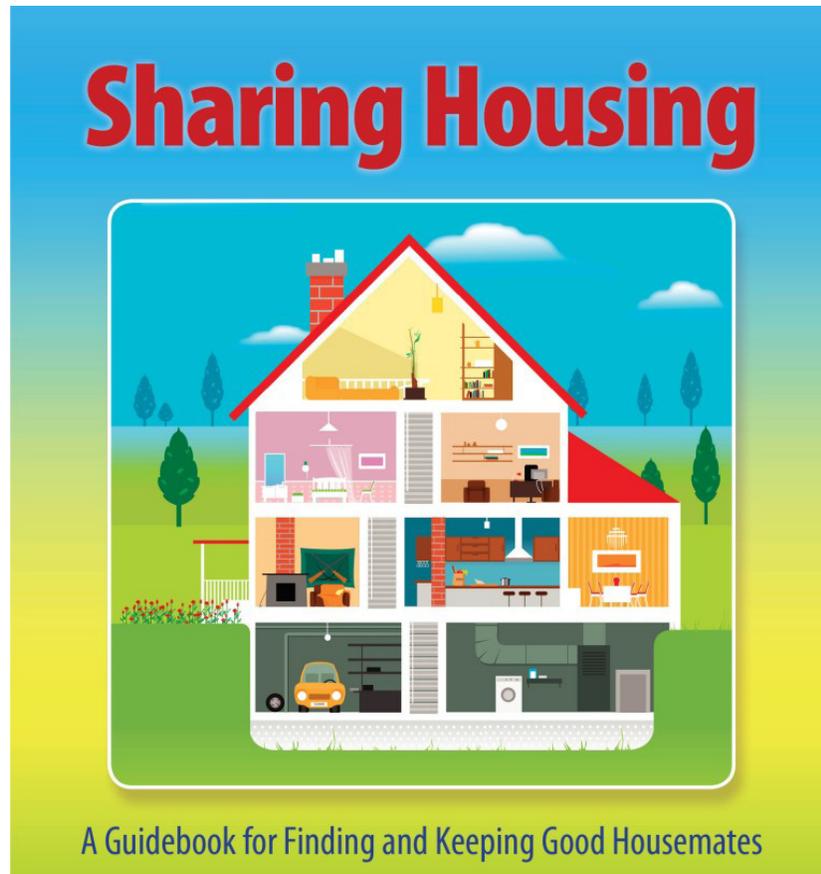


Sharing Housing



22 Reasons

For Living with Others

22 Reasons for Sharing Housing

Money

Save money on the monthly cost of renting/mortgage

It stands to reason, if two people are sharing the cost of a rental, each pays less than they would if they were alone. What this extra money can do for them depends hugely on their income. For some it is the difference between homelessness and a roof, for others it allows them pleasures of extra income.

Save money of the cost of utilities: heat, water, power, cable/TV/Internet

Modern living requires a range of services unknown to many as recently as 100 years ago. Heat, electricity, water, cable and Internet access are all essential in a dwelling. Two or more people splitting the bill will spend less than one alone.

Have “extra” money for retirement, critical expenses, or luxuries

Whether you are a homeowner renting out a portion of your home, or a housemate renting a portion of a home, your costs for housing are significantly reduced. This means you have “extra” income. Extra income that might allow for travel, pursuit of an education or avocation, gifts to loved ones to help them in their lives or simply building up retirement savings. Over ten years, it can literally be tens of thousands of dollars.

Company

Be able to say “hello”, “good morning,” “good night,” “how was your day?”

People who live with others may not notice the little bits of connectedness that give a lift to one’s day. Simply having an exchange, talking about the day, relating with another person is an essential part of being human.

Have someone with whom to have a meal

It is universally true that humans gather around food. There is something about eating together that is soul nourishing and creates communion. Some households eat together by plan and share the work of shopping, cooking and cleaning up. Others are more spontaneous or occasional. However housemates decide to manage food and eating, it can be a pleasure to share a meal.

