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# How to Create a Harmonious Living Space

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*Living with others, whether they be family or not, can present a double-edged sword. While you may enjoy the fact that there's never a dull moment and always someone to talk to or keep you company available in the household, living with others (your spouse, children, or roommates) can be frustrating and even annoying at certain particular moments. But we have some good, basic and sometimes surprising advice on how to create a happy and harmonious living space...*

Whether you're a roommate, or a newlywed couple "newly" living together, you may find that adjusting to sharing your space is not that easy. Regardless of how much you think you're open to change, most people succumb to a sort of "It's my way or the highway" mentality when it comes to "home sweet home." But in order to succeed in any living environment, you must be willing to adapt and compromise to your circumstances.

### **Communication**

For any kind of shared living space relationship to work, the lines of communication must be open. Whomever you're living with, you should feel comfortable enough to verbalize your needs and wants for your living situation. Too often, when one person is unhappy for a specific reason (*the other doesn't clean, had guests over way too late the night before, etc.*), and they don't verbalize their grievances, they end up bitter and sulking, but with no solution in sight.

Inevitably, their bad attitude will be noticed by the other, further dividing any hopes for conflict resolution and perpetuating an unhappy cycle.



Once you first move in with another person, a good way to make sure that the lines of communication will always be open is to make sure they're open right in the beginning. Raise any concerns you may have, but also show your enthusiasm to let them know that you want to make it work.

If you have a valid complaint about a bad habit or inconsiderate behavior, keep in mind that there's a right and a wrong way to approach the situation. Nobody wants to be "told" what to do, especially not when there is excessive finger-pointing.

Approach them with a positive attitude and a smile, and politely, but honestly, let them know how you're feeling. Don't be on the attack and make sure to only address their behavior, not what you don't like about them personally.

### **Compromise**

There's no one "right" way to share a living space – it all depends on the type of people who live there and the environment they want to live in. Here exactly lies the problem. People are different; they grow up different, have age differences, or are just used to having their living space their way. So can you really teach an old dog new tricks? Of course! There just has to be willingness on both people's part and willingness to pull your own weight.

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Habits, like your husband always losing the remote control or your son leaving a trail of socks and shoes behind when he comes home from basketball practice, can be endearing because these are people you love, but after awhile these habits are bound to become annoying. Bad habits can be tweaked and altered with just a little consideration and compromise. Don't forget to examine your own habits, and whether or not you would consider them annoying if whomever you live with exhibited them.

Keep this in mind – you don't have a right to your annoying or bad habits if they don't add to the harmony of the household. Compromise!

#### Roommates

One way to be a good roommate is to pick someone who is compatible to live with. If you like them on a social level, you'll be more inclined to please them with good roommate habits.

But how can you tell if a potential roommate will be true to their word that he or she will be clean, respectful, quiet, or even sane, if you found them on an online ad?

Unless you do some sort of a trial run, you can't be for sure. Tell your roommate which habits of yours would most likely annoy them, and then let them know that if it becomes a problem, you have no problem with them saying so. For example, are you noisy in the mornings or do you like to have loud music on 24-7? Giving your roommate the upper hand in the situation shows respect, consideration and a willingness to compromise right off the bat.

If you feel there's a problem in the making, don't wait until it reaches boiling point. Get it out in the open. Know your rights, such as the right to privacy, respect for your belongings, having people over, and the right to quiet time.

If you borrow something or break something, replace those items in a timely fashion. These are just a few good roommate guidelines, but the bottom line is to be considerate of your roommate and their lifestyle.

No living situation is perfect. But those communal living spaces that are happy and harmonious probably follow this basic, but beneficial, living advice.

