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Disclaimer

This book is designed to provide information on leaving the paid work force to become a stay-at-home parent. It is sold with the understanding that the publisher and author are not engaged in rendering legal, accounting, tax advice or other professional services. If these or other types of expert assistance are required, the services of competent professionals should be sought.

It is not the purpose of this manual to reprint all the information that is otherwise available on the topic, but rather to complement, amplify and supplement other texts covering various aspects of the stay-at-home lifestyle. The information in this book is used entirely at the discretion of the reader, and is made available on the express condition that no liability, expressed or implied is accepted by the author or publisher for the accuracy, content or use thereof.

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Welcome to the Rat Race

How did my life come to this? I asked myself this question one evening years ago as I sank, utterly exhausted, into a tub of warm bubbles. As I relaxed into the soothing water, I let my mind wander over the fast-paced events of my day. I was a thirty-year-old first-time mother of a five-month old baby boy. I was a college-educated advertising professional, with seven years' work experience. My husband, Willi, eight years my senior, was a commercial photographer with an engineering background. We both put in long hours on our jobs and had been married for two years.

I thought back to how this particular day had gone.

6:30 a.m. The alarm went off and we were up and running – showers, breakfast and a quick perusal of the newspaper before the baby awakened.

7:30 a.m. The baby was stirring. I delightedly scooped him up from his crib, but with no time to play, dressed him immediately and fed him his bottle.

8:00 a.m. The mad rush was on to get everything ready for the baby's day at the daycare center and our day at the office. I placed filled and sterilized bottles, diapers, medicines and changes of clothes for the baby in the diaper bag; and set out lunches and briefcases. Willi grabbed his lunch and with a hurried kiss to the baby and me, was off to work. I got the baby's coat, hat, gloves, and booties and loaded him into the infant car carrier seat. I grabbed his diaper bag, my lunch and briefcase, and, after making two trips to the car with all our gear, raced off to the day care center.

8:30 a.m. I arrived at the day care center with the baby. We rushed in; the baby still buckled in his car carrier. I signed in and hurried down the hall to the infant room. As usual, I was running late for work, so I asked the caregiver to please take care of getting the baby out of the carrier and his winter gear. I placed a quick kiss on my sleepy infant's forehead, and with a lump in my throat promised to return at lunch. I said a quick prayer of thanks that his center was located just one block from my office.

9:00 a.m. I arrived at work choking back tears. I felt bewildered to still have these feelings of guilt, grief and remorse over leaving my new infant in full-time day care. I had thought that by now, the awful feelings would dissipate; after all, I had been back to work for three months.

12:00 p.m. I raced to the day care center for lunch with the baby. I spent a bittersweet half-hour playing with him in the nursery's "fun box." I was again thankful for the opportunity to be close enough to the center to visit during the day, but I still dreaded having to tear myself away from him when it was time to return to the office.

12:30 p.m. I returned to my office desk, choking back tears again. I ate half of a sandwich brought from home and drank a cup of coffee.

1:55 p.m. I arrived five minutes early for a staff meeting. My colleagues asked about the baby. "Oh, he's fine," I had said, "probably napping, right now." I would have loved to have talked more about him, but I was interrupted by a male co-worker who joked, "Yeah, I wish I could be napping right about now." Everyone laughed as the boss strolled in to begin the meeting. I fought the lump in my throat and tried to pay attention. My mind wandered back again to the baby. I worried about whether or not he was getting a good nap. He had been so cranky at night, lately. It was so noisy at the center, with babies on all kinds of schedules, crying all the time, and the preschoolers across the hall making all kinds of ruckus, how could anyone sleep?

5:45 p.m. Quitting time! I packed up for the day and headed back to the day care center. I looked over the baby when I arrived, checking for signs of neglect such as a saturated diaper. He was crying uncontrollably again. I knew that the quality of care at the center fell dramatically after 4:00 p.m., when all the full-time staff left for the day. I changed the baby's diaper, gathered up his bottles and diaper bag, loaded him into his carrier and waddled down the hall with all our gear to sign out for the day. It had taken twenty minutes out of our precious free time just to get out of the center.

6:30 p.m. We arrived home, and I prepared to begin the "second shift." Willi had not arrived home yet. I threw some frozen pasta meals into the microwave for him to eat when he got home. I had no appetite so I didn't bother fixing myself anything. I started water boiling to clean and sterilize enough bottles to get the baby through the next day at the day care. I still felt a need to sanitize the feeding supplies we sent to the day care center each day. I had been home for ten minutes and was already getting things prepared for the next day.

