

Post Traumatic Baby Store Syndrome

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Post Traumatic Baby Store Syndrome (PTBSS) is no laughing matter. It is a real condition that affects thousands (this is a guesstimate) of twenty-somethings every year. Previous cases that were contracted at Babies R'Us and Target cannot compare to the nearly untreatable form of the condition that has been reported from young visitors to the monolithic Buy Buy Baby. Honestly that store intimidated the shit out of me and I consider myself pretty unshakable. These stores strive to offer the best selection of everything you could ever need; but they have no idea that they are terrifying young gift buyers and new parents alike.

The cure for PTBSS is several stiff drinks and a conversation with a parent whose child is at least one year-old. These people have made it far enough to realize that half of the baby things they have never got used, or were more of a pain in the ass than a convenience.

This summer a young male coworker came into the office, his face was ashen. His eyes were wide and full of fear. He stared at me with a look of disbelief and sadness. "So um. . . this weekend we threw a baby shower for one of my college buddies", he says. "OK", I slowly respond waiting for some clue as to why he looked the way he did.

"I went to go buy a shower gift", he stammered.

"OK", I responded, all the while thinking, *What is wrong with you?*

"So I went to this store Buy Buy Baby."

I immediately wanted to wrap him in a warm blanket, sit him down next to a cozy fireplace and serve him hot cocoa. This boy had obviously just been through hell. "Oh my God! Why did you go there of all places? There are some smaller baby shops in town. Hell, even Target won't send you into shock the way that store will!"

He had so many questions and they began pouring out of his mouth like pee from a leaky diaper. Will a kid need that many bottles? Why are there so many bottles? Why are there so many mattresses? Why does a baby crib cost \$2,000? Do you know how much a box of diapers costs? Why did they have bibs going all the way to the ceiling?

Slowly I was able to calm him down and talk him off of the preverbal ledge. His talk turned to his own wallet and how for the past few days since that visit he seriously doubted whether he and his young bride would ever be able to afford a child.

If you ever want some tried and true birth control, offer to babysit for a colicky child or visit a big box baby store. The batteries in your biological clock will immediately die or if you are a man, your sperm will stay upstream. If episodes like this continue I fear Americans will stop having kids all together; in shock from the high prices and overwhelming selection of nipple cream. For the sake of future generations I want to tell those of you who are considering a kid, having a kid, or just trying to buy a gift for someone who is to CHILL OUT!

When I got pregnant with our son I was in my late 30s and my husband had already turned 40. This didn't make us wiser, but I had gleaned valuable advice from my manic reading of every mommy/baby magazine in print. We were living in a one-bedroom condo in the heart

of Midtown Atlanta and knew that the kid wasn't going to have that much space anyway. After doing some re-fung shuing of the place we resolved that the kid would get a corner in our living room. A four drawer vertical dresser(changing pad on top), a collapsible play-pen for a bed, and an on-loan family treasured print of Noah's Ark for the wall. That was it. We remained calm and never freaked out over the stuff we would need by remembering that we lived in a one-bedroom condo and following the magic list. This list has been reprinted in many magazines and on many websites and I don't know where I originally saw it but it is brilliant. If on Monday you found out that you were going to have a kid on Friday, you would be set with the items on this list. Hopefully you are never in that boat, but in case you are, here is the list of what you **really** need for a baby:

1. Diapers- Cloth or disposable. Get a few of each and see what works best for you.
2. Bed- The kid will need a place to sleep.
3. Food - Bottles and formula or boobs as babies love to eat.
4. Car Seat- It's the law.
5. Onesies- The kid will need something to wear.
6. Baby blankets- Swaddle them tight and keep them warm.
7. Stroller or wrap carrier- Babies get heavy and arms get tired.
8. Pacifiers- They keep the kid quiet and keep dirty fingers out of their mouths.

In Finland they mail boxes to pregnant woman containing all of the things they will need for the first year of a baby's life. It includes clothes, a little snowsuit, blankets and diapers for the kid. It also includes condoms for the parents, which I find hilarious. The box that everything arrives in doubles as a bed for the baby, complete with tiny mattress and bedding. Those wacky socialists think of everything.

You don't really need most of the other inventory you see stacked to the ceiling in those mega stores. No bottle warmers, no shopping cart seat covers, and no Pee Pee Tee Pees (just Google it). If there are any other gems that work wonders you will learn about them from other parents. Seasoned parents love sharing wisdom so that new ones don't have to struggle.

So calm down, have a drink and remember the magic list. When you go to buy shower gifts ask an employee to help you with the registry. They will be able to quickly locate items for you or help you with a gift card if you don't want to risk stumbling across the breastfeeding aisle. The last thing you need is to find yourself reading the details on a box of nipple cream. OUCH!