

**Edited Extracts from**

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Andy Coaton

How To Raise Self  
Assured Confident  
Kids ...and enjoy it

**A modern approach to very old wisdom**

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## Why does Raising Kids Seem So Hard?



**Parenting makes us nervous**

As parents we worry a lot about our kids. We worry about bedwetting, getting them to sleep, disturbed nights, childhood obesity, potty training, tantrums, discipline and childhood depression. We feel guilty that we are screaming at our kids all the time, we don't want to spoil them, we worry about spanking and we worry about leaving them with child carers. We are anxious not to repeat the mistakes our parents made with us. We worry that we are not following 'the rules' demanded by the child raising guides we have bought and advice we get from relatives and friends. Parenting makes us worry.

**Parenting is a problem?**

Today parenting is a 'problem'. There is a whole industry trying to solve it: books, videos, DVDs, institutions, paediatricians, academics and, of course, manufacturers of every conceivable device from baby monitors to in the womb educational tapes.

Today we live in a flexible, dynamic, consumer society based on individual choice. We have huge expectations for ourselves and our children. The world appears to have unlimited potential and we feel like failures if we do not fully attain that potential for ourselves and our children. We have huge anxiety because we expect so much.

Parenting is now a project. Parents approach this project the way they approach other projects in their lives. We reach for the manuals; we seek guidance and education from professionals. And what do we find? A confusing array of approaches; fads for child raising that come and go; and a mass of narrow advice for specific problems. Contradictory information about what activities kids need to succeed in life, how much 'quality time' we need to supply and what products we should buy or risk depriving our children. Parenting professionals have left us with the idea that there is a huge gap between what we know and what we need to know.

In short, child raising appears so hard because we have lost touch with the intuition and traditional inter-generational education from earlier times. We don't trust our instincts and we struggle to follow the rules provided by child care professionals.

**There is a solution**

But there is a solution. A way through the confusion. Deep down you know that you can be a great parent. All you need to do is really understand and trust yourself and your children, even when they don't understand themselves. You can do it because nature has made you capable. This guide gets to the heart of what makes babies and children behave the way they do. It lets you in on what you need to do to meet their deep innate needs. Meeting their innate needs will allow them to develop into happy, capable self assured confident children, adolescents and, eventually, adults.

**Raising kids isn't meant to be that hard**

If you raise them right, your kids will be emotionally strong, confident and happy. Happy confident kids don't feel the need to rebel and misbehave. So you will have:

- a calm contented baby;
- happy and responsible kids;
- kids that listen to you and do the right thing;
- co-operative hard working teens that are a joy to be with.

With kids like that parenting becomes easy and you can just enjoy it. Read on to find out the secrets....

# Understanding Your Kids

Extracts from

Chapter 3

**As parents you need to know what your infant's innate expectations are so you can meet them. Loving your kids is not enough; it is not your motives that will affect your child, but only your actions as they impact his world and meet or violate his innate expectations.**

**Small children have only instincts to guide them**

Most behavior is subconscious even in adults. In small children it is almost completely so, as their brain isn't yet developed. So your children operate on instincts. In adults our instincts have been molded by experience and culture, in your baby and infant these instincts are biologically based – they are not learned, she is born with them.

This is the same as the way that a new born giraffe knows immediately it is born to stand up and walk. The reason is that a new born giraffe that wasn't on its feet ready to run but instead lay around a while would soon provide lunch for the lions and hyenas. The new born giraffe has not yet seen a lion nor knows what lions have for lunch but it instinctively knows that it must stand up and be ready to run. It has an 'innate expectation' that it will be able to stand. If it was somehow prevented from standing, a 'violation of its innate expectation', it would be distressed because it just 'knows' that this is life and death. This would be the case even if it were in a zoo well protected from predators.

**Emotional well-being stems from satisfying emotional needs**

Babies are largely helpless and so their instincts are about meeting his needs from his carers. His instincts assume carers will be there to meet these needs; this is what I mean by his innate expectations. To create emotional well-being you must understand your baby's instinctive emotional needs.

**Babies have only instincts, this means that they have certain innate expectations. Any 'violation of innate expectation' destroys well-being and inhibits healthy emotional development.**

So how do we understand what these innate expectations are so we can meet them?

