



“BABY-PROOFING” YOUR RELATIONSHIP

5 TIPS TO KEEP THE CONNECTION

Enjoyed your free guide to keeping the connection.

If you've recently had a baby, or even if you're just thinking about adding a baby to your family, you've probably given at least a passing thought to the notion that this new little being will likely impact your relationship in a big way. You're not wrong. Even the most well intentioned couples, who solemnly swear to weekly date nights, will find things have gone a bit topsy-turvy after your diapered addition.

As new parents you're likely seeing each other in a different light, which can be a bit disorienting. Add to that the typical concerns of "she doesn't love me as much now," or "he can't wait to escape us and get to work," and you've got an environment ripe for jealousy and arguing.

So what to do about all these new challenges to your relationship?

TIP #1

#1: Remind yourselves that what you're experiencing is normal, and that this time is temporary. You are in the midst of a transition, and in time you will become accustomed to your new roles. In the very beginning your baby relies on you for everything, so there is little of you left for anyone else. This will gradually change, and you will have more space for your partner as well as for yourself.

TIP #2

Talk about it. Expressing your frustrations and concerns to one another will help take the power out of them and make you feel less alone. As you do this, remember to use “I” statements and try not to be blaming. Being honest and vulnerable about your feelings will help you feel more connected to one another.

TIP #3

Sleep, sleep, sleep! If you aren't getting enough sleep everything else will be amplified. Take turns tending to the baby at night so that you each can get an uninterrupted stretch of at least 4 hours. After your baby has reached about 15 pounds or 4 months of age (check with your pediatrician), you may be able to sleep train your baby in order to get more adequate rest.

TIP #4

If you're at home and your partner works, make a plan for what happens when he/she comes home at the end of the day. You might feel crazed and ready to hand over the baby so you can have a moment to yourself, or be desperate for adult interaction, but does that work for your partner? Does he need a minute to adjust first? Talk through what you each need and make an agreement about how to handle this transition so that it doesn't turn into an argument.

TIP #5

Finally, make time for one another. Hire a sitter, or arrange a trade with other parents. Be willing to pump or give the baby formula from time to time. Doing this will not only be good for your relationship, but it will also help your baby learn that you will return and he/she is fine without you for awhile. If you simply don't feel you can leave the baby, at least hire a sitter for a couple hours and make a date at home. Aim to have these dates at least once a month, but be patient and flexible with yourselves. The most important thing is really finding time to connect; going out and having a nice dinner is less important.

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