

# The Good Wives Guide 1955

Housekeeping Monthly 13 May 1955



## The good wife's guide

- *Have dinner ready. Plan ahead, even thenight before, to have a delicious meal ready, on time for his return. This is a way of letting him know that you have been thinking about him and are concerned about his needs. Most men arehungry when they come home and the prospect of a good meal (especially his favourite dish) is part of the warm welcome needed.*
- *Prepare yourself. Take 15 minutes to rest so you'll be refreshed when he arrives. Touch up your make-up, put a ribbon in your hair and be fresh-looking. He has just been with a lot of work-weary people.*
- *Be a little gay and a little more interesting for him. His boring day may need a lift and one of your duties is to provide it.*
- *Clear away the clutter. Make one last trip through the main part of the house just before your husband arrives.*
- *Gather up schoolbooks, toys, paper, etc and then run a dustcloth over the tables.*
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- *Over the cooler months of the year you should prepare and light a fire for him to unwind by. Your husband will feel he has reached a haven of rest and order, and it will give you a lift too. After all, catering for his comfort will provide you with immense personal satisfaction.*
- *Prepare the children. Take a few minutes to wash the children's hands and faces (if they are small), comb their hair and, if necessary, change their clothes. They are little treasures and he would like to see them playing the part. Minimize all noise. At the time of his arrival, eliminate all noise of the washer, dryer, or vacuum. Try to encourage the children to be quiet.*
- *Be happy to see him.*
- *Greet him with a warm smile and show sincerity in your desire to please him.*
- *Listen to him. You may have a dozen important things to tell him, but the moment of his arrival is not the time. Let him talk first - remember, his topics of conversation are more important than yours.*
- *Make the evening his. Never complain if he comes home late or goes out to dinner, or other places of entertainment without you. Instead, try to understand his world of strain and pressure and his very real need to be at home and relax.*
- *Your goal: Try to make sure your home is a place of peace, order, and tranquility where your husband can renew himself in body and spirit.*
- *Don't greet him with complaints or problems.*
- *Don't complain if he's late home for dinner or even if he stays out all night. Count this as minor compared to what he might have gone through that day.*
- *Make him comfortable. Have him lean back in a comfortable chair or have him lie down in the bedroom. Have a cool or warm drink ready for him.*
- *Arrange his pillow and offer to take off his shoes. Speak in a low, soothing and pleasant voice.*
- *Don't ask him questions about his actions or question his judgment or integrity. Remember, he is the master of the house and as such will always exercise his will with fairness and truthfulness. You have no right to question him.*
- *A good wife always knows her place.*

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**The Good Wife's Guide 1955** is a reflection of the societal norms and expectations placed on women during the mid-20th century. Originally published in *Housekeeping Monthly*, this guide offers a glimpse into the domestic ideals of the 1950s, outlining the roles and responsibilities that many women were expected to embrace as homemakers and wives. While the guide is often viewed through a modern lens as outdated and problematic, it serves as an important historical document that illustrates the cultural attitudes of the time. In this article, we will explore the key themes and advice presented in the Good Wife's Guide, its implications for women in the 1950s, and how these ideas have evolved over the decades.

## The Context of the 1950s Household

The 1950s were marked by a post-war economic boom in the United States, leading to a renewed

emphasis on family life and traditional gender roles. Many women, who had taken on various jobs during World War II, were encouraged to return to their homes to support their husbands and raise children. The ideal woman was often portrayed as a devoted wife and mother, responsible for creating a warm and welcoming home environment.

## Societal Expectations

In the context of the 1950s, societal expectations for women were clear and rigid. The Good Wife's Guide encapsulates these expectations, offering practical advice aimed at ensuring a harmonious household. Some key expectations included:

- **Housekeeping:** Women were expected to maintain a clean and orderly home, reflecting their husband's success and providing comfort for the family.
- **Child-rearing:** Mothers were primarily responsible for the upbringing of children, instilling values, and teaching them manners.
- **Supportive spouse:** Wives were encouraged to be attentive to their husbands' needs, providing emotional support and companionship.
- **Social roles:** Women were often expected to host gatherings and socialize with other families, reinforcing community ties.

## Key Advice from The Good Wife's Guide

The Good Wife's Guide outlined specific behaviors and tasks that were deemed essential for a successful marriage. Here are some highlights of the advice given:

### Creating a Welcoming Environment

One of the primary focuses of the guide was on creating a welcoming home environment. The following points were emphasized:

1. **Greet your husband:** When he arrives home, greet him with a smile and a warm welcome. This gesture sets a positive tone for the evening.
2. **Prepare the home:** Ensure that the house is clean and tidy, with pleasant aromas wafting from the kitchen. A well-maintained home was seen as a reflection of the wife's character.
3. **Engage the senses:** The guide suggested that wives should prepare themselves and the home to appeal to their husbands' senses, from aesthetics to fragrance.

## Meal Preparation and Presentation

Another significant aspect of the guide revolved around meal preparation. Food was considered a vital part of family life, and the guide offered suggestions on how to make meals special:

- **Plan meals in advance:** This helps to ensure that the family is well-fed and reduces last-minute stress.
- **Cook with care:** The guide encouraged women to take pride in their cooking skills, suggesting that a well-cooked meal could enhance marital satisfaction.
- **Set the table beautifully:** Presentation was deemed important; a well-set table was a way to show love and respect for the family.

