



And Baby Makes Three: The Six-Step Plan for Preserving Marital Intimacy and Rekindling Romance After Baby Arrives

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Having a baby is a joyous experience, but even the best relationships are strained during the transition from duo to trio. Lack of sleep, never-ending housework, and new fiscal concerns often lead to conflict, disappointment, and hurt feelings. In *And Baby Makes Three* Love Lab(TM) experts John Gottman and Julie Schwartz Gottman teach couples the skills from their successful workshops, so partners can avoid the pitfalls of parenthood by:

- maintaining intimacy and romance
- replacing a culture of criticism and irritability with one of appreciation
- preventing post-partum depression
- creating a home environment that nurtures physical, emotional, and mental health, as well as cognitive and behavioral development for your baby

Complete with exercises that separate the "master" from the "disaster" couples, *And Baby Makes Three* helps new parents positively manage the strain that comes along with their bundle of joy.

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Melissa Erb Burgess says

Some helpful research data but also mostly super obvious examples of how not to treat each other like shit once your baby is born.

Erika RS says

A baby puts stress on a relationship. How well a couple weathers that stress is important both for the health of that relationship and on the longer term happiness and well being of the baby. The affects are both direct and indirect: stress can lead directly to distress in everyone in the family, and it can also lead to eventual divorce and the negative consequences of that.

This book takes a practical and concrete approach to helping couples handle the changes that a new baby brings. Unlike much of the advice on the topic, this isn't just things like "appreciate each other" or "divide chores evenly". This book is filled with detailed exercises which, if you go through them with your partner, will help you figure out what areas are likely to be troublesome for you and help you deal with them.

One thing to note about this book: most of it isn't specific to parents. Although I haven't read all of Gottman's books, of the three I have read (this one, *Why Marriages Succeed or Fail* , and *The Science of Trust*), this one is by far the best presentation of practical exercises to help a couple improve their communication. My husband and I found the exercises valuable as we went through them, even ignoring the upcoming baby. So even if you aren't parents, this book may be worth taking a look at.

Tricia says

Brian and I took turns reading this out loud. It was slow-going, but worth the effort. If you've read other Gottman material, you'll definitely notice some repeated material. The exercises and discussion prompts were the most valuable aspects of the book, since we don't normally ponder matters such as the dreams behind our mundane wishes or how we hope to instill a family legacy. The book also encouraged good, frank discussion about our fears and sex and family history.

Michael De Paola says

Coming up on the halfway mark... some good ideas, but too much of a rehash of earlier books.

Early on this book starts out as a condemnation that if you're not always acting on the best behavior in front of your spouse during pregnancy that your children will have all sorts of development problems. The

evidence is okay, but not completely damning. Either way though, real life gets in the way and it didn't seem to offer many solutions. The second half of this book was much better than the first. I particularly enjoyed a chapter on involved fathering and the positive outcomes it can make in children's lives. This pushed it into three-star range.

Joshua Marx says

3.5 stars, but rounded up. The material in the book was really good, but it is very redundant, hence the mark down. Read this with my wife while she was pregnant and it was really good so we could discuss the baby and foresee the stresses on our relationship. It is great to focus on each other now that we have the baby, and to make sure we all get what we need. It does seem to cast fathers in a semi-negative light, like we don't know how to care for a baby or might not want to; not really overtly, but the message is there. That part might be true for some, but was also a negative. Overall, I thought the message was good, just wordy.

Melissa says

Quotes:

It is very human to be much more forgiving of ourselves than our partners. Psychologist Fritz Heider called this “the fundamental attribution error.” Translated, it means that it’s human nature to think, “I’m OK; you’re defective,” and it leads to “I’m right; you’re wrong.”

...neither party in a dispute be able to persuade the other party they were right until they could state the opposition’s point of view to their satisfaction.

We need to be able to state our version of our partner’s point of view to our partner’s satisfaction before stating our own point of view.

We also need to be able to make what Rapoport called “the assumption of similarity.” What he meant by that was what one of our clients called “giving our partner the benefit of the doubt.” Rapoport said that we need to assume that our partner doesn’t possess all the negative traits in this discussion, nor that we possess all the positive traits.

The research has shown us that the master couples handle repairs differently than disaster couples. Partners in successful relationships make and accept each other’s repair attempts. In contrast, unsuccessful partners either neglect to make a repair, or if one is made, they rebuff it.

