RHONA BERENS, INC. COACH SPEAKER AUTHOR Page 1 of 8

THE WHO-DOES-WHAT EXERCISE

We all play different roles or parts in our relationships, which consist of the tasks or activities that keep those relationships functioning over time. Some roles are external in nature—tied to physical, material, or tangible activities—e.g., grasscutter, cook, CFO.* Others are internal and maintain the emotional, psychological, or energetic aspects of relationships, e.g., initiator, dissenter, motivator, feeler, analyzer.†

- All relationships—personal and professional—not only have roles: They need roles to function.
- Roles are not who we are, not immutable identities. Instead, they are the tasks and
 responsibilities we assume and perform in relationships. In committed romantic ones, how roles
 get distributed, who occupies them, and how fully or not they are occupied depends on many
 factors, e.g., preferences, habits, social, religious, or familial norms, happenstance.
- Problems arise when one person *over*-occupies or *under*-occupies a role(s), or when role distribution—and, therefore, task sharing—is inequitable or otherwise unsustainable.

It's not unusual for one parent to assume more external and internal household and childcare roles than the other. If decided jointly, equitably, or willingly, that scenario works well. However, because parenthood includes many *new* tasks and functions, and because their distribution isn't always a conscious or negotiated process, the division of labor in the home is a battlefield for many new parents, especially heterosexual ones. For example, sometimes a stay-at-home parent is presumed and expected to be available for childcare and household tasks 24/7, while the parent that works outside the home views the hours they devote to their paid position as mandatory, while time spent on home-duties seem more optional, negotiable, or dismissible. In other instances, both parents work outside the home, yet one is the go-to parent, called upon during child-related emergencies, illnesses, appointments, and errands. In this scenario, unspoken or unconscious influences—such as traditional gender roles, assumptions about whose job or career is more important, or fears about your own or your spouse's skillfulness as a parent—guide who occupies roles and how much they occupy them. In these scenarios, resentment, dissatisfaction, or other negative feelings impact individual and relationship fulfillment.

In *The Seven Principles for Making Marriage Work*, psychologist John Gottman offers an exercise based on typical household tasks. What follows is a significantly expanded version of that exercise, tailored to new parents, and combines the scope of existing household roles and tasks with the many new ones that arrive with a baby. Please note that quite a few tasks, e.g., replenishing baby diapers, are ongoing and repeat often. So, in practical terms, some functions require significantly more time, vigilance, and effort than others. Taking those factors into consideration will deepen your understanding of what it means to agree to, be expected to, or expect your spouse to take on roles and responsibilities.

<u>Warning</u>: The list of tasks that follows is long, which can be daunting to evaluate. If you find yourself checking out midlist or overwhelmed by just the prospect of starting this exercise, please take a few deep breaths to ground yourself. Consider doing this exercise in small chunks, e.g., pause, get up, and stretch after evaluating five or ten tasks, or complete this exercise over the span of multiple sittings.

^{*} Invisible labor usually consists of external tasks executed out of your spouse's sightline or without their knowledge, awareness, or curiosity about your efforts, e.g., setting up and tracking auto-delivery for diapers and other supplies. † Emotional labor dovetails with internal roles, though sometimes includes external ones as well, e.g., tracking your baby's milestones can be tangible insofar as you record them or communicate them to your pediatrician, yet also emotional in that you remain internally vigilant about your child's developmental changes *or* lack thereof with a view to ensuring your baby is healthy and on track with other kids their age.

Guidelines for The Who-Does-What Exercise:

- Complete this exercise individually (i.e., separate from your spouse).
- Mark the checkbox on the left for duties that currently are, or likely to become, topics of negative conflict.
- In the "Now" box, use initials to approximate your perception of the current distribution of labor, e.g., 100% JB; or 75% JB/25% RB; or even 75% JB/25% no one. If you are an expecting parent, fill out the "Ideal" box for baby-related tasks. You can complete the "Now" box after your baby is a few months old and compare it to the ideal scenario you imagined.
- In the "Ideal" box note your *preferred* division of labor, with a view to satisfying not only yourself, but also what you believe most benefits your relationship and family.

