

For Crying Out Loud



Understanding and Helping Inconsolably Crying Babies

Christina Hurst-Prager

This small book is a gift from the author to all parents,
grandparents, and caregivers of babies.

You can copy this PDF and give it away for free.

What Readers say about the Book

„For Crying Out Loud" is a priceless gift for new families. The description of different meanings of crying will help caregivers decipher what the babies may need. The sensitive methods you describe give parents and all involved caregivers tools that they can use to help babies. This book really will be used by so many people who feel helpless listening to the cries and not knowing how to stop the crying or meet the needs of the baby.

Phyllis Klaus, M.A.

LMFT, LMSW, is a licensed Marriage Family Therapist, Author

I loved reading this booklet - thank you so much for writing it!
Some of the points really touched my heart and I think that they apply not only to babies but also other adult family members. They got me thinking lots.
I love the way her care and love for humans speaks out through the whole text.

Elizabeth

A friend, mother of three and breastfeeding counsellor

It has changed my way I relate to my five grandchildren, as well as healed some of my own memories as a child. Thank you.

Joanna

Breastfeeding counsellor and grandmother

It is a very helpful and invaluable small book

Sibille

Mother and Parent educator

Already when reading the first pages my tears started to flow. I felt immediately understood and not so alone anymore. With her small book Christina helped me to cope better with difficult situations and understand my little one better.

Selina

Young first time Mum

Dedication

I dedicate this book to:

All babies of this planet

May they be accepted and honoured in their way of being and expressing themselves.

May they be loved, understood, and accompanied so they can develop into healthy, self-confident, and loving adults and use their creativity, strength, and trust in the good for a green, colourful, and peaceful Earth.

All parents of this planet

May they understand their babies and help them work through their painful experiences.

May they find ways to become aware of and transform their own unresolved painful memories

And may they reach the skills to connect with their children with an open heart, to understand them, guide them, protect them, and introduce them to the beauties of life.

If we hope to create a non-violent world where respect and kindness replace fear and hatred, we must begin with how we treat each other at the beginning of life, where our deepest patterns are set. From these roots grow fear and alienation—or love and trust.

Suzanne Arms (birthingthefuture.org)

Table of Contents

About This Book

The Lovely Dream & Then: Reality

The Three Types of Crying

Healing Through Crying

For Mothers & Fathers

Creating Daily Life

Some Words About Breastfeeding

Speaking to Deborah

Outlook

Resources

About the Author

About This Book

Life of a man is like a journey; the first steps determine the whole way.

Arthur Schopenhauer

This little book is intentionally kept short and sweet. When you live with an inconsolably crying baby, you neither want to nor have the time to read.

In the first part, we look at and acknowledge your situation and what is so disturbing or even painful about it.

The following two chapters explore the three types of crying so you can answer and respond to each type accordingly. The second one of these chapters is dedicated to the main point, the really inconsolable crying, what your baby is most likely trying to express, and the need behind it. Step by step, you are guided to help your baby release the memories they are expressing and help heal these memories.

As parents, you also have needs and feelings! You will receive help dealing with your emotions that invariably pop up when you cannot quiet and calm your crying baby. I suggest ways to calm you both down and to create a relaxing and confident environment, a haven for the whole family.

The inconsolably crying is most disturbing to parents (understandably and rightly so). I describe how you can respond in a helpful way that honours your and your baby's emotions and feelings. It is most likely that the baby's crying will trigger unresolved issues of your own baby- and childhood. You will learn how to deal with them in a helpful and healing way.

Last but not least, I have some suggestions on how to make daily life easier and less stressful for you as parents, and hence also for your child, which reduces his need for crying. I am including a few words about breastfeeding

James French is a wonderful animal communicator in Britain, the founder and developer of Trust Technique. He says that as human beings, we have failed to truly listen to animals. And that is also what we have done to newborns and small children: we have failed to truly listen to them. I put ,crying babies 'in the YouTube search function a couple of days ago and was shocked to see a whole stream of film clips of crying babies and laughing adults!!! The comments were just as shocking: how cute they are when they cry. I find that downright cruel!!! It explains much about our state of humanity when we find the expression of pain, fright, fear, frustration, loneliness, and anger funny and cute! James also says that when an animal doesn't do what we expect him to do, we judge them as being bad! Well, isn't that what many people do when a baby cries? They judge them as naughty, wilful, manipulative, and what-have-you!

Children born right now are very courageous. I have believed that for quite some time—when we think of the state that Mother Earth is in right now—they deserve all the love, understanding, care, and gratitude we can give them. We are at the threshold or already in the middle of a crucial step in the evolution of humanity. So really understanding, acknowledging, and accepting a newborn and infant, toddler, and school child gives them a good and solid base to deal with the rising global turbulences.

Following my suggestions, you will also gain a new understanding of each other as parents. Babies – and children – who are listened to deeply, have their feelings and experiences acknowledged, feel seen, and are offered healing have the best chance to develop optimally in their physical, emotional, and mental self.

In **Resources**, you find a list of books I really appreciate for their authors' deep understanding, along with some suggestions for self-help and/or professionals I consider to be helpful.

BTW: I am using he and she for baby and parent in an irregular random pattern. There is no hidden agenda. I am mainly addressing the words to mum or the main caretaker of the baby.

It is my sincere hope that you will receive the information, suggestions, and help to guide your baby from inconsolable crying to peaceful calm.

Küsnacht, Switzerland, February 2023

The Lovely Dream and then: Reality

In every beginning lies a mystery that protects and helps us to live.

Hermann Hesse in *Stufen*

Somehow the happy family with a lovely rosy baby seems to be an archetype image in our western world, advertising and marketing make full use of it and lead us to believe that having a baby is the end of all happiness and that babies are always cute, smiling and gurgling with joy. You live happily ever after, radiating and living love. Those images are strong even if they are not in our everyday awareness. For some young couples and families, it does work out that way, but sadly they are few and far between.

