



BABY STEPS

2 STEPS TO TAKE WHILE YOU ARE
WAITING FOR YOUR CHILD

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**THE CENTER
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BABY STEPS

If you have had a loss, or multiple difficulties during your journey, you may be experiencing more stress and tension than you would be having if the process went easily. As a patient once said, “my struggles took the stuffing out of me”. You have put a lot of effort into fulfilling your dream and although you are finally on your way, it can be hard to feel confident and relax.

This may be an exciting time but it also may be nerve wracking. For many, it feels like time is going in slow motion. Looking forward to parenting takes a combination of patience and faith. There will be so much to do when the baby arrives. Until then, you have time and space to wait. While you are waiting, it can be helpful to think about a way to use the time productively. Here are two steps that can benefit your state of mind and your future family.

In parenthood, as in life, it is important to feel whole. Focusing on practical advice and projects is useful but it can also feel like hopping on one foot. Giving some attention to your emotional life can help you feel balanced and grounded.

Just like when a baby learns to walk, beginning your new phase of family planning can be done best by taking small steps.

FIRST STEP:

To ground yourself, it is helpful to move inward. You may feel sadness when thinking about the past and anxiety when thinking about the future. The key is to spend some time in the present. Easier said than done, I know. So, let's start with a brief meditation. This meditation is most helpful if you can do it every day.

How to: Find a quiet place where you won't be disturbed. Sit on the floor or in a chair with your arms resting on your legs, palms facing upwards. Say these words, “I let go of my past stressors and embrace a grateful and happy future with my family”. Form a picture of your new family in your mind. If you are having difficulty picturing your future family, cut pictures out of magazines of families that resemble the family you are waiting for and tape them to your bathroom mirror and look at them daily. Visualizing, like meditation, takes practice.

Next, take 10 slow breaths in through your nose and out through your mouth. If your mind wanders that is ok. It is your mind's job to wander. It is your job to gently and kindly bring your attention back to your breath. Picture the breath being a gold stream of light going in to your body and then releasing. Imagine it is washing through you, filling you with hope and light. Count all ten breaths out loud or to yourself. In..and out. When you are doing this exercise, it may feel like you are doing it for a long time. It usually will not take more than ten minutes. Feel free to contact us for additional meditations at www.familybuilding.net.

If you can take a few minutes out of each day for a small meditation you will likely feel stress reduce a bit after each exercise. If you are able to practice a short meditation consistently, you should eventually feel a spillover effect. This means your stress levels should lower overall. Try it for one week straight and see if it helps. If meditation feels too difficult, a yoga practice can also lower stress levels and help you feel more centered.

SECOND STEP:

On a practical level you may be searching the internet for baby supplies and parenting advice. These activities can feel enjoyable and productive. Beginning a life book is another activity that can feel rewarding and enjoyable. A life book is your child's birth story. If a third party helped you create your child, information about that process and your unique story will be included. If you used your genetics and the assistance of reproductive medicine, a story that mentions people who helped you become a parent can be included.

This book will tell the story about how your child was born in your heart and finally arrived in your home. It is not meant to be a journal about your heartache but a history of the wonderful miracles and people who helped bring your child to life. Children love hearing about how they came into the world and the life book can help them feel connected to their beginnings.

Children understand information in concrete terms and will understand more nuanced and abstract information as they grow. Since the life book is an important object for your child to hold on to and cherish through the years, it needs to be appealing to children of all ages. Fortunately, life books are interactive, colorful and use abstract concepts that work for kids of every age.

Begin to compile pictures, receipts, airplane tickets, business cards from your doctor or attorney and newspaper clippings from this time in your lives. Take note of things that made you laugh and interesting experiences you had along the way. All of this information will be the beginning of a scrapbook that will chronicle your child's journey into your home. For more information on life books visit us at www.familybuilding.net.

Although you are now on your way to parenthood, you may still feel a bit out of control because you do not yet have your child in your arms. Taking these two steps can help you in ways that are beneficial to your current state of mind and your future family. Further, partnering with your significant other on these projects can help you bond and grow closer.

Putting the steps together: A meditation practice, no matter how small, can provide you with a sense of calm. Starting a life book will provide you with a valuable tool for parenting. It is not necessary to do both, but as a parent to be, honoring your desire to do things that are helpful for your child and caring for yourself will be concepts that will be part of your life forever

Warm wishes on your journey,

Lisa