

[PDF] Pacify Me: A Handbook For The Freaked-Out New Dad

Chris Mancini - pdf download free book



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Description:

About the Author A comic and a filmmaker, Chris Mancini has screened and spoken at various prestigious festivals including HBO's U.S. Comedy Arts festival, and at Comic Con in San Diego. Chris is a regular on Budd Friedman's world famous Improv comedy circuit. He's also cofounder of the ComedyFilmNerdsDotCom.com and contributes to two parenting blogs.

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My Life Is Over

That's it. It's done. Finito. Stick a fork in me. Game over, man. The Fat Lady has sung. *My life is over*. It's the first thought that came into my head when I learned I was going to be a father. All of a sudden I knew my life was *never* going to be the same. No more doing what I wanted when I wanted. No more freedom. No more allnight *Halo* playing, no more going out with the guys, and no more eating pancakes whenever I wanted to. My life from that point on would be endless responsibility and child care. Baby food, crying, PTA meetings, and ballet recitals. I didn't *want* to go to the ballet! I hate ballet! Seriously, does anyone *really* like ballet? The flash of life ahead was making me feel light-headed.

I was never against having kids. My wife, Audrey, and I talked about it before we got married. I always wanted them eventually. But suddenly, eventually came. I had just gotten used to being an adult. My wife may debate this, since I said for my birthday I wanted either the new *Resident Evil* game or Aqua Teen Hunger Force on DVD, so I suppose it's relative. But now I had to be a father too?! I felt like the clock started ticking and time was running out. It's like I was caught in some kind of pre-parental *Logan's Run*.

So does any of the above sound at all familiar to you? I thought so. Think of it as a knee-jerk reaction to something so huge that your brain can't even fully comprehend it. Don't worry; eventually it will sink in. Usually after the baby is about six months old. Your brain will finally process everything and you'll realize that the scary infantcrying sound *is coming from inside the house!*

So when you crawl out of your full fetal position from under the bed, know and understand that what you're feeling is *perfectly normal*. You're going to feel nervous, anxious, depressed, and uneasy all at once. Like you just ate a chili dog at a Céline Dion concert. Heck, you're going to be feeling so many different things, you may even invent a few new negative emotions of your own. Hyperanxiepression, anyone?

As anxious and nervous as men get when they are about to become fathers, I think I personally raised the bar for pre-baby anxiety. I couldn't eat. I couldn't sleep. I had big whiny fits and eventually I ended up in a psychiatrist's office. Have you noticed that no one ever "goes" to a psychiatrist's office? Everyone just "ends up" there. Like it's a big mystery how it happened. "Huh, how did I get here? And why are there bugs crawling all over me?" Also, a psychiatrist is the one who's a medical doctor. I think if you see the words "Life Coach" on any therapist's wall you should run away, very quickly. I'm pretty sure a life coach is just one step above "Dog Whisperer." Or maybe below.

So after I "ended up" at the psychiatrist's office, I just opened the floodgates. I told him that I didn't want to have a kid, but I *wanted* to want to have a kid. He may have rolled his eyes and checked to see what my co???pay was at that point, but I'm not sure. This whole baby thing was tearing me apart inside. Some mornings it got so bad that I would wake up shaking. "So what should I do, doc? What's wrong with me?" My psychiatrist paused and looked at me patiently. It looked like he was about to lay a secret on me. All right, let's hear it. I was waiting.

Well, he let me in on a secret, all right.

My psychiatrist was kind enough to inform me that these days it's all about mood-elevating drugs and not so much about talking through your problems anymore. So in other words, he was saying that it really didn't matter what either of us said, as long as he had his prescription pad handy. Wow.

Does anyone else know about this? Think about all the wasted years of medical school this knowledge would save! I think that's the subject of another book. Maybe Tom Cruise could write it. Anyway, so my dealer, er, psychiatrist, then listened impatiently to my baby terrification problems and promptly prescribed some Zoloft.

Interestingly, the drugs worked great. I felt better. When you're on antidepressants/anxiety medication, everything's...cool. Nothing's too horrible, and nothing's too great. You're Even Steven. Win the lottery? Cool...Your car is stolen? Cool...

Anyway, the psychiatrist sessions continued, and I got all of my insurance money's worth. We talked about everything from my relationships to my career to my childhood. Sometimes it's easier to talk to a stranger, especially if you know he isn't really listening. Despite his professional opinion, talking about it really did make me feel a little better.

The most ridiculous thing is that it never occurred to me that other fathers-to-be go through and share the same anxieties. In my bubble I thought I was the first man ever to be freaked out about having a child. I don't know why I felt that way, but I did. Maybe it's because we men don't communicate and share feelings with each other the way women do. If we did, well, then we would be women, I suppose. So I'm hoping if I write it down, it will sound less...girly. The truth is, *most* guys are terrified of having a child and share the same feelings of nervousness, anxiety, and powerlessness. Even that happy, excited guy handing out cigars is secretly wondering if he'll ever get to go to a restaurant again that doesn't have an arcade attached. If I could give you a hug right now, I would. Seriously, though, ask your friends with kids how they felt beforehand. But make sure you do it in a loud bar over some good manly beers. Domestic!

Look, you *should* be freaked out about having a child. It's huge. I'm not trying to downplay it at all. At this point I'm not even going to tell you to calm down. Go ahead, freak out. Get it all out now. I'm going to repeat this because it's important: *It's perfectly normal to be freaked out about having a child.* After you're done, then calm down. Feel better? No? Don't worry; you will in time.

I'll tell you, I'm more concerned about the guys who *aren't* freaked out about having a child. They're the ones who everyone should be worried about. What's going on in the guy's head who is completely unaffected by impending fatherhood? What's got *him* so preoccupied? That's the same guy who is usually described later on a police report as always being "such a nice, quiet boy."

So here's the deal: This book is all about explaining to you what I went through, what I learned, and why it's not as bad as you think. In other words, I'll be talking you down from the ledge. Because when I was up on that ledge myself, it was a horrible, anxious feeling, but it had a nice view. I'll let you know what I saw.

There were times when I didn't really think I could do it. But I did. And you will too. No matter your starting point, you just may surprise yourself as to how well you'll rise to the occasion. Luke Skywalker started out as a farmer, and look how well he did. Sure, he lost a hand along the way, but there's going to have to be a few small sacrifices.

I'll try to give you an idea of what to expect and how you can avoid a lot of the pitfalls I already fell into for you. I'll be sharing my lessons learned, offer advice, and will give you my opinions and judgments, mainly because I'm very opinionated and judgmental. You'll see.

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