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WELCOME HOME

A COMMUNITYLIVING
31-DAY HOUSE MEMBER COMPOSITE



TRUSTED SHARINGS TO MAKE THE HOUSE OF YOUR
DAYDREAMS FROM THOSE THAT HAVE

Discover the profound significance of 'household'—a term often overlooked yet harboring the social need we all crave. It embodies the fabric of 'who' composes your home and 'how' the shared spaces are governed by rules, traditions, and norms.

Amidst a societal landscape where the conventional household model no longer fits the mold for many, an immense void has surfaced, leading to a residential revolution. This transformation has birthed a plethora of non-traditional households. To the newby, navigating these unconventional living arrangements can present challenges. Some seek guidance to fully embrace and benefit from their atypical household, while many do not and miss out.

Like their traditional counterparts, healthy non-traditional households flourish by embracing quality members and removing bad actors. If you're in a non-traditional household and sense that guidance might help, you're in the right place.

Households, like communities or tribes, thrive by sharing stories and experiences that uplift, encourage, and guide one another. This book is a collection of these invaluable narratives, offering insights and wisdom from those who have traversed similar paths before you. May these daily readings prove of great benefit to you!



Meet Grant Shipman, the Coliving Guy, a passionate advocate for transformative change. In his engaging narratives, Grant delves into the world of coliving, exploring its potential to shape a brighter future. His writing resonates with a mission: ending loneliness, providing households for the householdless, and solving the pressing housing crisis. Grant is not just an editor; he is a

visionary dedicated to reducing environmental impact, making substantial changes in housing dynamics, and ensuring renters and investors get more for less. His work isn't just about words; it's about saving lives through innovative coliving solutions. When Grant isn't crafting impactful stories, he cherishes moments with family and friends, indulges in travel adventures, and finds solace in the pages of a good book. Join Grant on his journey as he uncovers the power of coliving and transforms lives, one story at a time.

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The House Of Your Daydreams From Those That Have

Each Daily Sharing Written By
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Introduction

If you're new to the house, Welcome Home! We're glad you're here. All households, tribes, and communities throughout time have shared stories of encouragement that are passed on, and these are some of ours. Each of the following 31 days is from a CommunityLiving Home member like you. Make sure to read a day at a time until you are done, and plan to be done about this time next month. Also, you get more out of these short daily readings if you answer the Questions To Ponder. Each of us was new once, like you, and it takes a bit to learn all the ropes. We encourage you to offer suggestions on how to improve the household—we need fresh viewpoints! But first, give yourself a couple months to settle in and learn the ropes. We'll be patient and helpful as you integrate into the home, so we hope you are patient with yourself and don't hesitate to ask us for help.

~

Over the last few decades, the term "household" has fallen out of usage and become antiquated. Let me geek out for a moment. Household is the group connection and culture between the people who live together. Snoozer right?! Except it's not. Every scientific study that hits on it indicates this group connection and culture (aka "household") as part of the very bedrock of our psyches, self-esteem, chances of success, and odds of happiness. Traditional concepts of a household, like a married couple with 2.3 kids, no longer fit all that well. That meant many of us felt like we might "no longer fit that well." End of the geek-out moment. The important thing to know is that the former concept of household was antiquated, and new concepts of household have risen up to fit us. CommunityLiving is a powerful one that fits me well—that I fit well. It's a group connection and culture that I have with the other members of my house—where each of us pursues our own goals and dreams, where we have the flexibility to live for years or only months, where we are appreciated and respected whether we're home a lot or a little, where we can share our good and bad days, where responsibilities are healthily shared, and a lot of other things. Being part of this household has provided me with a new, deep level of personal confidence that has brought ripples of success into my life.

~Anonymous Founder

Vision Statement

To be a home for all people that
cultivates a household of
peace, privacy, security, community,
individuality, quality, and sustainability;
to provide a standard and spaciousness of living at
significantly lower costs
to ourselves and the environment;
a place to call home for months or decades!

Day #1

Super Power

*"You can learn more about a person in an hour of play than from a lifetime of conversation."
~Plato*

I didn't know it until now, but I have a superpower. I honestly had no idea, but after 4 years of being part of a CommunityLiving Home, I now have this huge respect and appreciation for this power I wield so effortlessly. A power that, as my housemates tell me, has helped them in big ways. Each Sunday evening for weeks, a bunch of us in the house looked forward to watching HBO's "Game of Thrones." People would bring snacks to share, and co-workers, friends, and dates would come too. Watching the show was way more fun with others, and the commercial breaks were often hilarious. A couple people had been to Ireland, where the show was shot, and Amanda in the house had read the books. During it and after the season, my housemates were always like, "Dave, you're a genius for making this happen." To me, it was nothing. I set up my projector in the living room with a sheet on the wall and emailed the house with an invitation. That's it.

I call this superpower "Social Chair." I used this power to create: "Salsa Night," where we carpooled to this short dance class that was followed by a social dance every other week; "First Fridays," where we walked to a monthly little fair downtown on the first Friday of each month; there's not a name for it, but the first Tuesday evening of each month we BYOB'd & shot the shit at home; "Tube Day," a day trip to the river to tube on the Guadalupe River; and "Lecture Fun," where I emailed the house about an interesting free lecture coming up at the nearby college. When did I start all this? When I first moved into the house, Charlie, an extroverted house member, was always setting up cool stuff that I loved joining. When he moved out to get married, there was nothing going on. I missed this social aspect of the house but didn't think I was the person to initiate it. Then I got over it and just started doing things and emailing the house an invitation about it. Like all house invites, there's no pressure for people to go, so some joined and some didn't. Today, after 3 years of using this superpower, I'm grateful for Charlie's example, my initiative, and my housemates for joining in!

***Is there someone with social chair powers in your house?
What would it look like for you to try it once?***

Day #2

Adding House Magic

“The single biggest problem in communication is the illusion that it has taken place.”

~George Bernard Shaw

I kind of felt connected to my housemates. Honestly, that’s a lie. I didn’t feel connected at all. I felt like we were a boarding house rather than this so-called “CommunityLiving House” with all this rah-rah about households, etc. I just didn’t see anyone I lived with. Ever. One night, when it was pretty late, I started a private Facebook group for the house and sent an invite to the house email list. When I woke up the next day bright and early....errrh, I mean 3 p.m. (I tend to sleep in, which is why my heart delights in the room with no windows). Anyway, I looked at the Facebook Group I had made, and people had posted all kinds of cool stuff. Posts like, “Why didn’t we do this sooner?!” and “I thought of this but never actually did it. Thanks, Jeremy!” Plus, using the Facebook Group, members of the house had already made a plan to do board games that night in the living room. Most in the house had already joined the group, and Amy in the house actually made a Facebook profile just to join the group. Literally overnight, my house became the interactive house I wanted. A few months later, someone had the idea to make a group text for the house but didn’t know how to do it. I did, so I offered to set it up. Now it’s used just as much as the Facebook group, I think. That’s the story of how I became the unofficial communications chair for the house.

