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Conversations Topic: Household Chores

Transcription:

Curtis: Hi, everybody, it's Curtis Davies and Amy: Whitney from realenglishconversations.com. Today, we're going to talk about something called chores.

Curtis: And this is a word that I teach almost every single student of mine. And what is a chore?

Curtis: A chore is the odd job or little tasks that you do usually around the house.

Curtis: We're going to talk about some of the things that, that we do in our house, who has the responsibility or makes the decisions on which chores to do.

Amy: I think this is something that every couple or every family has to go through. Honestly, I remember when I was growing up, I don't think I really had a choice. My parents told me to do something and I had to do it. Whether it be washing the dishes or taking out the trash, sweeping, mopping, vacuuming, whatever that task may be.

Amy: And occasionally my dad would need a hand with something and it would always be this horrible task. Like he would say, oh, I'm going to trim the hedges outside, Amy:, come outside and help me.

Amy: And I'm like. And that meant that I had to pick up all the trimmings from the trees and get like a rash on my arm. And it was awful. So I yeah. I think one of the main reasons why parents have kids is to maybe have some help around the house. But for us, Curtis:, we don't have any kids, so we have to handle our own house cleaning and especially when we were living in Canada.

Amy: Now, this is something that I've realized is different between Canadian culture or even in the United States or Europe, I think, versus living here in Mexico. People have a housekeeper in Latin America. And this is something that is pretty inexpensive to hire somebody to come and clean up your house, which is pretty nice. But in Canada, is that a common thing?

Curtis: No, because it's really expensive to hire somebody in Canada to come and clean your house. And really people just take the chores on for themselves because it's hard to afford to get somebody to, to come in and wash your, wash your laundry and wash the, the windows and all that kind of stuff. So.

Amy: It's something that's really out of the question. It's out of our budget. I mean, I think you're paying somebody 30 dollars an hour.

Amy: Usually, it's a cleaning company, though, so they have some usually a woman that is coming and she does the cleaning and the company is taking their cut. So at the end of the day, it's really expensive to hire a housekeeper. And no, no, we, we just clean our own house. It's not even a decision.

Curtis: I don't think we even thought about it or considered it. We just did it ourselves.

Amy: Yeah. We grew up always doing the chores in our house as well.

Amy: So, OK, let's go back before we get distracted about talking about our childhood, I want to talk about how we distribute the chores in our own household.

Amy: So I think there are some things which I am better at than you. And there are also things that I really don't like to do. And I just make you do those things that I don't like to do. So why don't you tell us, Curtis:, what are the main responsibilities that you have around the house?

Curtis: OK, so main responsibility number One, Amy: does a lot of cooking and I try to be the cleaner. Right. You're the cook. I'm the dishwasher. We don't actually have a dishwasher, like a machine. A machine. Yeah. So I wash the dishes. I try to do it like half the time. I know you wash a lot of dishes while you're cooking, so we try to balance that out.

Curtis: But it's a, I want to put it as a main responsibility for me, but a really main one. Of course, we have three cats. Some of you might know that from our pets conversation, but I have to keep things clean.

Curtis: They have a bathroom, too, so it's the litter boxes. So I have to scoop the, scoop the waste or scoop the poop.

Amy: Yes, scoop the poop and the pee clumps out of the box.

Curtis: Right into the garbage, because sometimes, you know, I might leave it for a couple of days and Amy:'s like, you didn't clean that box. It's stinky in the house.

Amy: The litter box stinks, Curtis:. Did you clean it? No. That's what I say. Just like that.

Curtis: You're not that mean, really

Amy: Well, it depends. Depends on how stinky it is.

Curtis: And then, of course, you know, once I clean those, I try to do it every two days sometimes. You know, those little days go by or whatever, but and then I take out the garbage as well.

Amy: OK. All right. So you guys can hear from those chores that I have delegated to Curtis:. I do not like cleaning the litter box. It's not that I don't like it, but I think it's a chore that he can handle.

Amy: And taking out the garbage has always been something that I've made Curtis: do since the beginning of time. And for me, I am much better at dealing with the laundry. And the truth is that it's more complicated. What I have in my mind about what needs to be done to the specific type of clothing is something that Curtis:, it's like an unknown mystery, you know, for him, everything would just go into the washing machine. He would put some soap in and they would just come out the other side folded.

Curtis: But I think they'd come out the other side destroyed.

Amy: Maybe, maybe. But for me, I have certain things that I like to hang dry. I have certain clothing that needs to be hand-washed because it's a delicate type of clothing and I can recognize those types of things and they need to be handled in a certain way. So I usually handle the laundry side of the responsibilities.

Amy: And I think really especially thinking back to when we were living on Molnár Road in Kelowna with that house, we actually had a yard as well, and we had to sweep, mop and vacuum in the house.

Amy: So how did we deal with the yard work?

Curtis: The outdoor chores? Yeah, not all chores are indoors. So I would cut the grass. I would usually water the lawn.

Curtis: Amy, I think would really start planting a lot of things in our garden and, and did a lot of garden work.

Amy: Pulling weeds keeping it clean and harvesting the things that were ready, raspberries, beans, whatever we had out there.

Curtis: And then in, in the, in the wintertime, it would be shoveling snow and, and things like that. But yeah, more chores in the summertime, I think.

Amy: Yeah. And I think that we split both of those. I actually remember the time when we were so busy with our delivery business because we had a delivery business at that time.

Amy: You guys can refer to conversation called delivery service if you want to hear about that. But we literally were so busy that sometimes we would come home in between deliveries and do like I don't know what we would call it, like a power mower something like mow the lawn really, really quickly.

Amy: So, almost like one of those, like super-charged people. They have the lawnmower running across the lawn back and forth like a cartoon character, you know, and yeah. So we had to fit in the management of the different things that we needed to do to maintain our house, even if we were busy.

