



A CBT GUIDE FOR EXPECTING COUPLES, FROM THE SECURE BOND

From Couple to Parents

Preparing your bond for the most profound transition of your lives. The meaning, the responsibility, and the conscious choices that carry a marriage safely into parenthood.



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BEFORE YOU BEGIN

This is not an event. It is a transformation.

A wedding lasts a day. A birth lasts hours. But becoming parents is not an event, it is a transformation of identity, and it deserves to be entered the way every profound thing should be entered: consciously, together, and prepared.

For fifteen years I stood beside families as a birth and postpartum doula, through thousands of births. I can tell you with certainty what I saw: the couples who crossed this threshold well were not the ones with the most equipment. They were the ones who had talked about the meaning, agreed on the responsibility, and made their choices before exhaustion made the choices for them.

That is what this guide is for. Sit down together, unhurried. Answer in writing. What you build in these pages will hold you on the nights everything else shakes.

*"A child does not need perfect parents. A child needs parents
whose bond is a safe place to land."*

Esti Kedem

Part 1 · The meaning of the change

Understand what is actually coming. Not to frighten you, but to honor it. When your child arrives, your identity reorganizes: you remain partners, and you become guardians of a life. Time will no longer belong only to you. Spontaneity will yield to devotion. And a love larger than anything you have known will move into your home and rearrange all the furniture.

Couples who name this change in advance walk through it with open eyes. Couples who expect life to stay the same experience the change as loss. The difference is preparation.

Answer separately, in writing. Then read your answers to each other, slowly.

What becoming a parent means to me:

PARTNER 1

PARTNER 2

What I am quietly afraid of losing:

PARTNER 1

PARTNER 2

The parent I am committed to becoming:

PARTNER 1

PARTNER 2

Part 2 · Caring for her

Pregnancy is carried by one body, but it belongs to both of you. While she grows your child, her body, her hormones, her sleep, her sense of self, all of it is working around the clock. The single strongest predictor of how a woman remembers her pregnancy and postpartum is not the birth itself. It is how held she felt by her partner.

What caring for her actually looks like

- **Be present, not adjacent.** Come to the appointments. Learn what the third trimester does. Know her birth wishes as well as she does.
- **Carry the mental load, not just the groceries.** Take ownership of whole territories, the paperwork, the nursery, the meals, so they leave her mind entirely.
- **Protect her rest like it is your child's rest.** Because right now, it is.
- **Ask the two questions, every day:** "How are you feeling today?" and "What do you need from me tomorrow?" Then act on the answers.
- **Honor the change in her.** Her body and identity are transforming to bring your child here. Say out loud, often, that you see it and that you are grateful.

For her to complete: I feel most cared for in this pregnancy when you...

For her partner to complete: One territory I am taking full ownership of, starting this week:

Part 3 · The reordering of priorities

This is the tremendous change few couples discuss in advance: your priorities are about to be rewritten. Career ambitions, friendships, hobbies, spontaneous travel, none of it disappears, but all of it moves. The couples who suffer are the ones who let exhaustion do the reordering. The couples who thrive do it consciously, together, on paper.

First, each of you: my current top five priorities, honestly.

PARTNER 1

PARTNER 2

Now together: our family's top five for the coming season, written as one list.

The one rule: *The marriage stays on the list. Not first every day, but never off the list.
A child's deepest security is two parents who remained a couple.*

What we consciously set aside for this season, without guilt:

What we protect no matter what:

Part 4 · Preparing as a couple

Now make it practical. Responsibility that is divided in advance never becomes resentment. Decide together, in writing:

The nights. How do we divide them so both of us survive?

The home. Meals, laundry, the running of daily life.

The visitors. Who comes, when, and who lovingly says not yet.

The appointments and paperwork. Whose mind holds this territory?

Our support system. Family, friends, professionals we will actually call.

The exhaustion agreement, our CBT anchor

Sleep deprivation will hand you thoughts that feel true and are false. Agree now:

"I am failing at this."

"I am new at this. Competence comes from days, and the days are coming."

"I am alone in this."

"My partner cannot read my mind. I will say what I need, in words, out loud."

"We will never be us again."

"We are not gone. We are underneath. This is a season, and we planned for it."

We also agree on a relief signal. When one of us says it, the other steps in, without questions and without score-keeping. **Our signal:** _____

Part 5 · The responsibility, and the promise

Becoming a parent is the deepest responsibility a person can accept: a life will learn what love is by watching the two of you. That is not pressure. That is purpose. And it comes with a second responsibility almost everyone forgets: the responsibility to the bond this child will land on.

Our promises, written and signed:

To our child, we promise:

To each other, we promise:

PARTNER 1 PROMISES

PARTNER 2 PROMISES

Signed, as a family in the making: _____ Date:

REMEMBER, ALWAYS

The why of all of this is us

We are the anchor. We are the roots of this growing family tree.

Everything our children will ever grow from begins in the soil of our bond. So we put us first, not instead of our children, but for them. No matter what, and no matter when. Kids come after, because children grow best on roots that hold.



Enter parenthood held, not alone

For fifteen years I have walked beside couples through exactly this threshold, first as their doula, now as their CBT relationship coach. If you want to cross it as a stronger team than ever, I would be honored to walk with you.

Book your Introduction Session

75 minutes · on Zoom · one deep session to prepare your bond

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