7:00 p.m. Willi arrived home. He changed his clothes and sat down on the couch to eat his microwave pasta. It was "quality time" for me and the baby. After feeding him a bottle, I placed him on the living room floor to play. I tried to get him to coo and smile, but he was fussy and acted tired.

7:30 p.m. I bathed the baby and got him ready for bed. I had had exactly one hour of "quality time" with the baby. One hour in a 24-hour day.

8:00 p.m. As my energy level started to wind down, I made lunches and filled the baby's bottles for the next day. I munched down the rest of my half-eaten sandwich from lunch that afternoon.

8:30 p.m. I wearily traipsed down the basement stairs to throw in a load of laundry. I gathered up a clean load, carried it up the stairs into

the living room and handed the basket to Willi to fold. There was so much laundry with a new baby. So many tiny clothes to sort and fold. I was not angry with Willi for not helping me with the nightly chores. He never complained about doing them, when I asked him to help. The problem was that I had to ask.

9:00 p.m. And so here I am, sitting in the tub, utterly exhausted. Why am I so tired and sad all the time, I wonder. This wasn't the way it was supposed to be. How could I feel this depressed when I "have it all"? I'm married, have a wonderful job and a new baby. What more could any woman want, I thought miserably. Not coming up with any answers, I climbed out of the tub and dressed for bed. I went back into the kitchen and checked to make sure everything was ready for the morning. Lunches, briefcase with unfinished work I was too tired to look at, bottles, diapers and extra clothes for the baby were all in order and ready to be thrown together in the morning. I absently kissed my husband good night and fell into bed, hoping for a few hours of sleep before the baby woke up for his midnight feeding.

Introduction

At the point in my life just described – my working parent rat race, I was a bewildered parent, not quite believing what my life had come to. I missed my baby so much during the day and was so utterly exhausted each night. I was new to the emotions and physical challenges of parenthood. Millions of parents worked, I thought. I must be the strange one, feeling this depressed. I was inexperienced and did not see how I could change anything.

I continued working and was eventually able to adjust somewhat to the physical challenges of getting the baby to the daycare center and home each night, but I was never quite able to reconcile my emotions with the reality of being a working parent. I felt that my baby needed me more than I was able to give, but I just did not see a way to answer his demands.

Little did I know at that time, how very much my baby really did need me and how important it was that I, and his father, be there for him. I did not know that a more available parent could provide lifelong benefits to a child. I did not know that my baby's level of care in his first three years would affect his mental, social and psychological abilities for the rest of his life. Because I did not realize the importance of this, I continued on the same working-parent path for many more years. The societal norms of working were too strong. The pressure to progress in my working career took priority. The possibility of coming home to my baby seemed nonexistent.

Many people have asked me why, if I was so miserable, didn't I just talk to my husband openly and honestly about my desire to quit my job and stay home with the baby. The answer is complicated. It had less to do with my husband and more to do with my own conflicted feelings about my career versus my new role as a mother.

I grew up in the 1970's and the 1980's– the decades in which many women decided to find their way out into the world, instead of staying home in the more traditional domestic roles. It was

an exciting time to grow up as a female. Our high schools and universities offered us a world of new opportunities.

As a teenager, I did well in high school and never questioned the desire to continue my education and acquire a college degree. None of my female peers did. Many headed off to college with visions of business, law, or medical degrees. Being a traditional girl at heart, I decided to pursue either teaching or counseling at the University of Kentucky.

Once there, however, I was encouraged to take a few business courses, just to see how I would like something that would take me into the “real world.” I loved them! I found business management, marketing and economics classes to be eye-opening experiences and decided that they offered me an exciting new window on the world. I changed my major to marketing and left my domestic interests behind. Little did I know then, how those interests would return in full force later in my life.

After gaining my Bachelor of Science degree in Marketing, I returned to my hometown of Louisville, Kentucky and began an advertising and marketing career at a small catalog company. I was hired on as a temporary clerk to help out during a particular burst of new business occurring for the company. I dug in with full force. I was a real go-getter with energy to spare. I was quickly offered a full-time job and more responsibility. I was successful in my career at this company and stayed for five years. It was here that I met my husband.

Willi was a photographer with the company. He worked “below stairs” in the photography studios, while I worked upstairs within the business side of the company. Many employees thought it was a little like blue collar vs. white collar, but the way I saw it, the photographers weren’t blue collar at all. They were more like “gray” collar for their technical expertise. Many of them had college degrees. Willi had two college degrees – one in engineering and one in photography. It just happened that he enjoyed photography more than engineering, and decided to develop his career in this direction. He was very professional in his work, as were most of his peers.