Amy: And it wasn't always convenient.

Curtis: Turning on the water sprinkler, things like that.

Amy: Yeah, exactly. So what about growing up as a kid? How did you guys manage the chores in your household?

Curtis: OK, my parents tried to do a rotation between my three older brothers and myself, and so everybody had a fair turn. So it would be washing the car, cutting the grass, all these kind of things, even, even cleaning up our rooms and stuff like that were indoor chores, too. Curtis: But the thing that happened with older brothers is they found the sneakiest little ways to make sure Curtis would do all of those chores, especially if it was something that took a long time. We had a big lawn on a corner house, so I always got stuck with cutting the lawn. It was, you know, my older brothers would say, oh, yeah, I've got something else to do. I'm going to hang out with my friends, or I'd be the only one left.

Amy: Curtis said that he was going to do it. He promised.

Curtis: Exactly. Yeah, yeah. They would do exactly that too. Did you have anything happen like that with you and your brother?

Amy: You know, I don't really remember a specific list or a rotation of chores, but I do know that I think I've always had this kind of entrepreneur mindset, OK, how can I earn some extra cash?

Amy: OK, and I used to receive an allowance. So to give the kids motivation, it's really, really common that parents will give a little bit of money.

Amy: But you have to do whatever responsibilities, whichever chores, like every week you have to do them. And so, for example, my chores were usually helping my brother to wash or dry the dishes he usually dried, I usually washed and I can't remember what else I did before I got my promotion, but I got a really, really small allowance.

Amy: I think it was five dollars. I was, I don't know, like six or seven years old. But by the time I was eight years old, I noticed that my much older teenage brother, Stan, he was starting to be a lazy teenager and he never wanted to do the chores. So the lawn wasn't mowed. He wasn't sweeping and mopping and cleaning the bathroom and doing all the other things that my parents paid him to do.

Curtis: Right.

Amy: But I knew Stan got an allowance of twenty-five dollars a week and that was big bucks back then, like twenty-five bucks a week that's serious money.

Curtis: For a kid it's like winning the lottery.

Amy: Yeah, it's like my job. So I don't know if it was smart or stupid, but I told my parents that I would take over the responsibilities of the house and if I received Stan's

allowance I would do my chores plus his chores, and that sort of how I went through my childhood.

Amy: I did a lot of cleaning, but I was really excited about that twenty-five bucks every week.

Curtis: Money making opportunity. Thanks, Stan. Yeah.

Amy: Exactly. But yeah, I think that was the, the main way that we kind of worked it out in our household.

Amy: It was just the two of us and my brother was quite a bit older than me. He was seven years older. So, you know, we were in different stages of life at that point as well.

Curtis: I always got stuck with the bad stuff.

Amy: Yeah. And nowadays we have something that it's kind of like a luxury in Canada and we've been able to hire a housekeeper. And the truth is that when we moved to Mexico for the first, I think, two years that we were here, we were living in a small two-bedroom apartment.

Amy: And even though I could hire a housekeeper, no problem. It was really, really inexpensive. We just didn't feel like it was necessary because I think we were used to cleaning our house and it was smaller. Right.

Curtis: Right. Yeah. But now we live in a in an older house. But it's big. It's a large area to try to keep clean.

Amy: Yeah. I mean, this house, we what happened was Curtis: and I were actually working in the apartment. We had started to teach online and I was working at the kitchen table. And you were working at a desk in the bedroom because it was the only place where we had air conditioning in the house and then it was OK, you know, but we realized that we really needed to have maybe our own workspace and somewhere where we could have a proper desk and a proper chair and have more like an office. So this is the point where we started to look for other places. We were looking for a either two bedroom with a den or an office or a three-bedroom place, and that's what we found here.

Amy: But, man, this house, I don't know, I think it's from the 1970s, but this is like a huge Mexican house, like there is so much wasted space. I think if this house was a Canadian house, it would have like five bedrooms.

Amy: So anyway, fortunately, we had a really good price and we were able to move in here. But no, I had no hesitation. I needed a housekeeper for sure.

Curtis: Because it takes so much time to do these chores and to clean a place like this. And we're both really busy people. And, yeah, it's it's, it takes all day.

Amy: And what is the best benefit out of this lovely lady that we have hired to help us around the house?

Curtis: She's a sweetheart and she's an excellent cook. So sometimes she'll make food for us and the food will be like this authentic, authentic Mexican food. And but she has many other different creations. She gets creative in that kitchen and you hear that blender. I know that it's going to be a homemade sauce or some sort of homemade food. That's going to be incredible. So not only is you know, she's here to do the cleaning and stuff. She cooks and she's like a friend.

Curtis: I really do feel like she's a friend more than.

Amy: Like a family member or something. Exactly. And one of the other things is that if we go away on vacation or we need somebody to look after our cats for a couple of days, she's more than willing to help us out and stop by to give them food and scoop the box and all of those things.

Amy: So, yeah, it's been a little bit different living here rather than living in Canada. Of course, the day to day cleaning we still have to handle. Curtis: is still in charge of taking out the garbage and cleaning the cat box and washing the dishes, I still cook and, yeah, do the dishes as well. I make a lot of dishes when I cook. You guys have no idea that kitchen is a disaster, but it's worth it, the food is good.

Amy: Well, that wraps up another one of our interesting and funny conversations. I hope that you learned a ton of expressions and words and really listen to the way that we speak about these day to day activities. This is the real English that you're probably not going to find so easily in the textbooks or planned lessons.

Amy: But by analyzing spontaneous conversation like these, you're really going to have the best opportunity to see how native speakers speak. And through that, learn the phrases that you need to learn to sound natural while you're speaking.