In real life, many young mothers come home, often shortly after giving birth. They often lack real knowledge and experience of what a newborn and his needs really are and how life with a newborn will be very different from life before. It is usually a far cry from those pink and pale blue images we carry with us. Maybe the birth didn't go the way you had hoped and planned for. Your newborn found it difficult to attach to your nipple and cried instead, searching, finding the breast for a split second, letting go, crying, repeating the pattern. You get tense, understandably so, feel helpless, like a failure, are at your wits' end, and might even feel rejected by your newborn. You overcome these first difficulties if you are in good, knowledgeable, skilled, and empathic care. Breast-feeding goes on more or less fine. On the other hand, the midwife or nurse may have suggested giving a bottle, just to tie you over, relieved and yet hugely disappointed you had agreed...

And yes, now you are home. Hopefully, your partner has paternity leave and can support you, do the household chores, cook, go shopping—all those things you had

shared before, so you can take care of yourself and your baby.¹ All is well, or so it seems until your baby starts to cry inconsolably, for half an hour, an hour, even three or four hours. To you and your partner, it seems like 24 hours nonstop.

You do everything that comes to mind, what you have read, and what family members and people in your surroundings suggest. You search the internet and try those suggestions. The so-called good and well-meaning advice ranges from carrying him around, giving him a bottle, and letting him cry it out. Deep in your heart, you know you do not want to do that...but sometimes you see no other way out and let her cry alone in her cot or give her a bottle. All the things and suggestions you try do not seem to work. You feel helpless, powerless, frustrated, disappointed, and overwhelmed, at your wits' end.

Worries and fears might begin to rise. You might worry that there might be something wrong with your baby. You might doubt your ability to be a good parent or that the quality and quantity of your breast milk might not be good. You might fear what your parents, neighbours, in-laws, and friends say or even judge and doubt your behaviour and parenting skills. You might feel rejected by your baby, especially if she stems her fists and feet against you. You might get anxious that the neighbours, especially when you live in a flat, might start to complain. You might be afraid that the paediatrician will tell you to stop breastfeeding. You might be in anguish with the thoughts that you are doing something wrong, even harmful to your baby. You might be feeling guilty (quite common in western mothers). Your emotions might rise to the degree that appalls you, like frustration, anger at your sweet baby, your partner, the doctors, nurses, and total self-doubt. You might become anxious that you cannot control your negative reactions. This happens to practically all parents of a baby who cries inconsolably for hours for seemingly no reason you can detect.

The first step out of this misery is to acknowledge and accept your feelings: 'Yes, yes, I am feeling angry, sad, frustrated, desperate, at a loss, overwhelmed, alone.' And you might most likely experience a sigh of relief simply by stating and accepting your emotions, your state of being. If you fight your so-called negative thoughts and feelings, you increase your stress. You experience a double problem: fighting

¹ In some Middle Eastern and Asian countries, mums often stay at home with their own parents for the first six or twelve weeks. They do not have to do housework but only care for their baby. In the afternoon, the extended family's female members and neighbours visit the new mum. They sit and chitchat, welcome the new baby, and support the new mum. This way, she is not excluded from company and keeps up with what is happening in the family and neighbourhood.

yourself **and** having a crying baby in your arms. So, take a deep breath and a slow, leisurely breath out again with a sigh.

You might also be surprised at your baby's reaction once you fully accept yourself with all your feelings: your baby starts to relax a bit or even a lot. What a gift!

I suggest you write your feelings on paper and end with "I am ok!" And tell yourself: my baby can cry just as long as she wants and needs to. Wants and needs are the same in a baby and a small child. How about making a small ritual out of it and ripping the paper, flushing the pieces down the toilet, or burning them (in a safe way!).

As you accept your feelings and understand how you feel, you will start to relax, and your tears might start to flow, which is a very good thing! Crying is a wonderful stress releaser—as we will see in the chapters about the three kinds of crying.

I am sure you have felt stressed, sad, or miserable before. Your partner, a dear relative, or a good friend has taken you in their arms, accepting you and acknowledging how you felt. Allowing you to cry just as much and as long as you needed to release your stress, felt relieved, tears started to dry up, and you felt good about yourself again. And this is, in principle, what I suggest. Be there for your baby and allow them to cry as long as they need it. Researchers have made an interesting discovery: There is a difference in the composition of tears that flow because of wind or cutting onions and tears that are cried because of emotions. Tears stemming from emotions contain stress hormones and therefore cleanse the body of these stress hormones. Isn't that just so ingenious of mother nature! So, welcome your tears. They help the body to feel calm and good! (Newborns do not shed tears yet)

So, let's learn about the three types of crying, how each has its own cause, and how to help your baby with it.

The Three Types of Crying

Blessed, when the tears flow, like raindrops densely fall.
Unshed tears are the most painful ones of all.

Robert Eduard Prutz

Three types of crying? Isn't crying just crying?

In our western society, crying babies seem to be the norm, a given. The answers and explanations are manifold: because he is a baby and babies just do that; because his intestines are not well developed yet; because he is suffering from three months colic; because he wants to get his will and manipulates his parents because he is a bad boy (yes, even in the 21. Century such beliefs are still around!) The research and experience of pre- and perinatal psychologists show a very different picture. Karlton Terry, one of the leading therapists for babies, has a different explanation and distinguishes between crying out of need and crying out of remembering. I am adding a third explanation: crying as a stress release. The following passages describe the three kinds of crying.

Crying is communication, a baby's expression of a need or feelings, often as a last resort when we have not understood his previous communication. You will learn his signs...a baby does not need to cry to let you know e.g. that he wants to nurse. Be open, observe, and you will understand quite quickly. Newborns are fascinating!²

Shushing, giving a dummy (is helpful for emergencies), anything trying to quiet him is NOT helpful. Imagine if you were crying and somebody said, "Now, don't you cry. There is no need for it." You feel really understood and heard, right? Exactly, as a matter of fact, you don't. You neither feel heard, seen, acknowledged, validated, nor accepted. It is the same for a baby or a child!

² I can highly recommend the beautiful book: **Your Amazing Newborn** by Dr. Marshall and Phyllis Klaus

What does the baby really want to tell us when he is crying?

