

IS YOUR BABY SLEEPING THROUGH THE NIGHT?

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This post could also be named – Musings at 4 am.

Because it was one of the long nights this June while I was lying awake thinking / browsing did my thought process towards my baby's sleep change.

This is how it happened.

When you wake for the 2nd time at 3 am and watch your cellphone clock, become 3:30 am, then 4 am, then 4:30 am, and then while you lay awake it slowly becomes day all these thoughts run through your head.

Why isn't my baby normal?

Why isn't he sleeping?

What am I doing wrong?

If only I didn't have a nanny who attended to him regularly, I would make him cry it out.

If only I lived alone I would not bother about disturbing other people and make him cry.

If only he was a calmer baby. I would make him cry till he fell asleep.

If only he was like the babies in the books and not this persistent, it would take all of 20 minutes.

That's it. Tomorrow I am going to talk to my husband about a plan and then no matter what we will make him cry.

Tomorrow onwards, no more nursing baby in the night. Ok lets try it now. It's 5 am now. I try for 3 minutes by holding and cuddling him, he gets louder, I decide its better to nurse to sleep and try tomorrow.

To add to it my mother in law says it will take at least a year.

My mother says it will continue this way until I wean. 'Even you didn't sleep till I weaned you and moved you to your own bed', said she.

Umm, mom(s) have you not read all the sleep-training books and done millions of Google searches?? Do you not know babies don't wake up at night beyond the first three months (or until they are 15 pounds)? They are not hungry anymore according to the books. So by feeding them you are developing bad habits and dependencies. **Do you not know that babies will never learn to sleep unless they are taught?**

I'm getting more and more annoyed at this point, tossing and turning furiously, trying hard to accidentally wake up my husband who is gently snoring. He stirs. I dive in. He sleeps before I finish the sentence and I am left fuming.

My son is almost 9 months old. By now all the millions of sleep sites and 22,000 books on the subject have stopped writing about a 9-month-old baby still waking multiple times. Because by now even if the baby had **trouble sleeping through the night** you, the sensible parent would have taken care of it with whichever method you choose right?

Isn't it funny that this blog is all about following our ancestors; how they eat and sleep and move, and looking at traditional societies and trying to ape them, and when it comes to my poor little infant's sleep, I turn to present day books and rules?

Forget traditional societies, even today in India most families co sleep and those who don't, have nannies/ maids sleeping in their kids room - a human baby monitor so to speak - to shush the baby back to sleep or to bring him or her to mom when the baby needs a feed or a cuddle.

In fact most moms here before this information overload era didn't even know that babies were 'supposed' to sleep the whole night from 3 or 4 or 5 months. So they nursed, and rocked, and shushed, and did what it took until the baby slept on his or her own over the course of many many months. **And guess what? Eventually all of us slept. I don't need to be rocked to sleep today, do you?**

But here we are. Furiously typing all combinations of baby sleep on Google searching for and answer to why our baby isn't sleeping and what can we do if we have a baby who does blah blah blah.

Why is sleep such an obsession with new moms today? Why is '*is your baby sleeping through the night*', a first question she asks when she meets a fellow mommy?

Why do we expect the most vulnerable and dependent amongst us to behave independent and follow rules written by adult men?

I must admit. I too have pored over baby sleep books and websites. I've read all the forums out there. I've called a lot of fellow mommies to ask for advice.

Me! The one who is so confident of feeding and parenting my child MY WAY? The one who doesn't think too highly of doctors' orders when it comes to food or general advise. When it came to sleep I was lost.

In fact a lot of doctors routinely hand out advise like, let the baby cry but don't feed after he or she is a certain weight or number of months. The doctor is giving this advice based on facts. Yes if I stop feeding now, it won't affect my baby's growth and he will consume more calories in the day. **But, what about nurturing? Babies need to be nurtured as well as nourished. What about his sense of trust that my mamma is here when I need her day or night? What about his need to suck or be held?**

Many moms complain about how their baby always wants to be carried and held to sleep. Think

about it for a moment. We are mammals. So are kangaroos that carry their young in the pouch. So are monkeys whose babies sleep on them in the trees. Most mammals have their young on them and near them **until they are mature enough to fend for themselves**. And for most of human history this is what humans did too:

- 1) Co sleeping – children slept with their moms for years until they were weaned and independent enough to sleep on their own.
- 2) Breastfeeding – babies and older toddlers were breastfed for extended periods because they slept with mom and were close to mom for days carried about in hand made carriers.
- 3) Babies and young children were carried – they were close to mom day and night for years while she went about her day making breastfeeding easy and accessible.

Babies are primal. They are doing what comes naturally to them. Therefore when they cry to be fed, they are doing it out of instinct and need to be fed either for nourishment or when they grow older just out of need to be close to their safety haven.

Ok enough of the lecture! Let's backtrack a little bit to my story. Read my thoughts on my sleeping babe in the [next post](#)!

Thanks for reading !