**Your baby's instincts are rooted in our early hunter-gatherer lifestyles**

If you put your finger into the hand of a new born he will grip it very tightly. This grip is so strong you can hang him from a clothes line. This instinct has little value for a modern human baby as humans have walked upright and been able to carry a baby in their arms for over a million years. This instinct dates back right into our primate past when we were covered in hair and walked on hands and legs like chimps. Baby couldn't be carried in the arms so he was flung on moms back and he held on to the thick hair himself.

This extraordinary instinct illustrates that biological evolution works very v...e...r...y slowly. It takes many generations to change a fundamental characteristic. For more than 99 per cent of human history, people lived exclusively as hunter-gatherer communities. During this immense time people developed all of the physical and intellectual characteristics which all present-day humans still have. The vast changes in human societies in the last 1 per cent of human history have happened so quickly that they have had no time to affect biologically based human instincts and in particular the instincts of infants. This means if you want to understand why your infant responds the way she does then you must realize that she is responding in a way that made survival sense to an infant in a hunter-gatherer society.

**This is a crucial message of this guide. You can create total well being for your infant by getting into his mind. You can do this by seeing each situation from his point of view, the point of view of a total dependent trying to survive and prosper in a small close community on the savannas of Africa or forests of southern Europe.**

**So what does this mean for the care of your infant?**

The next few sections look at some key parts of baby and infant care using an understanding of infant biological expectations.

## Getting A Good Nights Sleep

Extracts from

**Chapter 6**

**For most of history and most places now, babies sleep with mom**

**F**or 99% of human history and in nearly all places on the planet today, except in Western culture, babies sleep in contact with their moms. It is only recently in Northern America and parts of Western Europe that we have undertaken this profoundly unusual route of abandoning our babies in their own rooms.

Sleeping through the night alone when very young is only a recent Western notion and this is a key area where modern practices clash with the biological emotional needs of your baby.

Polygraph tests on sleeping babies and mothers show that the pattern of brain wave activity, heart rate, muscle movement and breathing become synchronized through various levels of sleep. No human infant is evolutionary designed to sleep alone, so why should babies sleep alone if they sleep better with a parent?

**Crushing and suffocating?**

You might fear rolling over and squashing or suffocating your baby in blankets. But unless you are drunk, drugged, are smokers or obese, the chances of this are very low – your baby sleeps at shoulder level not deep in the bed and babies have strong survival instincts and would kick and scream. Also, co-sleeping mothers and babies are subconsciously aware of each other and anything untoward happening to the baby will cause you to wake. Finally, the simple fact is that nearly all babies on the planet sleep with their moms and are not dying of suffocation.

Of course, be sensible: place baby high in the bed, don't have a head board with gaps that part of the baby can fit through, have a hard mattress and don't have pillows around the baby and, finally, have the baby on its back.

If you still really aren't comfortable with your baby in bed with you, then have her as close as possible in a basket attached to your bed where she can hear and sense you.

**Babies need quiet to sleep?**

You might believe that babies need quiet to sleep. But there is no evidence that American babies sleep better than co-sleeping babies of other cultures (American parents certainly sleep worse as they often have to get up in the night to calm crying babies located in another room).

**Making him dependent?**

If you co-sleep you will be told that you are making a rod for your own backs and that you will never get your child into its own bed. This is nonsense. It is natural that the period of total dependence will be replaced with increasing independence. This happens naturally when your infant's innate emotional needs have been well met during the time he is helpless. When your child has had his emotional fill he will gain a sense of safety and security, and then he will naturally be ready to move on. He will be more independent!

Think back again when you were doing something new (and for a baby everything is new), such as those driver's ed classes. At the start you wanted someone in the car with you, you were dependent. But that didn't last, you didn't get 'spoiled' and always want someone in the car with you. You gained confidence and grew into independence.

**Abandoning your baby to sleep alone is biologically risky**

As mentioned co-sleeping mothers and babies become synchronized, the sleepers are physiologically entwined; the movement and breathing of each affect and echo the other. This might be important because all babies experience apneas, which are pauses in breathing. The extra arousal from mom helps babies learn to breathe. Since babies are born with their brains unfinished it is helpful that the environment provides this learning of how to sleep safely. The co-sleeping mothers in the polygraph experiments repeatedly kissed, touched and repositioned the baby even when they themselves weren't even conscious.

Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) is a leading cause of infant death in the US. A healthy baby goes to sleep and dies without warning. SIDS is diagnosed when no accident or disease is found.

At one in every 2,000 births, the US has some of the highest rates for SIDS in the world. Not just the developed world, in the world! Rates are lowest in Asia with Hong Kong having a rate of *15 times less* than the US at just one for every 30,000 babies. Rates are also low for Asian immigrant groups in the US.

Baby sleep evolved amongst life - with babies being knocked around while being carried by adults and being next to attentive (if asleep mothers). They are not adapted to lying alone in a (deathly) quiet room.

**Everyone sleeps well**

One of the biggest concerns of parents is, "Does he sleep through the night?" Yet we insist that he sleeps in a profoundly unnatural setting – alone away from life where babies have slept for the 1.5 millions years of human existence. Babies sleep better with their mom.

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One of the biggest moans of new parents is sleep deprivation. And yet we manufacture the conditions that guarantee disturbed sleep: we put baby in a distant room (with monitor so we can hear him) so that we have to get up to comfort or feed him. We add to this by bottle feeding so that additional time and effort is needed to go down to the kitchen and prepare the milk, while baby is working up a crying frenzy wondering why his mom is not with him and feeding him.

**Co-sleeping with your baby is clearly the natural thing to do. For your sleep and your baby's emotional well being, you owe it to yourself and your baby to have her in bed with you.**

This is something you instinctively already know. It is only because you have been told or read otherwise that you would do anything else. Have your baby in bed with you where it can latch onto the breast whenever she feels like it and you will all sleep well and your baby will feel at one with the world. You will be laying the foundation for an emotionally complete individual.

**So if you are tempted to bring the baby into bed with you but don't because you feel 'guilty' that you are taking the easy way out, now you know why. And you know to give in to that temptation because it is the right thing to do.**

## Getting good, well-behaved kids

Extracts from

Chapter 8

**Human beings evolved to be 'good' because it was best for them as individuals**

In July 1996 at St Luke's Primary School in England, Lisa Potts, a 20-year-old nursery nurse was enjoying a picnic outside on the grass with her kindergarten class of four year olds. A 33-year-old man ran over and started to hack at the children with a machete, gashing four of them. Lisa Potts rushed to protect the kids shielding them and taking the blows from the machete on her own body. She suffered severe injuries. For her efforts in saving the children's lives she was bestowed the George Medal, Britain's highest civilian award for bravery.

Later in court it was revealed that the attacker was a paranoid schizophrenic who believed the kids had taunted him as he passed the school each day.

Lisa Potts displayed true altruistic behavior. There was not much in it for her, but there was huge risk and danger. She ended up with severe scarring, depression and post-traumatic stress disorder. I'm sure she didn't think about it, she didn't weigh up the pros and cons of running away, she did what came naturally. She responded to her deep instinct to help her fellow human beings.

In the modern world we are used to thinking that people cannot be trusted and are manipulative and only out for themselves. Ever since civilization has brought us into towns and cities a lot of contact has been with strangers or people we barely know and so there is a great scope for profiting by cheating other people – so this is what happens.

But in hunter-gatherer societies of small groups everyone knows everyone else and has to live and work with them all their lives. In that situation it is very difficult to get away with being dishonest and cheating. When everyone depends on others for survival it is each individual's own best interest to be honest and fair. This is because if you weren't then the rest of the community (effectively your whole world) would stop dealing with you, making it a struggle to survive. Think of how people consider stealing \$10 from a work colleague as so much worse a crime than defrauding \$100 from an insurance company. Why? It's because the insurance stock holders company are strangers.

As already stressed, it is our hunter-gatherer past that has given us our biological innate instincts. So, although remaining suspicious and selfish to individuals and groups we don't know, human beings evolved co-operative social instincts to people we know. Infants are instinctively 'good' because when our natures were created, being good was best for us as individuals.

**Babies and infants are inherently social**

Not yet familiar with cold conscious reasoning infants work on instinct. So from a consideration of nature and looking at our hunter-gatherer societies we can be very clear that babies and infants are naturally social creatures. By social I mean that they want to engage with and fit in with other humans; to join in the culture – they are naturally good.

An infant is impelled to do what she perceives is expected of her by the humans around her. This is a deep impulse in the very social human infant.

The assumption of an innate social nature – the goodness of children - is not widely held in Western culture. Here there is the belief that people are inherently selfish and a child's natural impulses need to be crushed in order to socialize him.

