



The MYTH of Having It All TOGETHER

BY ANGELA RANTASHA OF ALEXANDRIA

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Outsourcing isn't just for the wealthy... it's for the overwhelmed.

I have a list constantly running in my head taking up all my bandwidth... like a sluggish computer. It's THE list. Girls, you know the one: What needs to be done. What I forgot to do (I'm not sure what's on this one). What I need to remind someone else to do. What's coming up next week. What's running low. What no one else even realizes needs attention. That's the mental load... and it's exhausting.

I'm not a therapist or mental health professional. I don't have research to cite. I just know my brain is full. Like... really full. Sometimes it even kind of hurts. Not in a dramatic way, but just this constant pressure, like there's no more room left to think. It wasn't always like this. Over two decades ago, when I got married (hard for me to believe also), life felt lighter. My brain felt quieter. There was space. It's definitely not because I've gone back to school and filled it with knowledge, that's for sure. It's something else. It's the weight of carrying the mental load... not just at home, but at work, too. It's managing people. Anticipating needs. Keeping track of things no one else is tracking. Making sure everything runs smoothly, even when no one else notices.

And I know it's not just me.

I was watching a viral clip from the show *Indebted* of a wife trying to explain this to her husband. She was talking about something as simple as toothpaste.

Not buying toothpaste. Remembering to buy toothpaste.

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 Her husband knew where the store is. He's capable. But his response was, "Just tell me where to go and what to buy."

And *that's* the point.

Because now she's not just responsible for the toothpaste. She's responsible for thinking about it, noticing it's low, remembering to say something, and then giving instructions. That's not help. That's adding to the load. What was one task now becomes four. Who has space for that?

And it makes you stop and ask: Why has this become so much for women to carry? Because it didn't always look like this. Dual-income households didn't even become the norm until the late 1970s. In the grand scheme of things, this shift is still relatively new. And while women working full time and raising a family changed everything financially, professionally, and socially, it didn't fully change the expectations at home. So now, many women are doing it all. Carrying the mental load of a household while also carrying responsibility at work. Managing people in both places. Keeping everything moving forward in ways that often go unseen. And somewhere in the middle of all that, *we're supposed to keep it together*.

Girls, we are expected to have it all together. The job. The house. The kids. All of it. And somehow, we're supposed to make it look effortless. The reality? My house is the messiest it's been in years... and that's hard for me to even say out loud, because I'm the type of person who likes having a clean home. I am the Queen of Clean. I love cleaning. I'm passionate about it. Laundry. Gardening. Keeping things in order. That used to be part of who I was. But now? I don't have time and things pile up. And it's not just the house... it's everything.

Once I gave up the facade of having it all together, something shifted. I kept the chores I didn't mind and outsourced the ones that drained me. Weeding my garden. Cleaning my house. Because the truth is, I would rather work four extra hours than do those things myself. They drain the life out of me. Work doesn't... at least not in the same way.

Outsourcing isn't about luxury. It's about buying back your time and your brain space – and it doesn't have to be expensive. That's where people get stuck. They picture something unrealistic, but it can be small. Grocery pickup instead of wandering the store trying to remember everything. Auto-ship on the things you always run out of. A laundry drop-off when you're behind. Swapping meals or babysitting with a friend. It doesn't have to be everything. It just has to be something. Because the biggest benefit isn't just time – it's what happens in your head. When you remove even a few of those running thoughts, you create space.

And that space matters.

I'm going to give you a little homework, because clearly you don't have enough on your plate already... and you're welcome.

Pick two things. Two chores that cause you the most stress.

The ones you avoid. The ones that sit in the back of your mind. The ones that drain you before you even start them. Now here's the assignment:

Find a way to not do them.

Trade with a friend.

Bribe someone.

Hire it out if you can.

Just don't do it yourself this time. Do it once. That's it. One time. And then pay attention. See if your brain gets a little quieter. If your mood shifts. If you feel just a tiny bit lighter. Because the goal isn't to have it all together – the goal is to stop carrying it all alone. *DW*

Angela Rantasha is the owner of Sota Cleaning Co. in downtown Alexandria. When she's not with her team, you can find her on the patio drinking wine with her friends, paddle boarding Lake Darling, or camping at one of Minnesota's beautiful state parks.

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