Are you happy with the current communication avenues for the house?

Do you see improvements that could be made?

Day #3

Introvert

*"I restore myself when I'm alone."
~Marilyn Monroe*

When I first heard of CommunityLiving, I thought it would be a bunch of extreme extroverts running around always in each other's faces, or at the very least some respectful people that are often bumping shoulders in the kitchen or in and out of the bathroom. I was quite surprised when Claire, a housemate, mentioned her extreme introversion. I asked her if she felt like an outsider living with a bunch of extroverts. Claire just laughed and said that about half the people in the house are introverts. Seeing my confused expression, she said, "Listen, what do we introverts know? We know that social lives are important to our psychological health; we don't want to work too hard for social lives, and we want to be able to easily retreat. CommunityLiving Homes are PERFECT for us." Claire realized it still wasn't clicking for me. "Look," she said. "I have a room all to myself, and for a social life, all I have to do is knock on anyone's door, email the house, or shoot a text to our house group text. Also, if I'm feeling a bit drained, I just head back to my room." I, more of an introvert/extrovert mix, have lived by Claire's words along with the following "words of wisdom" she called them: 1) If I am in a common area and don't want to interact with others, then I just put in earbuds or tell a chatty housemate that I don't feel like talking right now; 2) Ask your housemates about their preferred talking habits and share yours with them. My housemates know I love talking in the evening. I know Natty doesn't want anyone to acknowledge her existence in the morning until she says "hello." 3) Consider it an honor to know and be known at this level with the house.

List your own preferred talking habits and share them with at least one person in the house.

Keep an eye on your own talking habits and notice how they change over time.

Day #4

Loud Sex

“Good sex is like good bridge. If you don't have a good partner, you'd better have a good hand.”

~Mae West

I like having my girlfriend visit, so I have learned some tricks along the way. Music: if we're going to be sexual in my room, then I often turn on some music as white noise as a favor to those I share a wall with. It's also great for the mood. After my Saturday afternoon reading was interrupted by moaning through the wall, I had to ask Laura down the hall to do the same. How did she respond? She responded awesomely with three key points I make sure to keep in mind: #1) She thanked me for talking directly to her; #2) She thanked me for being kind in how I brought it up; and #3) She thanked me for the white noise idea. Also, I am a super light sleeper in general, so I have a white noise app on my phone that I use when I sleep to drown out any house noises. What about really loud sex? I had a noteworthy conversation with my housemates one time about this. One said, “I look at it like I look at drinking alcohol. I like to have a drink in my room, but sometimes I want to do some loud drinking. Loud drinking I keep out of the house at hotels or something, same as when I want to have loud sex.”

Is there anyone in the house with whom I have been quietly bitter with because of this topic?

Could anyone in the house be frustrated with me on this topic?

Why not go ask them if the noise from my room has ever bothered them?

Day #5

What's Your Default?

"Knowing yourself is the beginning of all wisdom."

-Aristotle

This house has been my home for over 10 years. I think I've earned two to three doctorate degrees in human psychology because of it. Those "degrees" have given me the skills to open doors with my work and personal life. So here's a big thing to know. Everyone has a default: inhibited or pushy. The inhibited often rip themselves off because they will watch a movie on their tiny phone in their room because they don't want to "bother" someone by watching it on the TV in the living room. The only person they are bothering is themselves. This is your home; enjoy it! The pushy rip others off because they will act like it's their home only. They'll move their surround sound into the living room or take up the driveway for four days with a car repair. They won't ask, act aloof, and think it's 100% others' responsibility to express their concern rather than asking permission ahead of time. For a household like ours, in the long run, both are equally problematic. Remember, everyone defaults naturally into one of these categories. The easy solution is to ask—ask ahead of time or ask right after—if it's okay with what you did or are doing. If you consider it 100% your job to ask directly and 100% your job to express concern, then you are 200% covered. I've been lucky to live in this home and learn these lessons.

Which category is my default? Inhibited or Pushy?

Have I always been in this category?

If I tend to be an extreme version of one of these, I can ask a trustworthy housemate to be my "coach" in this department until I feel good about it.

Day #6

Loud Talker or Walker

*“But I have learned in the last year, more than ever before
that sometimes we have to be loud.”*

~Atia Abawi

So some of us, like it or not, are loud talkers and walkers. We can wish all we want that we were not or that others would not care, but, as a loud talker and walker, I can tell you that wishing plus \$5 will get you a cup of coffee at Starbucks. My housemates gently made me aware of my loudness, and I wasn't going to be an ass and pretend it wasn't a big deal. The loud walking was easy; I just made sure to take my shoes off right when I entered the house and carry them to the door when I would leave. Even me trying, with my shoes on, to walk like a ninja in a quiet contest was too loud. For me, shoes off equals happy housemates. Loud talking is a team solution. I try to remember to use my “inside voice” (haha), and others know that I never mind them asking me to talk a bit softer.

I will ask at least one house member if they think I talk or walk loudly?

When am I the most loud? And what is a creative way to be less loud?

Is it uncomfortable for me to bring up to someone that they talk or walk loudly?

If yes, why?

Day #7

How Clean Am I?

“There's something wrong with a mother who washes out a measuring cup with soap and water after she's only measured water in it.”

~Erma Bombeck

I used to think I knew how to answer this question: “Very clean.” I would have righteous anger, sometimes expressed and sometimes only silently embraced, for others in the house that fell below my judgments on cleanliness. People didn’t need to be as clean as me, but they needed to be clean enough! I say this a bit tongue-in-cheek now. Tim moved into the house, and I got a lesson in perspective. Tim would talk to me at times about cleaning stuff I had never thought of before. He said I wiped down the counters well, but I didn’t rinse out the sponge when I was done or clean the sink I had just used. Tim even boiled water to pour into the sink to sanitize it on occasion. I had never heard of that. Sometimes Tim left his socks in the living room. He pointed out that I’d marked my sweep and mop chore done but hadn’t swept and mopped under the fridge. Tim asked why I left the bathroom soap dispenser out of place after I was done in the bathroom. The point wasn’t whether Tim’s way of cleaning was better than mine or not. The point was that I was getting some of my own medicine, and I didn’t like it. Tim would confront me at times, give me looks, or just put out a vibe about something I didn’t keep clean enough for him. I always saw his point, and I had no good response. It seemed logical to clean the kitchen sink, just as I thought it was smart to wipe the kitchen counters. It just wasn’t a habit of mine or something I had thought of. When I realized this, Tim and I had a good discussion. We realized we could become the clean team and bitch about everyone else while patting ourselves on the back, but we decided against it. We both asked for patience from one another and to help each other encourage cleanliness in the house in a healthy, non-shaming way.