Helps you “get out of yourself”

When you live alone it’s easy to become preoccupied with your own thoughts and feelings. Your perspective is the only one you have and so any internal conversation is amplified. You think something so often that then it becomes true. Having another who can listen to an idea or review an incident can provide some perspective and reality. What was a big deal, diminishes into manageable proportions just for getting it out of internal dialogue into the clarity of reality.

22 Reasons for Sharing Housing

Social Connection Mitigates Loneliness and Related Depression

Provides social connection, offsetting loneliness and the slide into chronic loneliness.

Loneliness is very complex. It is a feeling, an ache, a sense of something missing.

Research on loneliness has shown that for those who are chronically lonely, it also has life-threatening physical affects, including hyper-tension, poor sleep, depression and a marked increase in the development of Alzheimer's disease. While having a housemate doesn't guarantee that one would be less lonely, the opportunities for social connection are more easily available.

Someone to witness one's story

A person's life is a story. Stories are the essential stuff of being human. Since times pre-historic people gathered to tell and retell stories. It is through story that we create meaning. When important things happen we remember them and we tell others about them, whether it is the birth of a child or a camping trip gone wrong. The daily events, the little bits, are not momentous but they are part of who we are. They are part of our story and having someone witness our story gives it a reality and offers comfort.

Opportunity to practice generosity and kindness

Generosity and kindness are qualities that improve ourselves and our world. They are the natural expression of giving to others. We live in a society that doesn't overtly support the development of these virtues, though every major spiritual discipline encourages the individual to cultivate them. Living under one roof with an Other allows for opportunities to be kind, to be generous and in doing these we grow and like ourselves better. When we don't practice kindness and generosity, we shrink.

Learn different ways to live from non-family person

We learn from our families so much about how to behave. Their behaviors are normal to us. When we share a house with someone not from our family, we get to observe and learn different behaviors. While the difference might be felt as "wrong" with perspective we might learn to appreciate that there is an alternative and then we get to choose how we want to be. For instance, going to work right away on a project and finishing it within three days of when the client asked for it, rather than putting it off for "next week" or cleaning the kitchen while cooking instead of waiting until the meal is over.

Comfort

Margaret Mead said, "It is an almost universal need to have someone who wonders where you are when you don't come home at night." The anxiety of "what would happen... if I fall, if I have a heart attack in the middle of the night, if a stranger breaks in, if...if... if." These are worries that some notice overtly, for others they are pushed away. Some research indicates that when there is another person sleeping under the same roof, everyone sleeps better.

22 Reasons for Sharing Housing

Possibility for increasing one's network of connections

A housemate's friends and family visiting the home can extend one's social connections. This could be important for seniors for whom many of their community, family and friends, have died. It could also be valuable for anyone first moving to a new location where they don't yet know the area and have had time to develop their own network.

Be included, not left out

In their book, "The Lonely American: Drifting Apart in the Twenty-first Century" Dr. Olds and Schwartz describe how a person who is lonely develops the feeling of being left-out. And although (as they say) "left-out sounds like a whiny, juvenile term it is a real emotion with real consequences." They cite a series of studies by Baumeister and Twange who found that people who feel socially excluded: are more aggressive, engage in self-defeating behavior, less able to produce intelligent thought, avoid meaningful thought, emotion and self-awareness, give up on frustrating tasks sooner than socially connected people.¹ In the research, the subjects had no report of feeling any different, they just performed differently. "Feeling left out dramatically changes how people function without their noticing that they feel particularly bad about it."

Social connection allows for enthusiasm.

Why is it that we all want the "You go girl!" or "Atta boy!" encouragement when we try something new? Why are support groups so successful? We need other people to cheer us on. When we take on a new challenge, be it cooking a soft-boiled egg, or deciding to shed 50 pounds, or learning to play an instrument, if there's nobody to tell us we did well, it is easy to lose one's enthusiasm.

Assistance

Help with indoor cleaning tasks.

