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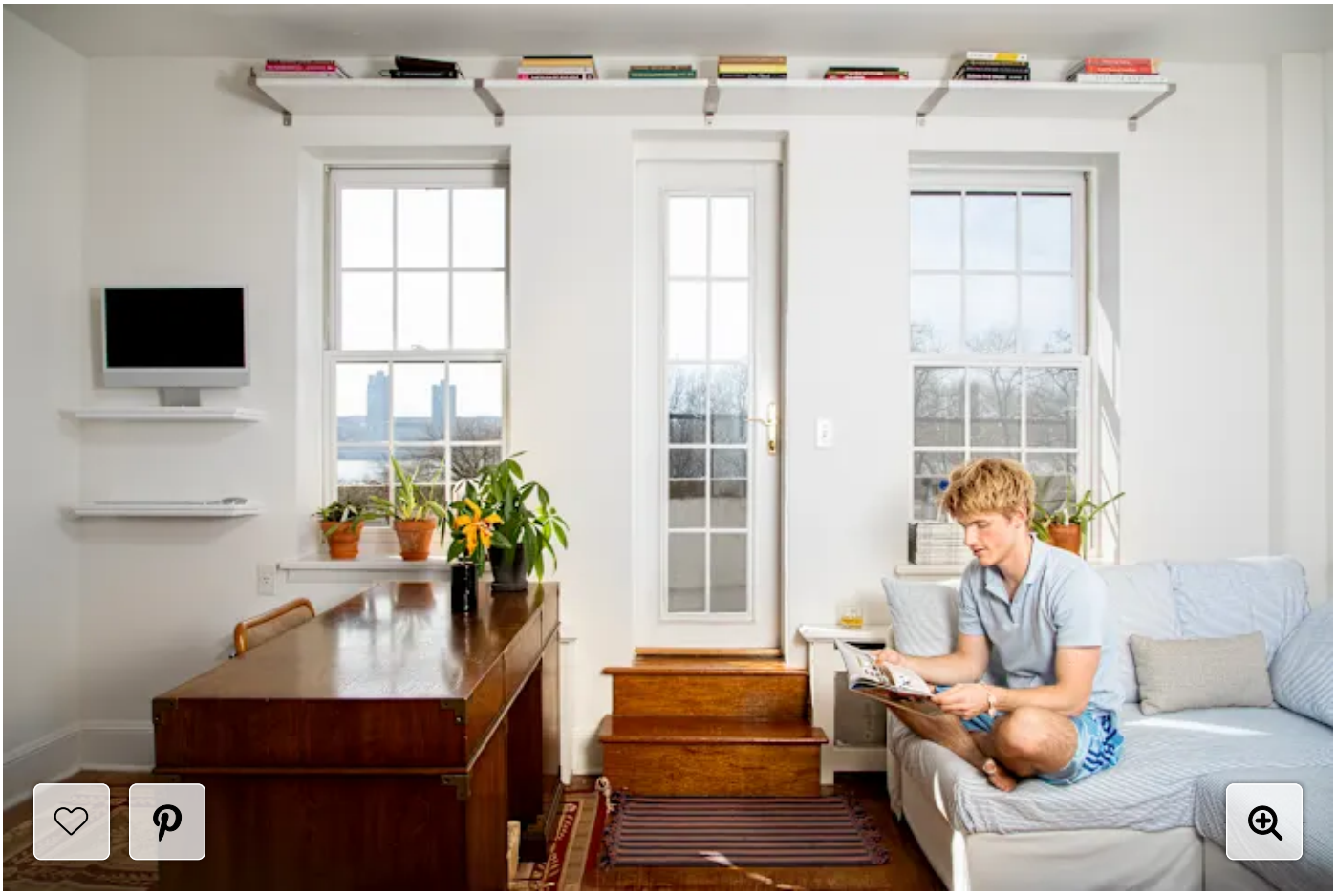
LIFE

