

Workable Concept

Advising leaders who are building a world where employees with caregiving responsibilities can thrive.

How Dual Career Couples Thrive Resource Kit

EXPERIMENTS TO TRY,
HABITS TO FORM,
CONVERSATIONS TO HAVE
AT HOME AND AT WORK

Experiments from the Workshop



Experiment to create your path forward.



STEP 1: GET REAL.

LOOK HARD AT
YOUR CONTEXT



STEP 2: GET INSPIRED.

LOOK UP TO SEE YOUR
LIFE VISION



STEP 3: GET GROUNDED.

TAME THE LOGISTICS
MONSTER AND SHARE THE
EMOTIONAL LABOR



STEP 4: GET TO WORK.

MAP BOTH PARTNERS'
WORKPLACE SUPPORTS

Get Real: Experiments



STEP 1: GET REAL.

LOOK HARD AT
YOUR CONTEXT

These tools can provoke deeper conversations about your values as an individual and a couple, and ensure they are aligned. Take time for individual self-reflection before starting the conversation.

Check your own individual biases and assumptions:

- Use Harvard's [implicit bias test](#) to see if your stated beliefs map with your unconscious assumptions about gender and career. Discuss your results with each other.

Proactively navigate the key transition you are in or approaching:

- Identify where you are in the key transitions using [Couples That Work](#). Some people go through all transitions with the same partner, some with different partners. All long-term partnerships follow a similar pattern.
- Collaborate on a “couple contract” [here](#). It’s designed “to help couples map out and agree on what really matters to them in the long term. Having this explicit agreement makes it easier for couples to navigate the many transitions they’ll face across their working lives together.”
- To tackle pandemic parenting challenges, check out [Couples That Work @ Home: The Survival Series](#)

Get Inspired: Experiments



STEP 2: GET INSPIRED.

LOOK UP TO SEE YOUR
LIFE VISION

These tools can show where couples have clear alignment or predictable tensions and can identify areas where one partner is acting “small” for the other. Take time for individual self-reflection before starting the conversation.

Check for alignment on understanding each other’s career goals and life goals:

- Complete the [Strength Finders](#) assessment, share your results and talk about how you could each build on your strengths in a 3, 5, 10, and 20 year timeframe. Think boldly, not practically (yet).
- Set aside one dedicated hour to answer the [36 Questions](#) for a joyful, creative approach to envisioning your life goals together. No spreadsheets, timelines or project plans allowed.
- For ideas on a process to craft realistic career goals for short and long-term, try [MindTools](#)

Identify areas where each partner is acting “small” for the assumed benefit of the other:

- Check out Tara Mohr’s [Playing Big](#). While written for a female audience, it applies to all genders.

Get Grounded: Experiments



STEP 3: GET GROUNDED.

TAME THE LOGISTICS
MONSTER AND SHARE THE
EMOTIONAL LABOR

These tools from Better Life Lab can help both partners map a much wider set of support than most assume are available in both home and work contexts, and how to create “just enough” of a family plan.

First, set a shared baseline for understanding what emotional labor really is.

- [How to Get Your Partner to Take on More Emotional Labor](#) article frames it well.

Step back to see and talk about sharing the load for emotional labor:

- [The Shared Parenting Assessment](#) is a fun way to understand each partner’s ideal view of their role in the family’s life.
- [The Gratitude Experiment](#) helps family members become more aware of unpaid labor.
- [The Handoff](#) walks you through how to productively hand off some of your mental burden to someone else in your household.

Create “just enough” of a plan for managing your home work:

- [Kitchen Buddies](#) sets you up with a small win early by tackling the dishwasher.
- [The Choreganizer](#) helps you see all the tasks everyone in your household does, and guides conversation about how to make sure it feels fair.

Get to Work: Experiments



STEP 4: GET TO WORK.

MAP BOTH PARTNERS'
WORKPLACE SUPPORTS

These tools can help both partners map how to use a much wider set of support than most assume are available in their work contexts, and how to create “just enough” of a plan.

Map out the broadest support you can each access in your current workplace:

- [The Benefits Cheat Sheet tool](#) makes sure you’re using all of the employee benefits and policies already available to you.
- [The Office Housework Gut Check tool](#) helps you both reduce the amount of non-core work you do in your professional life, so you focus your work hours on what’s key to your career development.