As for us “upstairs” folk, while some may have felt superior for being “white collar,” I saw most as more like “pink collar.”

Many were simply glorified paper pushers. I had respect for but a handful of truly talented, motivated workers and counted myself among them. This go-getter quality on such a young, fresh worker, was what attracted a “below-stairs” guy – my future husband - to an “upstairs” gal - me.

After several years of dating, Willi and I were married. We did very little pre-marital planning, except for a weekend retreat sponsored by our church. We did not have many conversations about how we would manage things after children arrived; we simply discussed the fact that we both wanted kids. Not talking about this ahead of time was a big mistake, but at that time, I was more concerned with my career. Within six months of being married, I left my first job to accept a position in the marketing department of our city’s large newspaper.

I absolutely loved being a part of the newspaper. Everything about my new job and the company fit me perfectly. I was, and still am, an avid reader. A day doesn’t go by, that I don’t read the newspaper. My job enabled me to put my marketing, research and communication skills to good use. I reveled in the atmosphere and went full force on the job. It was an exciting time to work for a newspaper. The digital revolution was just getting started, and I helped develop many new computer applications for my company.

I was heading happily up the career ladder when life happened, as it has a way of doing, in the form of our first baby. Nicholas was born when our marriage was about two years old, and my new career at the newspaper was just taking off.

During the pregnancy, I never seriously thought I would stay home. I had no desire to. My career was simply too exciting. No one I knew stayed home with an infant. Everyone worked, and besides, I was fortunate to have a high-quality daycare center located one block from my office. Everything would be perfect, I thought. A baby won’t slow me down at all, I thought. I had no idea what the reality of life with a baby was really going to be like. I had no idea of how physically exhausting it was going to be. Most of all, I had not a clue as to how that baby was going to change me emotionally.

Willi and I were in for big changes. We morphed from a couple of yuppie DINKs (dual-income, no kids) to a family overnight. It was quite a change, and one we were totally unprepared for.

I took the minimum maternity leave and returned to work. I struggled through the mental and physical exhaustion and plugged along, telling myself that it would get better. After several exhausting months, I realized things were not going to get better. This is the point at which my story really begins and the point at which I began asking myself (in the tub at night) how my life got to this point. Why was I not prepared? When were things going to get better? Why couldn't I handle this particular challenge – I had always been able to tackle and solve problems. I went round and round with the questions in my mind each night. I never had any answers. I really did not want to face the answers. Fear of change held me in my current position. I continued plugging along at work and tried to stop asking myself the questions.

I realized that it was not going to get any easier, when, month after month, I was still feeling conflicted about my role as a mother vs. my role as a career person. I wanted it all, but I realized there would be a price. A price in the form of stress, exhaustion and emotional pain.

At some point in my early years as a parent, I decided I was angry at my husband for not “allowing” me to quit my job. I harbored this misplaced anger at him for a long time. I wanted him to simply tell me to quit. But the problem was, I never came right out and told him I wanted to stay home. I was too afraid. I felt tremendous guilt in giving up a successful career and education. I did not want to be the bad guy who stalled our climb up the social ladder. I did not really know for many years if staying home was truly what *I* wanted to do. I wanted someone else to make the decision for me. I was very conflicted. Therefore, we never had an actual conversation about the issue, and I kept working.

About three years later, I found out I was expecting baby number two – this time, a girl. I was very apprehensive now, understanding the reality of working and caring for an infant. I was fairly certain that I would not be able to continue working full-time with two babies in tow. Nicholas was a three-and-a-half year old tyrant when

the new baby, Andrea, came along. However, I adopted a “wait-and-see” attitude and signed her up for daycare at the same center.

After working full-time through her first six months, I realized it was too much for me to handle. The daily treadmill of morning rush hour, daycare, work, brief evening hours at home and fitful sleep, led to horrendous stress, a severe lack of patience, and multiple illnesses.

I decided to be mature and have a real conversation with my husband. I finally came out and told him I was not going to be able to continue working full-time with these two children. I told him that I had never really gotten used to the emotional issues of working with one child; now, with two, I knew it was not going to get better. My husband agreed to take a look at our finances to see if it would be feasible for me to quit. He was very hesitant, but to my surprise, he agreed that I should come home. We would just “try it out,” we decided. If it didn’t work, for whatever reason, I could always go back to work.

