

Relationship Advice: Romance After Baby



By Dr. Jane Greer

Bringing a baby into your lives can change everything. The days move in a different way, the demands on you can be like nothing you have ever experienced before, both physically and emotionally, and you might be getting little to no sleep.

It's no wonder, then, that your romantic relationship, which may have always come naturally to the two of you, might now change as well. The very fact that the press paid so much attention to Meghan Markle and Prince Harry's small gestures toward each other on their most recent trip – holding hands while walking, a nice kiss goodbye as they went their separate ways one day – points to how important such moves can be after

having a child.

The royal couple has always been demonstrative with affection. But since the arrival of Baby Archie, their hand-holding and kissing seems a continued declaration of romance.

Keeping the romance alive and remaining passionate partners even after expanding your family can be a challenge. So how do you go about accepting and navigating the new circumstances without losing that important connection that brought you to this point in the first place?

The first step is acknowledging that things are no longer the same, and adjusting your expectations accordingly, so that you won't feel disappointed if you look back at the way things used to be. Perhaps you were intimate in the house whenever and wherever you wanted, spontaneously. But that was before being up all night with a crying infant or changing diapers, or worrying constantly made new demands on your energy. It was before you were breastfeeding or washing bottles and before all you could think about was this tiny new being.

As a result, the time and fuel you have for being romantic has probably diminished dramatically. With this in mind, work to establish a new normal based on what your life is like now and the resources you have and don't have as new parents. Things are likely to be starkly different from the way they were before.

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One helpful change might be to plan for time alone together, as opposed to simply waiting for it to unfold. You might not find the time nearly as often as you used to, so try to shift the emphasis from quantity to quality. Focus on making the times that you can be together meaningful so that the feel-good connection lingers.

Also, shift from the free-fall expression of love that previously accompanied your relationship and instead pay attention to the smaller gestures of connection, as Meghan and Harry seem to be doing. You might have to exchange an exciting romp in the hay or staying in bed together all day for a passing kiss, a warm hug, or a gentle back or foot rub. Look for opportunities to pepper each other with consideration, maybe offering your partner a few hours alone without the baby, or being empathic and acknowledging that you appreciate how exhausted they must be.

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The truth is that little acts of thoughtfulness and understanding in the face of having a baby ARE sweeping gestures of romance. They will allow you and your significant other to feel cared about, which then leads to wanting to please each other. It creates an atmosphere of gratitude, appreciation, and love, all of which are the kindling of romantic love.

The bottom line is that it's important to accept that things have evolved. It is unwise to judge your love by your old standards; your new situation will likely not hold up and might lead to feelings that something is wrong or missing.

Instead, think of the new phase as a revamp. Know that if your partner is too tired for sex or even a make-out session, it is not personal, it is because they are wiped out. Putting it all

in the context of nurturing your home and baby and creating a new landscape of love can sustain you through the period of infancy and toddlerhood.

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