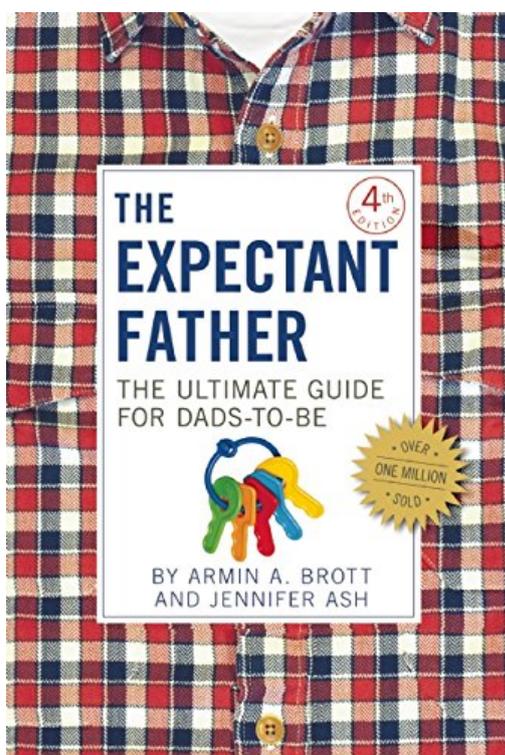


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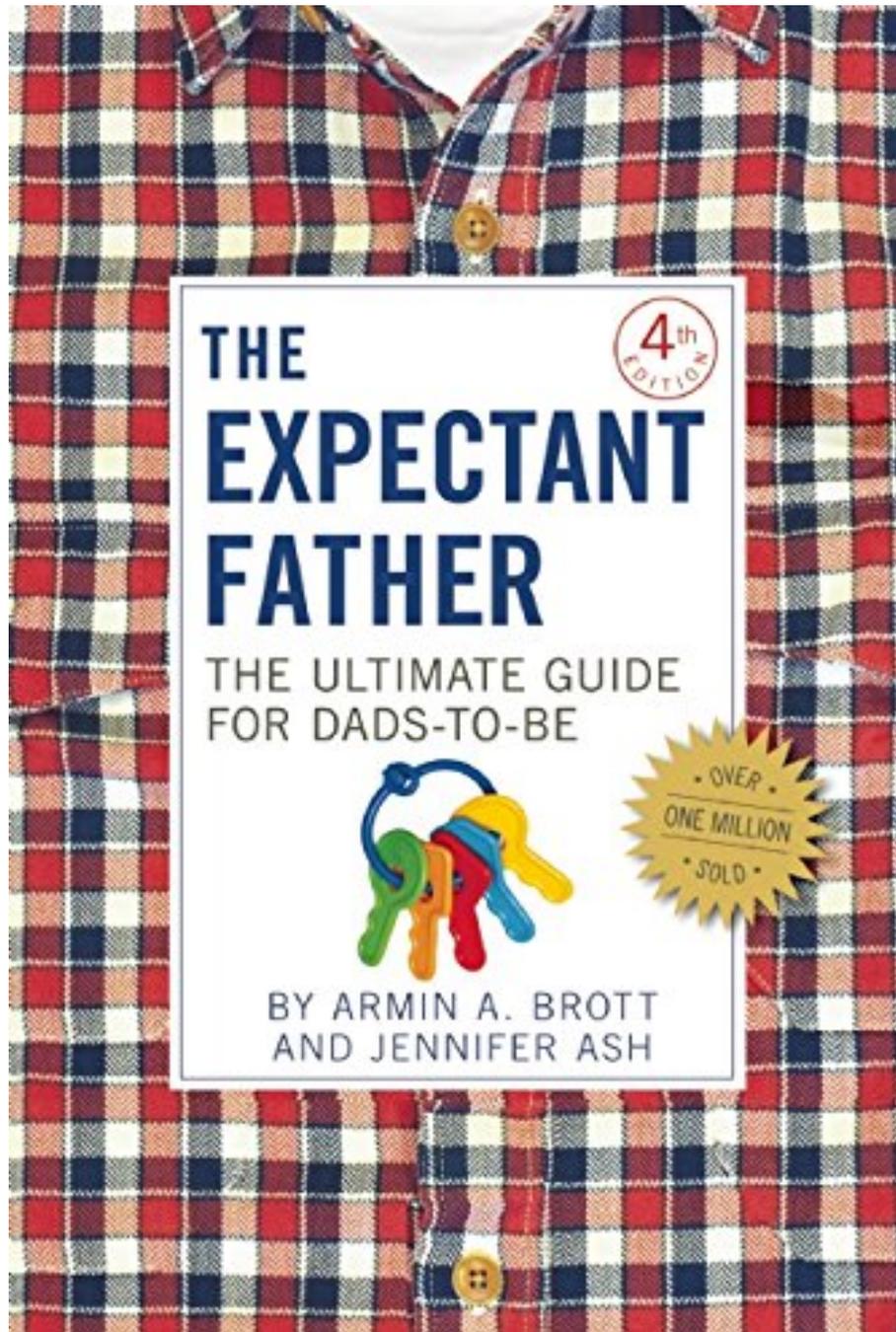
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Review

