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4 Ways to Feel Intimacy When You're All Touched Out

parenthood



WHETHER YOU ARE PREGNANT, HAVE A NEW BABY OR EVEN AN OLDER CHILD, WE MOMS ALL CAN FEEL TOUCHED OUT AT CERTAIN TIMES IN OUR PARENTING ADVENTURE. I ESPECIALLY HEAR ABOUT THIS FROM BREASTFEEDING MOMS.

If you've already been there, then you know exactly what I'm talking about. **The baby wants to do nothing but nurse. Or be rocked in your old rocking chair. Or will only sleep if she's lying on your chest.** The toddler wants to be picked up all the time. Your child is having a clingy phase or a preference for one parent over the other (I promise, these phases are temporary!). "Stranger danger" (or separation anxiety--a completely normal part of baby and toddler development) drives your child to desire being even closer to you...

You get the idea.

These phases when we feel all touched out aren't just about not getting breaks. It's about that constant physical contact. That tugging at your shirt. It's your baby being sound asleep when she's in your arms and then crying the second you set them down. Or, your teething baby needing constant soothing. Or your fully weaned breastfed baby still instinctively wanting to stick her hand under your shirt.

YOU MIGHT BE WONDERING, "WHEN IS MY BODY JUST GOING TO BELONG TO ME AGAIN??"

Being the partner or a child of someone that doesn't want to be touched can feel bad. It feels like rejection. And being the person that causes this rejection can make us feel guilty and awful too.

In last week's blog post, I talked about [what sex after baby might be like](#) for parenting couples.

You might be itching to get back in the sack, to feel that physical connection with your partner again. Or, it might be the last thing on your mind. Either way, it's totally OK.

The good news is that intimacy doesn't only mean sex and it isn't always about touch. It's about checking in and communicating with each other. **Ultimately, it's about feeling a deeper connection with your partner. That's true intimacy.** And you can still have that regardless of which phase of your parenting journey you're in.

So, when you're all touched out, and have limited time and energy, how can you feel that connection to your partner? Here are a few really simple ways:

1. INTIMACY IS TALKING AND LISTENING TO EACH OTHER.

What do you need? How was your day? What happened? This is communication 101, right? But really, it makes all the difference. **Being able to talk about the details of your day (however profound or mundane they might be) and to be truly heard with undivided attention...sometimes there isn't anything better.** This is a great opportunity to ask for what you need. Do you need a break? Maybe to go lay on your bed for some free untouched time by yourself. Do you need to get out into the fresh air for a walk? It only takes 10 minutes. And to have your partner hear you and give you that space is such a loving gesture. It really makes all the difference.

2. INTIMACY IS DOING THE LITTLE THINGS TO HELP EACH OTHER OUT.

You've probably seen images from those **"Porn for Women"** books....featuring attractive men doing things like housework or offering to take care of the crying baby. It's mostly tongue-in-cheek and a bit cliché, but as silly as it is, there is some truth to stereotype. The point is, when someone notices that the living room needs picked up or the dinner table needs wiped off and takes it upon themselves to just get it done to help us out, we feel seen, validated, supported. **It's such a subtle form of intimacy, but when our partner really sees us and can say something like, "I know you hate cleaning up after dinner. Let's do it together and knock it out faster." or, even better, "I've got the dishes. Why don't you go take that shower that the baby didn't let you take earlier today. I'll bring you a hot towel from the dryer." I dare anyone to tell me that doesn't count as intimacy.** I bet your partner feels just as cared for when you make small gestures for him or her to make their day better too.

3. INTIMACY IS GETTING REACQUAINTED WITH EACH OTHER.

For some new parents--especially if one parent is a stay-at-home parent--finding ways to have conversation that don't involve the baby or kids can feel awkward or challenging. It can be tricky to find ways to relate to each other. It might even seem like you have to relearn how to socialize with grownups again. It's normal! This is a huge life change and we have to be able to talk about what that actually looks and feels like for us. **But if you find yourself feeling stumped for a different talking point, one thing that always feels productive is to learn something new about your partner or share something new about yourself.** If you need some assistance with this, you can try table topic cards (like **one of these**, or **this app**). Or, sometimes a free online quiz can be fun and enlightening. I'm a fan of **this one** but there are plenty out there if you search for personality or relationship quizzes in Google if that one isn't your style. You're likely to learn something new about your partner, and maybe even find yourself going off on your own conversational tangents. That's great! **Instead of defaulting to Netflix, why not have your at-home date with each other centered around getting reacquainted?**

4. INTIMACY IS SOMETIMES GESTURAL.

Gestures are physical actions, but this doesn't have to mean sex or even touching. **Curiously, sometimes people who feel touched out find that if they can be the one to give a hug (rather than waiting to receive one), it helps bring them back to a place of wanting to be touched again.** But if that's just not gonna happen today, why not try simple eye contact? Maybe it's a shared glance when your toddler does something funny or maybe it's something more prolonged and intentional. You get to decide here. I've even had a momma tell me that the most intimate and romantic thing her partner did while their daughter was young was for her partner to reach across the bed at night to simply hold her hand after a rough day.

She said she appreciated that he didn't try to inch closer to hold her or "make a move"--he just held her hand, and continued to hold her hand til they fell asleep. I love that. **It's a simple acknowledgement of, "Yes, this is hard, and yes, we both are exhausted, but I'm still here with you."**

If parenthood is putting you and your partner through the ringer right now, whether you're feeling touched out or not, you might want to give some of these things a try. Maybe you're already doing one or two of these and didn't make the connection that **this is also what intimacy looks like.**

If passion and fireworks aren't happening right now, it's OK. It doesn't mean it won't ever come back. And in the meantime, **you can keep that spark and connection going by coming back to these basics time and time again.**

Want more tips? Check out my free video [5 Steps to Rockin' Your Relationship When Baby Comes Home.](#)

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