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# How to Make Peace in the Kitchen

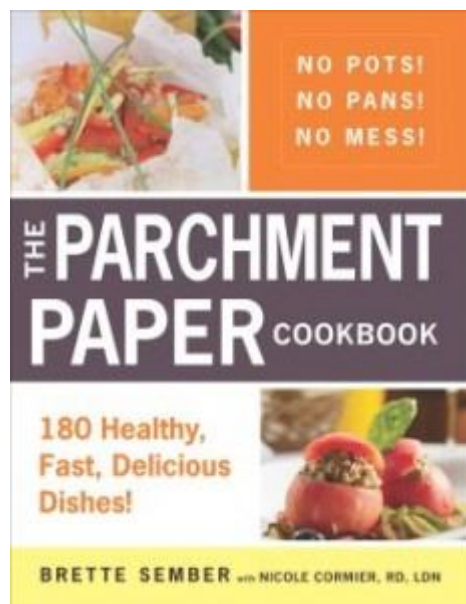
by Alisa on [December 16, 2011](#)

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Quite a few of my marital arguments have started in the kitchen. I've written about my husband's back seat cooking in the past. I will be in the kitchen doing just fine, not asking for any help from him. He'll waltz in, tinker with the oven knobs and move my ingredients around. Usually he will stare me down and I will pretend he's not there. Eventually he will clear his throat and say something like, "Do you want me to show you a better way to do that?"

I'll say, "Actually, I don't."

Then there will be tension. Then he'll attempt to tell me what the better way is. Then I'll tell him that I don't care about his way. Then, one time out of two, I'll realize his better way really is better, and that's more annoying than anything. Of course, one time out of two his better way is not better at all, and that can be annoying too.

At some point, I generally throw him out of the kitchen and tell him not to come back until I invite him.

Thankfully, now that I'm studying Buddhism, those types of fights have mostly become a thing of the past. My husband still back seat cooks, but it doesn't bother me as much.

Another kitchen fight used to center on clean up. I was always raised with the rule that the cook doesn't clean up. Whoever doesn't cook must wash the dishes.

It's only fair. (Interestingly, my dad now cooks and cleans up while my mom lives the easy life. She knows this is true and will laugh when she reads this. I hope. If she doesn't laugh, I'm in big trouble.)

Well, years ago, we didn't have a dishwasher. And I used to like to cook gourmet. That meant that there was usually a truckload of pots and pans to clean when I was done.

We'd finish eating and my husband would start watching TV. I'd stare at the dirty pots and pans in the kitchen and say, "The person who doesn't cook cleans." He'd say, "I'll get to it." He wouldn't. I'd end up cleaning it all up and then he wouldn't see my naked body for weeks.

That was before we worked on our marriage.

At any rate, at some point we moved to a house with a dishwasher and this solved that issue to some degree.

Until the dishwasher broke. It broke around the same time my car windshield wipers, headlight, interior light, and radio broke. Around the same time, our toilet handle also broke. And this was all added to the following things that had been broken for some time: the air conditioning, the curtain rods, the closet doors, various light bulbs, and some other things that are not coming to mind.

My husband did manage to fix my headlight, the toilet and the curtain rods. I got my windshield wipers fixed. The AC and the dishwasher are still broken. But now my radio is not only broken, it's stuck on permanent scan. I can't begin to tell you how annoying it is to drive around with a radio that stays on the Christmas music station for 10 seconds and then scans to the country music station for a few seconds and then back to Christmas music and so on. (Those are the only two stations it gets). And my defroster is also stuck in the "on" position. Oh and someone rear-ended me the other day, so my back bumper is, well, not looking very pretty.

My kid hates my car and told me that she asked Santa to bring me a new one. Wouldn't that be nice.

Anyway, yes, I have realized that my home life is a constant reminder of the fragility and impermanence of everything.

But I've managed to get off topic.

At any rate, when the dishwasher broke, I just braced for the marital strife to begin. It didn't. I think it helped that I've mellowed over the years. I can now outlast my husband in the amount of time I'm willing to be okay with a sink full of dirty dishes. He often breaks down and washes them long before I've started to care about the matter.

What also has helped is this: My friend Brette Sember wrote this fantastic book called the [Parchment Paper Cookbook](#). The entire book contains recipes that require zero cleanup. All of the meals cook inside of parchment paper. You never get a pot or a pan dirty.

At first I thought it would be bad for the environment, using up all this parchment and all. But I managed to find recycled parchment that is both reusable and compostable.

Since I'm a vegetarian who loves vegetables, I particularly love that Brette included 36 vegetable dishes and

dozens more vegetarian grain dishes. Everything that I've tried has been quick and easy to prepare, and it has all tasted fantastic.

The cookbook has probably saved my marriage. It just might save yours.

I think you all should [buy it](#). You also might want to check out her cooking site [NoPotCooking](#).

**I'm giving away one copy to a lucky person who comments on this post. In the comments, tell me what types of arguments you've gotten into in the kitchen. Or, if that doesn't strike your fancy, give me tips on how to save water when I wash dishes by hand. Or you can comment about anything else that you feel compelled to share.**

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Erik [December 16, 2011 at 3:00 pm](#)

Just posted a comment to the book's only 1-star reviewer on Amazon (very unfair rating if you ask me). I'm going to check the book out the next time I'm in a cooking store. (Less dishes == happier me.)

