

WHY ARE WE OBSESSED WITH BABY SLEEP?

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My blog is moderately well read. So it was a surprise when, without getting into TMI, one morning I woke up after posting [this](#), and saw that my stats showed readership in 1000's without me doing anything to promote the post. No Facebook, no twitter, no nothing.

It was no different from my other posts where I write about stuff from my point of view with regards to health mostly, and living life from a traditional or evolutionary perspective.

But this was a topic that happened to touch a deep chord with many people and went viral.

The topic of course was – baby sleep! It's safe to say that it's an obsession, especially amongst first time parents.

To put this in perspective, there are only 14,326 paperbacks that tackle the issue of poverty. There are only 9,990 paperbacks on the topic of racism. And yet, here we have nearly the same number of books on child sleep as poverty and racism put together -26135 paperbacks.

[Source](#)

All about-to-be parents are told during pregnancy – 'rest up, once baby comes you wont sleep'. But you don't realize what it means to get broken sleep continuously, having to attend to a hungry dependent mouth at any hour day or night, until you're actually there. Its enough to make the best intentioned amongst us desperate to find any solution.

To make matters worse sadly most moms are led to believe (by the experts) during prenatal class or baby books or doctors that your baby will sleep through the night by so and so months. I remember the lady in my prenatal class clearly saying that after the 3rd month when the baby sleeps through the night, never offer breast or bottle after that. I just went to the pediatrician for N's 9 month vaccination the other day and the first thing he told me that I must wean him off in the night so he will sleep the whole night and eat well during the day.

But here's the catch.

When it comes to most other things that I write about on this blog that is eating a certain way, exercising a certain way, having a different take on many things we take for granted, it has to do with US. **Rational human adults who have cast aside our natural instincts, read general research, follow advice that is normally against stuff that comes naturally to us, and have adapted along the way.**

So when I say you know what, we're not traditionally supposed to eat grains, you say – bah humbug! Let me shut this page right now because how else are we to get fiber? and of course everyone (and their mothers) know that whole grains are healthy! That's what even the science and the doctors out there say!

We humans are adaptable creatures, able to apply our large brains to arguments over feelings, and when the whole world says things are to be a certain way, we take it as the gospel truth, though we may not be feeling completely right. (Migraines, pcos, belly fat, low fertility anyone?)

But a baby?

A baby is born primal. Anyone who spends anytime at all with a newborn knows that. Babies are born almost blind and can see blurry, but they can make out their parents by their smell and the mother by the smell of her milk. Which is why the presence of a mother near a newborn confuses her, as the smell of the milk is so strong she feels the urge to suck and root around for the nipple.

Their needs are simple and few. Warmth of the parent, satisfaction of hunger, and the need to feel protected cover most of them.

The baby has not read a lot. The baby has not listened to this 'experts speak'. The baby has not surfed Google and has no idea about what the latest research on sleep says. The baby is oblivious to all of this.

The baby wants to be near his most precious caregiver, warmth giver, protection giver, and feeder. The baby needs the person who takes care of all his needs.

Which is why a particularly persevering baby will scream, cry, or vomit when he or she is denied their most basic need particularly in the dark of the night when they are at their most vulnerable.

And this absolute disconnect in mindset between today's rules, the working mum's conundrum, and the little innocent baby causes tremendous confusion to the parents where none of the advice that's been handed out is making sense to the baby and you're left wondering what you've done wrong. The trusted doctor and sleep experts tell you something (and of course you've always followed the popular mindset) and your baby is telling you something totally different.

The baby is saying, traditionally my mamma slept with me and didn't know any better, nursed me when I awoke in the night, kept me close to her and carried me all the time. So I don't understand why you're not doing all these things now. This is what I need, I don't know any better.

I guess we're grappling with what is meant to be, and how today's life has completely done a U turn on us. We have to wake up earlier and rush to work. We have lots more social obligations to fill in - we cannot take our baby to the pub with us. Our babies should not sleep with us else they will get crushed. I should not feed my baby in the night or I may spoil him. If I continue night feeds he won't eat his rice and daal (seriously people?).

I think this obsession of baby sleep comes from the fact that today's reality and way of thinking is so different from a newborn's instinct that when we try and force it down them it backfires at times and the parent is left thoroughly confused.

I've been there. It's not fun. But it's great learning all the same.

I want to tell new parents that frequent night waking for the first two years is NORMAL and that it's not us who are doing anything wrong and there is nothing wrong with your baby's sleep. I find that once I've accepted that normal, I sleep easier knowing I am not doing anything wrong.

Thanks for reading! What do you think? is this why we're so obsessed with baby sleep?

