

Your Possible Home

Building Meaningful, Enduring Family Bonds in the Age of AI



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Deciding Once

There are always more good things than there is life to put them in, and without a structure for saying no, every one becomes a negotiation that wears you down — not because the decision is hard, but because you're having it over and over. Guardrails are rules you design once, when you have the energy to think clearly, so they can work when you don't. Mark and I looked at a genuinely worthy ten-hour-a-week opportunity and knew in one glance, because the rule already existed. This worksheet writes yours.

Part One — *find the repeating decision.* The requests that keep coming back in our house (activities, volunteer asks, invitations, classes, causes): _____

The category that costs us the most repeated deliberation: _____

Part Two — *from feelings to conditions.* Feelings change depending on who's tired and who asked; conditions don't. What actually determines the right answer in this category — evenings already committed, whether family dinners are surviving, how stretched the household energy is: _____

Part Three — *write the if/then rules.* Three to start, in language plain enough to apply when you're exhausted and someone is waiting:

If _____, then we _____.

If _____, then _____.

If _____, then _____.



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The test: could either spouse apply these rules and reach the same answer? _____

If no, the conditions aren't specific enough yet — tighten and rewrite.

Part Four — *make it visible*. A guardrail that lives only in your memory is a good intention. Where the written version goes (shared note, page on the fridge): _____

partners have seen and agreed: _____

Part Five — *run the live one*. The request currently on the table: _____

The prompt: *Here are our current commitments this week. Here's the new request. Here are our guardrail rules. Which condition applies?*

The answer the rules gave: _____

And the relief worth noticing: not a closed door — a calm answer. If we're still debating this same category in a month, the guardrail needs tightening, and that's maintenance, not failure.

