



Roles

How can we each contribute to the Team?	Shouldn't we each be able to do exactly the same thing to be equals?		Who will do the work that we can't?	
We want to expand our relationship - and learn new things				Can I trust my partner to do it right?
My partner doesn't know what I know - then what?			I know who I am - including my limitations	
	How can we talk about assigning roles and tasks?			What does this have to do with love?

Roles

Getting it Together. Roles are kind of like job descriptions. The team needs to figure out who is going to handle which tasks. This chapter will cover loving ways to assign job duties.

Several factors play into how your job description develops:

- Time and availability
- Talents and experience
- Willingness

You may be well trained in a certain task, but if you have no time to get to it, it might never happen. So, looking practically at the needs of the project, how is your time best spent? Take some time at the start to talk it through with your partner to get input about where your time is best spent.

Willingness with availability can make up for being green at the job. Quite a bit of prep work done by a diligent hand can make the expert work easy and fast. With communication about needed details, you can have a site prepped for you (or even a professional), so using the least amount of that precious (or expensive) labor time.

There should be little of the “me and mine” involved -- in the sense of possession of the project, unless it is meant to be a personal showcase (in which case, quite a bit of prep work can still make the project easier and more successful). The team strives toward the shared goal of completion – not personal competition. Like a good jazz band, the whole team shares in the delight of a well-performed solo in addition to the big band sound.

Another aspect of role assignment involves how the team makes decisions. Take a look at the Decisions chapter to develop a method of handling the decisions of the project in a loving and consistent way.

So, how do we divide up the work?

Whatever roles you and your partner choose – are fine. Just make sure you understand them. Clarity is the key. Certain things end up being carved out as one or the other’s responsibility. One may make design choices while another makes construction technique decisions (but if you can talk technically very well together, you may even be able to confer on these types of decisions). One may determine colors and finishes. One may be the budgeter. From your conversations about teamwork and personal talents,

Renovation Psychology: Putting the Home Team to Work

as well as your review of the above checklists, you may get some idea about who will be better at what.

It is pretty simple to go through the list and then talk to try to figure out who gets what task, so that you know how far to go. It saves aggravation down the road and builds communication skills for your Home Team.

Dealing with the inside of change – resisting the return of old habits

As much as we sit and talk, it can be an instant internal reflex to convince yourself that you are ‘in charge’ when you are solo on one end of a project. But you are still part of the team – so just be sure that if you take a task on, you are also willing to talk about it later and let the other know what came of it. This is not about being bossed around, but about being responsible

for your agreements. A lot of people figure that there is no keeping score in relationships and nothing owed to the other; yes, that is good, but this does not mean that there is no accountability.

In home renovation, as in real life, when you say you will pick up the ball for the



Tasks & Tools Assesment Grid	me	my partner
Plan		
Choose colors		
Shop		
Bid on materials		
Track materials or orders		
Negotiate with vendors		
Pick up materials with vehicle		
Carry 50 pounds repeatedly		
Nails up to 2"		
Nails – many over 2"		
Drill straight holes		
Use screwdriver		
Gluing & clamping		
Tile & grouting		
Leveling a surface		
Shoveling		
Drive a truck, and tow		
Operate cement mixer		
Tow a wheel-barrow		
Handle a nail gun		
Use blowtorch		
Use soldering gun		
Table saw, radial arm saw		
High-torque screw gun		
Portable screw gun		
Use 12-oz. hammer		
Wield 20-oz. hammer		
Swing a 5-lb. Sledge for 20 minutes		
Use tack hammer		
Care & use of paint-brush		
Paint with rollers		
Measure and mark accurately		
Make diagrams & plans		
Read diagrams and plans		

