

Parenthood



A journey of love &
teamwork

Love isn't enough. Survive parenthood as a team.

There's a saying (and a book) "what got you here won't get you there". Most commonly this is used in the context of careers, and what you need to do to move to the rung of the ladder. However, this can also relate to the context of becoming parents, and the evolution of your relationship with your partner.

Close your eyes and think back to your life pre-children. What three words would you use to describe how your relationship felt back then?

Now do the same for your relationship now.

In a longitudinal study by Shapiro, Gottman & Carrère (2000), they found that before having children, couples commonly used words like "intimate," "passionate," "fun," and "friendship" to describe their relationship. However, after the birth of their first child, the most common descriptors shifted to "overwhelmed," "stuck," "stressed," and "fatigued."

When life is simple and there isn't much to negotiate or demand of each other, relationships feel easier and lighter. Love is oriented around your connection as a couple - the spark you have, your freedom to nurture passion and simply focus on each other.



Parenting is the epitome of teamwork

Once children arrive, romantic love is re-prioritised behind nurturing a family. Love transitions to becoming more committed, withstanding adversities and making sacrifices for the family. According to research, successfully transitioning this definition from romantic to nurturing family love is vital for marital satisfaction after having kids.

In the 1980's, researcher Sternberg identified 3 core components of love as the foundation of successful relationships.

1. Intimacy. Feeling close, connected, and bonded
2. Passion. Feelings and desires that lead to physical attraction, romance, and sexual consummation
3. Commitment. Feelings that lead a person to remain with someone and move toward shared goals

As parents, love evolves with the deeper commitment and interdependence family life brings. You're now in the most important team you've ever been part of. One that brings a whole new layer of skills, expectations and behaviours. Couples that develop their sense of teamwork, cooperation, and shared responsibilities for parenthood have higher relationship satisfaction and better child outcomes Cowan and Cowan (2000).



What does teamwork look like as parents?

These are some of the new skills you need now

- Negotiation
- Cooperation
- Clear and shared responsibilities
- Mutual involvement and respect
- Coordinated efforts

What can you do to show support for one another?

- Make time to listen without judgement, interruption, or offering solutions
- Offer and receive feedback graciously
- Allow disagreements, and repair them
- Say what you need - directly and without blame or accusation
- Make time to connect
- Show gratitude and appreciation daily
- Trust you're both trying your best
- Don't forget to have fun! Laugh, be silly and dance like no one is watching!

The most successful teams have psychological safety to give feedback, try new things, have difficult conversations, and lean on each other without fear of judgement or defensiveness. Consciously adopting this shift in your relationship helps secure your family foundations ready for the monumental challenges of raising children and juggling careers.

Answer the questions in the worksheet to help define your parenting team.



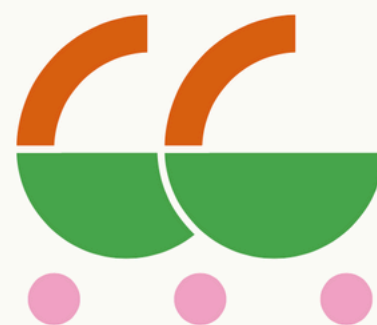


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Rachel Childs

