

[MUSIC PLAYING]

MAN: Hello. And welcome to the Modern Manners Guy's Quick and Dirty Tips for a more polite life. Johnny from Seattle and a number of other listeners have written in with questions about roommate etiquette. And we'll take that as our topic for this episode.

Roommate situations can be particularly challenging as they create circumstances of great intimacy with other people who may have previously been acquaintances, strangers, or friends. Speaking of friends, it is important to remember that the qualities that make someone a great friend may not be the same as those that make someone a great roommate. So be careful before becoming roommates with a friend. You could end up damaging your friendship.

To help out with your roommate situations, here are a few quick thoughts on how to have the best roommate situation possible. Be clear and upfront. Before entering into a roommate situation, be as clear about all of the details of the household arrangement as possible.

Which areas are shared, which are private? Are there hours when everyone should be quiet? Is food shared? What is the morning bathroom schedule? What is the policy on overnight guests? The more you can set out explicitly in advance, the fewer areas for conflict or misunderstanding.

Communicate. It is important to keep open lines of communication. Tell your roommate if something is bothering you or if there is something you would like to change about the way the household operates. Even though it can be hard, it is much worse if you let it fester. Some households even schedule standing check-in meetings to make sure there are regular opportunities to address any household issues.

Be respectful. While this should go without saying, it is especially important to be respectful of those with whom you live. Be quiet when you think others might be working or sleeping. Give others physical space if they need it. Be careful with their personal property, and respect their privacy. If your roommate has guests over, give them a little room for private conversation if you can.

Be considerate. If you make dinner, and you know your roommate may be working late, make

up a plate for her or him. And leave a note that there is dinner in the fridge if he or she wants it. Replace the toilet paper if it is running low. Ask your roommates if they need anything from the store if are going. And leave a little treat for your roommates every now and then.

Share household chores. Make sure that you work out a division of chores that is acceptable to everyone. Some households do it on a rotating schedule. Some pick specific jobs. Others have a cleaning day where everyone does everything. Whatever your arrangement, make sure that all in the house feel that it is fair and balanced.

Go the extra mile. The one boundary that you may want to cross in a roommate situation is the division of household responsibilities. Step over the line, and do dishes when it's not your turn. Help out with others' chores. And be extra generous with your roommates.

Goodwill an extra effort can make a household situation come along more pleasantly. Look for practical solutions. If you have problems in your household with regard to levels of cleanliness, hire a maid, and split the cost. This can be a very easy way to resolve an area of tension. Identify any areas that cause stress or strife in your household, and be extremely pragmatic about solving them. This will be much more productive than endlessly arguing about whose turn it is to clean the bathroom.

So here's hoping all of your households runs smoothly. And thank you for listening to Quick and Dirty Tips for a more polite life.

WOMAN:

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