

# Why Being a Stay-at-Home Mom Is a Luxury... for My Spouse

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The other day, I read [an article](#) in the *Washington Post* about a stay-at-home mother who was having a rather hard time adjusting to answering the ever-popular question, "*What do you do all day?*" now that the kids were at school.

It's a topic that has been on my mind lately as I watch in bewilderment as my children seem to insist on growing up at rates that surely I did not approve of when I signed my parental contract. I look at my youngest—my seven-week-old baby girl—and I swear my mind is already flashing to the day (tomorrow, probably) that I will be kissing her good-bye on her first morning of kindergarten.

But back to the task at hand. As I read the article, I scrolled through the comments, anticipating that there would be some doozies in a post about a stay-at-home mom basically proclaiming that she doesn't feel guilty for doing absolutely nothing all day when I came across this truly remarkable comment:

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*"I work full time, and my husband is a stay-at-home dad. We have two kids in school full day (8 a.m. to 3 p.m.). Don't you realize how much easier it is to hold a full-time job when you have*

*someone home with the kids? I can work late and travel when I need to and not worry about the kids. Our weekends are spent relaxing, instead of racing around to get errands and chores done. I can go back to work on Mondays having actually recharged over the weekend. **It feels like such a luxury to ME to have a stay-at-home spouse.***

I was flabbergasted.

Dumbfounded.

Perplexed that in all of my years as a stay-at-home/write-at-home mom, I've always been fighting the thoughts that I'm not *doing* enough or *being* enough. I've always felt I honestly owed the world some sort of explanation for being at home. That I've had to throw around the fact that since I stay at home we make sacrifices as a family—like not having cable! I've felt I had to bake pies so that the world would know I'm not a worthless member of society. And in the midst of all that mental clutter and guilt it had never, ever crossed my mind that staying at home wasn't "just" a luxury to me...

### **But also a luxury for my husband.**

And suddenly, when I read those words, it all made sense. Well, of course, it would be a luxury to the spouse who works out of the home to have a partner who stays at home with the children. Someone who is always there to take care of the inevitable days of sickness, arrange the doctor's appointments, make sure the cupboards are stocked, and heck, to ensure that no one steals the FedEx package off of the porch. And then—goodness!—to have someone to save you the worry of sending your kids into the world, someone to always be there to kiss a scraped knee, and take care of the potty training, and maybe even have a hot meal waiting for you when you come home?

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*Imagine that.*

I realized, in a rush of amazement, that I had spent all of our marriage feeling just a tad bit guilty for being the one who "gets" to stay home. I've pushed away the shame of staying snuggled up in my warm covers in the morning while my husband trudged off to work in the snow and I've felt the absurd need to pack a million and ten activities into my day, so I could list them off to my husband when he came home in an attempt to convince (who really? Mostly myself...) that I was "productive."

I realized, for the first time ever, that I didn't have anything to prove. That I had been working so hard to work from home, and always have it spotless, and do all my educational activities with the kids because it was my job, and I'd better darn do a good job of it if my husband had to work, that I never stopped to consider that my being home with our children could actually be a *gift* to my husband.

I'm actually writing this very article on a rare morning "off," courtesy of my husband having the day off of his work. I'm sitting in a café, writing for the two hours between my daughter's feedings. And, in fact, I just now called my husband, who had volunteered to be *me* for the day so I could work, to ask him what his thoughts were on the topic and to ask if he would give me a quote to include for the piece.

In the background, I heard my daughter crying, the two-year-old whining at his leg, and the four-year-old singing happily at the top of her lungs, having just returned home from preschool pick-up. I pictured the scene I had left this morning—four loads of laundry left undone from the weekend, the house a complete disaster, eggs still caked on the pan from breakfast. Sweetly, I asked him for a quote—did he ever consider me staying home a gift to him?

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"What?!" he asked frantically, desperation creeping into his voice. "I don't know, do I have to give you a quote right now? I mean, she's crying and I'm trying to make mac and cheese and if I could just pick her up maybe she'd stop crying and..." he trailed off, seemingly too overwhelmed to finish his train of thought.

I smiled—a bit too smugly, I'll admit. Because I think I had my answer. Being *me* for the day isn't so easy. And having him there so that I could be elsewhere working... well, it really was a luxury. And a gift.

*This story originally appeared on [Babble.com](#), courtesy of Chaunie Brusie from [Tiny Blue Lines](#).*

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