Praise for *The Expectant Father*:

"This is an essential book for all expectant fathers." --Publisher's Weekly

"Brott writes honestly and earnestly. His wry sense of humor will be a relief to hassled parents." -- Time magazine

"...stood out immediately...because of its perceptive insights"--San Francisco Chronicle

"The best guidebook to date for both the prospective father and his partner in their journey through the nine months of pregnancy... a must for fathers-to-be." -- John Munder Ross, Ph.D., author of *What Men Want and Father and Child*

"One would be hard put to find a question about having a baby that's not dealt with here, all from the father's point of view." -- Library Journal

"For fathers soon expecting the ultimate gift—a new member of the family—*The Expectant Father* is his best friend." --CNN Interactive

iParenting Media Award

"The *What to Expect When You're Expecting* for men. . . . If you know an expectant father, first baby or not, make sure he has this book. --Full-Time Dads

"...extraordinarily helpful...packed with specific advice."—Portland Oregonian

Winner, 2005 Adding Wisdom award from Parent-to-Parent

"For the dad-to-be, author Armin Brott's *The Expectant Father* is a terrific gift, offering insight into pregnancy and the first few weeks of parenthood."

—BabyCenter.com

About the Author

Armin A. Brott is a nationally recognized parenting expert and author of Abbeville's New Father series, including: *The New Father: A Dad's Guide to the First Year*; *Fathering Your Toddler: A Dad's Guide to the Second and Third Years*; *Fathering Your School-Age Child*; and *The Military Father*. He has written on parenting and fatherhood for *The New York Times Magazine*, *The Washington Post*, *Newsweek*, and dozens of other publications. He also hosts "Positive Parenting," a nationally syndicated, weekly talk show and lives with his family in Oakland, California.

Jennifer Ash is the author of *Private Palm Beach* and a contributing editor to *Town and Country*. She and her husband Joe, and their son Clarke and daughter Amelia make their home in New York City.

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Introduction

When my wife got pregnant with our first child, I was the happiest I'd ever been. That pregnancy, labor, and the baby's birth was a time of incredible closeness, tenderness, and passion. Long before we'd married, my wife and I had made a commitment to participate equally in raising our children. And it seemed only natural that the process of shared parenting should begin during pregnancy.

Since neither of us had children before, we were both rather ill prepared for pregnancy. Fortunately for my wife, there were literally hundreds of books and other resources designed to educate, encourage, support, and comfort women during their pregnancies. But when it finally hit me that I, too, was expecting (although in a very different kind of way), and that the pregnancy was bringing out feelings and emotions I didn't understand, there simply weren't any resources for me to turn to. I looked for answers in my wife's pregnancy books, but information about what expectant fathers go through (if it was discussed at all) was at best superficial, and consisted mostly of advice on how men could be supportive of their pregnant wives. To make things worse, my wife and I were the first couple in our circle of close friends to get pregnant, which meant that there was no one else I could talk to about what I was going through, no one who could reassure me that what I was feeling was normal and all right.

Until fairly recently, there has been precious little research on expectant fathers' emotional and psychological experiences during pregnancy. The very title of one of the first articles to appear on the subject should give you some idea of the medical and psychiatric communities' attitude toward the impact of pregnancy on men. Written by William H. Wainwright, M.D., and published in the July 1966 issue of the *American Journal of Psychiatry*, it was called "Fatherhood as a Precipitant of Mental Illness." (Another wonderful title that came out at about the same time was: "Psychoses in Males in Relation to Their Wives' Pregnancy and Childbirth.")