Who is cleaner than me in the house, and who is less clean?

What cleaning habits did I inherit from my parents, and what cleaning habits have I gained elsewhere?

How can I encourage change in my housemates and be open to them encouraging change in me without being a conformity-Nazi? (whether it's cleaning or another domestic metric)

Day #8

She Left That Out Again!

“Toss your hair in a bun, drink some coffee, put on some gangsta rap, and handle it” ~?

As an engineer, I think in bullet points rather than paragraphs, so here's a list of items to help you with this topic and some questions at the end.

- If you regularly leave your personal items in the common areas, take ownership of your actions and keep trying strategies until one works.
- If someone leaves an item in the common area and you know who it is, then put it in a plastic grocery bag and hang it on their door knob.
- If you're frustrated that others are leaving stuff in the common areas and you've never brought it up, then your frustration is mostly your fault, which means you have the power to mostly fix your frustration. Bring it up as a matter of fact, without emotion or judgment.
- Remember that if you leave something in the common area and it gets lost or broken, then the lease says there's no recourse.
- We can treat our rooms as we like, but let's keep our common areas tidy and clean.

Do you leave socks in the living room or plates in the sink?

Try a rubber band around your wrist that reminds you to check the common areas before going to bed or leaving the house.

Maybe you don't leave items in the common area, but you leave the back doors unlocked or the stove on after using it. If so, get creative with strategies and try one.

Day #9

Keeping the A's Together

"We all make bad decisions or find ourselves in error. But it's how we own up to our mistakes that makes all the difference." ~Scott Belsky

Growing up in a religious home, I was good at saying I'm sorry. Actually, it was very easy for me to apologize. Making amends was a foreign concept to me. It seemed like doing penance or something freaky. After 7 years in a CommunityLiving home, I can tell you that "keeping the A's together," which is what I call keeping my apology always paired with an amend if possible, is the way to go. First, I needed to learn that an apology and an amend were different. An apology is a written or spoken statement saying I'm sorry. An amend is an action or change-in-action to make something right. Sometimes an amend is simply telling the person you won't do it again and sticking to it. Being selfish, rude, foolish, or haphazard in CommunityLiving is not an IF but a WHEN. You will offend and be offended, but learning each "A" and keeping the A's together will turn these offenses into stronger and better relationships. For me, I use a 5-part formula: 1) I'm sorry for (be specific); 2) It was totally my fault; 3) If I could do it again, I would have (be specific); 4) Is there anything I can do to make it right? / I did _____ to make it up to you / I'll make sure to do better in the future; 5) Will you forgive me? Sometimes I leave off the 5th step, depending.

What parts of this 5-part formula have I used in the past?

What is harder for me: expressing or receiving an apology?

Is there anything in the recent or distant past that I could apologize for today or make amends for? Will I do it?

Day #10

A Forgotten Treasure: Neighbors

“A bad neighbor is a misfortune, as much as a good one is a great blessing.”

~Hesiod

We have neighbors that we treasure and neighbors that we treasure at the thought of them ceasing to exist. Our house has learned that good neighbors can add a lot to our lives (like great conversations on porches and surprise baked goods), and bad neighbors can make life super, super shitty. Bad neighbors, aka neighbors you piss off because you parked on their curb, threw cigarette butts on the street, mowed the lawn at 9:30 p.m., let your friend park in front of their house, drive fast through the street, leave your trash cans on the curb for 3 days each week, always have the music cranked in your car with the window open, or whatever other inconsiderate action. We had one neighbor continually report us for bunk noise complaints. The cops were required to respond to the complaint, and it was quite the pain. Months later, a housemate delivered cookies to this neighbor and found out they were upset because Abby, a former house member, had parked her oil-leaking car on their curb repeatedly, and their dog would roll in the oil. I would be pissed too. Anyway, the house pitched in and got the neighbor a gift certificate to a nice restaurant in town with an apology note. The result: no more noise complaints. Rather than managing bad neighbors, we've decided to please all our neighbors and have fun with it! We occasionally make a bunch of cookies, put them in bags with a handwritten card, and deliver them to each neighbor to say thanks for being neighbors. This gained us some treasured neighbors in the process. Plus, we had fun. Ideas some of my housemates have done include raking the leaves and shoveling the driveway for neighbors, blowing out neighbors' sprinkler systems before winter, and offering to help carry heavy stuff or babysit.

Am I or other house members creating “bad neighbors?”

If so, how can I play a part in stopping this?

What are some creative ways I could serve my neighbors?

What would it feel like to do that?

Day #11

Home Is Where You Have Privacy

“Privacy - like eating and breathing - is one of life's basic requirements.”

~Katherine Neville

Some of us learned healthy boundaries growing up, and some of us did not have the opportunity. CommunityLiving provides people with the best classroom to learn boundaries that are better and more healthy than they knew before. A baseline boundary is respecting someone's privacy. In our house, everyone knows their room is their sacred space. No one enters someone's room unless invited on each occasion, and we are invited into each other's rooms all the time. The thing about being SURE you have privacy is that you don't have to work as hard to guard it. So, my boundary for myself is that I always ask before I enter someone's room, and I expect others to do the same for me—the same with food and personal items in storage, the laundry room, and the garage. Respecting my housemate's privacy has been easy by following the boundary I set for myself. Violating a housemate's privacy breaks trust, which takes quite a while to rebuild. My housemates have told me that because they know I respect their privacy, they have a very easy time being open with me compared to others in their lives. This is a really encouraging compliment for me.

Is anyone in the house making me feel infringed upon?

What would it be like to write them a letter, have a 5 on 5, or do something to share the way I would prefer them act?

Privacy is not just about a person or their things but also about their private information. Our leases reflect this by forbidding the sharing of basics like the number of people we live with, names, or ages of house members. Any of this information is handy for scammers. Do I make it a point to not share information about my housemates with others?

Day #12

Home Of My Daydreams

"Some people look for a beautiful place. Others make a place beautiful."

