

DONE ON

DAILY HABIT 1 OF 3

Hand over whole tasks

When a task moves from one of you to the other, hand over all three parts with it.

Nov 13 - Dec 12, 2026 · 30 days · circle each day you do it

SMALLEST VERSION

CUE

WHERE

November 2026

MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13 ○	14 ○	15 ○
16 ○	17 ○	18 ○	19 ○	20 ○	21 ○	22 ○
23 ○	24 ○	25 ○	26 ○	27 ○	28 ○	29 ○
30 ○						

December 2026

MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN
	1 ○	2 ○	3 ○	4 ○	5 ○	6 ○
7 ○	8 ○	9 ○	10 ○	11 ○	12 ○	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

EACH FRIDAY

WHAT HELPED

WHAT GOT IN THE WAY

ONE CHANGE TO THE SETUP

DAILY HABIT 2 OF 3

Hold a short weekly check-in

Fifteen minutes once a week: what slipped, what felt heavy, and whether any task needs to change hands.

Nov 13 - Dec 12, 2026 · 30 days · circle each day you do it

SMALLEST VERSION

CUE

WHERE

November 2026

MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
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EACH FRIDAY

WHAT HELPED

WHAT GOT IN THE WAY

ONE CHANGE TO THE SETUP

DAILY HABIT 3 OF 3

Guard each other's Unicorn Space

Treat the other person's time like an appointment.

Nov 13 - Dec 12, 2026 · 30 days · circle each day you do it

SMALLEST VERSION

CUE

WHERE

November 2026

MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
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30 ○						

December 2026

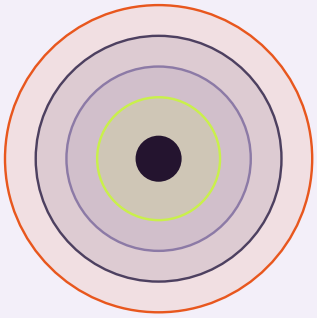
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28	29	30	31			

EACH FRIDAY

WHAT HELPED

WHAT GOT IN THE WAY

ONE CHANGE TO THE SETUP



Take the whole card, leave room for each other, and deal again when life changes.

HOURLIFE NOTE AFTER EVE RODSKY