But as discussed, how could that be true? For over a million years humans, like our primate ancestors, have been social creatures, living in small close groups, dependent on each other for survival. In that environment characteristics have been selected that integrate individuals into the group and who enhance the group, not who disadvantage the group.

**It is clear that infants are innately social creatures; they imitate, cooperate and act to preserve themselves, other individuals and the species.**

An example of this social nature is the natural concern children show for babies. Many girls in particular will take the chance to play with babies whenever they can. In the West we tend to curtail this interest to lifeless dolls, but in traditional societies girls as young as four take full charge of babies.

You may be thinking that if infants are so naturally good, then why are so many kids I see such a nightmare? Well we confuse and undermine this social instinct a number of ways: we *expect* kids to be antisocial so they are; and we don't trust them, so we attack and punish them which means they learn not to trust us.

**If you expect your child be antisocial, she will comply**

Because infants are so social they will almost always meet your expectations of them. This is quite a difficult idea to get. By expectations I am not talking about the direct meaning of the things you say but the underlying message about what you really expect them to do or how you really expect them to behave.

This means that if you believe little Johnny is bad he will become bad to match your expectations. Remember that infants don't reason, they don't consciously do this, the messages are taken in by his subconscious that then drives his behavior in the future.

If you say to little Johnny, "You are always making a show of us when we go round to dinner at our friends. Tonight I expect you to sit quietly at the table and behave", then

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although you are clearly saying to him what you want; the even clearer message is that you actually expect that he will misbehave.

In the same way constant control or monitoring gives the message that you expect them to do bad stuff. This can be seen in shopping malls and public parks where moms can be seen racing after runaway infants. For every animal on earth that cares for its young the young have a deep instinct to follow mom. Signets follow the swan, the swan doesn't have to chase after and round up her young. For a small kid in a strange place the natural instinct must be to stay close to the protection a familiar adult. But as adults we don't trust these instincts of our children so we put them in baby reins and tell them in grave tones to stay close and warn them of 'stranger danger'. All these things clearly convince a child that he is expected to run off. So despite his deep inherent desire to stay close, his subconscious directs him to meet your expectations and so he does as you always knew he would; and runs off.

Likewise, "Don't spill that", "Sit still", "Get in the car and don't hit your sister", tells the child exactly what you expect him to do!

It is also possible to undermine good behavior. If a child does something useful like dress themselves, tidy up or say thank-you and that is met with exaggerated surprised praise, "What a good boy!" then the underlying message is that it is a surprise and not expected, a message his subconscious will note and make sure that he meets expectations next time.

**This is another key message of this book. Infants will act to meet your fundamental expectations of them. Not what you explicitly say you want, but the subtle underlying message of what you do and say indicates about what you really believe they are like or will do.**

You know that your bundle of joy is a little angel, she loves her mommy and wants to make you happy. So behave like you believe it.

### **Punishing kids gives them bad habits**

The way we use punishment directly acts to undermine other things we are trying to achieve. If something is used as a punishment we are giving the message that we regard this thing is undesirable. Now the child instinctively wants to absorb our values and so the child's subconscious will store that thing under, 'to be avoided'. Conversely the opposite thing will be stored under, 'to be strived for'.

So even though we want our kids to go to bed willingly and sleep well we use being sent to bed as a punishment, implying that going to bed is undesirable and to be resisted and that conversely staying up late must be desirable. How crazy is that? But it doesn't stop there. We want our kids to be hard, willing, workers yet we use work in the form of extra chores as a punishment, hence, instilling the message that work is undesirable and to be avoided. We want our kids to get nutritional healthy food yet use

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a ban on McDonald's as a punishment and a visit as a treat, with the obvious message that junk food is the cuisine of choice. We want them to spend less time watching TV and playing computer games but ban these as punishment making them desirable. The list goes on.

The subconscious mental framework is more powerful than conscious reasoning and early programming of the subconscious is very difficult to change. This means that this treatment has an impact for the rest of our child's life. So as an adolescent and an adult, even though he may rationally reason that he should be doing certain things, for some inexplicable reason he finds that he just can't bring himself to do them. As an adult in his thirties he may consciously want to work hard, be healthy and loose weight, and get a good night's sleep so he has energy for the challenges of life. But for some reason he just can't seem to get out of the habit of turning up late for work, because last night he once again sat up eating take-out pizza watching the late show.