~Hazrat Inavat Khan

I want to pass on a \$10k secret to you. If you get it, internalize it, and act on it, then you and those you live with will have a better life. Complaining is cheap; it doesn't matter if we live in an actual castle on a beautiful Scottish sea bank; we (me, humans, everyone) will find something to bitch about if we want. Two things about bitching: 1. Bitching doesn't help; 2. Bitching turned upside down unlocks power. Bitching is about what we DON'T want. If we turn bitching upside down, we start to find what we DO want. You could find that you want the house to be more social; you want a firepit or rad garden; you want paper towels in the kitchen; you want the house to be cleaner or quieter; you want plants in the living room; the walls of your room or kitchen to be a different color; or you want a bigger TV. Here's your process: 1) Make a bitch and desire list; 2) Turn your bitching upside down and add it to your desire list; 3) Get specific—what would it look like exactly to have what you want? 4) Make a strategy: Since it's your house but not only your house, figure out who you need to run it by before making your move. Share your vision and strategy with maybe just yourself, maybe the house, maybe the Household Supporter; 5) Make your move! Here's the \$10k secret: you have resources to get most, if not all, of what you want; a deeper sense of pride and enjoyment of your home and housemates is available to you right now; and if you or we embrace this, then we'll have the home and house of our daydreams!

What would I come up with if I got specific about what I wanted with the house and household? With other areas of my life?

Do I want to make time to try the process outlined above? If yes, who in the house could support me through this process?

Day #13

Accumulated Wisdom

"I define wisdom as skill in living."

~Steve Larson

I've been asked to share briefly about my household. Households can be healthy or not healthy, and it has been my experience that everyone, including yours truly, first moved in with a certain concept of a household. Our concepts, each one unique, had gems, flaws, maturity, and immaturity. All our concepts had one thing in common: none of them fit a household composed of independent adults without an authority figure. This created a dilemma because it meant none of us knew how things should be when we first moved in—it was just an uncharted sea. Thankfully, the House, over the decades, had accumulated wisdom on how this type of household could be healthy and stay healthy. Interesting enough, it wasn't wisdom made of a bunch of "dos" and "don'ts." Bobette, who had been a part of the house the longest, defined "wisdom" as "skill in living." I liked that. So over the decades, skills have been developed and passed along to be used when helpful. The CommunityLiving Household Covenant is an example of this accumulated wisdom. On occasion, we have tweaked it, as it is a living document, but its sheer power to bring both security and liberty to a home has left the document word-for-word for the most part. I had to unlearn and apologize at times for bringing my own unhealthy concepts of household, and I've been thanked and encouraged by the healthy concepts of household I had that added to the accumulated wisdom of our household.

How would I describe the households I have been a part of?

What concepts within those households do I want to keep and leave behind?

Day #14

Home

“The ache for home lives in all of us—the safe place where we can go as we are and not be questioned.”

~Maya Angelou

When I first moved into the house, it was simply for functional life reasons. I needed a place to live that had to be such and such a price without a long lease commitment. The CommunityLiving idea was something I was cool with and even a bit interested in, but it was certainly not the reason I landed here. I thought about my past housemate experiences... One was good, but most were the reasons I preferred to live alone or be in charge. Today marks 5 years since I first moved in. It's strange because it is a lease, like I said, but the house is ours for all intensive purposes. I think it's not incorrect to say that me and the other house members own this place. We feel a great deal of ownership and pride in both the structure and the household. Even better, we don't have to worry about saving money or the logistics of replacing the roof, broken AC, or garage door opener. And WOW, is it grounding and psychologically powerful to know I have co-authored a household of mutual respect and appreciation! For someone like me who grew up in a broken home, this has provided a type of confidence and skill set I never knew before. I'm not sure how you look at it, but I can tell you I was surprised at how I came to the house for one set of reasons and have stayed for a whole different, larger set of reasons. I found more than what I was looking for. Maybe you will too!

What were the specific reasons I moved in?

What am I looking for in a house and home?

Day #15

What Did I Sign Up For?

"A wonderful gift may not be wrapped as you expect."

~Jonathan Lockwood Huie

"I didn't sign up for this sh*t?!" was the thought that went through every fiber of me while the paramedics brought Sarah restrained on a gurney out of her room. She had been sober for over a year when she joined the house. My other housemate, Jana, knocked on my door and came in with tears in her eyes. I told her, "I didn't sign up for sh*t like this!" She responded, "I love Sarah, but I don't want to come home to a dead body." Then she asked a question that surprised us both: "What did we sign up for?" This started a conversation that left me realizing I had signed up for... a LOT. I had signed up for living with others and all the things that come along with not living alone. Sheepishly, I realized that I had mostly thought of only the happy things about living with others. Life also included being laid off, friends with cancer, having mono for 6 months, Sarah relapsing, depression, life-controlling anxiety, quirks, angry ex-lovers showing up unannounced, car troubles or crashes, and death. Life certainly includes dying—for everyone, always—whether by suicide, an accident on the job, or going peacefully at night. Did I really want to be around others while they and I live our lives, which may include this stuff? And, if not, what were my alternatives? I could move out and live alone, but if I were going to live with others, whether blood relatives, strangers, or friends, it would necessarily include these darker things. My answer came to me as sure as ever: yes. Yes, I did want to live with others. Jana and I realized that day and over the following months that we wanted to live in a household for the good and mundane parts of life and we needed to live in a household for the darker, harder parts of life. I did sign up for this shit—the good shit (like inside jokes), the great shit (like when Jim got a bonus and gave each of us \$20 saying we were a big part of his work success), and the boring and dark shit.

What do I think of what CJ wrote above?

Without feeling compelled, do I know how to decide what level of support (0–5)

I want to give to a fellow house member experiencing a darker part of life?

Do I know how to provide support without becoming an unofficial nurse, therapist, or guardian?

Day #16

Abundance of Food Options

“One cannot think well, love well, sleep well, if one has not dined well.”

~Virginia Woolf

Something I have grown to love, which I haven't found anywhere else, is the options I have with food. I can totally do my own solo thing—grab my own groceries, make my own meals, and clean up. This I can do anywhere. However, in CommunityLiving, the options and combinations may have become infinite. Check out this list I, or my housemates, have done, and then I'm going to tell you the magic sauce at the end:

- A housemate sends an invitation to the house: “I have 4 spots for spaghetti dinner this Thursday at 7 p.m. RSVP by Wednesday for a spot.”
- Two housemates decide to make Tuesday dinner together for the next four weeks.
- Four housemates decide to share food staples and grocery shopping responsibilities.
- A housemate who has extra time is hired by a busy housemate to make her lunch to bring to work Monday through Thursday.
- Housemates share a meal together on the 1st Friday of each month, rotating dinner buying and cooking responsibilities, and all help clean up.
- A housemate who loves to cook but hates to clean occasionally cooks for a housemate who's great with cleaning, and both win.
- The whole house decides to share groceries. The grocery list hangs on the choreboard for anyone to add to it, and on rotation, 1-2 housemates shop each week. Each person buys their own meat and boxed or processed foods.