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Archena [December 16, 2011 at 3:02 pm](#)

I have been cooking for so many years even before we were married, and I never think it is wrong to be the one cooking and the one to clean up.

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Lauren [December 16, 2011 at 3:07 pm](#)

This post is great! I love the way you described being able to outlast your husband's ability to put off doing the dishes. Balancing temperaments like that has been a key step towards success at our house. This cookbook sounds magical, by the way. I'd love to win a copy – always happy to add more veggies to our diet – but if not, I may have to buy one!

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angelia [December 16, 2011 at 5:24 pm](#)

Our kitchen arguments usually stem from the dishwasher, not the cooking. I'll be loading the dishwasher and my husband will come over, seemingly to help, but will instead say 'if you load it like this there might be less gunk on the dishes after you run it'. \*sigh\* This is when I kick him out of the

kitchen before I say something I'll regret. 😊

angelia's last [type] ..[Giveaway Coming Soon!](#)

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[david miller December 16, 2011 at 7:00 pm](#)

I guess I am a fairly typical guy in the kitchen – i make a mess but cook with passion. Unfortunately my wife gets so aggravated with gthe mess I'm making she doesnt really relax and enjoy the product of my labour. The more I cook the more we row so I leave a s much cooking as I can to her and take her out for nice restaurant meals to make up.

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[Lisa Hetherington December 16, 2011 at 7:23 pm](#)

Cooking everything in parchment! What a fabulous idea! Fewer dishes to clean up/

...Lisa

[Reply](#)

[Flynn December 16, 2011 at 9:34 pm](#)

This sounds like a great cookbook. As I am the one doing the cooking at home, I think I will be digging into it soon. Thanks for letting us know about it.

With Regards,  
Flynn

[Reply](#)

[Amanda December 16, 2011 at 9:45 pm](#)

What a great idea! Alisa, you have some smart friends! I washed dishes by hand for years and years, and the best way I've found is to turn off the water inbetween washing and rinsing. I don't do the sink-as- a- bucket thing. I just soap up my sponge, wet the dish, scrub it with the water off and rinse from the faucet. It takes forever. Maybe you should just get that dishwasher fixed and pat yourself on the back for surviving this long without it and without fighting!

[Reply](#)

[Michelle R. December 16, 2011 at 10:20 pm](#)

I read this post twice, with my jaw wide open. Whoever doesn't cook cleans up? I would have a better chance of seeing God walk through the door than that happening in my house! I can't remember the last time my husband did a dish, let alone put one in the dishwasher. On a lighter note, this cookbook sounds like a great timesave. Thanks for the chance to win....would love one of your books too 😊

[Reply](#)

[Malinda R. December 16, 2011 at 10:37 pm](#)

One night when my husband and I were dating, he came over for dinner for the first time. I almost fell over when dinner was over, instead of getting in front of the tv with my children, he started helping me clean up. My first husband NEVER helped. My husband now is wonderful. We haven't had a fight in the kitchen and I only have one complaint, when he loads the dishwasher, he doesn't use the space like I do. But I'm not going to complain to him, because he could be in front of the tv with the kids. I love my husband, and couldn't ask for better.

[Reply](#)

Kim B [December 17, 2011 at 1:43 am](#)

I was just given a lesson on the importance of creaming the butter by itself before adding sugar. That was followed by a brief explanation of how baking powder works. But since I manage to make a disaster with every cooking attempt, I do not mind too much! I am fortunate to have someone who cooks for me and our children, so I will clean the dishes any day.

Thank you for the enjoyable post and opportunity to clean less via the cookbook I would love to let my husband at. Happy holidays!

[Reply](#)

[marriage](#) [December 17, 2011 at 2:08 am](#)

It is very interesting post....Thank you for your nice blog

[Reply](#)

Pat Gray [December 17, 2011 at 7:58 am](#)

Our regular "discussion" was about what he prefers to eat versus what I prefer to eat. He's a plain 'ol meat and potatoes guy – I want ethnic, mostly vegetarian food. He couldn't get his head around me being happy to cook two different meals, and if I didn't eat what he wanted to eat, he pouted. I finally dug my heels in, and it's a bit better now, but there were a few very unhappy dinners for a while...

We also have a bit of an argument over the dishwasher (he says wash dishes completely first, I say let the dishwasher do the work), but that's another story...

Pat Gray's last [type] ..[Getting a dog to stop chewing furniture can be problematic. While chewing is a natural behavior, destructive chewing can also be a symptom of bore...](#)

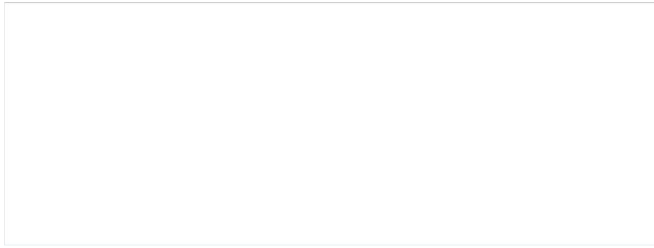
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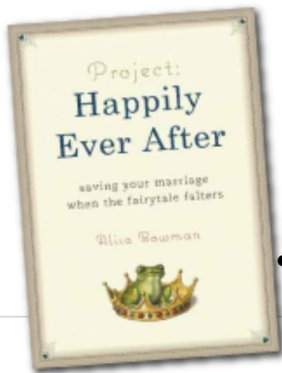
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