That’s when life happened again, in the form of my boss’s dismay over my announcement that I was quitting. Not so fast, she urged me. Let me see what I can come up with to help us both out, she said. She came back to me with a proposal to go part-time. I was offered a promotion, a raise, more responsibility and a three-day-a-week schedule to boot. It was an offer a still-conflicted professional mother could not turn down.

I took the part-time position and accepted the promotion. Daycare arrangements became extremely complicated. I had enrolled Nicholas in a three-day-a-week preschool program near our neighborhood in anticipation of my being home. In order to get him to his new preschool on Mondays – a working day, I had to leave him with a neighbor whose children went to the same preschool. He returned to his old daycare center on the other two working days a week. Our infant, Andrea, went to the same center three days a week. This arrangement lasted for one year until Nicholas started kindergarten.

School began a whole new set of childcare arrangements. During the school year, our son was able to go to an extended day program offered after hours at the school. The baby remained in day care. She

was now a toddler at the center. Willi and I raced all over town each day to get our kids and ourselves where we needed to be for the day and then home at night. Our lives were speeding up exponentially.

When summer came around, we set up yet another scramble for childcare for Nicholas. We enrolled him in a school-age summer camp program offered at a church several miles from our home. Andrea remained at the daycare center near my office. Our days continued to present us with a logistical maze to get everyone in the family to their respective places. Nicholas was very unhappy at his summer camp. As a shy and small child, he was overwhelmed at being surrounded all day with older and much larger kids and teens. His day was not as structured as school had been; he was bewildered and frightened at this camp.

This “part-time” period turned out to be the most stressful of my entire life. At work, I had been given the “gift” of a part-time schedule. It was something I was very grateful for; I wanted the two days a week at home with my children. Many colleagues watched me with great interest during this time, because there were very few part-time professionals in our company. The problem, I learned, was that I was trying to be all things to all people. I had been given more responsibility with my new position at work. I put tremendous pressure on myself to make the job a success even with my reduced in-office hours. The reality was that I was taking work home, emailing colleagues, and accepting long phone consultations on my “off” days, as well as weekends.

At home, the expectations were raised for a higher-quality domestic life. I again put the pressure on myself to be the best at-home mom I could be, even though it, too, was a part-time position. I took on more cleaning, baking, school volunteering and child care duties.

The small voice inside me finally insisted that I examine just what path I was on. It became very clear to me that I had to find a way to change our lifestyle before doing irreparable damage to my children, my marriage and our family life. My husband and I finally sat down together and made the decision to bring me home full-time. It was to be the first time in my adult life that I would not be earning a paycheck.

The fear I felt was numbing. It was easier, by far, to continue on the same path, than to face my fear and try to imagine how I could change our lifestyle. I had very few role models at the time I was considering a change. Most every parent I knew, was a working parent. No one among my friends or extended family had considered quitting a job to stay home with children. I found very few helpful books on the subject. It was very difficult to know where to begin - how to change our deeply ingrained, dual-income, upwardly mobile lifestyle into the one of my dreams - one filled with calm, peace and family happiness.

It took many long years of being a stressed-out, diaper bag- and-briefcase-toting working parent to find my way home. It was the hardest and scariest challenge I have ever faced. It was also the most rewarding. The lifestyle change I envisioned did not come quickly or automatically. Finally quitting my position at work, even though it was technically part-time at that point, was the first, and most important step to achieving the calm, peaceful and happy family life for which I longed.

After quitting my job and coming home full-time, I began to search in earnest for information about how to make a one-income lifestyle work. With some effort, I found a few books and articles that touched on the subject. I wanted to know why the stay-at-home lifestyle was important. I wanted to know how children of various ages would benefit from having a parent at home. I wanted to know if a less-stressful life would improve my marriage and my health. More than anything, I wanted to know how to make it happen, how to live on less income, how to structure a new life at home and how to handle the endless questions from friends and family. I wanted to give it a try. I wanted to make a successful transition to a new, sustainable lifestyle at home with my children.

This book is the result of my driven need to know all of the above and more. It is written for working parents looking for a way to come home; who hear the call to a different way of life and desperately want to heed it. This book is for those who don't know how, or are afraid, to listen to that call. This book is also written for parents who HAVE found their way home, but are perhaps looking

for a way to sustain the home-based lifestyle successfully and for the long-term.

It is NOT my intention to state unequivocally that all families should keep a parent at home. Finances may indeed be too tight, or the family may be in debt and need to get that aspect of their lives under control. Many working parents would be terribly unhappy stay-at-home parents. In these families, it would not be practical to consider this option. Children and spouses would not be served by a miserable parent at home.