Secret Sauce: 1) each person being unafraid to propose suggestions and okay with being told “no thanks”; 2) trying the idea for a set amount of days and then regrouping on it.

What would I add to this list?

If I've been involved in food sharing in the past, did I like it? why/why-not?

Am I okay with saying “no” or discontinuing a food share once I no longer feel like it?

Day #17

How to Spell Love

“Clean it b/c you used it, deep clean it b/c you love it.”

~Anonymous

The way to spell love to your housemates is “C-L-E-A-N-I-N-G.” No one has the spiritual gift of cleaning. However, no matter how great myself or another housemate is in every way, if we don’t clean, we’re like a thorn in the heel of the house. By cleaning, I mean both cleaning up after myself and deep cleaning something on occasion. You-do-you and figure out whatever it takes to make cleaning happen. For me, a few strategies have worked. I make a deal with myself: “If I deep clean the inside of the garage by 9 p.m., then I get to lay down the cash for the new A&E Old Republic game.” I’ve set up a chorewheel trade in advance for the chore I know I will avoid: “Hey Jaci, I’ll do your Kapt Kitchen if you do Yard Ninja for me next week?” Also, I find that if I can team my cleaning with a podcast, audiobook, or piece of music I dig, that does wonders for my soul. I’ve also heard that in one house, a gal who had frustrated the house with her lack of cleaning decided to solve the problem by paying another house member to clean for her, and all became right in the world.

What do I feel about a house member who doesn’t pull their weight with chores?

What’s something in the house I might enjoy deep cleaning?

Day #18

You Do You

"Mind your own business!"

To the extent we each mind our own business and not another's, we can partner together with joy, closeness, and success. I could not tell you a more important thing than this right now—You-do-you! This is NOT a rally cry for isolationism, but the opposite. Most or all traditions of success espouse this You-do-you truth: leading activists like Nelson Mandela, top business executives like Elon Musk, top psychologists like Patrick Carnes, top marriage counselors, 12-Step Traditions, kindergarten teachers, and you name it. There was a time when I was trying to “help” others in the house by saying what I thought they wanted to hear, acting like I had a vote on how they lived their lives, believing that I knew better than them, and feeling like someday someone would help me as much as I helped others. My “help” was controlling at best and crippling at worst. Thankfully, the house was patient with me as I slowly grew in this matter. Through the process, I found I could truly be myself, trust myself and others more, and enjoy more. If someone asked me if I wanted to do something, I responded honestly. If someone shared their problem, I listened and asked questions rather than pontificate. People liked me more as I stopped trying to please them or improve them. I liked myself more.

Do I have a lot going on "backstage," like agendas for other people's lives or a complex formula to get others to act a certain way or view me a certain way?

Who do I take responsibility for that is neither me nor a dependent?

Visualize my life of "You-do-you." What does it look like? How does it make me feel?

Day #19

House Meetings?

“Some frustrating commitments are more than worth it.”

Our household, like many households, shares the commitment of a monthly house meeting over food—we call it “Family Dinner.” Some households go without this, and I understand why—frankly, it’s frustrating to miss some cool event or outing with friends or work because of Family Dinner. But I can tell you that this real frustration is really worth it. My household is worth it, even in a selfish way. Living with my housemates has helped me when my car was at the shop, when I needed a job, when I met my girlfriend, when I had no one to celebrate Thanksgiving with, and so many more things. Family Dinner is just once per month for about 45 minutes when we cover house logistics and a meal, but I have found it is so much more. Family Dinners can be deep and heavy when someone gets vulnerable about a loss or medical diagnosis; other times they can be very comical or lighthearted; and occasionally they can be boring but always meaningful. Like life. Like togetherness.

Do I find scheduling around Family Dinner frustrating? Why or why not?

Would I miss out on anything if Family Dinners didn’t exist? What would I miss?

Day #20

Self Check-In

“Almost everything will work again if you unplug it for a few minutes, including you.”

~Anne Lamott

For me, living with others has been like living with a bunch of mirrors. When I get angry with someone in the house, I realize I'm actually angry with myself or someone else. When I need alone time, I realize it by noticing I'm not able to interact with others the way I want. A grand paradox: I get to know myself best within the context of sharing space with others. For me, an extrovert, occasional self-check-ins are mandatory. If you live with me and I don't treat you well, it's probably because I'm due to check in with myself. How do I feel? Why do I feel that way? Why am I doing what I'm doing? Why did I totally just judge Maia for how she cleaned up the kitchen? What things do I need to do? What stuff have I gotten done recently that I can celebrate? Sometimes, when I feel off, I can do a short check-in using HALT by asking myself if I'm: Hungry? Angry? Lonely? Or Tired? Or Another tool I've used is the three A's. When something is bothering me, I address the topic by: first, Awareness (make sure I really take in what's bothering me); Acceptance (regardless of how much I disagree with it, I need to accept that it exists); Action (decide what action my best self would take). Anyway, there are tons of cool tools, but the main thing I've learned by living in this house is to schedule 1/2 hour to 3 hours to myself and simply see how I'm doing. I can get some psychological distance, come to my own assistance, and operate more at full capacity (not to mention be a way better housemate).

What would a check-in look like for me?

Would HALT have helped me with anything in the past two weeks?

Day #21

Life Is Better Shared

“It takes a lot of courage to show your dreams to someone else.”

~Erma Bombeck

A housemate, Wes, had the practice of sending an email to the house every few weeks to share something personal. It may just be a few sentences about his day at work or how his relationship with his girlfriend is going. It always included something about how much he appreciated sharing his life with us in the house. All of us in the house would occasionally send an email sharing if something heavy happened in our lives or if we were sick, but Wes would share something regular and then ask to hear how our days or weeks were going. It was pretty cool to read the email thread from everyone following Wes' life share emails.

*What do I appreciate and not appreciate when someone shares about their life?
If I felt like it, what small or big thing would I share with the house today?
(Do it if you want.)*

Day #22

The Most Valuable Skill

“Take advantage of every opportunity to practice your communication skills so that when important occasions arise, you will have the gift, the style, the sharpness, the clarity, and the emotions to affect other people.” ~Jim Rohn

People will sometimes give me quizzical looks when I say that my time living at the house deserves significant credit for my success at work and the success of my partnership with my boyfriend. No, I didn't meet my boyfriend or find my job through the house, but that does happen. I mean that the communication skills I gained while at the house led directly to pay raises at work and better communication in my primary relationship. I noticed how Bruce had gained incredible communication skills, so I observed how he talked, listened, and asked questions. He listened a lot and asked real questions. That guy was a student, and the house was his university, and he had earned his unofficial master's in communication. Literally nothing happens without communication, so I knew the better skills I have at communicating, the better each part of my life would be. And now I make more money, am more respected at work, and have a relationship headed towards marriage. I am working on my black belt and bachelor's degree in communication!