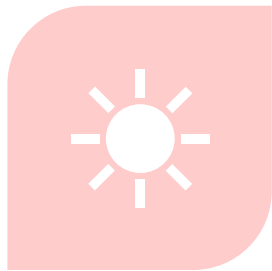
Merge them, stretch them, and create a pilot plan to use for the next 6 months

- [The Work Design Worksheet](#) helps you envision paired proposals for flextime, remote work, and meeting-free zones that make your life together work. Design it to stagger your schedules to provide childcare coverage, reduce commutes, and protect time for critical meetings. Then look to see what parts you can just DO, and which you need to propose to your bosses for approval.

Cultivate New
Habits to
Sustain Your
Efforts



Cultivate new habits to sustain yourself



**HABIT 1. EMBED
IT IN YOUR DAY**



**HABIT 2. MAKE TIME
TOGETHER COUNT**



**HABIT 3: LET SOMEONE ELSE
GUIDE THE CONVERSATION.**



**HABIT 4: TAKE IT
TO YOUR TEAMS.**

Embed it in your day



HABIT 1. EMBED IT IN YOUR DAY

REDESIGN YOUR 'COMMUTE'

- Gottman Institute [podcast](#)
- Better Life Lab [podcast](#)
- Rise Together [podcast](#)
- The Dad Edge [podcast](#)
- Working Mother's Mentor [podcast](#)

USE SOCIAL MEDIA FOR GOOD

- Better Life Lab [Twitter](#) [Facebook](#)
- Gottman Institute [Twitter](#) [Facebook](#)
- Claire Cain Miller [Twitter](#) [Facebook](#)
- Catalyst [Twitter](#) [Facebook](#)
- MenCare [Twitter](#) [Facebook](#)

Make time together count



HABIT 2. MAKE TIME TOGETHER COUNT

CREATE AN (AUDIO)BOOK CLUB OF 2

- [Couples that Work](#) | Jennifer Petriglieri
- [Fair Play](#) | Eve Rodsky
- [The Fix](#) | Michelle King
- [Sharing the Work](#) | Myra Strober
- [Maternal Gatekeeping](#) | Elissa Straus (article)

SPEND YOUR SCREEN TIME TOGETHER

- [The Mask You Live In](#)
- [Parenthood](#)
- [Boyhood](#)

Let someone else guide the conversation



HABIT 3: LET SOMEONE ELSE GUIDE THE CONVERSATION.

THE DIY APPROACH

- New York Times [36 Questions](#)
- Gottman Institute [Card Deck](#) app
- Jennifer Petriglieri's [The Survival Series](#)

WORK WITH A REAL PERSON

- Advisory engagements for HR, C-suite and leadership teams on how to improve your organization's support of working parents and family caregivers. More info at www.workableconcept.com
- Career coaching for employees with caregiving responsibilities– to address a burning issue or to design a strategic plan. More info at www.workableconcept.com
- For couples counseling to address deeper issues and understand their roots, find a certified therapist at [The Gottman Institute](#).

Take it to your teams



HABIT 4: TAKE IT TO YOUR TEAMS.

WITH YOUR MANAGER AND DIRECT REPORTS

- Create a [Benefits Tip Sheet](#) together and discuss which supports your team can provide each other even if not a company-wide benefit or policy. Experiment with your own team.
- Start a team conversation about how you can create designated a meeting free day or hours each week, using this [Harvard Business Review article](#) as a starting point for discussion.

WITH YOUR LEADERSHIP AND HR TEAMS

- Train your managers on leading remote teams and flexible work, which benefits all employees but especially parents and caregivers
- Support and lead caregiving initiatives through your ERG groups. Workable Concept and AARP just launched the [Caregiving ERG Toolkit](#)
- Train managers on why and how to support Dual Career Couples using Berkeley Haas EGAL's [Supporting Dual Career Couples: An Equity Fluent Leadership Playbook](#)
- Start the conversation at your partner's workplace by having your partner propose that their employer sponsor the same workshop [How Dual Career Couples Can Thrive at Work and Home](#)

Workable Concept

**Advising leaders who are building a world where
employees with caregiving responsibilities can thrive.**

As CEO of Workable Concept, Heather Ainsworth helps working parents create strategies for both partners to thrive at work and home. She also helps employers design and implement affordable ways to support working parents and family caregivers. Curious how she can help you or your workplace? She's at

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