Renovation Psychology: Putting the Home Team to Work

Instructions ~

Using the Tasks and Tools Assessment Grid

1. **Print out the list** to the left. Or make up one of your own that reflects the types of tasks and tools that will be involved in your project. Make two copies.
Each of you will mark one up for yourself, including what you think your partner is good at.
When you later compare the two sets of lists, you will both be interested to hear about the talents you each see that the other does not.
2. **How to mark up the list:** Mark the list of tools and tasks for the job according to your assessment of your own abilities.
Put a ✓ checkmark next to those tasks you have experience with and can do well. You need to remember that you are not going to have a checkmark in every box.
Then put “X” next to tasks or tools you don’t figure you can use or handle well or safely.
Put a “?” next to those you need to learn more about but think you can do with assistance or help.
3. **Compare lists.** If neither one of you can do some of the essential tasks or tools, you have just discovered your edge! Not a problem – just get assistance with those.
4. **Clear specialties.** Of the remaining tasks and tools, you will notice that some things will be delegated to one or the other of you depending upon who can do them. If it is too much for you, talk it through about getting help, even if it is for a short time.
5. **The rest.** The tasks that are able to be done fine by both of you need to be assigned according to each of your availability and willingness. It is pretty important to be up front about what you can do and are willing to do in this respect.
6. **The tasks you take on** may defy stereotypes, or they may be hauntingly traditional. Be prepared to talk them through so that they are appropriate regardless of how they might appear.

team, you need to anticipate that your partner will care about the where you place the ball.

Your family is in the game with you and will want to know about the next play. So, talk it through.

Role RE-definition

Do you and your partner have the exact same abilities and interests? Hopefully there are differences. That way you won't be vying for all the same jobs and decisions. Competition is not helpful when you want to get things done. And if you were both the same, who would do the stuff you hate doing?

When do we talk about our different abilities?

Little adjustments: the assignments

As you set about to use tools and assign tasks, it is good to step back just a bit and ask yourselves if the job assignments are good matches for the talents, abilities, and preferences of the team members. For example, handling a nail gun seems cool, but when hooked up it can act like a 20-pound cat avoiding a bath in a washtub. Do you really have the strength to use it safely over your head? Maybe you should rethink that assignment if you have doubts. Will you bring it up, or will your partner? Share your concerns, but tactfully.

So – just take some time and communicate to let roles make sense for the team under YOUR roof.

Abused by my own principles?

There can be some principles that may rule you a bit too hard

Wonder about battling stereotypes? A silly example for me was when I went hiking with a gentleman and I insisted we carry equal weight in our packs. I was determined not to have his strength and greater size be a factor in our planning who would carry the camping equipment and how we would distribute the load, feeling that if he carried more, that it would limit my personal potential. Consistent with my attitude, I carried a load that was more than 2/3 of my body weight, and he carried less than half of his weight. I became exhausted more quickly than he did, and was in fact more prone to injury and safety errors. Yet, even as I had bruises from some falls and strained muscles, it was still difficult for me to relent and redistribute the loads, as I was overwhelmed with a sense of failure; but the high altitude and fatigue

made redistribution important for the safe completion of the hike. I relented and we made a safe descent to the valley below.

We laugh now at my silly self-defeating stubbornness, but all of us can be quite irrational about our choices, even at home altitudes.



Delegating —

~ A matter of TRUST, but not the lovey type

Sharing a task can be comforting, because you both get to see what is happening and can adapt plans on the spot together. You can also get to know the other's work methods and be able to talk through project issues with greater detail. Yet, there comes a time when it is just more efficient to split up a job and each do separate parts – whether it is due to ability differences or just to save time – and you will have to face the challenge of trust. Will you give it over to your partner to handle the project's buying tasks or the casting of cement? You will have to face living with their work. And THAT is trust.

Awkward Expectation?

It may seem odd to talk about this, but it will come down to trust in the end. This type of trust is not the gushy romantic kind, but a negotiated practical understanding of what each one can do that the other one will abide. This is the love-in-action! Real trust has sweat on it.

Isn't trust just a romantic thing?

If you are committed to each other, you have probably spoken of trust before – trusting with secrets, trusting with your safety. But on a project you are placing trust in the delegation of tasks. Can you trust that both of you have assessed each other's capabilities correctly and communicated the vision and methods of the project clearly? That the other will be able to carry the joint decisions to another level, and carry them out as agreed? Yep, that's the rub. The letting-go kind of trust. That is a dependable trust, a trust that matures a relationship. Working on the elements that bring your family to this level of delegation will add a new dimension to the trust in your relationship. This becomes the mature activity of love, and it gives depth to the home.