As you'll soon find out, though, an expectant father's experience during the transition to fatherhood is not confined simply to excitement—or mental illness; if it were, this book would never have been written. The reality is that men's emotional response to pregnancy is no less varied than women's; expectant fathers feel everything from relief to denial, fear to frustration, anger to joy. And for up to 80 percent of men, there are physical symptoms of pregnancy as well (more on this on pages 74–79).

So why haven't men's experiences been discussed more? In my opinion it's because we, as a society, value motherhood more than fatherhood, and we automatically assume that issues of pregnancy, childbirth, and

child rearing are women's issues. But as you'll learn—both from reading this book and from your own experience—that's simply not the case.

WHO, EXACTLY, HAS WRITTEN THIS BOOK?

From the very beginning, my goal in writing *The Expectant Father* has been to help you—the father—understand and make sense of what you're going through, the better prepared you'll be and the more likely you'll be to take an interest in—and stayed involved throughout—the pregnancy. Research has shown that the earlier fathers get involved (and what could be earlier than pregnancy?), the more likely they are to be involved after their children are born. And that's good for your child, good for you, and good for your relationship with your child's mother.

All that's very nice, of course, but it's clearly dependent on your partner's being pregnant. So a good understanding of her perspective on the pregnancy—emotional as well as physical—is essential to understanding how you will react. It was precisely this perspective that Jennifer Ash, along with my wife and hundreds of other expectant and new mothers I've interviewed over the years, provided. Throughout the process of writing the book, all of these women contributed valuable information and comments, not only about what pregnant women are going through but also about the ways women most want men to be involved, and the impact that involvement has on the entire pregnancy experience.

A NOTE ON STRUCTURE

Throughout the book I try to present straightforward, practical information in an easy-to-absorb format. Each of the main chapters is divided into four sections, as follows:

What's Going On with Your Partner

Even though this is a book about what you as an expectant father are going through during pregnancy, and how you can best stay involved, it's critical that you understand what your partner is going through and when. For that reason, we felt that it was important to start each chapter with a summary of your partner's physical and emotional pregnancy experience.

What's Going On with the Baby

You can't very well have a pregnancy without a baby, right? This section lets you in on your future child's progress—from sperm and egg to living, breathing infant—and everything in between.

What's Going On with You

This section covers the wide range of feelings—good, bad, and indifferent—that you'll probably experience at some time during the pregnancy. It also describes such things as the physical change you may go through, your dreams, your changing values, your relationship with other people, and the ways the pregnancy may affect your sex life.

Staying Involved

While the “What's Going On with You” section covers the emotional and physical side of pregnancy, this section gives you specific facts, tips, and advice on what you can do to make the pregnancy “yours” as well as your partner's. For instance, you'll find easy, nutritious recipes to prepare, information on how to start a college fund for the baby, valuable advice on getting the most out of your birth classes, great ways to start communicating with your baby before he or she is born, tips on finding work/family balance (hint: there's no such thing, but with planning, you may be able to get close). And sprinkled throughout, you'll find suggestions for how to be supportive of your partner and how to stay included at every stage of the pregnancy.

The Expectant Father covers more than the nine months of pregnancy. We've included a detailed chapter on labor and delivery and another on Cesarean section, both of which will prepare you for the big event and how best to help your partner through the birth itself. Perhaps even more important, these chapters prepare you for the often overwhelming emotions you may experience when your partner is in labor and your child is born.

We've also included a special chapter that addresses the major questions and concerns you may have about caring for and getting to your child in the first few weeks after you bring him or her home. If someone hasn't brought them for you already, I'd recommend that you rush right out and get copies of *The New Father: A Dad's Guide to the First Year* and *Father Your Toddler: A Dad's Guide to the Second and Third Years*. These books pick up where this one leaves off and continue the process of giving you the skills, knowledge, confidence, and support you'll need to be the best possible dad. All of them are also available as e-books.

Toward the end of this book there is a chapter called "Fathering Today," in which you'll learn to recognize—and overcome—the many obstacles you may encounter along the road to becoming an actively involved dad.

As you go through *The Expectant Father*, remember that the process of becoming a dad is different for every man, and that none of us will react to the same situation in exactly the same way. You may find that some of what's described in the "What's Going On with You" section in the third-month chapter won't really ring true for you until the fifth month, or that you already experienced it in the first month. I've tried to tie the ideas and activities in the "Staying Involved" sections to specific stages of the pregnancy. But, hey, it's your baby, so if you want to do things in a different order, knock yourself out.

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