



LEAVE LIKE A BOSS

Handling Unwelcome Comments – Pregnancy & Postpartum Edition

FOR BIRTHING AND NON BIRTHING PARENS

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First, the Golden Rule

PREGNANCY AND PARENTING DON'T MAKE YOU PUBLIC PROPERTY.

People may mean well, but curiosity ≠ entitlement.

In this Tip Sheet, you'll find:

- 3P Framework to handle any unwelcome comment like a pro
- Common examples and ready-made responses



Mindset Micro-Shift: The 3P's

WE LOVE A GOOD FRAMEWORK ROOTED IN ALLITERATION.

Use this simple framework to handle uncomfortable moments with clarity and confidence:

- **Pause** – Take a breath before you respond. A tiny pause gives you space to decide how you want to show up—rather than reacting on autopilot.
- **Pivot** – Redirect the conversation in a way that feels aligned with your tone and mood. You can go light with humor, keep it neutral with facts, or shift the topic entirely. Some examples: “Speaking of...”, “We’re still figuring it out...”, “I’m keeping that private for now...”, “Oof, too early in the day for that...”
- **Protect** – Prioritize your energy, privacy, and boundaries. You are not obligated to share personal details just because someone asks. Protecting your peace is productive.

WRITE DOWN A FEW PIVOTS THAT FEEL RIGHT TO YOU:

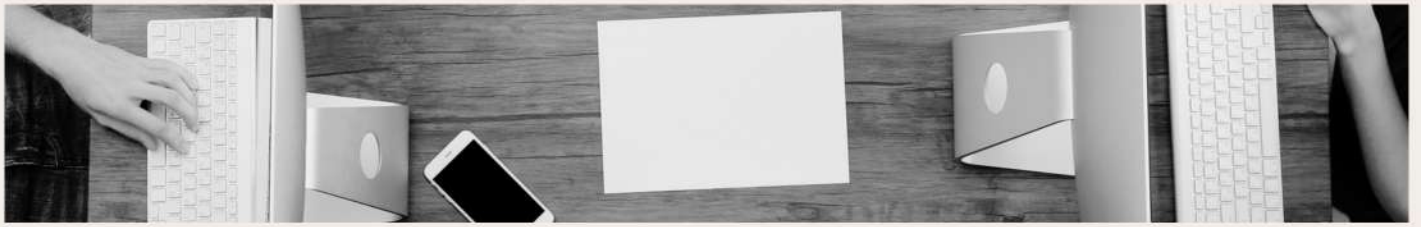


Responses for Common Comments

LIGHT HUMOR, POLITE REDIRECT, OR A CLEAR BOUNDARY

Everyone sets boundaries differently. Finding a way that feels most authentic to you will make it more effective. Here are some starter options for common comments:

COMMENT	LIGHT HUMOR 😊	POLITE REDIRECT 😊	CLEAR BOUNDARY 🚫
“Wow, you look tired!”	“My newborn runs a 24-hour startup. We’re still hiring night staff!”	“Sleep’s a work-in-progress. How’s <i>your</i> week going?”	“I’d rather not discuss my appearance, thanks.”
“You’re taking <i>all</i> your parental leave?”	“Yep! The baby needs to know who the fun parent is early.”	“Yes, I’m using the full benefit - grateful the company supports it.”	“Parental leave is part of my benefits; I’m committed to my family.”
“Are you coming back to work after leave?”	“Yes - unless the mortgage magically disappears!”	“That’s the plan—I’ll be back in [month]. Can we review the hand-off?”	“I’ll discuss next steps with my manager when the time’s right.”
“How was your <i>time off</i>?”	“Like a spa day... if the spa served cold coffee at 3 a.m.”	“Rewarding and intense - glad to be back. What did I miss?”	“Parental leave isn’t vacation; let’s focus on work updates.”
“You’re going to breastfeed, right?”	“Our strategy is called ‘feed the baby’—method TBD.”	“We’re working with our pediatrician on what’s best for us.”	“That’s a personal decision I’m keeping private.”
“You’re not going to want this project. Just focus on your baby.”	“Good news—I’m capable of doing both <i>and</i> asking for help when I need it.”	“I’d like to be looped in and decide for myself what’s manageable.”	“Please don’t make assumptions about my capacity - I’ll speak up if I need support.”



When to Escalate

RAISE A FLAG WHEN:

- Comments repeat after a clear boundary
- Jokes veer into discrimination or pressure
- You're undermined for taking protected leave

→ Document the issue and loop in HR or your manager.

FINAL REMINDERS:

- You're not required to educate, explain, or entertain.
- Whether you choose humor or directness, you get to set the tone.
- Not all bias sounds mean. Sometimes it's wrapped in concern - like being left out of a project because someone assumes you're too busy as a new parent. That's called **benevolent bias**, and it can still limit your opportunities and growth.
- You get to decide what's too much—not anyone else.

SAVE THIS. SHARE IT. AND DEPLOY AS NEEDED WHEN AUNT CAROL - OR CARL IN ACCOUNTING - GETS TOO CURIOUS. 🤨

HAVE MORE QUESTIONS?

Get in touch with team Josie:



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