If we skip this, could it be a problem?

If you find that you are involved in the project and you are having arguments about things the other one just did, you have a signal that you need to work on delegating and trust. You will have to face this sooner or later in most any job: you will have to trust each other to do certain things and to live with what is done. You may as well tackle it before it becomes a problem and do some groundwork for the solutions before you both become irritable.

Developing 'Task-trust'

This involves candid appraisals and acceptance of each other, and facing one's

Renovation Psychology: Putting the Home Team to Work

own limitations. Can he handle it that she does not like his sense of color? Can she admit that she tends to succumb to a sales pitch? That he may not want her to make big purchases solo? Or she might not want him to pick out certain materials without her? If these things can be talked about, many cross moments can be avoided. Use the checklists in this chapter to talk through your own abilities and limitations, and to honestly communicate them to your partner. Let your partner do likewise. Do this respectfully and lovingly, remembering again that you married for love, not for plumbing. You can hire a plumber, but you cannot buy love.

Developing ‘Procurement-trust’ (shopping)

It can be very beneficial to shop together quite a bit at first, and for all sorts of things from hardware to appliances. You will get an idea of how you each do with these items. Talk about how you would purchase higher-priced items, and what your choices would be. This will give you a clue how it could go in the future, when you might split up the shopping tasks.

When the tasks go solo

Try the same thing for tasks on the job site. Start together side by side, and talk about how each of you would handle the next steps, and what you would contribute to the process. Then you will be better prepared for when it is time to have one of you perform the task solo. You may wonder if you both need to do every task. The answer to each job will probably come naturally. The one with the interest and ability for the task is likely to want to persevere, even when it might get complicated or boring. While the bored one will soon come to realize they don’t need to stick around and can trust the other one with that type of task. The spare person who finds they are not central or needed on the task should then try to be useful with other necessary jobs that have been delegated, or should help by acting as a Go’fer for materials or food and liquids. (But – no alcohol on the job site, especially if you want things done right and done safely.)

Keep the wheels greased

Have patience with each other. Delegating and trust will very much evolve over time as you work and encounter some glitches, relief, and even success. It is important when you get to the glitches that you go to the communication chapters and work out solutions that will carry you on. There is no harm in having glitches, just use them as an opportunity to work on your rebound skills and team building. The more of those challenges you learn to overcome, the stronger your **Home Team** will be.

Adjusting Roles

It saves money and materials to have the right person on the right job. Yet it may be very clear to you or your partner that one of you is not at all ready for the job or role assigned.

Start with your hats off – and talk

It is suggested that you put your hats on the table every so often and look at your own performance in the role you have taken on. Ask for feedback. Talk about your frustrations. Ask for help. Maybe you don't want to do certain things alone just yet. Maybe you need to do it alone. Talk it through. If you feel you are in over your head, let your partner know. Chances are, they have had a hint of it already and will be relieved to hear you admit it.

Breaking the news without breaking their heart

If you think your partner just can't do a task and they won't admit it, you have a challenge of tact. Be double- sure that you are very gentle if you feel you must deliver such news; they are likely to be hurt. But it may be necessary to do so if they could get into serious trouble or overrun the cost of the project. And, if they



Renovation Psychology: Putting the Home Team to Work

are using up too many materials with mistakes, you can discuss the changes in budget and see what you both want to do to remedy this.

Reaching beyond your Home Team

You may have a friend who is good at the task ahead who can come in, help lead the way, and teach the techniques that save materials. You may need to rent equipment that is easier to use or does not break things as easily. It will come down to communication, and accepting each other lovingly and “as-you-are,” and not for your construction techniques.

Notes from Roles

Go over the lists and work on your inventory of skills

What are the things you are both able to do?

(Even if not equally)

What are two things that your partner is especially able to do that you cannot?

Name:

1.

2.

Name:

1.

2.

Who can organize things?

Who will make sure the **Home Team** communicates?

Who might be able to lend a hand to your **Home Team**?
(whether paid or not)

Renovation Psychology: Putting the Home Team to Work