

Musings of a Listless Mind

Jake Rozran

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Chapter 1

Introduction

This is not a parenting book, but I will draw on many lessons I've learned in my short time as a dad. It is a bunch of short stories that have shown me that there is truly no one right way to do things, just the right way for you. Trust yourself and you'll find yourself very happy.

Chapter 2

Whatever Works for You

When I first found out I would be a father, I read books. Our OB/GYN made us go to a class. I was nervous, but I wasn't cocky. Every existing parent I knew wanted to give me advice and I happily listened. I wanted to make sure I knew what to do with the thing when the thing finally came into the world. I was excited - and as a perfection seeker, I knew I was going to do this dad thing right.

The first thing I learned is that it isn't a "thing," it's a "him," and he rocked my world instantly. It didn't take me long to forget everything I had read in the books, learned in class, and heard from trusted advisors. That's the thing that happens when you have a baby boy who decides that 2am is the proper time to urge mom to tell dad it's time to go to the hospital. By the time he arrived and all the dust had settled, it was late into the evening. That was hardly the last sleep deprived day I've had as a father.

I, like so many other fathers, wore the haggard look of an unshaved face and bloodshot eyes proudly as a badge of honor. All this time, I was tired but I was "doing it right." The second he made an uncomfortable noise, I was changing his diaper, offering him a bottle, and burping him. No child of mine will be subjected to "bad" parenting.

So... I ran around without sleep for a long time (like 14 months or more - I'm pretty fucking stubborn) before I learned the secret. It is not a bad thing to take cues from the kid and do the things he likes - so what if the books don't say to do it that way or if the hottest baby product on the market isn't doing what it promised to do. If the baby is happy (or asleep), leave him be! Even better, if I am happy, leave well enough alone and keep on keeping on.

DO WHATEVER WORKS FOR YOU and anything else be damned. Find your style, happiness, parenting technique, career, whatever and do it that way - if it is working (and you're not hurting yourself or others), keep on going. Give the baby a pacifier, or swaddle them, or let them sit in a dirty diaper, or

sleep with ear plugs, or take turns with your partner (if you are so lucky to have one) having a night off. Smile at the people who look at you funny or are bold enough to tell you that it isn't the right way - they don't have a fucking clue.

COME BACK TO THIS SECTION

This applies is more than just parenthood - this is an absolute truth in life. If you are a lawyer that wants to become a data scientist, go for it. Make sure you remind your lawyer friends what a work-life balance is the next time they tell you how hard it is to make partner.