How have I suffered or benefited due to my communication abilities?

What is one aspect of communication I want to improve at?

Which of my housemates is good at that aspect of communication?

Day #23

A Shared Kitchen Is A Happier Kitchen

“Use it on the reg, buy it on occasion.”

Finally, I don't feel like I'm wasting food all the time, and I have more than ever! I love opening up the house spice cabinet and seeing all the options. Same with the condiments on the fridge door. Previously, I'd buy something because I needed it for a recipe, and the remainder would sit in the pantry or fridge until it went bad. Now, instead, I feel good by sharing the rest with the house. I'd put a blue dot on it and put it in the fridge or in the house pantry. House food and spices are an art, so be an artist. Certain housemates—you know who you are because we've talked—have used the salt, pepper, salad dressing, etc. but never thought to purchase some on occasion to share. Thankfully, those housemates heard my concern with appreciation and are now fellow artists.

I want to remember that using house food or spices is optional.

If sharing isn't my gig, I can simply not share or use any house food or spices.

Am I too bashful to use house spices or food? What is a small step to start?

Day #24

\$700 Blender

“Sharing Makes Everyone Rich”

As I’ve seen different housemates move-in and move-on, I’ve noticed an area that matters: personal items. Most of us own an item that we use and could leave in the common area for our housemates to use: like a \$700 blender, game console, favorite vacuum cleaner, you get the idea. There are a few ways this can go down, so do yourself a favor and pay attention.

Options:

1. Allow the house to use your item because you want to.
2. Allow the house to use your item because you feel you should.
3. Keep the item to yourself and feel bad about it.
4. Keep the item to yourself and feel fine about it.

Here’s your magic mantra: “The item is mine,” “The item is mine,” “The item is mine.” The item is yours; don’t allow people to use it unless you want to. Period. Otherwise, if someone breaks it or mistreats it, then you will be extra angry or sad. The item is yours to share if it makes you happy. Then you will get joy when you see others using it and will be regular sad or angry if someone breaks it or mistreats it.

Grace came up with a cool system that our house adopted: If you want to keep an item to yourself, then you cannot store it in Common Areas. This means I use my \$700 blender, then clean it up, and put it back in my room or personal pantry. If you want to let others use your item, then you can store it in the Common Areas (as long as no one objects), and you agree to be totally okay if it gets broken or goes missing. However, please tell the house if it goes missing because theft is a house issue.

Are there any items I want to share or do NOT want to share?

Can I be honest with myself about not sharing an item I don’t actually want to share?

Day #25

Big Talker

"I'm Talking And I Can't Shut-Up"
~Shirt Seen in Wal-Mart

Some of us are big talkers. All of us know big talkers. When I was little, we got my dad the shirt, "I'm talking and I can't shut up." As a big talker myself, my housemates helped me learn two essential skills. The first skill is to STOP what I'm saying and say, "Sorry for going on so long." My housemate John was notorious for saying, "Sorry for going on so long," and then continuing to talk. We actually coined the phrase "pulling a John," and occasionally someone in the house will say to me, "Did you just pull a John?" Touche. The second skill requires a bold heart. All hearts can become bold with some practice, and your house is just the patient and forgiving place to do it. When someone is talking and your non-verbal signals have had no effect, try using these phrases: "Sorry, I have to go soon"; "I like what you're saying, but I've only got 2 more minutes before I need to go"; "Sorry to cut you off, but I'm not much in the talking mode right now." Or even ask them for a 5-on-5 to say that sometimes you feel your conversations are more like monologues and would like to know what to do when that happens. Keep in mind that big talkers usually know they are big talkers and honestly want to know when they are talking too much or annoying you. You hold the key to a happy them, a happy you, and happy ears. I've actually told people in my life to give me the "secret signal" if I'm going on too long (snapping twice with their fingers).

How do I respond to people when they talk longer than I want them to?
Is there anyone in my life I need to set up a "secret signal" with?

Day #26

The Power of Inquiry

“The power’s in asking the right question.”

Sometimes I think happiness can be boiled down to asking more questions and better questions; at least that is true of my time living in our home. Sometimes I kid myself, “Use your words, Jeff,” because I will be wondering something and not actually asking someone about it. I wonder if my music is too loud, so I knock on doors and ask. A housemate’s music is distracting me a bit, so I ask them nicely to turn it down. My girlfriend and I wonder if our movie is too loud, so I ask the people in the rooms closest to the TV. I wonder if how I clean the bathroom is good enough for my housemates, so I find a housemate and ask. I’m bothered by dishes left in the sink repeatedly, so I sent an email to ask that it not be done. Usually, I do not get my feathers ruffled about something because of something, but because I took so long to ask that something be changed. Your answer is only a question away (read that with a Yoda voice).

*If I could see inside the minds of my housemates, what would I be curious to know?
Could I “use my words” and turn some of those curiosities into answers?*

Day #27

Compliments

“Some of the best things in life are free.”

~Coco Chanel

I love the phrase, “Be patient because life is rough sometimes.” Ain't that the truth, so I like to go further with giving compliments because life is rough sometimes. Honestly, even when I'm feeling awesome, a compliment from a housemate sky-rockets that awesomeness! Someone gave me this journal that asked me each morning, “Who is someone you could surprise with a note or sign of appreciation?” Answering that question each morning and then putting it into play made my life better. And the recipients of the short text, or the 1-sentence note under the door, or the 2-sentence compliment I said to them in the kitchen, or the occasional beverage I brought back from grocery shopping for them—wow, it brightened their mood like a solar flare! Jesus of Nazareth was on to something when he said, “It's more blessed to give than receive.”

What was the last compliment or sign of appreciation someone gave me?

How did it make me feel specifically?

If I wanted to, who is someone I could surprise with a note or sign of appreciation?

Day #28

Dominate Me

"The TV and living room are mine, but they aren't only mine."