My aim is to help those of you who *do* want to find your way home. This book will be your roadmap and guide. It will provide all the support, ammunition, practical advice and tools you'll need to convince yourself and others that a change in lifestyle will greatly benefit you, your family and even your community. It CAN BE DONE. Here then, in the following pages, you will discover exactly how to find your way home, and then, how to successfully maintain your home-based lifestyle.

How to Use This Book

Finding Your Way Home is structured in three main sections, each with 10 sub-sections. The book offers a comprehensive how-to guide for parents seeking a way to remain at home to raise children and care for the family. Readers will be substantially challenged to think creatively about the why and how of this process. A writing journal or notebook is suggested as an appropriate companion to this work.

In Part I, *Ten Compelling Reasons to Find Your Way Home*, ten justifiable, research-based motivations for quitting the dual-working lifestyle are presented as “ammunition” to those desiring a change in lifestyle. The intent of this section is to provide compelling reasons to quit a career in order to lead an at-home life. Changing an ingrained family lifestyle is a dramatic undertaking. The person instigating the change needs to have a strong conviction and knowledge that it is the right choice and will provide tremendous benefit to the entire family. Many working parents remain conflicted as they contemplate quitting a job or career pattern. As you read through this first section, take note of any and all compelling reasons for finding your way home that have a particular resonance. It will be very important to keep these reasons in the forefront of your mind as you work through the action steps listed in Part II and Part III.

Part II, *Ten Courage-Building Strategies to Find Your Way Home*, presents ten action steps to build the necessary courage to make a change. These strategies are designed to build upon each other and will be worked through in a step-by-step manner. The first two strategies are designed to help you analyze your reasons for desiring a change and examining some options. At Strategy Three, you will begin to admit to yourself and a few like-minded people, the desire to quit the working parent rat race. Courage-building continues with financial analysis and examination of work and income-earning options. Powerful courage expansion takes place at Strategies Six, Seven and Eight, as you will begin to visualize a new lifestyle and voice the desire to scale back. Keep your workbook and a calculator

handy as you work through this section. At the end of Part II, you will have a new one-income budget, a set of contingency plans and the courage needed to initiate a change in lifestyle.

Part III, *Ten Transitional Strategies to a Successful Life at Home*, outlines ten steps to adjust to your new one-income lifestyle. It will take time to transition to a slower pace of life. It will also take a dedicated effort to research and implement new methods of living and dealing with children. It will be of utmost importance to constantly review your compelling reasons (from Part I) for making this change in order to keep your motivation and confidence elevated. At the end of this section, you will have transitioned successfully by creating a safe haven at home for your family, and you will have the confidence to maintain your new lifestyle for as long as you choose.

For Single Parents: This book can help you make informed decisions about what it will take to scale back your working life in order to be at home. It will be entirely possible for you to make changes such as going to part-time work, or developing a home-based business in order to afford you the opportunity to create a new home-based lifestyle. You will use this book in much the same way as a parent in a dual-income household seeking a way home. You may want to consider reading the special addendum for single parents prior to reading through the material in this book. The first section of this book will be used to create your “ammunition” for scaling back your work life – the same motivations dual-income parents make for going to a one-income lifestyle will also be your reasons for going to a part-time work schedule, for example. Part II of this book will offer you many of the same financial strategies. Where a dual-income parent is looking to go to a single-income budget, you will take a full-time household income and pare it down to a part-time income budget. It can be done! Read about some who have done it, in the special addendum. Your courage-building process, outlined in this section, will be much the same as the dual-income parent’s. Part III will offer you transitional strategies to adjust to being more at home, dealing with your children more each day and learning to live on less income.

Part I

Ten Compelling Reasons to Find Your Way Home

Why would anyone want to stay home?

Before you can begin to think about quitting your current way of life, you must ask yourself, why? Why do you want to quit your job, career or business in order to attempt a new life at home?

People in your life, some well-meaning, and some not so well-meaning, such as your spouse, in-laws, friends, co-workers and employers, will ask why in the world you want to quit working. You'll need to be prepared for those questions. You'll need to arm yourself with solid reasons for wanting to create change in your life. It will be important to justify your position in your own mind – to convince yourself - and to be able to gracefully handle the inevitable avalanche of questions and raised eyebrows from other people, as you begin your journey home.

