

**EPISODE 960**

*“ER: I realized that this is happening to me, the little girl who said this was not going to happen to her. The woman who is trained, I’m Harvard trained to use my voice. I’m a mediator by training. If this was happening to me, I figured, and then I went out to find out that this was probably happening to other women.”*

[INTRODUCTION]

[0:00:50.3]

**FT:** Eve Rodsky, author of the now New York Times bestseller *Fair Play* is on the show today. We’re very lucky. Eve is doing a worldwide tour right now for her book, it is in the Reese Witherspoon book of the month club as I mentioned, New York Times bestseller, she’s been speaking everywhere, good morning America, all different stages. I actually saw her speak at a recent JP Morgan event and thought, I need to get her on my podcast and I reached out, she immediately responded.

Turns out, she loves the podcast, she’s read my books and here we are. It’s a privilege too have her on the show. For anyone listening who feels as though they have yet to really figure out domestic work in their relationships, to make it fair play. Eve’s got the book, she’s got the game, she’s got the manual and she has the science to back it up. It is a fascinating conversation about how she arrived even at this topic. How her work is impacting families in particular men, simple steps that all of us can follow to have more peace on the home front.

Here’s Ever Rodsky.

[INTERVIEW]

[0:02:03.7]

**FT:** Eve Rodsky, welcome to So Money.

[0:02:06.0]

**ER:** So happy to be here, I love your podcast.

[0:02:08.2]

**FT:** Well, thank you, and I love everything that you're saying in your new book, fair play. Quick question, has the Nobel Piece committee reached out yet because this is conflict resolution at its finest.

[0:02:21.4]

**ER:** Thank you. Well, I will say that I have a very private job, no one really understood what I did, I used to say, I'm a philanthropic advisor and mediator and thank god for the HBO show Succession because now, everybody knows what my clients look like and I feel like those skillsets you know, have now really helped me in fair play. Bring those mediation and conflict resolution skills to all of us.

[0:02:50.7]

**FT:** I'm sure you've seen this book, it's everywhere right now, congratulations on New York Times bestseller list.

[0:02:56.9]

**ER:** Thank you.

[0:02:58.1]

**FT:** Reese Witherspoon's book club. Basically is a revolutionary, real world solution to the problem of unpaid, invisible work that women have shouldered for too long and you Eve Rodsky have been tapped by Reese Witherspoon as the expert on this topic for a new generation of

women but how did that happen, first of all? I want to go into the business of this first, how did this happen?

[0:03:22.5]

**ER:** Well, it is – it's been a seven-year journey.

[0:03:26.6]

**FT:** So it wasn't overnight?

[0:03:27.7]

**ER:** Nope, it is definitely not overnight, this is a seven-year, this is what I call my unicorn space, we'll get into that but I ended up with a giant passion for the gender division of labor and it all started after a text my husband sent me that I talk about in the book, my second son is born and my husband sends me a text that says, I'm surprised you didn't get blueberries.

Literally, thank god for that text, I say this to Steph all the time, we're still married and we're living to our play every day. I like to say I'm not just the hair club president but I'm the first client or whatever that old commercial was. At that time, after my second son was born and I receive the "I'm surprised you didn't get blueberries" text. I pulled over the side of the road and I just started sobbing.

You can picture the scene, I had a breast pump and a diaper bag on my passenger seat. I had returns for new baby in the back seat, which is great that they gave me the gifts but the store policies are like one day I didn't want to waste the money. I had a client contract on my lap with a pen stuck in between my legs, trying to mark up my client contract at every traffic light, red traffic light stop, on the way to pick up my older three-year-old from his transition toddler program that in America, since we really value working parents lasts like 10 minutes.

Even though I was going to be late to pick up Zack, I had to pull over, take a breath, cry over this – "I'm surprised you didn't get blue berries," text and as I was thinking, sitting there crying,

thinking you know, I used to be able to manage employee teams and now I'm so overwhelmed, I apparently can't even manage a grocery list. More importantly, how had this happened to me, how would I become the default or as I call in the book, the she-fault for every household and childcare task for my family including apparently being the fulfiller of my husband's moody needs.

