

W Parenting

You're going to hear people say (if you haven't already), "you just don't know what it's like until you have one of your own". Man, that is true and then some. When your sister was born, they gave her to mom to hold for a minute and then took her across the room and put her under some type of heat lamp while they cleaned her up (and while the doctor was attending to mom). They told me to come with them, so I did.

As I stood over her I was overcome with the most powerful feeling of love I have ever experienced. I don't think I realized it at the time but Lauren and I were in the presence of God. It was the strangest, warmest, best feeling I have ever experienced. Time seemed to stand still. I had tears in my eyes, which doesn't happen often. At that moment, I knew what all those people meant when they said, "you just don't know until you have one of your own..." And I was amazed at how fast the paternal instinct kicked in. I would have given my life to protect her, within minutes of seeing her. And that feeling hasn't faded one bit. I guess it never will.

A day or so went by and it was time for mom and I to take Lauren home. They rolled mom out the front door of the hospital in a wheelchair with Lauren in her arms, and I was there waiting with our 2000 Volvo Wagon. I don't think I reached the speed limit all the way home. It was the most I've ever concentrated to drive a car. I knew I had precious cargo on board.

When we got home I carried Lauren inside (still in her detachable car seat). I remember this like it was yesterday: I sat her on an ottoman, took a step back and thought, "now what"?

Raising children is tough, but it's one of the most important and rewarding things a man can ever do. And raising children, through all the different stages, will create a strain on a marriage. In the beginning, you're looking at sleepless nights. Your wife is going to be worn out, emotional and very stressed. You might not be as emotional but you're going to be feeling worn out and stressed as well. All that is going to create tension and conflict. This is normal, so don't read too much into this new tension between you and your wife. But gear up.

The infant stage is mostly all take and no give by the baby. The baby is helpless...