•	In "Notes," explain how your Ideal scenario will better serve you, your relationship, or your family than what					
	you wrote for "Now." Do your best to avoid communication toxins in your notes: e.g., disrespect, blame,					
	criticism, or defensiveness and resist using absolutes and rigid commands, such as "always," "never,"					
	"should," "have to," "must," "supposed to" and the like.					
	e.g., Grocery shopping Now: Ideal: Notes:					

- Share and discuss your "results" with your spouse from a place of genuine curiosity and openness, especially when it comes to the ways in which your responses differ. The goal is *not* to agree; it's to better understand your partner's perspective, which provides a foundation for future discernment, negotiation, and compromise.
 - If you have very different perspectives on who does what or your ideal scenarios, try open-ended questions:
 - What do you think accounts for our differences in perception?
 - How do you think we can better understand each other's views on who does what?
 - Given that we disagree, and both believe in the validity of our own perspectives and experiences, how can we compromise from a place of choice so that neither of us resents or regrets the outcome?
 - How might you be willing to shift to better understand my view (and vice-versa)?
 - Imagine that, together, you've been charged with adjusting your housework and childcare roles—and the tasks associated with them—to better manifest the relationship and family you most desire. You have an opportunity, indeed responsibility, to collaborate to create a new vision of your roles that you can both live with and abide by intentionally and willingly, at least until those roles get renegotiated again.

 ©

General Household Duties:

Some of what follows is scheduled differently in different households, e.g., you might address financial planning monthly, annually, or on an *ad hoc* basis; some of you might take daily medications, while others use prescriptions solely in the event of serious illness. Feel free to add a task currently listed as Daily... to Annually, etc.

Items in red often tap into emotional or invisible labor. If that's true for you, please mention how so in Notes. NB: Other tasks than those in red might spark invisible or emotional labor for you so please say so in "Notes," e.g., the formula you first chose upset baby's tummy so researching and trying new formulas ensued, which creates invisible labor. Plus, tracking your baby's discomfort and trying to ensure their digestion is settled taps emotional labor.

Please indicate "N/A" in Notes for tasks that don't apply to your household (or skip them altogether) and please add tasks not on this list in the blank boxes near the end of each section. Grey boxes expand as you type in them.

Daily - Weekly - Biweekly tasks:			
Create/update grocery list	Now:	Ideal:	Notes:
Shop for groceries	Now:	Ideal:	Notes:
☐ Put away groceries	Now:	Ideal:	Notes:
Sort clothes for dry cleaning	Now:	Ideal:	Notes:
☐ Take clothes to dry cleaner	Now:	Ideal:	Notes:
Get clothes from cleaner	Now:	Ideal:	Notes:
Oversee relationship messages:	Now:	Ideal:	Notes:
e.g., phone messages, texts, emails, mail f	from friends/fai	mily including invitations	to social events.