[0:05:33.2]

**FT:** Also, how did you husband arrive at this place where he expected you to be the grocery whiz and all the things?

[0:05:40.2]

**ER:** Well, that's it, right? I mean, this shouldn't have happened to me because I'm a product of a single mother from eight years old, while I would help her, that's why I became an organizational management specialist I think and mediator because I was always helping her mediate with her father and also working on her piles of late eviction — late utility bills, eviction notices, I would pull out things from the mail if I saw a red signs stamped on it. Very worried about those things.

From that early age, I realized that I didn't want to live like that. That I was going to have an equal partner and I was investing, going to invest in making that happen for myself. I married that equal partner and things felt really fair. We took turns doing the dishes, ordering in food, marking up each other's — I marked up his operating agreements, he helped me get my — he marked up my interview questions to get my dream job at JP Morgan.

Two kids later, I'm in this situation. I realized that if this was happening to me, the little girl who said this was not going to happen to her. The woman who was trained, I'm Harvard trained to use my voice. I'm a mediator by training. If this was happening to me, I figured, and then I went out to find out that this was probably happening to other women.

[0:07:00.5]

**FT:** So many women and I think what's so beautiful about this book and the aftermath is that men are picking this up and families are so grateful.

[0:07:11.7]

**ER:** Yeah, I was going to say, this is sort of breaking news but you know, the book's been only out for two weeks and we have unsolicited emails, the info at Eve Rodsky, it's not where people would find me, now, normally people will find me on Instagram or something but at this email address, we have over 300 emails that have come in and the woman who was helping me sort through them said 70% are men.

[0:07:37.5]

**FT:** Wow.

[0:07:38.0]

**ER:** How cool is that?

[0:07:39.6]

**FT:** My gosh, that's amazing.

[0:07:43.3]

**ER:** A new stat for you. Really cool

[0:07:45.6]

**FT:** The hook of this book is really that it's a game. You've gamified this.

[0:07:51.6]

**ER:** Yes, it is a game, it is absolutely the heart of *Fair Play* is a game and the beauty of this game is that you hold test cards, there's a hundred cards in the Fair Play system and each year you and your partner, you hold cards that you value, that you've talked about before, that you value.

And then, it's not destined, you don't have to hold them forever, you re-deal but it's all based on the rules of – that you find in the book. But everything you need to know about the Fair Play game, I like to say that you can learn from just one word and that word is mustard. What I mean by that is somebody in your household knows that second son Johnny, your second son only eats protein with French's yellow mustard. That that's how he gets his protein down.

That's in the business world what we call conception. Then, someone has to be the one to notice when the mustard's low and put it on a grocery list along with other groceries for the week. That's what we call in business, planning. Then, someone actually has to get their butt to the store to purchase the yellow mustard and that's in business what we call execution.

That's where men step in, in my research over 500 men and women that mirror your senses. I found men were stepping in at the execution stage and that's a big problem because they bring home spicy Dijon, the grossest mustard with the seeds in it.

[0:09:23.6]

**FT:** Or ketchup! Even the right category.

[0:09:24.8]

**ER:** Yes, right. When they do bring home the right category of mustard and it's the gross one with seeds in it that your son would never touch. Then men all over the country were – and actually the world because I have interviews in Japan, the UK, Australia, Norway, they're saying to me, I can't do anything right.

I'm failing at the home stuff. Because even when I go to the grocery store for my wife or my partner because this happens same sex couples too. I'm bring things, I'm bringing on the wrong

thing. And then, women all over the world were saying to me, Eve, you want me to trust him with ownership of our estate planning, our living will or healthcare directive.

He can't even bring home the right type of mustard. It's not about blueberries, right? It's not about mustard, it's really about trust.

[0:10:25.3]

**FT:** It's not about getting to 50/50 like the – it's not about you get 50 cards, I get 50 cards. Let's talk about that too because I think there's some confusion there.