We gravitate toward our perpetual issues especially when we’re overworked and exhausted, in short, after we have babies. Then it’s harder to deal with them because we lack the energy to stop scratching at them— and at each other.

When Alyson analyzed her data, she found that half the variation in the baby’s vagal tone could be accounted for by the quality of the parents’ conflict discussion while the baby was still in Mom’s womb. That’s a very powerful prediction! In other words, the quality of a couple’s marital relationship and how they handle conflicts while pregnant will determine, in part, what kind of baby they’ll have... The big news for us is that the quality of our marital relationship while pregnant is literally tailoring our baby’s temperament.

Danielle W says

I would recommend this book to every couple expecting a child, or already having children. Honestly, very little of the book is about child rearing. The majority of the book is how to work together to have the best marriage, because being a great spouse naturally dominoes to being a better parent and raising healthy kids.

My #1 take away goal (as of 38 weeks pregnant!): to not compete with my husband for my child's attention and love ♥️?♥️?♥️?

Lori Ben-ezra says

If you've read other books by the Gottmans, then you've already read most of this book. It's basically reiterating their research and clinical theories, with a few extra chapters on how this applies to couples expecting their first child or new parents. There's great information presented in the book, just don't expect any new information if you're familiar with their work.

Jessica says

"When we savor each other, our babies rest in the cradle of our contentment". -John Gottman

I thought this was a great book, that gives great tips on how to preserve intimacy and romance after baby comes. I also read John Gottman's Seven Principles for Making Marriage Work, and found a lot of the same information and tools in this book as he used in that book. I love Gottman's idea of Love Maps.

As with any Marriage book you take what you like and leave what you don't. There are some things in the book that I disagree with, but overall it was a great reminder to be pro-active with your marriage when change or stressful transitions are taking place, like the birth of your second baby! :)

Julia Murtha says

This book came highly recommended from my early childhood teacher. The idea and concept of the book is excellent as most people experience difficulty in maintaining their relationship after bringing home a baby. The author does a great job of outlining basic ways to get and stay connected to your partner. The disappointing part of the book is that the author provided examples of partners that held very traditional roles-- father works and is hands off and mother is the main caregiver. Also, he assumes that the father is uncomfortable caring for the baby and does not know what to do. I am hoping the main concepts of the book were updated to reflect a more modern household.

Emily says

Like asking a friend for advice and then hearing what you sort of already knew you were supposed to be doing.

In short: Parenting is stressful and tiring. Communicate as much as possible. Maintain intimacy (not just sex). Try to see things from your partner's view. Keep things spicy (quickies, masturbation, porn, oral, or roleplaying). Make sure Dads are involved parents with Baby. Think about "we" instead of "me".

It's not the book's fault I found this all so basic. I think I was looking for some magical tidbit of advice I hadn't thought of before, like how to not be tired, haha.

Having said all that, if open communication about intimate subjects is challenging for your partnership, as it is for so many, there are a lot of good exercises in here to help. In fact, some of them are foundational and may help folks who don't even have small kids yet/anymore.

Aisha says

The book is great, and I am a big fan of Dr Gottman's work.. but GOD so much emotional correctness! I don't believe in all that sharing and talking about childhood and stuff! it can backfire.. AND seriously! if a couple can spend hours doing "exercises" to improve their relationship I suggest they better go out and have one!!! So annoying! so far Susan Page is my all time favorite author when it come sto relationship..

Maggie Athridge says

This was a pretty good book - I think its less useful for people who have been married a while or already have good communications strategies in the relationship. I think it would have been more helpful if we had had our baby in the first few years we were married - the strategies they discuss are solid and well researched and I know people who would probably benefit from the book it just wasn't personally that useful.

Art says

"Small things often" - this is the advice the Gottmans give to couples to help their marital relationship survive and develop further after a new baby arrives. I especially appreciated their tips on making arguments/disagreements more respectful, tips like: give compliments, make light jokes, and listen to feelings during arguments. Restate your spouses' position before giving your own. Compromise, don't overgeneralize. This is real practical advice, and there's years of research behind what he's saying. The research is interesting for those that need it, the stories of couples that Gottman followed for years is even more interesting. I'd recommend this for couples with babies or couples who are considering having babies.

Liz De Coster says

Basically the same as all his/their other books, and for the most part could be easily summarized in a blog post.