Page 3 of 8

_			
Respond to those messages	Now:	Ideal:	Notes:
Gas up car(s)	Now:	Ideal:	Notes:
☐ Plan meals	Now:	Ideal:	Notes:
Cook meals	Now:	Ideal:	Notes:
Set the table	Now:	Ideal:	Notes:
Clean up after meals	Now:	Ideal:	Notes:
Clean the kitchen	Now:	Ideal:	Notes:
Load dishwasher	Now:	Ideal:	Notes:
Run dishwasher	Now:	Ideal:	Notes:
Unload dishwasher	Now:	Ideal:	Notes:
∐Clean bathroom(s)	Now:	Ideal:	Notes:
Gather/sort clothes for laundry	Now:	Ideal:	Notes:
Spot-stain laundry	Now:	Ideal:	Notes:
☐Wash & dry laundry	Now:	Ideal:	Notes:
Fold laundry	Now:	Ideal:	Notes:
☐Put away laundry	Now:	Ideal:	Notes:
Launder bedding/towels	Now:	Ideal:	Notes:
☐Put out fresh towels	Now:	Ideal:	Notes:
<u></u> Dust	Now:	Ideal:	Notes:
∐Sweep/vacuum	Now:	Ideal:	Notes:
☐Tidying up in other ways	Now:	Ideal:	Notes:
e.g., folding throw blankets on your couch		•	
☐Make bed(s)	Now:	Ideal:	Notes:
☐Oversee housecleaner	Now:	Ideal:	Notes:
If you hire someone to clean your home re	• ,		
distribution in terms of communication wi Turn off lights at night	Now:	Ideal:	Notes:
Set/reset thermostat	Now:	Ideal:	Notes:
Replace empty TP roll(s)	Now:	Ideal:	Notes:
Replace paper towels	Now:	Ideal:	Notes:
Gather household trash	Now:	Ideal:	Notes:
Take out trash	Now:	Ideal:	Notes:
Gather household recycling	Now:	Ideal:	Notes:
Take out recycling	Now:	Ideal:	Notes:
Take trash cans to curb	Now:	Ideal:	Notes:
Return cans from curb	Now:	Ideal:	Notes:
Oversee composting	Now:	Ideal:	Notes:
Get/gather mail	Now:	Ideal:	Notes:
Sort incoming mail	Now:	Ideal:	Notes:
Review/read incoming mail	Now:	Ideal:	Notes:
Track petfood and pet supplies	Now:	Ideal:	Notes:
Purchase petfood and supplies	Now:	Ideal:	Notes:
Feed pet(s)	Now:	Ideal:	Notes:
Houseplant care	Now:	Ideal:	Notes:
Track relationship care	Now:	Ideal:	Notes:
Plan dates	Now:	Ideal:	Notes:
Plan outings/weekends	Now:	Ideal:	Notes:
Make plans with friends	Now:	Ideal:	Notes:
Make plans with family	Now:	Ideal:	Notes:

Use the blank boxes above to add daily, weekly, or biweekly tasks not listed.

Monthly - Quarterly tasks:						
Handwash select items	Now:	Ideal:	Notes:			
☐Iron	Now:	Ideal:	Notes:			
Service the car(s)	Now:	Ideal:	Notes:			
Shop for new clothes/shoes	Now:	Ideal:	Notes:			
Replenish toiletries	Now:	Ideal:	Notes:			
Order medications	Now:	Ideal:	Notes:			
Pick up medications	Now:	Ideal:	Notes:			
Order vitamins	Now:	Ideal:	Notes:			
General pet(s) care	Now:	Ideal:	Notes:			
Track expenses/budget	Now:	Ideal:	Notes:			
Track savings	Now:	Ideal:	Notes:			
Review bills for accuracy	Now:	Ideal:	Notes:			
Pay bills	Now:	Ideal:	Notes:			
Balance checkbook(s)	Now:	Ideal:	Notes:			
Additional banking	Now:	Ideal:	Notes:			
General correspondence	Now:	Ideal:	Notes:			
Prep packages for delivery	Now:	Ideal:	Notes:			
Mail/send packages	Now:	Ideal:	Notes:			
Change light bulbs	Now:	Ideal:	Notes:			
Purchase light bulbs	Now:	Ideal:	Notes:			
Change air filters	Now:	Ideal:	Notes:			
Purchase air filters	Now:	Ideal:	Notes:			
Perform yard/garden work	Now:	Ideal:	Notes:			
Gardener	Now:	Ideal:	Notes:			
If you hire someone to maintain your gard		•	e, please indicate task			
distribution in terms of communication w			Makaa			
Clean outdoor furnishings	Now:	Ideal:	Notes:			
e.g., clean the BBQ, wipe down patio furn Clean windows - interior	Now:	Ideal:	Notes:			
Schedule car maintenance	Now:	Ideal:	Notes:			
	Now:	Ideal:	Notes:			
H	Now:	Ideal:	Notes:			
H	Now:	Ideal:	Notes:			
H	Now:	Ideal:	Notes:			
H	Now:	Ideal:	Notes:			
H	Now:	Ideal:	Notes:			
H	Now:	Ideal:	Notes:			
H	Now:	Ideal:	Notes:			
H	Now:	Ideal:	Notes:			
H	Now:	Ideal:	Notes:			
Use the blank boxes above to add monthl	_		11000			
Biannual – Annual tasks:						
Prep tax materials	Now:	Ideal:	Notes:			
Oversee tax return prep	Now:	Ideal:	Notes:			
Consult with accountant	Now:	Ideal:	Notes:			
Financial planning	Now:	Ideal:	Notes:			
Book regular dental care	Now:	Ideal:	Notes:			
Book regular medical care	Now:	Ideal:	Notes:			
Deep clean pantry	Now:	Ideal:	Notes:			
Assemble furnishings/items	Now:	Ideal:	Notes:			
Deep clean fridge	Now:	Ideal:	Notes:			
Thaw and clean freezer	Now:	Ideal:	Notes:			
Organize cabinets/closets	Now:	Ideal:	Notes:			
Wash windows - exterior	Now:	Ideal:	Notes:			
Replace smoke alarm batteries	Now:	Ideal:	Notes:			
Book vet appointments	Now:	Ideal:	Notes:			

