

Is the Parenting Gig Just Too Much Work?

Kate Lawler, a 39-year-old former reality TV star turned broadcaster in the UK and her 35-year-old fiancé [have started a podcast](#) for those conflicted about starting a family. It aims to break what they describe as the “taboo” about expressing a desire not to have children. A “light-hearted look at the highs and lows of parenting,” the podcast [Maybe Baby](#) will host various celebrity guests talking about their own experiences of parenthood.

Apparently, something that used to be taken for granted as the “happy ending” of every love story is now seen as the unhappy ending of an individual’s beautiful relationship with his or her self and even the end of love itself.

Indeed, “an industry of maybe-baby coaching now exists to help individuals and couples work through their feelings and reach a decision,” according to the Telegraph.

But if there really is, as some claim, a “stigma” attached to childlessness it does not seem to be showing itself in the birth rate figures, which are now declining alarmingly. And judging by the rocketing abortion figures, neither does there seem to be much stigma attached to eradicating children before birth. Concern has been expressed that many women are leaving motherhood too late, but that is because it is still seen as a good thing rather than a punishment – that they might miss out on its joys.

Kate’s fiancé is much more upbeat, and 75 percent sure he wants a child, but Ms. Lawler is 75 percent sure she doesn’t. She told the *Telegraph* that childbirth has long filled her with “dread.” “I either have to have my stomach cut open, or I have to push it out...I wish there was another way.”

She seems not to have considered adoption. However, “the birth is not the only part she dreads” but also the aftermath: “The first six months with no sleep, the terrible twos, making packed lunches, school runs, stroppy teenagers – nothing excites me. I always think of the negatives.” She certainly sees having children as one long saga of misery, and says glumly: “I consider every element of parenting and it never fills me with joy.”

It seems Kate has considered every angle on this issue except the one that really matters: having a baby, the only thing that provides the necessary knowledge to make that decision. And if she is worried that by then it might be too late, she might consider that those parents who regret having their children are in a vanishingly small minority – they certainly do not feature on her podcast.

Nowadays it is considered essential to prepare for parenthood by talking about it a lot, but there really is no substitute for doing it.

Interestingly, there is no element of reflection on her own parents’ sacrifice in giving her life, but that usually comes when people have children of their own.

As we remember in November the supreme sacrifice of those who gave their lives for us in two World Wars, perhaps it would be good for us also to remember that in order to die they first had to be born. Their sacrifice was made possible by somebody else’s sacrifice. Let us hope that this couple will replace their podcast with a new one on the delights of enriching their own lives by helping to create a new life and a new love.

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