# My Husband's Quirky Dinner Habit Is Actually the Smartest Productivity Tool



By Cheryl Fenton

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Credit: Kiritin

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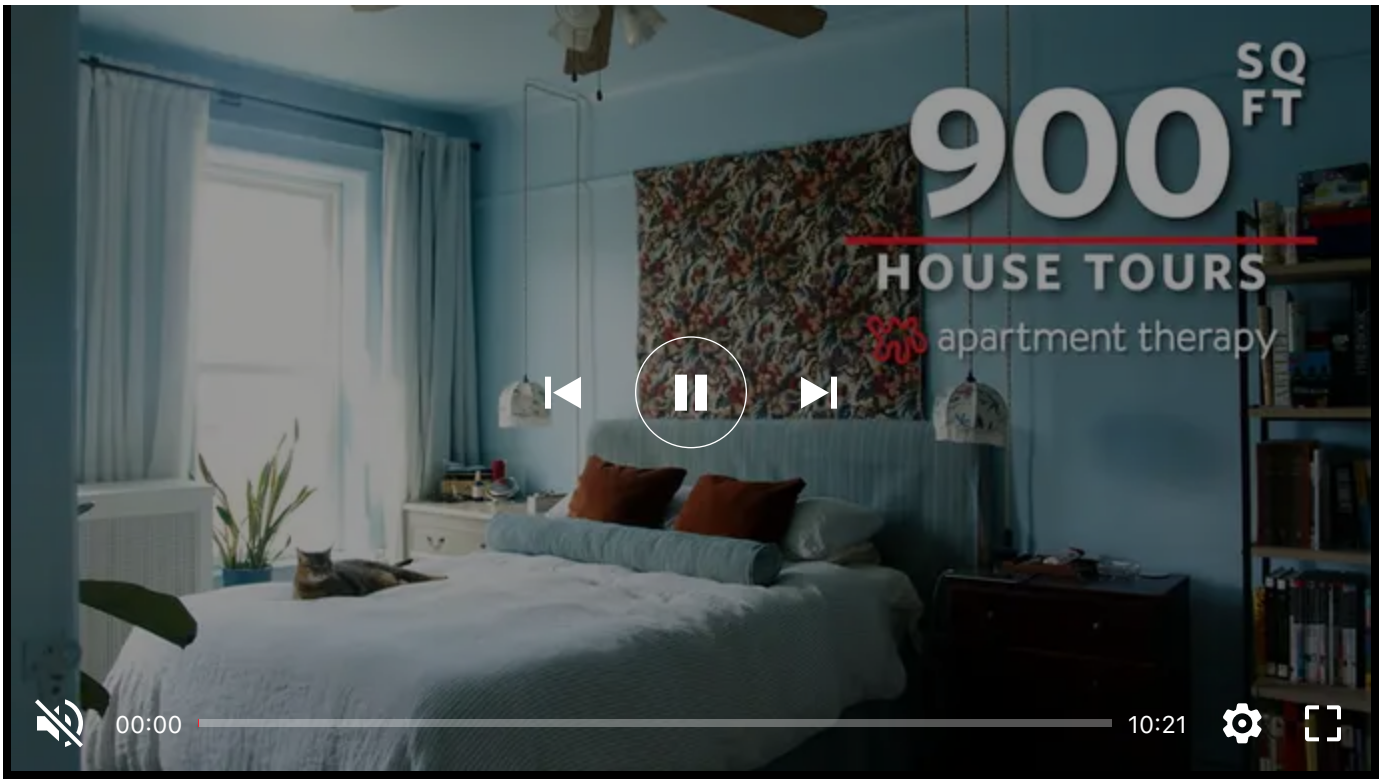
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Quirky marriage discovery alert: After years of being together, I noticed that my husband has a unique way of eating dinner. He always eats his veggies first, but not because he particularly enjoys them. It's quite the opposite. To him, veggies are something to be endured in the name of good health rather than actually enjoyed. So when his meal hits the table, he immediately eats whatever vegetables are on his plate as quickly as possible. Once they're gone, he moves on to the more enjoyable parts of the meal.

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For a while, I thought this behavior was peculiar (and also quite endearing). Then I realized my husband is a man with a plan. All this time, he’s been doing something called **“eating the frog,”** and it’s a philosophy that works beyond getting your vegetable intake out of the way. As it turns out, it’s actually a great **productivity tool**.

## What Is “Eating the Frog?”

The productivity concept of “eat the frog” was popularized by Brian Tracy in his 2001 book ***Eat That Frog!: 21 Great Ways to Stop Procrastinating and Get More Done in Less Time***. The basic idea’s simple: Identify the task you’re most likely to put off (apparently, snacking on a frog) and do it first so it’s not hanging over your head all day (or hopping around, to keep the analogy going). The upshot? You can go through the rest of your day knowing the worst thing you’ll probably have to do is already behind you.

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The origin of the oft-repeated concept of “eating the frog” is up for debate. Some attribute it to American essayist and humorist **Mark Twain**, while others say it was in collected works of French writer **Nicolas Chamfort** in the 1790s. Regardless of its origin, Tracy turned the frog into a full-blown productivity philosophy that encompasses 21 strategies for conquering procrastination. And apparently my husband, unbeknownst to him, has independently developed his own dinner table version.

Credit: Cheryl Fenton

## How We Use This Productivity Concept at Home

Because my husband sees eating vegetables as an unpleasant task, he gets them out of the way first. Once I made the connection between his routine and this productivity plan, we started applying the same philosophy to things to do around the house. We call chores we don't want to do our "vegetables" instead of "a frog." If there's an undesirable household task, we try to do it first instead of spending the entire day (or, let's face it, sometimes several days) avoiding it. Clean the gross bathroom first. Deal with the pile of paperwork first. Paint the brick fireplace hearth first.

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Do we *want* to start our day doing these tasks? No. But the anticipation we hold onto is often worse than the chore itself. Knowing something unpleasant is waiting for you keeps stress levels up and motivation levels down. Once it's done, it's done. There's also something surprisingly satisfying for a couple when you have a shared understanding that you tackle unpleasant chores after morning coffee.

## Why This Productivity Concept Is So Smart

I wish I could say that this rule works because it makes the chores fun. In all honesty, it doesn't. But it makes them feel smaller. It allows us the time to take a collective deep breath, dig in, complete a task, and move on. Once the "vegetables" are gone, we get to enjoy the rest of what's on our plate (aka the rest of the day) without that nagging feeling that something unpleasant is waiting in the wings.

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These days, while I watch my husband immediately go for the vegetables at dinner, I don't think he's being weird. I respect that he accidentally stumbled upon a pretty good life strategy. Once you get the thing you're dreading out of the way, then you can enjoy dessert.

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