Page 5 of 8

☐ Take pet(s) to appointments	Now:	Ideal:	Notes:
	Now:	Ideal:	Notes:
Π	Now:	Ideal:	Notes:
Ħ	Now:	Ideal:	Notes:
Ħ	Now:	Ideal:	Notes:
H	Now:	Ideal:	Notes:
Use the blank boxes above to add biannua	-		Notes.
Ad-hoc tasks (as needed)			
Respond to incoming mail	Now:	Ideal:	Notes:
Prepare/stamp outgoing mail	Now:	Ideal:	Notes:
Drop outgoing mail in mailbox	Now:	Ideal:	Notes:
Create budget	Now:	Ideal:	Notes:
Review household costs	Now:	Ideal:	Notes:
e.g., review subscriptions and revise as nee		_	
Dispose of worn-out items	Now:	Ideal:	Notes:
Dispose of expired items	Now:	Ideal:	Notes:
e.g., food in fridge, freezer, and pantry, an			
Research new furnishings	Now:	Ideal:	Notes:
Buy furniture & furnishings	Now:	Ideal:	Notes:
Research appliances	Now:	Ideal:	Notes:
Buy appliances	Now:	Ideal:	Notes:
Buy other big stuff (e.g., car)	Now:	Ideal:	Notes:
Research advisors (tax, legal)	Now:	Ideal:	Notes:
Select advisors (tax, legal)	Now:	Ideal:	Notes:
Meet with advisors (e.g., legal)	Now:	Ideal:	Notes:
Pick up medications for illness	Now:	Ideal:	Notes:
Emergency pet(s) care	Now:	Ideal:	Notes:
Track friends/family birthdays	Now:	Ideal:	Notes:
Track other friend/family events	Now:	Ideal:	Notes:
Calendar social plans	Now:	Ideal:	Notes:
Buy gifts for friends/family	Now:	Ideal:	Notes:
Wrap gifts	Now:	Ideal:	Notes:
Write cards for gifts	Now:	Ideal:	Notes:
Perform home repairs	Now:	Ideal:	Notes:
Coordinate repairmen	Now:	Ideal:	Notes:
Research vacations	Now:	Ideal:	Notes:
Decide on vacations	Now:	Ideal:	Notes:
Book vacations	Now:	Ideal:	Notes:
Pack for short outings	Now:	Ideal:	Notes:
Pack for vacations	Now:	Ideal:	Notes:
Unpack after outings/trips	Now:	Ideal:	Notes:
Arrange rides to airport, train	Now:	Ideal:	Notes:
Arrange airport, train pickups		Ideal:	
	Now:		Notes:
Plan (for) holidays	Now:	Ideal:	Notes:
Decorate for holidays	Now:	Ideal:	Notes:
Prep food on holidays	Now:	Ideal:	Notes:
Serve food on holidays	Now:	Ideal:	Notes:
Clean up on holidays	Now:	Ideal:	Notes:
Invite friends/fam to events	Now:	Ideal:	Notes:
Initiate lovemaking	Now:	Ideal:	Notes:
Initiate relationship talks	Now:	Ideal:	Notes:
Sew/mend	Now:	Ideal:	Notes:
Prepare for guests	Now:	Ideal:	Notes:

