

## Baby Bomb: A Relationship Survival Guide for New Parents

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New Harbinger Publications (Jul 1, 2021)

Softcover \$18.95 (184pp)

978-1-68403-731-5

*Baby Bomb* is a wise, entertaining, and compassionate relationship survival guide for new and expectant parents.

While many parenting guides focus on infants and are geared toward raising healthy, well-adjusted children, *Baby Bomb* addresses the impact of the massive transition on marriage itself, noting that marital satisfaction often declines after a baby is born. The book outlines ten guiding principles, with practical tools and exercises, to help parents not only survive, but thrive, in their relationships. Asserting that the relationship must come first, this guide will help couples navigate the issues and changes of parenthood.

Dozens of examples illustrate new parents dealing with real-world challenges, including balancing their careers, their individual coping styles, cultural expectations, social lives, and intimacy. In some scenarios, conflict escalates; in others, couples apply simple strategies to work effectively as a team.

Kara Hoppe also cites personal experience, such as the time she bristled at her husband's help with their newborn and, in frustration and exhaustion, "chucked the hospital [breast] pump to the kitchen floor." Her accounts are tinged with self-deprecating humor, as she explores what went wrong and what she learned. Current themes are interwoven, including of adoption, IVF, same-sex couples, and parenting during a pandemic.

The tone is conversational and nonjudgmental:

*It doesn't matter if you thoughtfully planned for your baby, like we did, or if you wholeheartedly (or with some ambivalence) embraced a big surprise, there is really no way to truly understand what it will be like until you are parents... Responsibilities are gained, and autonomy is lost. Immense joy and love can abound amid feelings of loss and overwhelm.*

Emphasizing communication, mutual respect, and teamwork, *Baby Bomb* demonstrates that effective parenting begins with effective partnering. This engaging, insightful guide will be transformational reading for new and expectant parents.

KRISTEN RABE (July / August 2021)

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