

The Baby Doesn't Compromise With Love

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What Nobody Told Me About Having a Baby



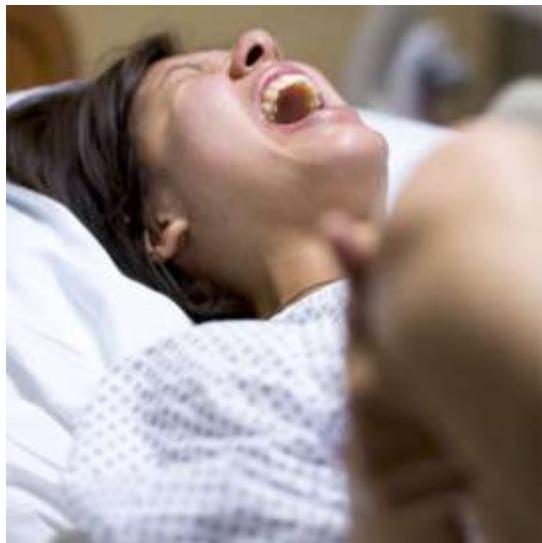
When my husband and I announced our pregnancy last fall, I sought out all the advice I could get. I talked to my and grandmother, as well as my cousin, who was also pregnant and who already had a two-year-old daughter. I also bought *What to Expect When You're Expecting*, and read a little in it every day.

I even did a bunch of web searches as I came up with questions, and brought many of those same questions to my doctor throughout the pregnancy. As a result, I was prepared for gestational diabetes (which runs in my family) and gestational hypertension (again, thank you, genetics)

and most of the discomforts that come with pregnancy. I was also aware that breastfeeding could be difficult, that you go into a depression right after you have the baby, and that it can be months before you start to like your baby.

The one thing that remained constant, no matter what advice was given to me or where that advice came from was that everyone seemed to expect me to be radiant and happy and full of magic (except one or two other women who were pregnant the same time I was).

Then I Had the Baby



And it sucked.

And all of a sudden, everyone started commiserating with me.

Would it really have been so hard to induct me into the secret mommy club before I went into labor? I've heard of hazing, but isn't pregnancy a bit much for that kind of thing?

There is a lot to be said for the fact that I grew a freaking human being in my belly and then he came out and now he's going to grow up and have a life and impact the world – there's just nothing that compares to that. But, at the same time, what I really needed someone to say was, “pregnancy sucks, and that's normal; giving birth sucks, and that's normal; the first few months suck, and that's

normal,” in those words. None of this “well, it might be bad, but it could also go really well” nonsense. Honestly, I have never felt more lied to in my life.

Then everyone kept telling me “don't worry, it gets better, I promise.”



I had a really hard time believing them, and I even started to think that maybe it does get better for other people, but it could never possibly get better for me.

And then my baby started laughing.

And everything changed.

It's amazing how much power a baby can have. You'll do anything for a smile, and you'll do even more for a giggle, and sometimes it can be so easy.

But as soon as he starts to cry...crying baby

your brain shuts down completely until you've dealt with whatever the problem was and the crying finally stops. It's not physically possible to think about anything else until the crying stops. Your entire life

suddenly revolves around someone else, and at the beginning you have to do everything for him because he can do nothing for himself.

And nobody even tried to prepare me for that part of it.

I felt that I had prepared myself well for being a spouse. I spent years thinking carefully about all the different aspects of the husband-wife relationship, what it should be, what it shouldn't be, and why. I went to church workshops, read about marriage and spouses, and prayed and prayed and prayed. My husband also put a lot of effort into preparing, and when we first met, we both put in effort to seeing if we could make a relationship work, and ever since we've been married, our relationship takes some effort, as all relationships do, but it's wonderful and beautiful because of that.

Babies don't compromise.

It's not the same when you have a baby, it's a different relationship.

Babies don't talk, so it's not like you can communicate your issues with them and ask for their understanding and support.

Perhaps this should be obvious, but has everyone forgotten that women go nuts when they're pregnant and things that should be obvious simply aren't?

Common sense is a lot to expect from someone who has spent the last nine months dealing with sudden hormone changes and "mind fluff" only to then experience a pain that is more intense than any human being should be able to endure and then to be medicated up to the eyeballs with painkillers and vitamins. As crazy as pregnant women can be, I think the rest of the world is even crazier for expecting them to see the obvious for what it is.

It was kind of assumed that I would just intuitively know how to take care of a baby, that I shouldn't bother reading books about how to raise children or take care of babies because everybody who writes those books is wrong. There's no workshop to prepare you for parenthood, or pregnancy. And it's not like God is going to give you a heads up "hey, you're going to get pregnant in six months, so you might want to study up."

In our case, I was four months pregnant before I finally stopped writing off the positive home pregnancy tests. I mean, I was really stressed. I had just finished teaching Latin for the school year, we were taking some of the students on a week long trip to a convention, and my husband and I were planning a move from the East Coast to the West Coast. There was no way a pregnancy was going to stick; I was totally going to miscarry before I hit three months.

Plus, I didn't have health insurance. I had made all kinds of plans for all kinds of situations that might come up. Except being pregnant. Therefore, I couldn't be pregnant.

Yeah, right. Apparently, God has a sense of humor.



God also has a very good sense for what you can handle, what you can't handle, and when you aren't challenging yourself enough in your life. Looking back at pregnancy and delivery and what I physically survived, I am amazed. I don't mean to boast, but it's just unbelievable that any person could go through all of that and physically survive.

And do it again.

And again.

And again.

On purpose.

Sometimes I think there must be some kind of permanent brain damage or biochemical addiction that happens with the first pregnancy. Why else would anyone do that to themselves again on purpose?

Well, there is that whole True Love thing.

And that's the real thing nobody told me about having a baby. Divine Principle has always had meaning for me, but what it meant before pales in comparison to what it means now. True Love comes in many forms, but none so intense as that which a parent feels for his/her child.



Sometimes, it's warm and fuzzy, but mostly it's battle axes and shields. Your body fights against you the entire happy-baby time that you're pregnant, and then someone drops a nuke on you when you deliver (or try to deliver, fail, and have a c-section, as I did), and then you have to fight your way through recovery while being the primary caregiver of a tiny invalid. Because the only other choice you have is allowing your baby to fend for himself, and that's just not an option.

So you do things that should be impossible. You survive what no one should be able to survive. You do it without realizing you're doing it. Because it's the only thing you can do.

It's not about fear of punishment, or desire for reward. It's not even something you do because you genuinely want to do it. It's something you do because it's like breathing, and if you don't do it, you'll die.

And the same force that enables you to do that also gives you the ability to sing lullabies in a voice your child will never forget, kiss boobos better, and make the best chicken soup ever, even when it comes straight out of a can. Nothing could possibly be more amazing than that.

It would have been nice if I could have had this realization before my son was four months old, but hey, I'll take what I can get.