The Mother of All Inventions

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Abstract

Crusty childbirth educator humorously reflects upon the conveniences of modern-day parenting.

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DEB GAULDIN is a childbirth educator who performs songs and humorous tales ("Hormone Affirming Music and Humor for Women") about pregnancy, childbirth, and the adjustments to parenthood. She lives outside Chicago, Illinois.

Have you ever wondered who developed that life-saving little device that pins a pacifier or rattle to a baby's clothing? I'm picturing a crazed, sleep-deprived mother crawling out from some crevice, triumphant. I can see her silhouetted—the dust-bunny-covered Binky® raised to the heavens.

"Long as Ah live," she vows, shaking her clenched fist, "Ah will nevuh, nevuh go huntin' again." The music swells. The scene ends, and she spends the rest of her life at Club Meds, living off her product royalties.

I have crawled out of my share of crevices. Why didn't I think of a solution? And who came up with baby-wipe warmers, or baby wipes for that matter?

It's funny how each generation marvels at the modern conveniences they never had. From time to time, my mother still reminds me there was no "permanent press" in her day. Why, she had to dampen our 100% cotton, full-skirted, cuffed and collared, chubby-department dresses, roll them up, and store them in the refrigerator or freezer until she had time to iron them three at a time. Some years later, my sisters and I watched as she dropped to her knees in appreciation when Pop-Tarts® and, later, frozen waffles were invented.

And so, it is with amusement that I find myself jealous over the latest toys and gadgets my friend Diane uses when caring for her new baby. Have you seen those individualized servings of rice cereal and itsy-bitsy jars of baby food? Will Diane never know the pleasure of removing 273 half-eaten jars of molded beets to find

room in the refrigerator to store the leftover pizza? Does she have any idea how traumatic it was for my children when I had to rewind the deafening crank on the baby swing by hand?

Could Diane possibly have an appreciation for the fact that I had to walk 12 miles to school in the dead of winter with cardboard in my shoes and a hot potato in my pocket to keep me warm and, later, served as my lunch? Whoops, that was my dad. . . . But I did walk three quarters of a mile in a mini-skirt carrying a clarinet during February in Des Moines. Does that count?

Oh well, I digress. But if anyone develops a clip-on

device that keeps perimenopausal women from ranting or rambling, please let me know. You could be very, very rich one day.

Editor's Note:

Deb travels nationally, presenting keynote speeches for perinatal practitioners. For booking information, call 800-682-2347 or visit www.debgauldin.com. Deb's CDs and tapes contain songs about pregnancy, childbirth, and the adjustment to parenthood. They are available through Lamaze International (800-368-4404).