

RUTH

Uhum. (Pause) So there is a problem?

ROSE

Oh yeah. The man is completely incapable of finding his own stuff. He's blind to the things that are right in front of him. I'm tired of being the one that has to know where everything is. Solve everything all the time. He needs to look for himself, right? And he has this fascination with driftwood, all of a sudden. He collects it from the beach. He says he's going to make something from it but never does so it's collecting in the living room here. Brings in the bugs.

RUTH

Driftwood is really big right now. I just bought some from this guy off Kijiji. Great for garden décor.

ROSE

(Noticing that some of the driftwood is missing) Kijiji! That's his new hobby. Now that actually does get him moving but he's buying so much stuff to fix and sell again that I can't get the car in the garage. I had a bike in the living room for four weeks. The keys bowl my mum bought is missing, so my guess is he sold it. It's just too much. (Pause) He just doesn't appreciate what I am going through at the moment. I have so much work to do. At the bloody kitchen table! Which I share with a puzzle, he won't finish. The cases are going through the roof...I'm tired of take away food...so many people need shifting from hospital beds that I'm actually contemplating asking staff to take patients home after their shift...not enough staff...the couch stinks, Coop stinks. I'm just so overwhelmed. I...

Start
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RUTH

Rose, breathe. (Pause) You have a lot on your plate. You need to stop trying to manage everyone else outside your nine to five day job.

ROSE

Seven to whenever actually. (Pause) Sorry.

RUTH

You need to find ways to alleviate the stress. Make sure that when you're done work; your home life is your safe haven, your

calm place. Create your "no stress" bubble.

ROSE

Calm? Have you met Coop? Sorry, I guess I never thought of it like that. So what do I do? How do I get this bubble? I mean he is, at no fault of his own, very much a part of my workday. Do I say to him, hey its five pm cut the stress until nine am tomorrow?

RUTH

Uhuh. Talk to him. Find solutions together.

ROSE

I've tried that. Coop doesn't do well with my approach to problem solving. Once during an argument I tried to calm things down by asking him to help me define the problem and develop some solutions. So I gave him three cue card, always has to be three, and asked him to write down three of what he thought were our main problems. So one problem, one cue card. Then the flip side of each card would outline what he thought was the solution to each of those problems.

RUTH

I like that approach. How did he do with it?

ROSE

Well, it did calm down the argument. At first I thought he was just humouring me by participating, but then he sat down right away and got to it. So I thought, this is great! This is working!

RUTH

That's good.

ROSE

Uh, wait. Not done yet. So I came up with three problems pretty quick, that's the easy part. I went to get us a glass of wine and when I came back to start on my solutions, he was done.

RUTH

That fast?

ROSE

Yep. I told him I wasn't done yet but that's okay we could start with his. He wanted me to read them aloud.

RUTH

And what did they say?

ROSE

Actually I still have them in the junk drawer. I'll show you them. *(ROSE goes to the draw and gets the cue cards and reads card one showing them to RUTH on the screen)* You are driving me nuts. *(Turns over the card)* I think you should leave. *(Reading card two)* You are driving me absolutely nuts. *(Turns over the card)* I really think you should leave. *(Reading card three with COOP's accent)* You are driving me absolutely bloody barmy! *(Turns over the card)* I really think you should leave right bloody now! *(Pause)*

RUTH

I don't even know what to say to that.

ROSE

Thought so. Is there a type of therapy to fix that?

RUTH

Well... *(Avoids the question)* What happened after that?

ROSE

He went to the pub. Things just blew over. It kinda made me laugh though. He insisted on keeping the cards so he didn't have to redo the work.

RUTH

He's going through a lot right now as well, I'm sure. Not working and seeing you work; it must be difficult for him.

ROSE

Yes, I'm sure you're right.

RUTH

Don't LEAD him Rose, he's not one of your project deliverables. Walk through this time of COVID together. Listen to him. Let him think of ways to come up with solutions. *(Pause)* Or at

least make him think it's his idea.

ROSE

Gotcha, I can do that. And, the driftwood has got to go!

RUTH

Yes, the driftwood has to go. At least out of the house anyways.

RUTH's doorbell goes in the background.

RUTH

Excuse me for a second.

RUTH disappears off camera to get the doorbell.

ROSE

No problem.

There is a muffled conversation in the background while ROSE waits for RUTH to return. Front door is visual.

RUTH

(Answering the door) Hello. I'm just on a call. Let me end it and I will be right back.

MAN'S VOICE

(English accent sounding like COOPER) Alright love. No rush.

RUTH

(Returning to the camera) Sorry. It's a delivery I've been waiting for but our session is up anyway, so I'll sign off now. Take care Rose. See you in a month.

ROSE

Thank you and sorry again about being late... *(RUTH leaves the session)* late. Okay, guess we're done.

End

ROSE closes her laptop pours a glass of wine and starts to make a salad. COOPER enters with a large bit of driftwood, toilet paper and pizza. He leans the driftwood up against the wall and puts the pizza on the table.