### Socialization comes from trust

*"Trust is the basis of authority, and a trusted authority figure disciplines more effectively", William Sears, MD*

If you find punishing your kids stressful, tiring and soul destroying, then you are not alone. If you don't want to spend twenty years as a jailer, what should you do? Well you need to nurture the innate social nature of your kids. Kids become genuine social beings from developing in relation to tender, nurturing, and non-harmful others.

The need for the use of punishment by parents is an indication that there has been an insufficient development of trust between parent and child early on.

**Your infant is naturally social, so there is no need to socialize him, only to avoid making him asocial or antisocial by undermining his innate trust for his carers.**

Basic trust is a 'must have' for a healthy emotionally mature personality. Your child expects that you can be trusted to satisfy his basic needs and meet his instinctive expectations for nourishment, protection and nurture. From this secure base he learns to trust himself and the world. If this trust is not fulfilled, his trust in others is crushed and along with it a healthy human emotional and social development.

Your baby trusts you, but do you trust him? Western culture appears to believe that babies can't be trusted and that babies and young children are manipulative and wanting to make their parents' life hell, as if their need and desire to be with their parents, and to be nurtured by them, is not real.

Trust develops when both parties have trust in each other. Your child continues to trust you when you regularly meet his need for nurturing. If you are to meet this need and not feel manipulated then you must have the belief that your child's expression of his need for nurturing is real.

Too many parent-child relationships degenerate into misery, unhappiness, and a struggle for power with the child defying and punishing his parents. If your relationship is like this, it is not because he doesn't like you or wants to punish you, but because his need for nurturing has not been met. His trust has been undermined. But don't despair, the reserves of goodwill between parents and children are very large and relationships can be saved if you have the will to change your behavior to regain trust.

**Free your child  
to want to do  
the right thing**

Picture yourself accidentally driving the wrong way down a one-way street. You're not a bad person, you didn't mean to drive down that street, you just made a mistake. What if the following happens? Someone on the street, Steady Eddie, sees you and starts waving his arms to attract your attention and calls over "Hey buddy, this is a one-way street you best turn around before you have a smash". He has respected you and recognized your mistake and that you needed help to get it right this time. You will feel grateful, you will thank Eddie, you are motivated to turn around and follow the rules.

Now suppose instead of Steady Eddie, you meet Angry Angelo. He yells, "What the \*\*\*\* are you doing, you moron! Turn that heap of \*\*\*\* around and get the \*\*\*\* outta here before I kick your useless butt". Now how are you going to feel? You feel attacked, you want to defend yourself. You don't care that you did a wrong thing, this time you aren't motivated to cooperate. Instead you will focus on the abuse. Your internal talk goes something like, "How dare he say that to me, it isn't right. Nobody talks to me like that". Next thing you know you've got a screaming match or worse.

This is the kind of thing that happens to kids everyday. They just did a bad thing and they are attacked, punished and made to feel bad. If this happens often enough then they will become constantly on the defensive, always ready to assume a contrary stance and always ready for a fight. Their natural inclination to be social, to fit in and be like their parents, is undermined and they become antisocial. His parents wonder what went wrong.

A child is naturally social but this is confused in a child when his parents set themselves up against him – declare war on his sense of rightness, which puts his innate instincts 'out of whack'. This starts with ignoring his cries when a baby and continues with formal punishments and casual puts downs and humiliations. A child wants to do the right thing but how can he when the adults in his life effectively 'dare' him to do something else by ordering him not to do it even before he'd thought of it, or they gloat when they successfully impose their will. On other occasions these adults ridicule him with praise when he does something ordinarily social like being kind to his baby sister.

## HOW TO RAISE SELF-ASSURED CONFIDENT KIDS

If you tell a child he is bad, or that he is always doing bad things and you punish him then his subconscious will be absorbing that information. This will be setting his self-image from which will spring his behavior in the future.

Instead, if he is never made to feel bad, only that he is a loved child doing an undesirable act then that does not offend his sense of justice (he didn't mean it after all). It doesn't affect his trust in you and means he is never set against you and doesn't feel the need to defend himself. You can both stay on the same side.