Why does dust and dirt happen? It's a fact of life. Every home requires a certain list of tasks: cleaning the kitchen, bathroom(s), dusting and vacuuming, washing floors, taking out the trash, compost, and doing the recycling. These are common. In addition, a home may have a particular set of needs for instance maybe a green house to be watered or a wood stove to be cleaned of ash, firewood to be split and carried in, a hot tub to be cleaned. Some households may choose to hire outside cleaning help rather than manage the tasks, some homeowners may feel that they are responsible for all space except the portion the housemate rents. However the agreement, living under one roof all can have responsibility for sharing the tasks.

Someone to take care of pets when you need to be away.

A housemate can feed the cat when you know you won't be home at dinnertime or to let the dog into the backyard when delayed by traffic. Going away for the weekend or a vacation? Again, the housemate can help out. There are many variations on this theme depending on the preferences of both people. When more than one housemate has a pet a fair exchange of trading tasks can be a big help.

22 Reasons for Sharing Housing

Someone to pick up food and medicines when sick.

When we're too laid up with flu or a cold to get to the store for the necessary food and medicines it's awfully nice to be able to ask someone who is already coming to the house and may already be going to the grocery store to add a few things to their errand list. Very different from asking a friend or relative for whom it may be a large effort and cost time.

Help with outdoor seasonal maintenance tasks.

Maintenance takes time and effort. Unless the home is an apartment in the city, there are outdoor tasks that must be done. Mowing lawns, shoveling snow, and weeding flower beds are much less onerous when the tasks are shared. In fact, the care for flowers and vegetables and the creation of a garden can be a shared pleasure.

Help in an emergency.

When your car won't go, a housemate can give you a ride. If you need to leave your car at the shop, a housemate can pick you up and take you home. The good news is that the housemate is going to the same place you are. If a winter storm is coming a housemate can pick up the candles and milk you might need. Of course this is a reciprocal arrangement. If your housemate's car is in the shop, you can give him a ride home.

Allows for temporary housing while transiting to a new life.

Often when relocating, leaving a relationship or going to school or otherwise leaving one life behind for a new one, living in shared housing offers a place to live without making a permanent commitment to a specific place before being sure of this new step.

Sustainability

Use Less Of the Earth's Resources

When you share a home you use less of the earth's resources than you would if you lived under separate roofs. This is especially true for the oil, gas, electricity or wood that provide heat in the winter and air conditioning in the summer.

Need to Own Less "Stuff"

When you share a house you simply need less "stuff." You only need one toaster, iron, vacuum cleaner, blender, lawn mower, food processor, microwave, wireless router, toaster oven, etc. Similarly, the tools we use occasionally such as a snow shovel, shovel, saws, sewing machine, or power drill can be shared.

Resources to Learn More

Consulting

Let me hold your hand! If you are unsure, worried about making a mistake, or simply recognize that it would be useful to have an experienced professional to talk with as you go through the process, hire me to consult with you. You will get a listening ear, clarity about your next steps, and support in framing whom will work for you as a good housemate. I'll hold your feet to the fire to make sure you don't make some of the more common mistakes and celebrate with you when you find the right housemate for you.

Contact Annamarie at connect@sharinghousing.com or call (802) 387-0487.

For more information on consulting services, go to: <http://www.sharinghousing.com/consulting>

Books

Sharing Housing, A Guidebook for Finding and Keeping Good Housemates. By Annamarie Pluhar. A practical, easy to read guidebook detailing both the process for finding a good housemate, and how to live well in a shared housing arrangement. "The book is full of great ideas and advice." - Dan Kesterson, Talon Broadcasting

Available here: <http://www.sharinghousing.com/book-offer> and on Amazon, iBook, Kindle and Nook.

Coming Soon! A companion workbook containing all worksheets in the book, plus more.

Sharing Housing Website

Check out the website. <http://www.sharinghousing.com>.

- ✓ On the website, download the free PDF, "5 Questions You Must Ask to Guarantee You Won't Be Living with a Psycho." (This will also sign you up for our newsletter.)
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- ✓ Join the Forum
- ✓ Use the interviewing questionnaire.
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