

The 50/50 Debate

Would you go 50/50 with a man? Over the years there has been a lot of debate over if women should be paying and going fifty fifty in relationships with men. Many people believe that going fifty fifty is the fair thing to do, while others believe that women paying is actually unfair. The belief that women paying for their part is in any way equal or fair is simply wrong due to many factors. Since the beginning of time women have been treated so poorly, seen as less than a man, and been overall ill-treated by society. Women fought for their spots at the table and in order to be taken seriously, have put in 10 times the amount of work men have had to do in order to gain respect from others and just for them to still be put into second place of a man. This is a very important topic in our society, especially now that more people have begun to speak about it. Many young women are seeing this discourse and being brainwashed into thinking that 50/50 equals fairness because no one is discussing the factors that come into play when talking about equality between a man and a woman in society.

A big thing many people don't think about when it comes to arguing for going 50/50 is that the wage gap still exists. The wage gap is the difference there is between the earnings of women and the earnings of men. The wage gap is calculated based on women and men who both work full time jobs in order to control for work hour differences. According to the *Women's Bureau U.S. Department Of Labor*, in 2021, it was found that for every dollar men make, women make only 84 cents. The site reads "the analysis shows that about a third of the gap between full-time, year-round working men and women's wages can be explained by worker characteristics, such as age, education, industry, occupation, or work hours. However, roughly 70% cannot be attributed to measurable differences between workers." This means that about 70% of the gap is due to discrimination. The wage gap is also due to "women jobs" or jobs

typically held by women being much lower paying jobs, such as childcare workers, housekeepers, home aides and personal care aides. But even with the same amount of hours being put into the same job, women still earn less and men still earn more for doing the same amount and type of work. How are women expected to go 50/50 with men when they are not even being paid fairly? The fair thing to do would be for men to cover the cost of whatever it is they are both consuming because they are making more money than women are while putting in the same amount of effort.

Another thing many people don't bring up is the amount of unpaid labor being done by women everyday. Women often take on the load of housework and childcare all on their own while men focus on working, but in the majority of homes nowadays women are working as well in order to maintain their financial stability. According to Tesni Jones Edwards, in "Is Paying 50/50 Doing What We Think It Is for Feminism? An Opinion Piece." in *Neighbourhood Magazine*, "More women are working than ever with over 72% being employed in the UK compared to just over 78% of men and yet women still do most of the domestic duties. In a study conducted by University College London (2019), it was found that in 93% of heterosexual households, women are the main contributors in duties such as chores and childcare." So if women are taking care of the children, cleaning and cooking, and working while men are just working and not helping them with these communal tasks, then they should be getting compensation for it, no? Sadly this is just the reality of many women, who are then also expected to go out with men and spend even more money after working hard for just a portion of what they deserve.

Unpaid labor is defined as "time spent doing routine housework, shopping for necessary household goods, child care, tending to the elderly and other household or non-household

members, and other unpaid activities related to household maintenance,” Ghodsee, a professor of Russian and East European Studies at the University of Pennsylvania and the author of other Arguments for Economic Independence, wrote in “Women’s Unpaid Labor Is Worth \$10,900,000,000,000.” In the text she writes, “On Oct. 24, 1975, 90 percent of Icelandic women refused to cook, clean or look after children for a day. It brought the whole nation to a standstill. Men across the country scrambled to fill in, taking their children to work and overwhelming restaurants.” After calculating how much women would have made if their work was paid and accounted for, being paid minimum wage, they came up with \$10.9 trillion. This is the amount of money women are not being paid and this is how much is truly being lost everyday that their labor goes without pay. It's very sad to see how much time and effort is being put in and how much is being lost and getting no sympathy from others, to still be expected to go 50/50 when your time is not valued by the world.

Women’s unpaid labor doesn't only affect their pockets but it affects their mental health and wellbeing too. Women often experience high levels of stress and depression that men do not due to how much work women are taking on. In “Women’s Wellbeing and the Burden of Unpaid Work,” Seedat Soraya, Chair of the South African Research in Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder and director of the South African Medical Research Council of Brain Disorders at Stellenbosch University, and Marta Rondon, a psychiatrist with a master’s degree on policy and services for mental health, explain that “the cognitive and emotional involvement and the lack of respite (eg, time for leisure, communication with partners or friends, and self-care) from unpaid work can eventually lead to physical and emotional distress, depression, and anxiety.” They found that many of these difficulties and mental tolls only affected women as they often worked longer hours and took on a bigger load of work than men did. They also found that “providing long term

or high intensity care for a sick or elderly relative has been associated with an excess of psychiatric morbidity in women (eg, depression, anxiety, and lower life satisfaction).” women make up about half of the population and when you think about how much work they are doing and how much trouble they are going through while working, it is a lot of money that is being lost and a lot of health risks that women are taking on.



Many people such as myself grew up in households where the women and the man go 50/50 and you watch how the women in your family work themselves to death while the men just work, come home, eat, and sleep. I've watched my mother work almost the same amount of hours as my father, take care of three kids including me, cook and clean, and still manage to have some sort of time and space to be present and be attentive to us while my father worked maybe 3 more hours than her, came home and slept, woke up to a hot meal, spent some time relaxing, went to bed and did the exact same thing the next day. I used to believe that 50/50 was feminism and that it truly meant equality. Going 50/50 is presented to women as empowering and as a sign that you have your own money and you don't need a man and that you're equal, but it's the

patriarchy disguised as feminism. It shouldn't be normalized for women to have to put in extra effort to get to the same spots as men, and you shouldn't feel empowered by paying for half because it truly is so unfair for women to be seen as less men and on top of that be expected to pay the same amount as them. And it's sad that many women have been brainwashed to believe that them working harder than men in order to be taken seriously is something to be proud of or something to aim for, it's the society we live in and it's what we have to do to reach to the same spot but its not something that should be glorified.

If the argument for going 50/50 with men is that men and women are equal so we should pay equally, then that argument is immediately invalid, how are we supposed to act like equals in a society that does not see us as equals? How is it fair for women to be treated as less and be given the bigger end of the workload and still be expected to spend the same amount of money as men do when they're doing half the work that women are doing. If men want women to start going 50/50 with them, then men have to start treating women as equals and start putting in the same amount of work women have been putting in throughout history.

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