

## Spending Time With Your Baby - Making The Most Of Joy.

When you first bring home your Bouncing New Baby, you will surely feel you want to watch over her and be with her much of the time, especially if you are a first time parent. Newborn babies are fascinating even if they are not yours; when they are your own, that special feeling takes off into the stratosphere. You may feel tempted to hold them, watch them and chat to them the whole time; even when they are asleep you will enjoy standing silently over them and observe them in their slumbers.

Those first few days are a magical time, but then a transformation may take place. For the first few nights, the night feed may be a novelty, and you may even feel "great, she's awake, I can see her again". But then sleep interruption may start to irritate you rather than be a signal for pleasure; tiredness begins to take a hold as your sleep is disturbed so often. Night feeds, colic, bringing up her milk; all can contribute to an interrupted night. Insufficient sleep mixed with aggravation can start to eat away at that feeling of wonder you had when your baby first came home.

Your baby has not changed; but you have. She is the same gorgeous baby you brought home from hospital. Her simple life is evolving only very slowly to her; it is yours that is changing most rapidly. Those rapid changes, maybe mixed with a new level of tiredness you have not felt before, represent the first exertion of pressure on that very special relationship - you and your baby.

Then there is day time. The old day to day pressures are still there; the need to rush around to the shops, worrying about money, wondering how to deal with work, job and baby; the car not starting, the leak in the pipe under the sink, the washing machine seizing up under the constant use. The days spent wishing you could get a good night's sleep, wishing you were back at work earning more money, and being with your work colleagues. The time you spend thinking: "where's my life gone? I have no control anymore. That baby is my jailer in the day time and tormentor at night."

Stop! That is a train of thought you must either not board, or at least get off at the first station. It is a train fuelled by self pity, and heading down the track to unhappiness for you, your partner, and your baby. You are the only one who controls your life; you choose between the track to contentment and joy, or to discontent and misery.

Remember, that baby loves you more than anyone else ever has, unless you have had a baby before. Her devotion, her admiration, and her dependence are total. It is for you to decide whether that is something to cause resentment in you, or the overwhelming joy that it should. That little miracle of a baby is the biggest responsibility you have ever had, but she can also be the source of the greatest pleasure and joy.

Compare your baby's devotion with your work colleagues you miss; in 10 years time you will probably have lost contact with most or all of them. Your workplace is like a busy junction where people cross over. Your work? If you are employed, your bosses will ditch you as soon as they need to if they see a "better" alternative. Your car, your washing machine, your leaking pipe; do you really think they are important compared to that unique and potentially wonderful relationship that is in your arms, the relationship with your baby?

You make the choices; you take the actions. You have experienced in the first few days with baby at home that there can be sheer joy and excitement; wonderment and appreciation. The baby loves you to bits; you can love her to bits too, and put the exterior trivia in their rightful place. Or, the baby loves you to bits and you can wallow in resentment because she's interrupting your life, demanding attention when you have a leaking pipe or a car that won't start.

In black and white, on paper, it's a simple choice; but how can you make that choice and achieve the right balance in your life? Think about it quietly for a while; somewhere on your own. Think of the pleasure the baby gives you in those precious moments when you do not feel stressed. Then, make a conscious decision to perpetuate those moments; to make each moment you have with your baby, infant and child a moment when you and she are there simply for each other.

As your baby grows, there will be countless moments of development that can bring you a lot of pleasure and pride; learning to walk, getting out of her crib, her kisses and cuddles, her first word and every new word thereafter; her expressions, mimicry, her laughter and her first attempt to dance to the music on the radio; her attempts to control and manipulate you, and learning to use her charm to get her own way. All can be moments of intense pleasure, if you allow them to be.

Such developments you can allow to merge into the noisy background of life's trivia, and miss the joy they can bring you. In so doing you are increasing the chances of an unhappy baby, and an unhappy you. Or, you can make each moment you spend with your baby one for you to enjoy to the full, shutting out life's trivia for those times you are sharing with your offspring. In so doing you would increase the chances of a happy baby and a happy you.

You make the choices; you take the actions. For your own sake and the baby's, spend as much time with your baby as you can, and set out to enjoy it to the full. Shut out the trivia that are trying to spoil your unique relationship, and your life will be considerably better for it.

It is not always possible, but try to organise the trivia around your time with baby. The more you give her precedence, and willingly, the more happy you will both be. Enjoy every single moment of watching her development. It is something that cannot be repeated.

## About the Author

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