[0:10:34.3]

**ER:** Okay, very important, if all your listeners take away one thing, it's that I believe 50/50 is the wrong equation. 50/50 has been holding women back for a hundred years and what I mean by that is it's never 50/50. When you don't get 50/50 and this is what I found in my data. Expectations and disappointment are what come out of that.

Then people tend to give up and say, I might as well do it myself and the time it takes me to tell him how to do it. When you focus, we change our focus off of 50/50 and we focus on the full mustard situation. On ownership, on someone who holds the card with full ownership, with full conception, planning and execution. Even if it's one card.

You are bringing home the right type of mustard and it changes the dynamic of trust in your relationship. I found it over and over again in my beta testers. This is the good news. The good news is science backs me up. The good news is science shows and I went deep with my consultant, was the gender division of labor expert professor Darby Saxby and an intern I got out of her lab.

We went deep into the literature, into the science and the truth is that perceived fairness is more important than actual fairness. Because you don't even know, what does actual fairness even mean? It's how we perceive it. That's why your fair is going to look different than my fair. I can't

tell you what your fair is going to look like but I can develop a system so you can develop your own fair and that's really what fair play is.

[0:12:12.8]

**FT:** Do you find that the roles of the game are different when there is a partner who isn't working or a partner that make exponentially more money. The reason I ask this is because we put so much value. There's so many, the card that you hold that is bread winner, there's a perception that that holds so much weight, you know? Justifies, well, I'm not going to do all the laundry because I got the most important job.

In those cases, I've written about this in my book, you know, *When She Makes More*, I've taken a seat of your idea which is like, don't ask for help, ask for accountability. Help me with the dishes, the kitchen is your domain.

[0:12:53.2]

**ER:** That's it. I mean, Farnoosh, I feel like, if you and I both talk about this, let's go on the road together because this is literally, and I ordered your book by the way too. Yes, it is all about accountability and this is the beauty of it. The beauty is that men back to the men, right? 70% of men who are requesting this book and asking me questions.

They want accountability, they want ownership, they want to know their role. Everything else that has come up before *Fair Play* — I write ever book and article, they're saying things, even in the New York Times, you know? That I love, has articles in it say, the way you fix this, one woman's suggestion was to train your husband by acting helpless.

Another one was move to a foreign country where your husband knows the language and you don't so he has to fill out school forms. I mean, this is how — this is the conversations we're having.

[0:13:45.9]



**FT:** Crazy.

[0:13:48.1]

**ER:** How unproductive, right? But when you sort of flip the script like you were saying about accountability. It's how our best organizations work. All I'm asking is that we treat our home with some respect and rigor. That we retire the three toxic words, figure it out, and we actually figure it out in advance, not in the moment and that way we're not fighting over mustard.

We're not – oh sh\*t, we don't have mustard in our house, go to the store and get it. Go buy me tampons and so men are telling me they're running around. One man tells me that he's locked out of his house over a glue stick. You can't make these things up. He's driving around White Plains, New York, thinking to himself, do I wait till my wife cools down, do I bring the glue stick home now even though I forgot to bring it home before and she says it was the last thing, it was just one thing that she asked me to do?

Do I drive into New York City to go get a hotel room and stay overnight? I mean, these are conversations men are having. It is unfair to them. Because we are not giving them the accountability or the ownership and Fair Play is about, when you give over that card, you had it over and by the way, it does take us doing some education.

Some left wing feminist, you know, my mom is one of those. Some of her friends would say to me when they read the manuscript. Well, shouldn't men be the one? Shouldn't we be inviting men to have these conversations? Farnoosh, what I'll say is like, you can do that but you'll be waiting another hundred years.