~Anonymous

An amazing thing about having a house is having a house. There's a spacious living room and kitchen, rather than the cramped counterparts in an apartment. There's a sweet ass garage for oil changes and projects. There's usually a nice deck or patio on the back for sunbathing, grill-outs, and picnics. There's a yard for yard games and hanging with my dog. You get the point, right? The great thing about having a house is having a house! However, there was a time when I denied myself the enjoyment of all these because I didn't want to step on any toes. What the hell was I thinking?! My housemates said to me, "This is your house, and all these awesome things are for you. Enjoy!" Hopeful but unsure, I shot back, "But how do I know I'm not dominating something like it says in our household covenant?" Their response was, "Michelle, don't make us the reason you are denying yourself the enjoyment of our awesome house. Use this house to make you happy, ask us if you're concerned you're dominating, and trust that we'll speak up if needed. We know your heart is good, so live it up!" And I did! I had dinner parties, a Super Bowl party, and a 4th of July get-together. I spent glorious hours in the driveway one summer day on my car washing, waxing, and making the inside shine. I invited my co-workers over for movies. My housemates loved it. They loved that I was happy, and they loved joining in. A housemate even met his girlfriend through people I invited over. One time a housemate reminded me to tell my guests not to park on neighbors' curbs, and honest communication like this set me free to really enjoy this huge, wonderful house we have!

What is something in the house I haven't gotten around to enjoying yet?

What do I think about what Michelle just wrote?

Day #29

Dietrich Bonhoeffer's Wish Dream

"Those who love their dream of a community more than they love the community itself become destroyers of that community even though their personal intentions may be ever so honest, earnest and sacrificial."

~DB, German Theologian & Holocaust Victim

I spent years looking for the perfect community, and in the process, I did a great disservice to the communities I was a part of. I thought a healthy community had no problems, had members with no problems, had no problems between members, and always perfectly communicated the first time. What a critical ass I was, and this attitude robbed from my housemates and myself. I'm grateful I am now a recovering critical ass. I didn't just decide all households were healthy; I made large adjustments. For instance, a community without problems is in denial; a community with members without problems has members afraid to show their real faces; a community with no problems between members is not close enough; and a community that always communicates perfectly the first time is not human. What is a healthy community? My current working conclusion is that healthy households have reasonable conduits of communication to enjoy each other and respond to problems (email list, group texts, occasional whole house meetings), have a conflict resolution process (5-on-5), have a vision statement (written or not), and have clear boundaries and common agreement (Household Covenant). I've lived with family, friends, and alone, and every time I have had problems with at least someone. In lieu of having a problem with these problems, I now accept them with openness, honesty, willingness, and the belief that they are a symptom of genuine interaction.

Would I rather live alone or with others? Why?

Do I have criticisms of my housemates or myself?

What could I do differently about those criticisms based on the above?

Day #30

“Screw Them!”

“Whenever you’re in conflict with someone, there is one factor that can make the difference between damaging your relationship and deepening it. That factor is attitude.”

~William James

We’ve inherited a magical formula. Some of us were fortunate enough to grow up in a home with a healthy way to address conflict, but most of us weren’t. Thankfully, we’ve inherited the 5-on-5 from an incredible home started in 1978 in Austin. If your CommunityLiving Home is composed of humans, there will be conflict. Even people who live by themselves have conflicts with their “housemate” (aka themselves). The magic of 5-on-5 is its track record. It has been used for decades, and only once that I know of did a house ever need to do the final step and ask the Household Supporter to help mediate, and this instance seemed to be due to an aging house member’s failing mental capacities. The 5-on-5 is simple. I have a problem with someone in the house. I say, “Can we do a 5-on-5?” We do it then or schedule it for later that day or that week. I share for 5 minutes while my housemate listens to me carefully for 5 minutes. Then my housemate shares for 5 minutes, starting with their understanding of what I said, and I listen carefully, making sure not to interrupt. Usually, that is all that is needed—often, mutual understanding and connection solve the issue. Sometimes we decide to do another 5-on-5 the next day if there are strong emotions or we both want a night to think creatively about a solution. Let me tell you the three magical ingredients that always lead to 5-on-5 success: 1) Ask for the 5-on-5 (don’t demand); 2) Start by reading the directions for it in the Household Covenant; 3) Listen openly and with love. I’ve also used the 5-on-5 for other purposes, like to check on someone who seems sad lately, to ask for advice from a housemate I admire, and to share a heavy thing in my life.

How did the family I grew up in solve conflict?

What are the similarities and differences between how I’ve solved conflict in the past and the 5-on-5?

What do I think about those differences?

Day #31

Guests, Animals, & Thermostats, OH MY!

“Problems don’t cause problems, attitudes do.”

~G.R.S.

There I was, with a day off, relaxing in my bed with Max, my dog. Then it started. Madalynne’s dog would bark, then Sandra’s dog, then silence. About 10 seconds later, the whole thing would repeat. I figured the dogs would knock it off eventually, but it continued an hour later like a terrible record on repeat with no off switch. The dog owners were both at work. It was 11 a.m., so I was looking at my entire day off, infected by this barking. Why didn’t they train their dogs better or use a bark collar?! I’ve always believed there’s no such thing as bad dogs, only bad owners. My dog Max was hearing everything and not adding to it. Maybe it wasn’t the owners, but the dogs. Maybe they were just not meant to live in a CommunityLiving House. Anyway, I was pissed. I texted Greg, who had lived there for a while. My texts to Greg were polite, but my heart was furious and my brain was full of projection, expectations, and assumptions (isn’t that what they call a “P.E.A. Brain”?). Greg suggested I text the dog owners. I didn’t want to because I didn’t want to bother or offend them. The last thing I wanted was a rift with my housemates, but I realized there was already a rift in my heart towards them. I could deal with it directly or not. After agonizing over the text for too long, I pushed send. I got a quick, great text back from both Madalynne and Sandra; both were there in 15 minutes, one with a bark collar, and the other one took her dog back to work with her. Suddenly, my relationship with each of them tripled in goodness. I was blown away by their concern and immediate response. They also appreciated my direct and kind text.

This is only one example of many showing that problems don't cause problems in CommunityLiving Homes, they just provide opportunities to deepen relationships and trust. Poor attitudes, PEA Brain thinking, and decisions not to communicate cause problems. I titled my share "Guests, Animals, and Thermostats, OH MY!" because each matters to everyone (and I do mean everyone) and is bound to clash a bit before finding their groove. Check your attitude, talk with your housemates, and believe that with time and open discussion, housemate-teamwork will find a great solution. Plus, you'll deepen a relationship and enrich your life.

When have I experienced that problems don't cause problems; attitudes do? Do I have anything like that in my life now?

What is an example of how I responded well to an issue with a person? What specifically did I do that helped so much?

Household Covenant

Vision

To be a home for all people that cultivates a household of peace, privacy, security, community, individuality, quality, and sustainability; to provide a standard and spaciousness of living at significantly lower costs to ourselves and the environment; a place to call home for months or decades!