Crying Stemming from A Need

Many babies react with tummy cramps, often called three months colic, when mums eat dairy products. If your baby's tummy feels hard and he pulls up his legs when crying, try eliminating dairy products from your diet for 10 -14 days and observe if there is a difference in your baby.³

We all have needs of various kinds, including newborns and babies. A baby cannot regulate his physiological state; he depends on his parents or other caregivers to help him fulfil even the most basic needs. They are not only purely physical ones like food, warmth (or cooling), and shelter but also emotional and mental ones. The fulfilment of these needs lays the foundation for his later life. She learns that the world is a good and safe place that she can trust or that it is scary or even hurtful, and she needs to protect herself. That is WHY a baby's crying is so disturbing. It urges us to attend to his needs, find out what they are, and how to help him fulfil them. Usually, in our society, we try to appease him (and then do the same with ourselves in adult life) without first finding out what these needs are and to address them.

Physical needs: Food in the optimal form of mother's milk for the first six months exclusively, if possible; comfortable clothing, protection, adequate temperature, being cleaned when the nappies are pooped in. During the night and the day, body contact and closeness keep him warm and help him regulate his breathing and heartbeat. Steven Porges⁴ calls this process co-regulating. Responding to their needs makes babies feel safe. Their nervous system can relax, their energy can flow, and they are ready to communicate. They are accessible to themselves and others (all this is true for adults, too, of course). Through physical closeness, the nervous system learns to regulate itself. It is a longish learning process. In the chapter for parents, I describe what you can do when you feel overwhelmed by your child's crying needs.

³ You might also experience a difference in your own well-being; an increasing number of persons seem to develop lactose intolerance, resulting in bloating, constipation, sluggishness, and skin blemishes. You have been partly misled if you have been told that milk and its derivatives are important for calcium. It is true that we ingest much calcium from dairy, but studies have shown that we eliminate most of it through our urine, whereas the body can absorb the calcium ingested from plant-based calcium (a good source is plant-based.org for lists of veggies, legumes, fruits, and nuts containing calcium)

⁴ On YouTube, he has fascinating and enlightening talks.

A mother needs her baby's closeness for her hormones (mainly prolactin and oxytocin) to release into her bloodstream. These hormones help her to be calm and loving and stimulate her breasts to produce milk and then let go of it so the baby can access it. It is a wonderfully complex and ingenious cooperation. Oxytocin also helps the uterus of the mum to contract and become smaller again.

Emotional needs: A baby needs to be seen, heard, acknowledged, and accepted for who she is, even when her needs and crying disturb parents and caregivers. She needs calm and relaxed parents and caregivers so she can be the same, calm and relaxed. It is up to us adults to provide for such an environment...yes. Yes, creating such an environment is often demanding and sometimes difficult, even seemingly impossible. However, the baby thrives best in such an environment and learns to regulate his emotional state.

His mental needs are automatically met when his physical and emotional needs are met, as his neurone connections are not yet ready and capable of intellectual thinking. However, beliefs are already created.

When he cries for one of the primary, physical, or emotional needs and you attend to it, he stops crying. And so you know you have understood him and met that particular need, and all is well – and you have NOT spoiled him!!!

British paediatrician Dr. Donald Winnicott wrote so many decades ago that it is crucial to let an infant be angry, allowing him to express it and let it go its run; a child knows when his need to express the feeling is over. Anger is not bad; yes, even a newborn can feel angry. Google 'angry baby' and be surprised!

Now that you have satisfied your baby's physical and emotional needs, she is still crying, and you are at a loss. What else could she need (Remember: Needing and wanting are the same at that age)? What else could you do to calm, quiet, and soothe your little darling? Most likely, one of the two types of the crying needs to be expressed, either stress-release or healing-crying.

Stress-Release Crying

Have you ever said or thought, "I am so stressed I could scream?" Or have you ever felt stressed or overwhelmed, and someone took you in his arms, held you, and your tears streamed down your cheeks? You felt a huge release in your body, and low and behold, you started feeling better within a few minutes? It is also what our baby needs right now: to be held with gentle and loving awareness and to be acknowledged. So, instead of trying to find just one more way to fulfil a physical or emotional need to quiet your baby, sit down in a comfortable chair, crying baby in your arms, and maybe also allow your tears to flow because you feel stressed and overwhelmed, too, by the seeming inability to understand and respond to to your baby.

You might even feel angry at him for not responding or reacting to your efforts. And then, of course, you judge yourself for that feeling because a loving parent of a newborn or small baby shouldn't feel angry, making things even worse for you. Well, even the most loving parents get frustrated when their efforts and good will are not met with success, success being a quiet, calm, and smiling baby.

So, sit, breathe slowly, and accept whatever emotion is arising in you. Babies sense the emotions of mum or dad and mirror them, feeling the same emotions. It is just like when we walk into someone's home, and they just had a fight. We feel that tension, and we become tense; it is often so subtle that it is below our conscious awareness, but we feel that something is not quite right and might attribute it to us when actually we had picked up the emotions of our hosts. Babies sense everything but cannot intellectually recognise that they are picking up the emotions of mum and dad. So, if you take care of yourself by allowing the emotions to rise, saying yes to yourself, I feel this emotion, and I am ok. Just allowing and accepting what comes up, allowing it to flow, you will see a change in your baby. He will cry more, and it's ok! Just hold him, murmuring: *It's ok, sweetie. I love you.* You will probably automatically rock her, or he might relax, become calm, and even fall asleep. Don't expect anything. Just allow it—and you—to be, and let it flow.

If you feel calm already, get yourself a glass of water – always a good start – sit down, holding your baby however it is comfortable for the two of you, and tell him: I know all this (whatever all this is - like visits from a critical relative, a trip into a crowded area, loud noises, a jab from the paediatrician, etc.) is overwhelming to you, is scary to you, makes you feel uncomfortable, ill at ease, edgy ... I know ... it is ok ... in a soft, calm, reassuring and understanding tone of voice. No! It is not your fault that

she is crying or feeling pain or discomfort, these feelings are part of life, and it is important to allow them to be felt, so they can be released. This letting go happens naturally with babies once they have been heard, seen, and acknowledged.