[0:15:13.5]

**FT:** Yeah.

[0:15:14.6]

**ER:** Let's be Nora Efron instead of being she says, you can be the victim of your own life or you could be your heroine, right? Let's – empowering. It was empowering for me to sit down with Seth in a new way and say, I don't want to just sob over blueberries. I want to tell you that I feel like my time isn't being valued the same as yours

We used to value each other's time so fairly. And here's what I mean, I hear you saying that you're in charge of extracurricular sports for our sons. I know that you mean well by showing up at the field but here's what I'm doing behind the scenes. I'm deciding what sports they should play, conception. I'm planning 18 items behind the scenes, what equipment they need, ordering it off of Amazon returning it to Amazon when it doesn't fit. Filling out enrolment forms, signing at waiver, figuring out a login some AOISO portal, trying to figure out how to –

[0:16:12.0]

**FT:** That damn portal.

[0:16:13.1]

**ER:** Right? You know the damn portals, peeling oranges for snack day and I want you to own this. Own it in the scheduling and getting them to practice. Own this for me, own this one card and you are going to give me eight hours of my life back. You did it.

[0:16:30.3]

**FT:** Amen, well how does outsourcing fit into this equation to this model? Because I am a big fan of just if neither one of us wants to do it or has the capacity to do it or frankly you know, it is just easier to have it to be outsourced, some families I mean did you watch that very first episode of the Marie Condo Netflix series? There was a couple where –

[0:16:52.5]

**ER:** Yes.

[0:16:53.0]

**FT:** You need to go in there and really figure like you need to go there and figure it out for them because they weren't getting it.

[0:16:57.2]

**ER:** Well someone sent it to me because there was this late article or some article that said, this is not about tidying up, this is about the gender division of labor and I said, "Oh my gosh."

[0:17:04.5]

**FT:** Exactly, yeah the husband didn't value outsourcing laundry. He's like, "My wife doesn't work. Yes, she taking care of two toddlers." Nobody wants to do laundry.

[0:17:17.2]

**ER:** Okay, you're right. You are totally right and this is why there is suits in the game. So this is where my professor also helped me of the gender division of labor psychology. We worked on it together because what we realize is that I wanted to use her research, which is that men choose, ultimately choose tasks that they can do in their own time table. Back to the value of time, whereas women are choosing tasks that they have to do in their own timetable.

Like making school lunches, picking up the kids when they are sick from school whereas men were doing things like lawn and plants, right? Watering the plants when they had time. So those are called the daily grinds. Some of those daily grinds are outsourceable but some of them aren't. So even if you think laundry is — there is still 50 cards in the Fair Play deck that are not outsourceable because typically and this is from my data.

Typically you are not outsourcing, taking your child to get a haircut. You typically go with them. You are not outsourcing medical and healthy living like if your child needs their adenoids out, you're on top of that and you are going to be there for that surgery and your child has special

needs, you are going to be working on their IEP, their individual education plan. So it was very important that there is different suits because then you can look at the suits.

And say yes, there is a green suit called home and there is a yellow suit called out. Those suits, you can download them on fairplaylife.com. You will see them in the book, those suits are a little bit more outsourceable but when you get into the caregiving suit and the magic suit, those aren't. So even if you outsource the execution of say childcare helpers or babysitter or laundry there is still somebody who is holding the conception and planning of that part.

I am a huge executer outsource fan and I say to my husband all the time, I appreciate you outsourcing, getting my children to sports practice. Whatever carpool, whatever parent as long as it is safe and they have a booster seat you want to outsource that, that is wonderful but they're going to be ones texting you to pick them up or whether they are late, outsource the sh\*t out of it just as long as I don't have to conceive and planning anymore.

So that is how outsourcing comes in. It is really an execution step, where somebody in your home is still probably holding the conception and planning for most homes.

[0:19:41.5]

**FT:** Right, you have simplified this and you called this your unicorn space. You feel like this is your billion dollar idea is that what that means or — ?

[0:19:50.2]

**ER:** Well yes, well the Unicorn space is sort of change how I wrote the book because as I told you and from what I said about my clients, I am really into fixes, right? I am an organizational management specialist and mediator. I am really into solutions but what happened was along my 500 plus couple journey, the interviews with men and woman from all walks of life that mirrored the US census there was a theme that was too hard to ignore.

