THE BACKWARD TRUTH • STAGE II FREE GUIDE

The Load Check

Is your marriage carrying too much? A 15-minute check for busy couples

Between forty and fifty-four, careers, kids, aging parents, and money pressure often peak at the same time. **Pressure isn't the problem. Unmanaged pressure is.** When no one has decided who carries what, the job falls to whoever cracks first.

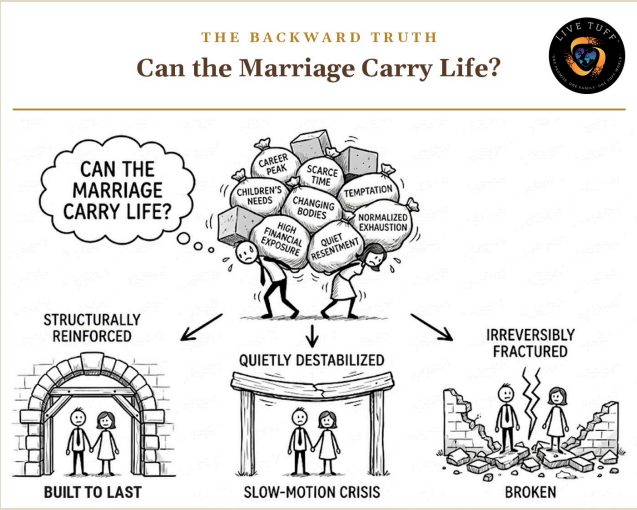
> A study of household work found that the "thinking work" of running a home (noticing, planning, and keeping track) often falls mostly on one partner, even when chores look evenly split.
>
> *Source: Daminger, American Sociological Review, 2019*

Map who carries what

Area of life	Who carries it? (1, 2, both)	Stress (1–10)
Career demands		
Kids: schedules, school, emotions		
Money: bills, budget, saving		
Aging parents		
Home: cleaning, repairs, upkeep		
The mental load: remembering and planning		

Three warning signs

- ☐ **The default trap:** one of us carries jobs just because we always have, not because we chose to.
- ☐ **The stress gap:** one of us absorbs most of the stress while the other pulls back to cope.
- ☐ **The roommate drift:** we can go three days without a real conversation.



Try this week: the Sunday 20

Every Sunday evening, take 20 minutes. Look at the week ahead, check who's carrying what, and ask: *"Is either of us above a 7 on the stress scale? What can move to the other person for 48 hours?"*

Quick Check

Statement	Circle one
We both know exactly who is responsible for what.	0 1 2
The workload, including the invisible work, feels fair.	0 1 2
We protect at least one time each week that is just for us.	0 1 2
We have a calm way to handle conflict before it boils over.	0 1 2
Our lifestyle leaves room to handle a job loss or emergency.	0 1 2

0 = not yet • 1 = somewhat • 2 = yes, and we live it

9–10: Built to last
Your marriage can carry the load.

5–8: Feeling the strain
A few changes in how you share the load will help a lot.

0–4: Overloaded
It is time for a new plan, together.

In the Stage II workbook

- The full load map and role plan
- The Honest Warning Promise
- Money safety rules and spending limits
- Parenting as a united team
- Guardrails against drift and temptation
- Reconnecting after busy weeks

This free guide is for education and reflection. It is not therapy, medical, legal, or financial advice. If you ever feel unsafe in your relationship, contact the National Domestic Violence Hotline: 1-800-799-7233 or text START to 88788. © 2026 Marcela C. Sherwin, Live TUFF, LLC. Free to share in full; not for resale.

Don't just survive the busiest years. Come out of them closer.

Get The Backward Truth: Stage II, The Load Years.

LIVETUFF.ORG