



TIPS FOR MEN:

# How to Support Your Partner as a True Equal

[#LeanInTogether](#)

## TIPS FOR MEN

# How to support your partner as a true equal

Women still do a majority of housework and childcare, and in many cases men's careers get prioritized.<sup>1</sup> Approach your relationship as a true partner. Couples who share responsibilities are stronger—and their children benefit from seeing their parents model equality.<sup>2</sup>

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**TIP 1** COMMUNICATE OPENLY

**TIP 2** MAKE DECISIONS AS A TEAM

**TIP 3** DO YOUR SHARE AT HOME

**TIP 4** ENCOURAGE YOUR PARTNER TO LEAN IN

**TIP 5** MODEL EQUALITY

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# 1

## Communicate openly

### SITUATION

Communication is critical in relationships.<sup>3</sup> Partnerships are stronger when both parties talk through disagreements calmly and listen to each other's perspectives, and this is particularly important when you're managing a home or raising children together.<sup>4</sup>

### SOLUTION

Discuss your goals for your home and career with your partner. Listen carefully to what she wants and be vocal about your own needs. Then keep the conversation going. Talk through unresolved issues and review your calendars and to-do lists together. When you see your partner has too much to do, ask her how she's feeling and how you can help.

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### DID YOU KNOW?

Women are interrupted more than men.<sup>5</sup> Even if you're supportive of the women in your life, you may not be giving them the airtime they deserve.

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# 2

## Make decisions as a team

### SITUATION

Many women make professional sacrifices to support their partner's career, and men still assume their partner will do the lion's share of child care.<sup>6</sup> In addition, couples often prioritize the man's career when they make household decisions.<sup>7</sup> Over time, these trends can lead to missed opportunities for you as a couple.

### SOLUTION

Make decisions as a team. Consider what's good for both of you, and be clear about each other's trade-offs. It's not about finding the perfect compromise with each decision; it's about achieving a healthy balance over time. If you have children, treat child care as a joint responsibility.

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### DID YOU KNOW?

According to a survey of graduates from Harvard Business School, three-quarters of millennial women anticipate their careers will be at least as important as their partners, while half of millennial men believe their careers will take priority.<sup>8</sup>

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### 3

## Do your share at home

#### SITUATION

Running a house and raising children is hard work—and women still do most of it. This means many women don't get the support they need at home, and women who work outside the home often end up with two full-time jobs while their partners have one. More women than ever are primary or co-breadwinners, yet only 9 percent of couples in dual-income marriages say that they share child care, housework, and breadwinning evenly.<sup>9</sup>

#### SOLUTION

Approach the responsibilities of housework and child care as real partners. Commit to doing your share of daily chores, and make sure work is split fairly. Don't wait to be asked—step up when you see dishes in the sink or laundry piling up.

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#### DID YOU KNOW?

When couples share household responsibilities fairly,, both parties are happier and marriages are stronger.<sup>10</sup> Not only does marital satisfaction go up, but couples have more sex—"choreplay" is real.<sup>11</sup>

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### 4

## Encourage your partner to lean in

#### SITUATION

Men typically apply for jobs when they meet 60 percent of the hiring criteria, while women wait until they meet 100 percent.<sup>12</sup> Moreover, women negotiate less frequently and ask for a third less money when they do.<sup>13</sup> As a result, women often miss out on opportunities and income. There is a good chance these dynamics impede your wife's career advancement and your income as a couple.

#### SOLUTION

Encourage your partner to apply for stretch opportunities and commit to do your fair share at home. When it's time to negotiate her compensation, encourage her to go for it and role play the conversation.

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#### DID YOU KNOW?

Women who don't negotiate leave money on the table. Over the course of their career, this can amount to hundreds of thousands of dollars in loss earnings.

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## 5

# Model equality

### SITUATION

We're all held back by gender stereotypes. Women are expected to be kind and collaborative, while men are expected to be strong and in charge. As a result, we're often uncomfortable when women lead and men nurture, which makes it harder for all of us to be our whole selves.

### SOLUTION

Show the people in your life what equality looks like. Model a broader definition of manhood and celebrate your partner's ambitions. If you have kids, encourage your daughter to speak up and take the lead and your son to respect his feelings and care for others. Point out and challenge gender bias when you see it. When you reject outdated stereotypes, others will follow.

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### DID YOU KNOW?

Seventy-six percent of people who've taken Harvard University's Implicit Association Test more readily associate males with "career" and females with "family."<sup>14</sup> You can take it yourself at [leanin.org/IAT](http://leanin.org/IAT).

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