After a few minutes, your baby will snuggle up to you, heaving a long relaxing sigh, smiling, maybe asking for the breast, or falling asleep. This relaxing crying may occur every so often, mainly in the evening. You could view it as an evening walk for the soul, integrating what happened during the day and preparing for a restful night.

And then again, he may still seem edgy, crying, cramping his legs, stretching them out stiffly, arching his back, pushing against you with his feet, making little fists. Obviously, there seems to be more to release than the built-up stress in his system.

The third type of crying, the memory or healing crying, goes deeper. I am addressing this type and ways to respond to it in the next chapter, as well as the difficulties, frustrations, and pain you might encounter and how to handle and deal with them constructively and helpfully.

Healing Through Crying

God gave us crying so other folks could see when we needed help, and help us.

Joshilyn Jackson

You have handled her needs by understanding and responding to them and allowing her to release the more recent stressful experiences. Yet, she is still crying, maybe bringing up bewilderment, desperation, frustration, helplessness, anger, guilt, the whole gamut of possible emotions in you.

Some events during pregnancy, birth, and the first moments, hours, and days can be painful or scary, even traumatic for a baby. Maybe there were tests during pregnancy and some interventions during birth. Perhaps the entry into the world was less than gentle, loving, caring, and respectful, and was even handled roughly and carelessly. Yes, it does happen, still today, less and less though, thank goodness.⁵ Maybe your baby was whisked away right after birth and needed some procedures. Some medical measures or interventions might have been necessary to save their life. Yet, the baby experienced them as traumatic. These experiences are still in her system. By crying, she is trying to tell you that she feels hurt, afraid, and insecure. As with stress-release crying, the baby needs support, understanding, and witnessing to release and heal these memories.

When you feel ready to allow your baby to cry in order for her to heal her memories or traumas, talk to your partner about it since you most likely need support yourself. It is not easy, but it is such a loving gift to all!

The Healing Crying is NOT, I repeat, NOT letting her cry it out alone in her cot! The Healing Crying is always done in the calm, gentle and loving arms of mum, dad, or a therapist!⁶ Should you get tense or frustrated whilst holding your crying baby, ask your partner for help, ask him/her to hold you while you hold your baby.

⁵ Frederick Leboyer's book 'Birth without Violence' was an eye opener for many and has influenced birth practices world wide.

⁶ some craniosacral therapists have special training in baby treatment or check out emotional first aid, according to Thomas Harms

For many parents, this task is challenging and in the end very rewarding ... and what I suggest seems counterintuitive. You already suspect it: allow the baby to cry as long as he needs it and support him simultaneously. It is not at all the same as letting them cry it out, as parents used to be, and still are, told to do. Letting them 'cry it out' might cause more painful and scary experiences for the child that might slow down his emotional growth and haunt him the rest of his life⁷—unless, of course, she has found a good therapy later in life or method for healing those emotional wounds. Letting them cry it out leads to feelings and beliefs of not being important, not being worthy, not being lovable, having no say, and being helpless. If it happened once in a while that you did not immediately respond to her crying she may have experienced pain, fear, sadness, etc., but not as deeply and permanently as when this letting them cry it out had always been the case...AND through the Healing Crying, those memories of more recent painful experiences are also healed and let go.

Remember to turn off all your phones, not put them on fly-modus only.

First of all: S L O W down, breathe, relax, be kind to yourself. Listen, deeply listen to your baby, with your heart open, with compassion. You need to be calm and centred when holding your baby during this Healing Crying. This state, calm and centred, alone is helpful for a frantic and inconsolable baby. If you can be held and supported by your partner, a good friend, or a specialised therapist, so much better! Take two or three minutes to breathe calmly. A constructive way is to breathe in for a count of four and breathe out for a count of six and imagine that you are breathing through your heart. You will start to sense, to have a clue, a hunch, to understand why he is crying, what he is communicating to you.

When you feel ready, sit comfortably, holding your baby on your lap, supporting her head and back, so she can see you; let her know through thoughts and your eyes that you are here for her now, willing to listen. Start talking to him slowly and quietly, inviting him to tell you his story, feelings, memories, hurts, fears, and anger. Something like: „Hi sweetie, up to now, I had thought that when you cried, you wanted to be consoled; I hadn't understood that you had tried to tell me about your experiences, your pain, fear, and wanting to cry so you could heal yourself from these memories. I am sorry, sweetheart. I am now ready to be totally here for you, hold you in my arms, and listen to you as long as you need it. I love you very much.“

⁷ The Canadian Psychiatrist Dr. Gabor Maté is very clear about it in his books or his talks, widely available on YouTube

These are my words and are only guidelines; you will know what words and expressions are right for you! Maybe your baby will cry a little, look at you with big, even astonished eyes, and want to be nursed because this is all so new. And maybe he cries for a longer time, even wailing and looking into your eyes deeply. Maybe he cries with closed eyes, becomes quiet, is breathing more calmly, opens his eyes, and starts screaming again, his body heaving. Everything that happens is the right thing to happen! So allow yourself to be open, with compassion, understanding, and love.

She may also want to be held close to you, lying on your chest, her head resting just under your shoulder or collarbone. She may move her head closer to the middle of your chest. Gently but firmly hold her, but following her movements, so she can feel safe.

Simply murmur: „I know, love (or their name). It was scary and painful. It really hurt. You felt unsafe and all alone. You didn't know what was happening.“ Whatever comes to your mind is the right expression! Be with him as long as he needs it; he knows when he has cried enough. It can be from some minutes to an hour or two, or even more...

One long crying-session may be enough; another baby might cry several times at different lengths. The first time, he may not quite understand that now he can really ‚tell‘ you his story and share his feelings and memories with you since it wasn't possible before. And a second or third crying session might be longer and more intense. Whatever happens, trust that he knows what he needs. The important thing is that he feels safe, held, and understood.

As pain and trauma will numb the body, it is possible that the crying gets stronger a second or third, or more time around, as the baby now knows he can express his emotions and release them in your safe arms. Rage can be a way out of collapse when the trauma is really very deep. So don't be alarmed if that happens. It shows that your baby trusts you and feels safe.