1) Quality:

House Members will always do their best to cultivate the vision of the house.

2) Privacy/Security: House Members will never enter the private room of another House Member unless expressly invited.

If a House Member is unsure if they have been invited, they may ask, “Is it okay to enter your room?”

3) Peace: House Members will keep noise from their rooms to a level that will not disrupt the peace of other House Members.

If the House Member is unsure if the noise from their room is too loud, they may ask fellow House Members, “Do you want me to turn it down?” Quiet hours: 10 p.m. – 7 a.m. on weekdays and midnight – 9 a.m. on weekends.

4) Peace: House Members will do their best not to dominate Common Areas.

Common Areas belong equally to each House Member, and therefore each House Member will act like the Common Area belongs to them, but not only them. If a House Member is unsure if they are using a Common Area for too much time, they are welcome to ask fellow House Members.

5) Peace/Security: There will be no substances (controlled substances nor alcohol) used or ingested in Common Areas.

Alcohol may be drunk freely in private rooms. If a Resident is drinking alcohol in the Common Area, the Resident will happily and quickly return to their private room if another Resident or guest requests it.

6) Privacy/Individuality: House Members recognize that just because they or another House Member is in a Common Area does not mean they want to be engaged in conversation.

If unsure, a House Member can always ask, “Are you up for talking?”

7) Community: Events.

If something is going on in the Common Area, all House Members and guests are welcome to join. Private events are held in private rooms or elsewhere.

8) Community/Individuality: 5-On-5.

A two Resident conversation when one speaks for five minutes while the other listens, and then the other speaks for five minutes while the first speaker listens. A 5-On-5 may be prompted by a household question or concern, personal conflict, advice, or just the need to share. To request one, simply say, “Can we do a 5-On-5?” Residents will take requests for 5-On-5’s with urgency, even if they have to schedule it for a later time or day.

9) Peace/Community: Conflict Resolution through the 5-On-5 Process.

The Household is ONLY as healthy as the Residents’ willingness to communicate directly and respectfully in order to resolve conflicts and build/rebuild trust. A healthy household isn’t the absence of conflict but the ability to resolve its own conflicts. All House Members intend to resolve their own Resident-to-Resident issues with the 5-on-5 Process. When a Resident (“Initiating Resident”) has an issue with another Resident (“Responding Resident”), the Initiating Resident will request a 5-on-5 with the Responding Resident as noted above. If one of the Residents feels the issue was not resolved by the 5-on-5, both will choose another time to repeat the 5-on-5 within five days. If, after the second 5-on-5, one of the two feels the issue is unresolved, then another House Member both Residents agree on will be asked to do a 5-on-5-on-5. If this does not resolve the issue, then these three Residents will email the Household Supporter. At this point, the Household Supporter will be included in a meeting with these three Residents to mediate or resolve the issue as a service to the Household. Residents will use this process to maintain and restore individual and community happiness. The Household Supporter will ONLY be contacted according to this process OR if the Responding Resident refuses the request for a 5-on-5.

10) Individuality:

House Members will look to themselves, fellow House Members, and their available resources to enrich and develop their unique person and personality.

11) Quality:

House Members are kind, respectful, and beneficial towards themselves, one another, and neighbors.

12) Quality/Community: Chores, Cleanliness, and Condiments.

Each House Members will keep the Common Areas (inside and outside) well-maintained and looking good by investing 30–60 minutes per week in assigned/unassigned chores and alternating weeks in cleaning their assigned bathroom. If a Resident uses a shared condiment, spice, etc., they will occasionally purchase a backup or replacement product to be shared.

13) Sustainability: Minimizing our footprint on the environment and our bank account.

House Members will do their best to keep electricity, water, gas, and bandwidth usage to only what is useful to the House Member for the sake of Mother Nature and to keep the monthly flat rate bill fee from increasing.

14) Gaming and the internet:

Gamers, or those who use the internet to a degree much higher than average, are welcome to purchase a monthly Gamers Package from the Household Supporter or request permission from the Household Supporter to set up their own internet source. Otherwise, the local public library welcomes gaming.

~ Signed By All Residents Before Joining The House As Part Of The Lease ~

Thermostats

Welcome to your new home! Something essential that makes a house a home is not feeling too hot or too cold in it. We decided to add this section to help you out as new housemates—just lessons from the journey we’ve adopted. This is to help make sure you wake up happy and refreshed rather than freezing or sweating each morning. We’re not sure how others in the world figured it out, but this is how we did and still do:

- 1) Believed our household could find a happy-harmonious house temperature plan.
- 2) Believed we could NOT know what another housemate(s) thought about the house temperature unless we asked them.
- 3) Used a thermostat schedule that would change so the night temperature was colder than the day temperature. If our thermostat had a program, we could use that. Otherwise, we would just adjust it manually. Much of the year, we turned the thermostat off and let Mother Nature handle the schedule for us.
- 4) Realized some of us wanted it particularly hot or cold in our room, and that person could get themselves a portable heater, fan, or AC to meet their particular need.
- 5) If the thermostat was turned on/auto, we refused to “just open the window” in our room rather than communicate with our housemates, because this fell short of our Household Covenant’s principle of sustainability and may increase our utility fee.

Guest, Parking, & Animal Policies

The lease we made, which you signed before moving in, has a number of concepts we adopted as a home to better live out our Vision Statement and Household Covenant. We summarized a few of those below for quick access.

Our House Has Made the Following Guest Policy

All House Members are welcome to have guests without additional permission in accordance with the following: In-Area Guests may stay for up to 3 days total in any 7-day period; Out-of-Area Guests may stay for up to 10 consecutive days and up to 30 days total in a calendar year.

Our House Has Made the Following Parking Policy

I and my guests can park in the following places: *

- Parking Stall in the Garage if I've rented it.
- Parking Stall in the Driveway if no one has rented the garage parking stall in front of it.
- Street Parking, but we NEVER park, even momentarily, on a curb that is alongside the property of a neighboring house.
- We have a 36-hour window to work-on or store non-operating vehicles. We find this allows plenty of time for oil/brake/etc. repairs without annoying anyone. Non-operating vehicles may be stored in a rented garage stall.

*Lease Section 16

Our House Has Made the Following Animal Policy

Animals (Service, Pet, Otherwise)

* No pets, dogs, cats, birds, or other animals are allowed on or about the Property, without Household Supporter's prior written consent. Strays must not be kept or fed on or around the Property. If an animal has been on or allowed on the Property, even temporarily (with or without the Household Supporter's permission), House Member(s) may be charged for cleaning, de-fleeing, deodorizing, shampooing, or replacing any portion of the Property.

*Lease Section 18