Your first step in planning a change will be to think carefully about your reasons for wanting to make it happen. Knowing precisely why you want and need to make a change and how that change will affect you and your family will help ease the fears that will inevitably appear.

Knowing that a parent at home will provide vast and tangible benefits to children of all ages may be all the ammunition you need to start making your plans to come home. Or, you may need more than that. You may need to know that a life at home will also provide benefits to your health, your spouse, your family life and even to your pocketbook. Regardless, you will need at least one or two, and maybe more, solid reasons for making such a dramatic lifestyle change.

Lucynda Koesters

The following section will arm you with this important ammunition. You may not like everything you read. Some of the information may make you feel sad or guilty - especially the areas dealing with children and their real need for an at-home mom or dad. It is not my intention to make you feel more guilt. It is also not my intention to state that a life at home with children is the correct way of life for everyone - many, many parents would make terrible stay-at-home parents. My intention is, rather, to give you, the parent with the desire to make a change, strong, intelligent reasons and justifications for choosing to make changes in your current way of life.

Part I of this book will provide a start. Take note of all the benefits to being an at-home parent: benefits, first and foremost, to your children, no matter what their age. Note also the benefits to be gained in your health, both mental and physical, your marriage, your family life and your finances (yes, your finances can actually improve with one parent at home). In the final section, note the importance of doing this now. Have no regrets later in life for not making positive changes - take the time now, to study how to plan and execute methods of making beneficial lifestyle changes.

Gather strength in your convictions as you read and work through this section. Keep what you learn to yourself for awhile. Keep it private until you are sure you have your solid reasons firmly in mind. Know that you are on the right path and doing the right thing for yourself and your family.

Compelling Reason Number 1: Your Infant

Your baby snuggles in your arms sleepily, then looks up into your eyes trustingly and coos. Your heart melts, you are in love. Your baby is so soft, so gentle, so innocent, and so helpless. Your baby is dependent on you, her parent, for her every need. She adores you.

Infancy is precious and fleeting. It is your right and your responsibility to be there during this time, to love, care and provide for your baby, laying the foundation for a secure and healthy beginning to life. Much research has been conducted that highlights the importance of a secure and predictable early environment for babies. Having a parent at home to love, nurture and care for an infant has been shown to provide wide-ranging and lifetime benefits to the mental and physical health of the child.

Attachment Theory

An infant is helpless. He depends on other people to meet his every need. Imagine how frightening it must be to be so small, so helpless, so defenseless. A baby needs a primary caregiver to provide for his needs - food, warmth, clean clothes, stimulation. In time, the baby learns to trust that his primary caregiver will consistently be there for him. He feels most secure when he is in close proximity to the person who cares for him and eventually learns to trust that everything in his universe will be all right. This is called attachment theory and is the foundation of bonding - a very important facet of a child's healthy development.

Dr. Isabelle Fox, a psychotherapist, former senior health consultant for Operation Head Start and author of *Being There*,

Lucynda Koesters

The Benefits of a Stay-at-Home Parent, explains John Bowlby's attachment theory:

“The English psychiatrist, John Bowlby, was one of the first authorities to observe and describe the significance of early bonding between infants and their mothers, and to develop attachment theory to explain behavior. The theory explains that the infant feels most secure when it is in close proximity to the person who cares for him or her. This “attachment” between the newborn infant and the caregiver begins to form very early in the infant’s life, as he or she is nurtured during the hundreds of interactions necessary for survival. Slowly, the infant learns that a particular caregiver provides a predictable, safe and comfortable world for the infant.”¹

This attachment to one person leads to bonding and the beginnings of trust; its success depends upon hundreds of daily interactions between baby and caregiver. Bonding will not occur unless these interactions are between the baby and one caregiver - a one-to-one relationship over an extended period of time.²

As the baby transitions from a protected environment inside the womb to the outside world of sights, sounds and movements, it depends on others for all of his needs. When a baby feels distress, he becomes agitated, tense, and cries with “tiny fists clinched and eyes squeezed shut.” The familiar caregiver provides comfort by holding the baby close, offering a bottle, changing an uncomfortable diaper, and rocking or cooing, thereby relieving the baby’s stress. The baby begins to learn trust as his needs are consistently met and his fright soothed by the primary caregiver. This initial bonding and subsequent trust forms the basis of the baby’s psychological health for the rest of his life.³

A secure attachment, bonding and trust in the early stages of life provides a solid foundation for the baby. When his needs are consistently met and his cries answered, the baby learns that he has power and control over his universe. From this secure base, the child will eventually develop a positive attitude - confidence. He will feel