The prime motivation of every living being is to be safe.

If you start feeling tense or overwhelmed, which understandably might happen, keep breathing slowly and through your heart, relax your shoulders or whatever else you tensed up, knowing that you are doing a most loving thing for your child and that you can take care of yourself and your reactions and emotions later, as I will explain in the chapter for mothers and fathers.

As parents, you can also hold your baby together from the beginning. That is an especially beautiful way to help your baby heal her painful memories and scary experiences. One of you, usually the mum, but not necessarily, holds the baby en face, supports his head with her cupped hands, his back resting on mum's lower arms. Depending on the age/size of your baby, he sits on your lap with tiny legs against your tummy and larger legs on either side of your rwaist. You'll figure out how you will both be most comfortable, dad sitting behind mum, embracing her, and simultaneously, the baby. A bit like you might have done during labour and birth. The baby may look from one to the other, fix his eyes on one, closing the eyes, and open them again. Whatever he does is what he needs to be doing. He knows what he needs. The first time he might be a bit confused and holding back, not quite trusting the situation yet. Just be calm and centred, breathing slowly and evenly.

It might come easy to you or be very, very difficult. It may be easy for one of you and difficult for the other. Whatever it is, it is ok!

He will start to relax and fall asleep at the right time, often into a long and deep sleep. Don't put him in his cot immediately. Allow yourselves to enjoy and honour this state of deep peace.

After the baby has gone to sleep, share how you experienced the healing crying session with each other. It will most likely stir up old memories in you, as few babies were allowed to cry, not because of ill will but because your parents were unaware of the benefits of crying.

The Older Child

Toddlers, too, might still remember painful experiences that can pop up, especially when a new baby is underway, he is going to a daycare centre, during a medical check-up, being left with a babysitter, or any event out of the ordinary. Hold her, if needed, when she pushes against you and wants to get down, firmly but gently, and let her know that you are here to listen to her crying and expressing whatever she wants and needs to express, holding her, acknowledging what is going on for her, and still affirm that what is going to happen will happen. It is, therefore, most helpful

to schedule ample time when a new situation, or an old one, hereto met with crying and struggling, is happening.

In the next chapter, a few words about the possibility of using these triggers for your healing.

For Mothers and Fathers

There is a gift in there for you

A gift? My baby's crying is a gift? You've got to be kidding!

That sounds not only counterintuitive but downright absurd, doesn't it?!

Tending to your infant's needs means also listening to what she is telling you, the experiences and feelings she is sharing. Babies do not use words but communicate through their voices, facial expressions, and body language. Most mums and dads can sense that, especially after a while! In the chapter about daily life, I share the sounds babies make for specific needs to help you along.

Even if you are adults, as parents, you still need to be heard, someone to witness what is happening within you and hold you! That does not mean, of course, not attending to the momentary needs of the baby for food, comfort, and protection. As an adult, you know that you can postpone attention to your needs and take care of yourself and your needs later. You cannot care for anybody else if you are drained and depleted. Remember what they tell us in airplanes when the pressure drops, and you need to put the oxygen mask on first for yourself and then help others. More on this in the next chapter about creating daily life

Being heard and cared for makes us and the baby feel safe, and our nervous system can relax. The energy is flowing again, and we are ready to communicate. We are accessible again to ourselves and others. That means that mum and dad also need to be witnessed, heard, and able to share discomfort so they can be accessible to the baby again and to each other.

So, what are you to do when you feel angry, sad, frustrated, and desperate? Your baby's crying and upset might trigger, most likely will trigger, old memories in you that have not been healed yet. It is NOT the baby who makes you angry, impatient, upset, sad, frustrated, or at a loss. It is the memories that want to be dealt with. It is an invitation to check in with yourself and the emotions you are experiencing, acknowledge and accept them and put them aside until you have time

and space to deal with them. This is the gift your baby's crying gives you a chance to heal your own ,stuff.'

It might be that you feel guilty for not having protected your baby. Remember: Feelings are NOT rational. You feel what you feel, but let them rise up, accept them, and forgive yourself and the people involved. Anger and even rage at some caregivers might arise. Allow, accept, and release. These emotions also might trigger memories of experiences that might date to former painful experiences.

A memory—a scene—might pop into your awareness when you acknowledge your feeling. Greet it like an old friend, thank it for coming up, ready to be healed, and let go. By suppressing (often unconsciously) the painful feelings and unhealed, unresolved old hurts, we use up a lot of energy that, once released, will be available to enjoy your baby and each other.

Sometimes it seems enough to become aware of your feeling, acknowledge and accept them and then allow them to go. Some people can do this quickly, while others need help from more direct step-by-step instructions through a self-help video, a book, or a professional.

I find EFT (emotional freedom techniques), also called tapping, a wonderful, a downright brilliant method. It is easy to learn, always at your fingertips for ,first aid' or long-term explorations. EFT uses a combination of modern psychology and the Eastern wisdom of the meridians. One states the ,problem,' and adds that one accepts and loves oneself all the while tapping at the points of the meridian on the head, face, and upper body.⁸

Take time to talk and listen to each other as a couple. A helpful format is setting aside a time, preferably when the baby sleeps. Make yourselves comfortable, each with a cup of herbal tea or water. Make sure cell phones are turned off, not on vibrate! Then, decide who talks first and who listens first. Listening with empathy, understanding, and accepting what the other one is saying without saying anything back and with no raised eyebrows is important. The one who talks must avoid blaming and poking fingers. Instead, they are invited to share their feelings and experiences.

⁸ Check out: www.thetappingsolution.com, www.tappingthrough.com or www.tapwithbrad.com

Set the timer for seven minutes. As the timer goes off, thank each other for listening or sharing respectively. Let the experience settle for a couple of minutes, and then take turns sharing how you experienced being listened to, deeply listened to, and how you experienced the other's sharing. – and then change roles.

Making this type of sharing could develop into a routine for you. Maybe once a week. Some couples like it more often as it clears the connection between them and any old unsaid, but bugging thoughts, questions, or feelings can be voiced in a safe and caring space.

