

02 FIELD GUIDE / MENTAL LOAD

The One-Page Version

Many couples argue about the mental load as though it were about chores, but for the person carrying it, the deeper pain is often feeling alone with the tracking: noticing the form is due and remembering the appointment. Imagine a computer with a hundred tabs open: nothing on the screen looks dramatic, yet the whole machine runs hot, and from the outside the heat is all a partner can see. Because those tabs cannot be seen, a kind offer such as “just tell me what you need” can leave the carrying partner feeling even lonelier. The offer still asks one person to notice what is needed, decide what to ask for, and remember to ask. Naming the load usually carries a bid for partnership underneath it, and walking a partner through one ordinary day is often easier to hear than a list of everything.

Three ways the conversation can begin:

- 01 “Can I show you one day instead of listing everything?
Pick any day this week, and I’ll walk you through
what had to be in my head for it to go smoothly.”
- 02 “If I have to tell you each time, I’m still the one keeping the
list. What would help is if one piece left my head completely.”
- 03 From the other partner: “What’s living in your head that I
haven’t been seeing? Is there a tab I can take off completely?”

This page is the short version of *The Mental Load Conversation Guide*. The full Field Guide adds every script, the worksheet and a cheat sheet for the fridge.

couples-conversations.com/fg-mental-load

One important note: This program is not in place of therapy or clinical treatment or diagnosis, but for education. Many relationships struggle with various issues; this is normal. However, they should always feel safe. If there are any mental health concerns, or concerns for safety, or if the relationship feels dangerous in any way, please seek professional support rather than continuing in this program. When in doubt, it is best to consult with a proper therapist.