## Emotional Support and Communication

The emotional dynamics of a marriage were also a focus in The Good Wife's Guide:

1. **Listen attentively:** Wives were encouraged to listen to their husbands' concerns and needs without interruption, demonstrating support and understanding.
2. **Maintain a positive demeanor:** The guide emphasized the importance of a cheerful attitude, suggesting that positivity helps in creating a harmonious home environment.
3. **Avoid stress:** Wives were advised to manage their own stress, ensuring that their husbands could come home to a peaceful environment.

## Impacts and Critiques of The Good Wife's Guide

While The Good Wife's Guide provided some women with a framework for managing their homes and marriages, it also drew significant criticism. The expectations outlined in the guide can be seen as restrictive and oppressive, limiting women's roles to domestic spheres and denying them the opportunity to pursue careers and personal interests.

## Feminist Perspectives

Feminist critiques of The Good Wife's Guide often highlight the following points:

- **Reinforcement of Gender Roles:** The guide reinforced traditional gender roles that confined women to domestic duties, limiting their personal and professional aspirations.
- **Lack of Individual Identity:** The advice often overshadowed women's individual identities, reducing them to their roles as wives and mothers.
- **Pressure to Conform:** The guide placed undue pressure on women to conform to specific ideals, leading to feelings of inadequacy for those who could not or did not want to meet these standards.

## The Evolution of Gender Roles

Over the decades, societal attitudes towards gender roles have undergone significant changes. The feminist movements of the 1960s and 1970s challenged the norms established by guides like *The Good Wife's Guide*, advocating for women's rights to work, pursue education, and control their own destinies.

## Contemporary Reflections

Today, the legacy of *The Good Wife's Guide* serves as a reminder of how far society has come in terms of gender equality. Modern marriage dynamics tend to emphasize partnership and shared responsibilities:

- **Equal Partnership:** Many couples now strive for equality in domestic responsibilities, with both partners contributing to household management and child-rearing.
- **Individual Pursuits:** Women today are more likely to pursue careers and educational opportunities, balancing personal ambitions with family life.
- **Open Communication:** Modern relationships emphasize open communication, where both partners express their needs and expectations freely.

## Conclusion

In conclusion, ***The Good Wife's Guide 1955*** reflects a bygone era of rigid gender roles and domestic expectations. While it served as a manual for many women during its time, the guide's advice is often viewed today as a symbol of the limitations placed on women. As society evolves, the ideals of partnership, equality, and individual identity continue to reshape the landscape of marriage and family life, moving away from the constraints of the past. Understanding the historical context of

guides like The Good Wife's Guide allows us to appreciate the progress made while recognizing the ongoing journey toward gender equality.

## **Frequently Asked Questions**

### **What is 'The Good Wife's Guide' and when was it published?**

'The Good Wife's Guide' is a controversial article published in 1955 that outlines expectations for women in marital roles, emphasizing domestic duties and submission to their husbands.

### **What are some key expectations outlined in 'The Good Wife's Guide'?**

The guide suggests that a good wife should prioritize her husband's needs, maintain a clean home, prepare meals, and create a welcoming atmosphere for him after a long day.

### **How has 'The Good Wife's Guide' influenced modern discussions on gender roles?**

The guide has become a reference point in discussions about traditional gender roles, often used to critique outdated expectations of women in marriage and highlight the progress made in gender equality.

### **What societal norms were prevalent in the 1950s that the guide reflects?**

The 1950s were characterized by patriarchal values, where women were often seen as homemakers and caregivers, with societal pressure to conform to domestic roles.

### **Is 'The Good Wife's Guide' considered a feminist text?**

No, it is not considered a feminist text; rather, it is viewed as a reflection of anti-feminist attitudes that reinforce traditional gender roles, which many feminists actively oppose.

### **How do modern readers typically react to 'The Good Wife's Guide'?**

Modern readers often react with criticism or amusement, recognizing it as a historical artifact that highlights the limitations placed on women in the past.

### **What role does 'The Good Wife's Guide' play in discussions about women's rights?**

It serves as a historical benchmark to illustrate the progress of women's rights and the ongoing struggle against societal expectations that limit women's roles.

## Has 'The Good Wife's Guide' inspired any contemporary works or discussions?

Yes, it has inspired numerous articles, books, and discussions that critique traditional gender roles and explore the evolution of women's rights.

## What lessons can be drawn from 'The Good Wife's Guide' for today's society?

The guide serves as a reminder of the importance of challenging outdated norms and advocating for equality, encouraging a reevaluation of gender roles in modern relationships.

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## The Good Wives Guide 1955

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You say ' Good ' or ' Very good ' to express pleasure, satisfaction, or agreement with something that has been said or done, especially when you are in a position of authority.

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1. Being positive or desirable in nature; not bad or poor: a good experience; good news from the hospital. 2. a. Having the qualities that are desirable or distinguishing in a particular thing: a good exterior paint; a good joke. b. Serving the desired purpose or end; suitable: Is this a good dress for

the party? 3. a.

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Explore "The Good Wife's Guide 1955" and uncover timeless tips for homemakers. Discover how these classic insights can inspire modern living. Learn more!

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