And last but by no means least, take time to enjoy each other and your baby, even if it means that dishes are not washed, the furniture not dusted. Turn off laptops, tablets, etc. by 8 pm, which seems to be a perfect idea anyway, even without a newborn or baby in the house.

Do also take good and loving care of yourself and be present for and with yourself, lessening your stress. Also, be sure to sleep enough! For mum: Allow yourself a nap or two. Learn how to breastfeed when lying down and allow the hormone prolactin to help you relax and fall asleep.

With all my heart, I wish you peaceful, joyful, and loving beginnings in your family life.

Creating Daily Life

A stich in time, saves nine

Crying is the last resort babies go to when we do not understand their 'language' yet, what they are trying to communicate. In more relaxed cultures and where people live in extended families, a young boy or girl already learns the 'language' of his smaller siblings or cousins. They are well versed in it when becoming parents themselves. When travelling and visiting countries with those cultures, I was always astounded by how little babies cry. I used to think it was because they were carried by their mums or older siblings. Being carried is definitely a factor, but not the only one. It was also my experience carrying my babies in various slings and contraptions that are now so readily available and that of young parents who practice this in their way of parenting.

Now that you understand with gentle awareness the types of crying, you can use it daily. It's actually quite simple: The crying types are sequential. If your response to your baby makes him content, you understand and care for his need. As said above, carrying them in body contact definitely responds to an intrinsic need of a baby, toddler, and even an older child.

Babies also seem to miss the reassuring closeness of womb, including the sounds of mum's heart beat and digestive noises. If it is not convenient to carry the baby in a carrier, a very good and lovely possibility to help her feel more secure and calm is to swaddle her in a soft blanket to make her feel snugly comfortable. On the internet you find step by step suggestions - e.g. on the Mayo-Clinic Website.

But let's look at the language, the sounds a newborn makes to communicate. Priscilla Dunstan ⁹ has identified 5 specific sounds to communicate their feelings, needs, and what they are asking for. They are the same sounds every baby makes, no matter what country or culture they live in.

It is so helpful to know, it ends the trial and error and speeds up learning to understand the baby. It also ends endless crying for needs and turning these cries into crying out of frustration and pain of not being understood and having his needs met. It is so helpful to know it ends the trial and error and speeds up learning to

⁹You can find her videos on Youtube, so you can hear the sounds instead of simply reading about them here.

understand the baby. It also ends endless crying for needs and turning these cries into crying out of frustration and pain of not being understood and having his needs met.¹⁰

So, what are they, and what do they mean?

The first one is NEH. You know it is time to feed your baby if you hear it. Before uttering NEH, a baby will often gently smack his lips and turn his head from side to side, searching for the nipple. And if you miss that first expression, he will become vocal and tell you: NEH.

The second one is OWH, often with a round open mouth, telling you he is sleepy.

The third one is HEH, communicating discomfort. It could be wet or full nappies, cold or too hot, uncomfortable with his clothing or position, or feeling lonely or bored.

The fourth one, EAIR, is often accompanied by pulling their legs up and tensing their arms and hands, letting you know that he has discomfort in his lower abdomen.

The fifth one is EH. EH tells you there is pressure in his upper stomach, and he would like to be burped. Put him over your shoulder; that will most likely release his burp. Upwards gravity, so to speak, is doing its job.

Of course, there is also body language. When your baby is just waking up, he turns his head from side to side, searching for the nipple, maybe smacking his lips. His fists are still closed means he is getting ready to nurse. Speak to him gently, „hello, sweetie,“ pick him up gently, and get yourself comfortable with a glass of water ready for you. Drinking enough is very helpful for successful breastfeeding.

The beautiful and helpful book ‚Your Amazing Newborn‘ by Marshall and Phyllis Klaus will encourage you to look, listen, and sense to learn about all the skills and abilities a newborn has to communicate with.

The first step to lessen the need for stress-release crying is understanding and responding to their needs. As you know, it can be quite stressful, even for adults,

¹⁰ Gabor Maté, the Canadian psychiatrist and expert in trauma and addiction, stresses the importance for a baby’s—and child’s for that matter—healthy mental development to be seen, heard, understood, and their needs met.

when we try to communicate and are not understood, listened to, or acknowledged. And as a new parent, doing just that is not always possible. So, let him know that you hear him and will be there for him as soon as possible, not more than a few minutes! Be as present as you can.

Other than not being heard and understood, what else might stress a baby? Especially in the urban western world, stress seems ubiquitous.

At the very beginning of life, babies prefer to be touched by their parents only. It's a bit difficult if you give birth in a hospital. You can honour this preference by NOT handing the baby to every visitor, whether in a hospital or at home. Maybe grandparents, aunts, and uncles can be excluded from the ,ban 'for the first six weeks. I am sure most people will understand if you explain it gently. If they are miffed, what is more important: your child's well-being or your adult friends' feelings?

Infants also like quiet, slow, and dim lights. I suggest S L O W down, breathing slowly, and moving slowly, especially when picking her up. Speak in a soft voice, and keep the light dim. Move slowly and gently when you put him on the changing table to change his nappies, to wash or bathe him. Babies also love to be informed of what is going to happen. ,Hi Sweetie, I am going to pick you up; we are going to the changing table. I will undress you, clean your bottom, and give you nice fresh nappies.' You will most likely have noticed that you speak quite naturally in a high-pitched voice. Researchers have found that people worldwide speak in such a manner to a small baby, and would you believe it? Even animals use a higher tone of voice when communicating to their young vocally. Inform your baby when a visitor is coming, not in an all excited voice, but calmly and softly; the same is true for going on an outing. And keep outings to an absolute minimum for the first six weeks at least.

Avoid malls and loud supermarkets. If you cannot, carry him in a baby carrier close to your heart.

Babies love to be in contact with mum or dad, preferably 24/7. It makes life a lot easier for everyone if you use a carrier/sling around the house when doing housework or even sitting down, reading or writing. Over the years, the number of parents carrying their children outside has increased. I consider this a very good thing!

