

## Resentful of Doing More Than Your Fair Share?

Do you tend to grumble because you have a spouse, sibling, coworker or friend who can never seem to manage to do their fair share of whatever it is in which you are both involved?

Somewhere in the world there are some really lazy, selfish, or stubbornly incapable people whom you might want to avoid, in order to keep your sanity and not be prevented from accomplishing an important goal or your life's purpose.

But, I propose quite often the problem with one person's unhappiness in an "unfair" relationship (working or familial), has more to do with one's own perception and entrenched assumptions, than with the other person's shortcomings. Let me explain.

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Imagine you have twelve hours to drive to some place unfamiliar. You have this other person on the trip with you, but he can't drive. He falls asleep in the passenger seat.

Eight hours into the trip you're feeling tired and wishing he would do his share of the driving, to let you do some of the happy dreaming over there in the other seat. But no, he doesn't even have a driver's license because he's always been afraid to try, even though you think his poor vision isn't all that bad; after all, he doesn't have trouble doing anything that else he really wants to do.

You come to a fork in the road which isn't on the map, and you're not sure which way to go. You pull over, wake your friend, and see what he thinks. You take his advice because it makes sense, and forty minutes later you see a sign which lets you know you are on the right track—your friend had been right about which way to turn.

Suddenly he wakes up again, and just before a freeway exit he asks if you know you are just about out of gas. You would have passed the exit and run out of gas because you were too tired to think of checking your gas gauge. Thanks to your friend, again, you are on your way with a full gas tank and no time lost.

When you arrive at your destination, you are so happy to be on time that you are no longer angry about having to do all the driving; you're not even tired because you're psyched about getting on with the purpose of your arrival.

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Now of course by normal thinking, it certainly sounds like the work of the trip was unfairly divided. But consider your assumptions.

- You assume that your friend was happily dreaming for 12 hours. But what about the fact that

your friend often wishes he could drive himself about, without having to depend on others? What about the headache he had all the next day because he slept uncomfortably in that car seat, instead of home in a bed, where he could have been if he hadn't wanted to be along with you? What about the nightmare he had about you falling asleep while driving?

- You assume that you did all the work of driving. What about your friend's two major contributions, without which you might have been several hours late? Don't you think knowing which way to turn and when to get gas is just as important as controlling the car, as far as arriving at the correct place and time?
- You assume that your friend could actually drive just fine, if he weren't too lazy to take responsibility. Maybe that's true; maybe not. But even if that were true, it's actually his loss, not yours. If he won't learn and use a skill, he's that much less capable and less experienced. But if you can manage to do more where he does less, than you are that much MORE capable and MORE experienced. You might even thank him for affording you the opportunity to stretch yourself.

So the truth is, you did what you could do, your friend did what he could do, and together the trip was a success. Remind yourself what matters.

If life were meant to always be "fair" as defined when we are acting like children who complain, "That's not fair! I did it last time; it's his turn now!" then we would all be identical in every way.

While sometimes we feel afraid of standing out from the crowd for fear we'll make a mistake and be ridiculed, or for fear of being a bit lonely, truly everyone wants to be unique, special, better, needed, appreciated. We'd be so bored if somehow everyone's life could be just like everyone else's, so why ridicule or resent someone for not having the same skills or personality traits we possess?

An important key to finding happiness in any relationship, is to look for the virtues and utilities of the other person. Whether they are greater or lessor as compared to yourself or anyone else, does not mean they are not valuable. Appreciate the valuable, and it will appreciate in value.

Now reconsider that person in your life who can't or won't do his or her "fair share," and see what there is about him or her for which you can be thankful and happy. What is his or her valuable contribution, whether great or small? Appreciate it. Build on it.