Page 6 of 8

Clean up after guests	Now:	Ideal:	Notes:
Prepare for parties	Now:	Ideal:	Notes:
Clean up after parties	Now:	Ideal:	Notes:
File/store important docs	Now:	Ideal:	Notes:
	Now:	Ideal:	Notes:
\Box	Now:	Ideal:	Notes:
\Box	Now:	Ideal:	Notes:
Ħ	Now:	Ideal:	Notes:
H	Now:	Ideal:	Notes:
H	Now:	Ideal:	Notes:
H	Now:	Ideal:	Notes:
Use the blank boxes above to add <i>ad hoc</i> to			Notes.
ose the slam boxes above to add an not to	isks flot listed. Tal	menus a runniny	
Infant & Childcare Tasks:			
Not all new parents perform all these tasks	, and some have resou	rces to outsource, so o	only check items relevant to your family.
Design baby's room/space	Now:	Ideal:	Notes:
Decorate baby's room/space	Now:	Ideal:	Notes:
Select baby furnishings	Now:	Ideal:	Notes:
Buy baby furnishings	Now:	Ideal:	Notes:
Assemble furnishings	Now:	Ideal:	Notes:
Make home baby-safe/friendly	Now:	Ideal:	Notes:
Research gear (e.g., stroller)	Now:	Ideal:	Notes:
Select baby gear	Now:	Ideal:	Notes:
	Now:	Ideal:	Notes:
Buy baby gear			
Read baby gear directions	Now:	Ideal:	Notes:
Assemble baby gear	Now:	Ideal:	Notes:
Dispose of outgrown gear	Now:	Ideal:	Notes:
Replace with new gear	Now:	Ideal:	Notes:
Install car-seat(s)	Now:	Ideal:	Notes:
☐Track car-seat upgrades	Now:	Ideal:	Notes:
e.g., when to change rear-facing to front-fa			
Change car-seat direction	Now:	Ideal:	Notes:
Complete hospital forms (birth)	Now:	Ideal:	Notes:
File birth certificate	Now:	Ideal:	Notes:
Create birth announcement	Now:	Ideal:	Notes:
Compile announcement list	Now:	Ideal:	Notes:
Distribute announcement	Now:	Ideal:	Notes:
Add baby to insurance(s)	Now:	Ideal:	Notes:
Buy baby clothes	Now:	Ideal:	Notes:
Organize baby clothes	Now:	Ideal:	Notes:
Buy baby blankets/towels	Now:	Ideal:	Notes:
Buy crib bedding	Now:	Ideal:	Notes:
Organize bedding/towels	Now:	Ideal:	Notes:
Set aside outgrown clothes	Now:	Ideal:	Notes:
Give away outgrown clothes	Now:	Ideal:	Notes:
Research baby products	Now:	Ideal:	Notes:
e.g., diapers, wipes, diaper pail, baby salves			Notes.
Select products	Now:	Ideal:	Notes:
Evaluate product efficacy/safety	Now:	Ideal:	Notes:
Buy products	Now:	Ideal:	Notes:
Replace wipes when empty	Now:	Ideal:	Notes:
Dispose of full diaper pail liner	Now:	Ideal:	Notes:
Replace diaper pail liner	Now:	Ideal:	Notes:
Replenish diaper supply	Now:	Ideal:	Notes:
Replace salves/creams	Now:	Ideal:	Notes:
Organize baby products	Now:	Ideal:	Notes:

