

MAKING SENSE OF YOUR CRYING BABY

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So I have been writing a blog about applying evolutionary principles to our modern lifestyles when it comes to food and exercise and now parenting.

But the biggest case in point that differentiates how far we've come from our primal selves is our little newborns.

They're primitive. They haven't changed much since cavemen babies. Oh I'm sure evolution has worked its magic a little bit and they are probably smarter, but they are still hardwired to expect a few things when born.

4 million years ago the first hominoid appeared on the planet. When they started walking upright (from 4 to 2 legs) the pelvis tilted and flattened. 1 million years ago they started making tools and the brain size of humans started to increase.

Because of the small pelvis and larger brain, today's human baby is born extremely immature. Therefore humans have to complete their gestation outside the womb and expect to be held and kept in close contact to the mother at all times.

Here's what our ancestor babies' world was like in all probability:

They came into the world at home with a few well-known women around and were placed on the mother's chest for as long as they both liked. The baby latched on to the nipple with little or no assistance from the mother.

The mother had things to do and probably other children to look after so she wore her baby on her body and went about her day. The baby would probably bob off and on to sleep and somehow I don't think she'd have a bookshelf lined with books on baby sleep.

When the baby begins to make sounds and start sucking her fingers the mother would latch her on and continue her work.

At night instead of having a designated area for the baby to sleep most likely families slept together and the mother nursed when the baby made sounds. A small settlement at the dead of the night with silence all around would not want to attract predators with crying babies would they?

When the baby grew and started reaching out and grabbing food of the family's plates that's probably when weaning began. I can't imagine a mother at those times mashing food and preparing separate meals for the baby.

These are things babies are born expecting

1. breast
2. breast milk
3. breast
4. human skin to skin
5. being held/ carried

6. being close to caregiver when sleeping
7. learning by being close to mom and watching facial expressions and language.
8. Being one unit with the mother. The mother and baby is one ecological unit even after birth for a long time. Babies expect that to be so.

Cut to today.

The new mother turns to 'experts' with questions regarding breastfeeding and 'schedules'. The expert – your 50-year-old pediatrician dispels advice like: let the baby cry it's good for her lungs. The crying is wrenching out the mom's newly ballooned heart and throwing it to the scavengers.

The new mom is simultaneously googling, reading on her ipad, reading a book, calling her friends and calling the doctor with questions on scheduling her feeds. Despite following the 'rules' her baby seems unhappy and mom is unhappy wondering why none of it is working.

She puts her baby for naps in a foreign surface – a crib – and wonders why her newborn won't settle and keeps crying for her.

She puts a beautiful cot mobile over the crib with fancy lights and wonders why the baby won't be content watching the baby animals go round and round and why she wants to be held upright instead.

We trust expert speak over primal instincts.
research and doctors over our hearts.
other's advice over our intuition.

And none of these multiple sources of advise is making any sense to the baby who is born expecting an alien set of things.

And we wonder why babies cry.

Thanks for reading today! Do drop me a line if this post makes sense to you and appeals to you as a mother.

Happy mother's day !