And it was a theme of identity loss for woman after kids and a lot of it happened to stay at home moms but it has also happened to women as I define in the book called new super women who

do have a very intense job and are doing all the cards and are parenting and they sort of – all of these women were saying to me, “I don’t even know who I am anymore.” I am either on a treadmill or the stay at home mothers a big data set of them were saying to me:

“Yes I have three Ivy league degrees but I am an object at rest, it’s physics. Objects of rest stay in rest, objects of motion stay in motion and now that I am an object of rest, I don’t have unicorn space or I don’t even know what my passion and purpose is beyond being a parent.” And that is dangerous. It is dangerous for marriage and it is really dangerous for self-worth and it is really dangerous for longevity.

So this idea of being you, what makes you, you, and how do you share it with the world that is what unicorn space is. It is based on, the reason why I call it unicorn space is because it is like the mythical, beautiful, magical equine that’s white and gorgeous and you know, you see it flying in the sky and whatever you or have a rainbow, however you picture your unicorn right? This beautiful white space for your brain, a creative space, magical space.

Whatever you want to call it, it doesn’t f\*cking exist just like a unicorn unless we can reclaim it and that is only I believe in the context of domestic rebalance. I find it very women shaming to hear about finding your passion and your purpose on top with the CBD oil pedicure I am supposed to get and be a size two and have my hair done and all of this crap that I am supposed to be doing, on top of what, holding all the cards?

Not when I am crying on the side of the road with blueberries and having a pen sticking me in the vagina. I am not thinking about unicorn space at that time.

[0:22:27.9]

**FT:** It sounds like there might be a cohort of readers out there that could use some therapy too because this is also some mindset work that needs to happen in order to really, you know?

[0:22:38.2]

**ER:** Oh my god, we’re going on the road together.

[0:22:39.4]

**FT:** Okay.

[0:22:39.9]

**ER:** I think it is so important that you set that up because a lot of people say to me, “Why isn’t it just Fair Play game? Why couldn’t this just be the cards?” I mean I could have done it as like, whatever those are called, Cards Against Humanity, but a 190 pages are the data and the “woke-ness” that I need women to come on a journey with me, right? Not every woman is going to come on that journey but when I say to you that we are the worst purveyors of the toxic time message that women’s time is less valuable than men, a lot of women don’t believe me.

And so then I go out and try to prove it to them. Women all over this country don’t value their own time and that is where the crux of the issue was. It was not about glue sticks or blueberries — or mustard. It is the core crux of the problem was back to this, whatever the patriarchal trauma or wherever it is from, we don’t value in the time as same as men. We know that from equal pay issues, right? We know that in the workplace but it is insidious in the home.

[0:23:42.0]

**FT:** When we run our own companies women, we pay ourselves less than when men run their own companies. So you know the —

[0:23:49.0]

**ER:** Correct and it is definitely happening on your side, right? I mean I am sure So Money could do a whole entire other podcast on time value of worth of time and sort of how that measured in equal pay issues but on this side, women were saying to me things like, “Of course I should hold more cards and pick up the extra slack because my husband makes more money than me.” Though that is a terrible argument because I just said, men will always make more money than us even the same jobs.

So throw that to the side, another argument we have to throw to the side — I am a better multitasker, I am wired differently. I went out to the top neuroscientists in the world. Women are not better multitaskers, we do not have any different executive function than men and we know this because men are the CEO's all over using their amazing brains and capacity to conceive and plan and execute just not in the home.

But what one neuroscientist said to me off the record, so I have a beautiful neuroscientist who tell you women are not better multitaskers, in the book, but this is an off the record quote and he said to me, imagine you can convince half the population that they are better at wiping asses and doing dishes, how great for the other half of the population? This is a man saying this to me.

Hence our Forbes list, look at our Forbes list last month. Top 100 CEO's what do 99 have in common?