Dealing with visitors: When they ask how they can help, DO ACCEPT HELP! They can run the Hoover, fold some laundry, or bring a prepared casserole for you to pop in the oven. Avoid taking care of their needs. Instead, voice your needs and wishes, and allow them to be fulfilled. And if there is someone you'd rather not see at the time, let them know that you are tired and that your baby needs a tranquil atmosphere. Respect your needs and the ones of your infant, and put them first and above any needs of others!

If there is a loud noise, a sudden change, or a stressful or unforeseen situation, simply inform your baby. And, you guessed it: move slowly, breathe slowly and deeply, become aware of what is happening to you, and accept and acknowledge it.

Where does your baby sleep? Babies prefer to share the bed with their parents beyond the shadow of a doubt. They also need closeness at night. They need it to regulate their breathing pattern and heartbeat and emotional closeness to feel safe. It's not always easy, for sure. I remember that when my kids were small and shared our king-size bed, at times, I would have liked the space all to myself, and then thought of all the lonely people who would be so glad to have a little one snuggle up to them. And it rendered me grateful and content.

A really lovely thing to do is sing to your baby, maybe lullabies or songs you sang to her before birth. Put on some slow and sensual music and dance together, the baby either in a parent's arm or both parents swaying together, baby in their arms.

Above all: Enjoy your baby

Some Words about Breastfeeding

The Tender Gift: Breastfeeding

Title of a book by Dana Raphael

There are many good books on breastfeeding describing all the benefits for the child and the mum, how to get a good start on nursing, and how to overcome obstacles. New benefits are still being discovered. I simply want to say a few words here because when a baby cries, mums often start to doubt their ability to breastfeed and the quality or quantity of their milk. Unfortunately, several professional carers suggest or support that doubt and might even pressure you to give your baby a bottle or at least, supplement your milk, or use an electric pump to increase your milk supply.

However, drinking from a bottle differs significantly from drinking from the breast. From the bottle, the milk flows without the 'effort' of the baby. Breastfeeding is a combined action of mum and baby. The baby nuzzles up to mum, and hormones in her start to react, enabling the breast to 'let -down' the milk and immediately start making a new supply. There is also an ingredient in mother's milk that invites the baby to pause in between; they don't chug it down like the artificial milk in bottles.

An ingenious hormonal mechanism also stems from our evolutionary times as hunters and gatherers, still living in caves. When there was danger from, let's say, a bear or lion and mum needed to fight or flee, the stress hormones overpowered the effects of oxytocin and prolactin that enable breastfeeding. The physical action of running or fighting then cleansed the bloodstream of those stress hormones. Once the danger was over, she was able to sit down calmly and peacefully and resume feeding her child. Today the stress hormones flood the bloodstream without physical threat and stop the milk flow. Mums get stressed by many experiences and happenings, including their thoughts and feelings. Know that you need to learn to relax when your milk flows sparingly. Use something simple like breathing slowly in and out, emphasising breathing out, often a sigh when breathing, which helps to let go of tension. Make yourself comfortable, and sit well supported, so there is no

tension in your body from holding yourself or the baby. In other words, you can right the 'problem' simply by relaxing AND asking for support. The late anthropologist Dana Raphael discovered in her research of what helps mothers to successfully breastfeed that a kind word of a visiting friend: oh, what a sweet baby, you are such a wonderful mum, sit down, put your feet up, I'll make us a cup of tea, were the magic words that gave the mum the confidence that helped. She relaxed, felt at ease, and held her baby with confidence. The milk started flowing, putting the baby at ease and snuggling into mum's arms and up to the breast. At times, visiting a professional breastfeeding counsellor or a member of a volunteer breastfeeding group like LLL¹¹ might be a perfect idea.

The problem with mixing breast and bottle is, first of all, that it is often stressful to mum and baby and that the sucking needed (or not needed with bottle) that it confuses the baby, adds to stress-crying and brings breastfeeding often to an unnecessary end.

Sometimes mothers are encouraged to use an electric breast pump to stimulate milk production. This is unnecessary, as unrestricted breastfeeding, a calm mind, a glass of water before and/or during feeding, maybe some soothing music, and a supportive environment are the perfect background for those critical first few days, weeks, and maybe even months, ensuring ample milk production. As a final and most important note: Give yourself permission to enjoy your baby, enjoy these special times of closeness that breastfeeding brings, breathe in your baby's special scent, and those adoring eyes looking at you as you settle down and offer the breast.

Prolactin and oxytocin are also called love and cuddle hormones. People who are close to or in the vicinity of a breastfeeding mum have increased levels of prolactin in their bloodstream; in other words:

Breastfeeding spreads Love on Earth and contributes to Peace.

¹¹ See Resources for websites

Speaking to Deborah

An inspirational true story

I volunteered at the Children's Hospital in Zurich, Switzerland, for some time. Volunteers visit children who have to stay for a long time in the hospital to relieve their parents and relatives and keep the children company. One spring, I visited a two-month-old girl who had undergone a stomach operation right after birth. Surgically speaking, everything seemed ok, however Deborah didn't drink, swallow, nor digest, so she was fed intravenously. Still, she didn't gain any weight and had been transferred from the smaller children's ward in her parents' hometown in southern Switzerland to the larger Children's Hospital in Zurich.

The mother, a woman from Portugal, mentioned to the doctor that she believed that her daughter was afraid of swallowing. The response she received: 'That can't be. Small babies are not afraid of swallowing. Swallowing is a reflex.' Well, the next day, as I accompanied Deborah to an x-ray, and she was lying there patiently, I whispered to her that I believed that her mum was right and that I could very well imagine that she was afraid of swallowing, as it must have hurt and frightened her when her stomach was examined (with a tube through her mouth to her stomach). She grew very quiet,, it seemed like pensive, and looked at me with big clear eyes. I knew she understood!

Two days later, a friend lent me the book by Myriam Szejer, a French psychologist who works with babies and infants, in the German translation: 'The Child who Wanted to be a Cat.' It was a gift from heaven. It was true that Deborah understood me and that she needed her experiences and feelings validated and needed clear information about what was happening to her. As Deborah also had only one ear, I said that maybe the midwife, her dad, and her mother were startled when they noticed it. But for her, Deborah, that was how she was and that she was fine and lovely just like that. Her parents needed to 'swallow' this fact about their precious little girl.

I kept talking to her about her experiences and feelings daily, acknowledging and validating them. After a few days, she started crying when I held her for a time (with tubes in her nose, one to feed her, the other to suck the mucous out of her stomach, and a subclavian one to feed her intravenously). Inspired by Aletha Solter's work that crying in tiny babies should not be stopped but allowed, and answered with

empathy, I softly murmured to her encouragingly to tell me her story, her pain, and her fears, again acknowledging them. It usually took about ten minutes of crying, and then she became very quiet, calm, and relaxed. Her arms, which she had held tightly to her body, became less tense. I also told her that although her parents could only visit her on weekends, this didn't mean they did not love her. They needed to work and came from far every weekend because they loved her so much. She was soaking in all the good and clear information whilst enjoying being held, cuddled, and loved.

After several days of crying, she started to make 'birth movements.' I supported the movement, and when she stopped, I gently lifted her head again, telling her I was so happy she was here. She was now digesting the milk she received through the tube, and there was no more mucous to be sucked up! Two months after I started to visit her, one of the professors dropped by for a chat and said they were so happy that she had been gaining weight in the last two months. I asked him what changes had been made in her treatment. 'Oh, no changes. She is just slowly getting well.' Well, she certainly was. Another six weeks later, she was ready to return to the small hospital in the town where her parents lived. Another few weeks later, her father called me to tell me that Deborah was now home, drinking from a bottle and cooing away. He even put the phone close to her mouth so that I could hear her. Tears of gratitude and gladness welled up in my eyes.

I know that by believing her mum, understanding the healing power of crying in small babies, acknowledging her pain and fear, and allowing her to express them, I helped her heal herself.

Outlook

Imagine a world where babies are conceived consciously and in love, growing and developing in a mainly stress-free, calm, and loving environment. Her caregivers are skilled and mindful of mum's and baby's feelings, needs and physical health and well-being. Parents prepare for their children by various means according to their needs and penchants, resolving as many hurtful events in their lives as possible. Birth occurs either at home or in a calm, beautiful place. Attendants are calm, skilled, and mindful; the baby is welcomed with kindness, awe, and love. Mum, baby, and dad spend the first hours and days in a peaceful, protected, and private space, well cared for by people who understand this significant time. And if something unpleasant or even painful happens, it is immediately acknowledged and healed.

Healing crying results in peace of mind for babies, parents, caregivers, whole families, and communities. Since we are all connected, healing babies' traumas are part of healing the world.

Imagine a world where people listen to, acknowledge and accept each other's feelings, thoughts, worries, and concerns. Where we witness without judgment, where we are open, accepting ourselves and others.

With John Lennon, I sing:

*You may say I'm a dreamer
But I'm not the only one
I hope someday you'll join us
And the world will be as one*

Resources

Some Books:

Thomas Verny:	Nurturing the Unborn Child
David Chamberlain:	Windows to the Womb: Revealing the Conscious Baby from Conception to Birth
Wendy Anne McCarty	Welcoming Consciousness: Supporting Babies' Wholeness from the Beginning of Life
Frederick Leboyer:	Birth without violence
Michel Odent:	Entering the World: The De-Medicalisation of Childbirth
Sheila Kitzinger:	The new of Pregnancy and Childbirth
Marshall and Phyllis Klaus:	Your Amazing Newborn Bonding
La Leche League:	The Womanly Art of Breastfeeding
Daniel Siegel:	Parenting from the Inside out

If you want more in-depth background information about the importance of these first days, weeks, and months, find some talks on YouTube by Stephen Porges, Gabor Maté, and Daniel Siegel.

For breastfeeding support:

La Leche League international (LLLI) <https://lllusa.org> and <https://www.llli.org>
Or a national and local breastfeeding support group

Modalities for self-help with dealing with your memories and emotions

EFT (emotional Freedom Technique): www.tappingthrough.com <https://www.thetappingsolution.com> and <https://www.tapwithbrad.com>

Mindfulness practices: jackkornfield.com

Help from professionals

Cranio-sacral Therapy for mum and baby, especially, but not only after a long and/or difficult birth, helps to balance body and mind.

As babies are highly sensitive and open, they not only pick up on the patterns of their parents and immediate family but might also pick up patterns that run through their ancestral families. If that is your interest or hunch, look into family constellation work.

Osteopathy and EMDR

Do allow yourself to explore and feel what is right for you and which modality and therapist is right for you. You might also ask your friends, caregivers, or community health centre for recommendations.

About Me

Initially working in the hospitality industry, I discovered the fascinating time of birth, breastfeeding, and parenting through the birth of my first child, Alex; two more children, Trevor and Clarissa, followed. They now have families of their own, and I am a grandmother of nine and great-grandmother of one, with a second one on their way.

In 1973, I brought the breastfeeding support organisation La Leche League to Switzerland when breastfeeding was very low. Most mothers wanted to nurse their newborn babies, but the information and handling in the 1970s practically programmed mothers for failure.

Counselling young mums I started to realise of the importance of the birth experience for mums, babies, and the whole family. As a result I started to also teach birth preparation and parenting classes and accompanied birthing couples as a doula.

I wrote a few articles for parenting and women's magazines.

Upon her suggestion, Julia Jus, also a 'good birth' advocate, and I planned, organised, and held five International Congresses in Zurich called Birth in Safety and Security (Gebären in Sicherheit und Geborgenheit). We attracted the cream of the crop of scientists and professionals on the frontier of (birthing/breastfeeding/gynaecology) as speakers and presenters.

Through my intensive involvement with my own children, childbirth preparations classes, attending home as well as hospital births as a doula, breast-feeding counselling, working with babies as a craniosacral therapist, attending countless conferences as well as seminars and workshops on pre- and peri-natal topics, I have developed a deep sensitivity and insights into the needs and expressions of babies and the turbulent times parents can experience in this first days, weeks, and months.

The beginnings of life continue to fascinate me.

