



## WELLNESS WORKSHEET 43

### Assessing Your Readiness to Become a Parent

Many factors have to be taken into account when you are considering parenthood. The following are some questions you should ask yourself and some issues you should consider when making this decision. Some issues are relevant to both men and women; others apply only to women. There are no “right” answers—you must decide for yourself what your answers reveal about your aptitude for parenthood.

**Yes    No**

#### Physical Health

- \_\_\_ \_\_\_ 1. Are you in reasonably good health?
- \_\_\_ \_\_\_ 2. Do you have any behaviors or conditions that could be of special concern?
- |  |   |
|--|---|
| ___ Obesity                                      | ___ Anemia  |
| ___ Smoking                                      | ___ Diabetes                                      |
| ___ Alcohol and drug use                         | ___ Sexually transmitted diseases                 |
| ___ Hypertension                                 | ___ Epilepsy                                      |
| ___ Previous problems with pregnancy or delivery | ___ Prenatal exposure to diethylstilbestrol (DES) |
|  | ___ Asthma  |
- \_\_\_ \_\_\_ 3. Are you under 20 or over 35 years of age?
- \_\_\_ \_\_\_ 4. Do you or your partner have a family history of a genetic problem that a baby might inherit?
- |                         |                           |
|-------------------------|---------------------------|
| ___ Hemophilia          | ___ Phenylketonuria (PKU) |
| ___ Sickle-cell disease | ___ Cystic fibrosis       |
| ___ Down syndrome       | ___ Thalassemia           |
| ___ Tay-Sachs disease   | ___ Other                 |

#### Financial Circumstances

- \_\_\_ \_\_\_ 1. Will your health insurance cover the costs of pregnancy, prenatal tests, delivery, and medical attention for the mother and baby before and after the birth?
- \_\_\_ \_\_\_ 2. Can you afford the supplies for the baby: diapers, bedding, crib, stroller, car seat, clothing, food, and medical supplies?
- \_\_\_ \_\_\_ 3. Will one parent leave his or her job to care for the baby?
- \_\_\_ \_\_\_ 4. If so, can the decrease in family income be worked into the family budget?
- \_\_\_ \_\_\_ 5. If both parents will continue to work, has affordable child care been set up?
- \_\_\_ \_\_\_ 6. The annual cost of raising a child is about \$9500; can you save and/or provide the necessary money?

#### Education, Career, and Child Care Plans

- \_\_\_ \_\_\_ 1. Have you completed as much of your education as you want?
- \_\_\_ \_\_\_ 2. Have you sufficiently established yourself in a career, if that is important to you?
- \_\_\_ \_\_\_ 3. Have you investigated parental leave and company-sponsored child care?
- \_\_\_ \_\_\_ 4. Do both parents agree on child care arrangements?

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Yes No

**Lifestyle and Social Support**

- \_\_\_ \_\_\_ 1. Would you be willing to give up the freedom to do what you want to do when you want to do it?
- \_\_\_ \_\_\_ 2. Would you be willing to restrict your social life, to lose leisure time and privacy?
- \_\_\_ \_\_\_ 3. Would you and your partner be prepared to spend more time at home? Would you have enough time to spend with a child?
- \_\_\_ \_\_\_ 4. Are you prepared to be a single parent if your partner leaves or dies?
- \_\_\_ \_\_\_ 5. Do you have a network of family and friends who will help you with the baby? Are there community resources you can call on for additional assistance?

**Readiness**

- \_\_\_ \_\_\_ 1. Are you prepared to have a helpless being completely dependent on you 24 hours a day?
- \_\_\_ \_\_\_ 2. Do you like children? Have you enough experiences with babies, toddlers, and teenagers?
- \_\_\_ \_\_\_ 3. Do you think time spent with children is time well spent?
- \_\_\_ \_\_\_ 4. Do you communicate easily with others?
- \_\_\_ \_\_\_ 5. Do you have enough love to give a child? Can you express affection easily?
- \_\_\_ \_\_\_ 6. Do you feel good enough about yourself to respect and nurture others?
- \_\_\_ \_\_\_ 7. Do you have safe ways of handling anger, frustration, and impatience?
- \_\_\_ \_\_\_ 8. Would you be willing to devote a great part of your life, at least 18 years, to being responsible for a child?

**Relationship with Partner**

- \_\_\_ \_\_\_ 1. Does your partner want to have a child? Is he or she willing to ask these same questions of himself or herself?
- \_\_\_ \_\_\_ 2. Have you adequately discussed your reasons for wanting a child?
- \_\_\_ \_\_\_ 3. Does either of you have philosophical objections to adding to the world's population?
- \_\_\_ \_\_\_ 4. Have you and your partner discussed each other's feelings about religion, work, family, and child raising? Are your feelings compatible and conducive to good parenting?
- \_\_\_ \_\_\_ 5. Would both you and your partner contribute in raising the child?
- \_\_\_ \_\_\_ 6. Is your relationship stable? Could you provide a child with a really good home environment?
- \_\_\_ \_\_\_ 7. After having a child, would your partner and you be able to separate if you should have unsolvable problems? Or would you feel obligated to remain together for the sake of the child?