You want your child to be so used to feeling 'good' that when something he does is disapproved of he feels that it is what he has done that is bad and not himself. Then he wants to cooperate and he doesn't have to take any stance other than yours. This fits with the natural state of things.

***Not punishing your kids is not the same as being permissive. Your kid's subconscious wants to do the right thing and so it needs to know what the right thing is. You need to be clear, firm and consistent about what is undesirable behavior.***

### **Give your child the knowledge to do the right thing**

Often bad behaviour happens because the child does not know how to do the right thing. He lacks knowledge. You might think that you've told him a million times but telling (yelling) doesn't lead to learning. When a child is being told off he is focusing on the abuse not on the message.

As a concrete example take a very common scene, the breakfast table. All is going well until little 5 year old Lydia carelessly knocks over her glass of milk. Now mom doesn't have time for this. She yells, "Lydia, you naughty girl, what have I told you? You're the clumsiest girl in the world. Go and wait by the front door until I'm ready to take you to school." This may make mom feel better, but the outcome is entirely negative. Mom has cleaned up the mess as it is faster and so Lydia sees no connection between actions and consequences. Lydia is resentful because of the unjust scolding, breeding mistrust and future defiance. Lydia's subconscious has absorbed more information to build Lydia's self image – naughty, clumsy and bad.

How else can mom deal with this? Mom can accept that Lydia wants to please mommy and needs help. Mom can see herself as a coach to help Lydia achieve this. Mom can say, "Oh dear, accidents happen, lets get that cleaned up." Mom gets Lydia to clean it up with her help, hence cementing the connection between having an accident and the chore of having to put it right. Also Lydia learns a valuable skill of cleaning up. Once done, mom then says, "How can we make sure you don't spill your milk again?" Maybe with some help, Lydia suggests putting the glass away from her plate. She gets problem solving practice and praise from mom for a good solution. As it's her idea she is more likely to remember in future. Of course, she will forget and so

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a prompt like, “What did you learn about where to put you glass?” reaffirms in a positive way the lesson learned. After a while a new skill and behavior is created.

What else has Lydia learned? She has learned to react to an accident calmly and effectively rather than panicking and fussing. And she has learned that to plan ahead and look out for dangerous situations is how to avoid accidents.

Lydia’s subconscious has got a message that she is a good child that has done a bad thing. Trust is maintained, the natural alliance with mom is reinforced. There is no need to take a stance against mom.

Children appreciate this kind of instruction in helping them understand what is required of them to fit in. It gives them confidence and clarity about how to please their parents and themselves. The approach as illustrated by Lydia’s spilt milk is:

- Explain to them what you want them to learn and why.
- Show and demonstrate.
- Practice and help by doing it together.
- More practice by letting them do it alone.
- Repeat the above as often as necessary. It may be an easy and obvious skill for you but it is brand new for your kid and so much repetition is needed. When they forget, remind and encourage them and certainly don’t scold them. Be a coach not a critic.

**Your child wants to stop doing things you don’t like – he is inherently social. So let him be social, support and coach him in learning how to do the right thing.**

## The Total Package

Extracts from

Chapter 11

**W**e all have deep parental instincts inside of us if we can just find them; we do really know what our infant needs. But the problem is that these instincts have been confused and overwhelmed by cultural influences from our parents, friends, media and ‘experts’.

This book has considered evolution and natural biology and highlighted how other communities, who are closer to a natural instinctive approach, raise their kids. I am hoping that understanding what they do can help you uncover your deep parental instincts that will empower you with the confidence to trust yourself and your baby to know what is good for your family. Every man, woman, girl or boy has an instinctive knowledge of how to care for babies. So take the initiative and don’t hand over responsibility to supposed experts and to society pressure.

If you are a new mom, you’ll get a lot of advice, both good and bad, from friends and family about baby and infant care. But you have a deep mothering instinct and it probably is telling you to rush to your baby when she cries; it is giving you a longing to hold your baby close to you for hours; it makes you feel uncomfortable to leave her alone at night in another room and not have her snuggled up close to you. Your instinct is telling you these things because your instinct has been millions of years in the making and it knows these things are absolutely OK. More than OK they are the right things to do.

I wish you every luck in your great adventure.

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email me at the address below and I will endeavor to reply to any emails.**

**Contact: [raisingkids@raiseselfassuredconfidentkids.com](mailto:raisingkids@raiseselfassuredconfidentkids.com)**

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