Page 7 of 8

_			
Select baby toys/books	Now:	Ideal:	Notes:
Buy baby toys/books	Now:	Ideal:	Notes:
Replace baby toys/books	Now:	Ideal:	Notes:
Read to/play with baby	Now:	Ideal:	Notes:
☐Plan friend/family visits	Now:	Ideal:	Notes:
☐Write/send thank you notes	Now:	Ideal:	Notes:
Change diapers-daytime	Now:	Ideal:	Notes:
Change diapers-nighttime	Now:	Ideal:	Notes:
Launder baby clothes	Now:	Ideal:	Notes:
Launder baby bedding	Now:	Ideal:	Notes:
Change baby bedding	Now:	Ideal:	Notes:
Clean baby's room (general)	Now:	Ideal:	Notes:
Clean <i>ad hoc</i> , e.g., spit up	Now:	Ideal:	Notes:
Put away laundered items	Now:	Ideal:	Notes:
Select baby's outfit(s)	Now:	Ideal:	Notes:
Change the baby's outfit	Now:	Ideal:	Notes:
Place clothes in hamper	Now:	Ideal:	Notes:
Breastfeed baby	Now:	Ideal:	Notes:
Research lactation support	Now:	Ideal:	Notes:
Schedule lactation support	Now:	Ideal:	Notes:
Select baby formula	Now:	Ideal:	Notes:
Buy baby formula	Now:	Ideal:	Notes:
Replenish baby formula	Now:	Ideal:	Notes:
Daytime bottle-feeding	Now:	Ideal:	Notes:
☐ Nighttime bottle-feeding	Now:	Ideal:	Notes:
Wash/sterilize baby bottles	Now:	Ideal:	Notes:
Clean breast pump parts	Now:	Ideal:	Notes:
Organize breastmilk storage	Now:	Ideal:	Notes:
Track frozen breastmilk (if any)	Now:	Ideal:	Notes:
Burp baby-daytime	Now:	Ideal:	Notes:
Burp baby-daytime	Now:	Ideal:	Notes:
Soothe upset baby early am	Now:	Ideal:	Notes:
Soothe upset baby early arr	Now:	Ideal:	Notes:
Soothe upset baby find-ani	Now:	Ideal:	Notes:
Soothe upset baby mid-pm	Now:	Ideal:	Notes:
Soothe upset baby late-pm	Now:	Ideal:	Notes:
Soothe upset baby late-pill	Now:	Ideal:	Notes:
Early am infant/baby care	Now:	Ideal:	Notes:
Midday infant/baby care	Now:	Ideal:	Notes:
Evening infant/baby care	Now:	Ideal:	Notes:
	-	Ideal:	
Late night infant/baby care	Now:		Notes:
Overnight infant/baby care	Now:	Ideal:	Notes:
Swaddle baby	Now:	Ideal:	Notes:
Oversee baby's naps	Now:	Ideal:	Notes:
Track baby's naps	Now:	Ideal:	Notes:
Oversee baby's bedtime	Now:	Ideal:	Notes:
Track baby's sleep cycle	Now:	Ideal:	Notes:
Bathe baby	Now:	Ideal:	Notes:
Research baby's doctor(s)	Now:	Ideal:	Notes:
Interview baby's doctor(s)	Now:	Ideal:	Notes:
Placement of monitor/baby-cam	Now:	Ideal:	Notes:
Charge baby monitor(s)	Now:	Ideal:	Notes:
Track doctor appt schedule	Now:	Ideal:	Notes:
Book doctor appointments	Now:	Ideal:	Notes:
☐Take baby to doctor(s)	Now:	Ideal:	Notes:
Follow-up w/ doc, if needed	Now:	Ideal:	Notes:
Follow-up w/ doc, if needed Serve as contact for doctor(s) Emergency/ill baby care	Now: Now:	Ideal: Ideal:	Notes: Notes: Notes:

Page 8 of 8

<u> </u>			
Track baby milestones	Now:	Ideal:	Notes:
☐Keep/update baby book	Now:	Ideal:	Notes:
Research baby caregiver(s)	Now:	Ideal:	Notes:
Check caregiver reference(s)	Now:	Ideal:	Notes:
☐Interview caregiver(s)	Now:	Ideal:	Notes:
☐Hire caregiver(s)	Now:	Ideal:	Notes:
Schedule caregiver(s)	Now:	Ideal:	Notes:
Supervise caregiver(s)	Now:	Ideal:	Notes:
Pay caregiver(s)	Now:	Ideal:	Notes:
Research baby class(es)	Now:	Ideal:	Notes:
Sign up/pay for baby class(es)	Now:	Ideal:	Notes:
Attend baby class(es)	Now:	Ideal:	Notes:
Obtain baby-related advice	Now:	Ideal:	Notes:
☐ Initiate baby chats w/ spouse	Now:	Ideal:	Notes:
Test out baby advice	Now:	Ideal:	Notes:
Research baby CPR course	Now:	Ideal:	Notes:
Sign up for baby CPR course	Now:	Ideal:	Notes:
Take baby CPR course	Now:	Ideal:	Notes:
Track general baby needs	Now:	Ideal:	Notes:
Track general baby wellbeing	Now:	Ideal:	Notes: