

LITTLE DID I KNOW CREATING A "TEAM AT HOME" WOULD MAKE LIFE SO FUN

Today Jeff and I may be "empty nesters" but looking back, I can see how the seeds we planted sharing in the care of our children really helped us succeed in all aspects of our lives.

You too can create a "team at home" - let us help you ... Today's newsletter is chock full of ideas on how to help parents share in the work and joys of family. Read on to learn about the "Saturday Basket" - an idea you can even try out this week.

Make the most of the "school aged" years ... When your youngest child starts school it becomes an incredible opportunity for both parents to share in the joys and challenges of planning around a school schedule. Read on to see the benefits of this approach, and then join us next week when two dads share how they do this on our Thursdays with ThirdPath webinar.

Why is Shared Care more possible today than ever before? ... One reason is because there are now plenty of books that have been written about Shared Care, including Kristin Mashka's book. She's the author we featured on last month's webinar. To learn how Shared Care saved her marriage, replay our video recording of the webinar, or listen to it on iTunes.

Thanks for being part of the growing, vibrant, inspiring ThirdPath community!

/Jessica and the ThirdPath team

PS - Are you excited to help diverse families - two parent, single parent, LGBT or straight - learn how to redesign work so they have more time for family? Then join us this April at our ILA Forum.

An easy first step towards sharing

When you create a "team at home" it helps everyone increase their success at navigating both big and small family responsibilities.

Lori Mihalich-Levin knows all about this. She's written a great resource for new parents and parents to be called, ***Back to Work After Baby***. The book is chock full of ideas to help you better navigate the big transition back to work after the baby is born.

One of the tips actually works well for families with any age children, so we asked Lori if we could share it with you. Here's what she taught us:

Improving home front logistics

"I hear from working mamas all the time that their days are so scattered. Does the following sound familiar? 'I can't seem to find a chunk of time to collect my thoughts in the evenings between packing milk and lunches, paying bills, ordering diapers, filling out day care forms, scheduling appointments ... How do I get back some sanity?'"

Lori's secret? The 'Saturday Basket'

"At our house we have instituted what we refer to as a 'Saturday Basket' that sits on top of our microwave in the kitchen. Into the basket go bills, birth announcements that need a response, forms to fill out, lists of things we need to order, retirement info that needs reviewing, a list of meals for the week. You name it.

Mundane, frequent, and annoying tasks seem to take up way less of my emotional energy when they go into the basket, and I love that they are temporarily checked off my to-do list during the week. Being in the basket keeps them from spiraling around in my head!

Then, every Saturday evening, my husband and I have the hottest date ever - what we call our 'Saturday Meeting'. After the kiddos are in bed, we take out the basket and tackle what is inside in one big swoop."

What's inside Lori's 'Saturday Basket'?

- Bills and money
- Anything we need to order
- Planning out our week (including who could take kids if they get sick)
- Scheduling weekend activities (and preserving a few weekend days per month with NO commitments)
- Getting our parents' helper on the books
- Scheduling a monthly date night

- Carving out time for exercise during the week
- Making sure each of us is getting time alone and with friends
- Reviewing our respective business goals

When we asked Lori "Do you make it through the basket every week?" She replied, "Nope. But the meetings are still always worth it. And so is the connection we create as we chat back and forth over a glass of wine."

Want us to send you a copy of our free Shared Care brochure? We'd be happy to do this. Learn more on our "[free resources](#)" web page.

Work, family and the school aged years

When children start school, parents need to learn how to navigate school closures, sick days, after school activities and summer schedules.

When parents learn how to share taking care of both these predictable and unpredictable changes, everyone wins - moms, dads, kids, and our workplaces. The dads in the below photos - Roger and Michael - will tell you all about this on our next Thursday webinar. Or read on to get a sneak preview of some of the things we'll be discussing.

More time as a family:

After school time can be great for both bonding and productive activities. Parents can plan an after school adventure instead of waiting for the weekend. They can also schedule appointments and errands. One shared care dad combined the two, "my kids weren't always thrilled to get the errands done, so I'd make a plan to go someplace fun afterwards."

More wiggle room for change:

Learning to work as a team, knowing which parent can flex and when, as well as building a network of support with family and friends, will pay big dividends when families work together to navigate school closures, sick days, and the summer months. Want a jump on how to make the most of summer breaks? Check out this [great resource](#).

More opportunities to teach life lessons:

As children become more self-sufficient, creating a relaxed afternoon at home can give everyone time to connect. Having a friend come over can free up parents to get other household tasks done, or as children grow older, they can help you with these activities, by learning to take on responsibilities like laundry and cooking meals.

More able to be present for teens:

Older school aged children may start to need you less, but being around still makes a big difference. Parents of teens learn that teachable moments come at different times - at the mall when trying on clothes, or late at night when they are trying to finish a paper. Other parents admit to "shamelessly eavesdropping" during car pools. This helps the parent ask better questions later on such as, "So how is that new coach?" By taking turns being the parent at home, both parents increase the likelihood of being

available, whatever comes up.

Join our next [Thursdays with ThirdPath](#) webinar where Roger and Michael will share tips and lessons learned about the school aged years.