[0:25:16.5]

**FT:** Genitalia.

[0:25:18.3]

**ER:** Men, they're men. So those are the things we have to cast aside. The last one I will say that really got to me was in the time it takes me to tell them how to do it, I might as well do it myself. So I went to the top behavioral economists in this country and they said that is such short term thinking for women. Of course you want to take the time to tell him how to do it now so that you can invest all of those extra hours long term in your career.

In your passions, in your unicorn space, in the raising of your children and the connections, human connections, adult friendships. So these are all toxic time messages that we have to work on ourselves and each other to help us through them and that is fortunately and unfortunately why if your play had to be a book because we have work to do on ourselves before we can get to the gameplay.

[0:26:08.2]

**FT:** Whoa, this is so good. This is so good. I want to know when we are going on the road, what is next for you?

[0:26:14.8]

**ER:** Yes, we are going on the road together.

[0:26:15.9]

**FT:** This has been two weeks everybody, what is another two weeks going to look like and what is the hope for the journey that you want this to ultimately have? What is the body of work here?

[0:26:29.1]

**ER:** Well thank you for asking that. Actually no one has ever asked me that.

[0:26:32.4]

**FT:** What is your five year plan?

[0:26:35.0]

**ER:** I like my day job and I really liked raising my family, you know I like both of those things but I am not Rosa Parks but I will say a quote that is always been very resonant for me from her was when she asked about the fear, the fear of standing up and speaking against social norms and obviously, in very important ways and she said you know, when your mind is made up the fear diminishes and I sort of feel that way for my journey.

My mind is made up that this is going to be the message that I shout from the rooftops until the day I die that all time is create equal and until there is a society where we value holding a child's



hand in the paediatrician's office as much to society as we do an hour in the boardroom, nothing is going to change and so that's my contribution to the world is to continuing to shout that from the rooftop that an hour holding our children's hand in the paediatrician's office is as valuable to society as an hour in the boardroom.

[0:27:35.5]

**FT:** Thank you so much but one last question before we go, we have a Chase connection. I know that you worked at JP Morgan, this podcast is sponsored by Chase and we're asking guests this month, this is airing in November about what they are grateful for in their financial lives because there is a correlation between gratefulness and being rich.

[0:27:57.7]

**ER:** Wow, cool.

[0:27:59.1]

**FT:** Science has found that.

[0:28:00.4]

**ER:** So you're teaching me something too, that is so cool. I love stuff like that.

[0:28:01.7]

**FT:** The more grateful we are, yeah so in the spirit of that, what is something that you are really grateful for in your financial life Eve?

[0:28:08.5]

**ER:** I am so, so grateful that I was able actually to use the skillsets that I started cultivating at JP Morgan actually and growing into a thriving practice where I was able to be my own boss and I

think the gratefulness I have of that is that it is really scary to go out on your own and it requires a lot of logistics management to manage clients and working with accountants and hiring your own employees but I feel so grateful to have had the opportunity to be my own boss.

[0:28:45.0]

**FT:** And now you're teaching us all. You are the queen of parlaying you know?

[0:28:49.5]

**ER:** Yes, I am a parlay-er for sure.

[0:28:51.1]

**FT:** You're a parlay-er, I love it.

[0:28:53.1]

**ER:** Yes but you know, the other thing I will say, I am grateful for the unique experiences I had that people may not even know are going to help them later in life but I will say skillsets you may not know are going to be parlayed. Just lean into what you are doing at the time because those skillsets often show up later on.

[0:29:09.9]

**FT:** It absolutely does. Everything, every minute is an investment. It is an investment.

[0:29:14.0]

**ER:** Yes and I will say back to women out there who are not earning money at this time and are in partnered relationships, I will say to you that you are valued. These cards matter that you are holding, your work is important and I think that we should just make sure that women know that there is a lot of value in raising good human beings.

[0:29:40.8]

**FT:** And men, we've got a lot of stay at home dads out there.

[0:29:43.0]

**ER:** Yes and stay at home dads for sure. Stay at home dads as well.

[0:29:46.0]

**FT:** Eve Rodsky, thank you so much, Fair Play.

[0:29:48.8]

**ER:** Thank you so much.

[END]