



PARENTAL LEAVE POWER UP:

A Brief Guide for Non-Birthing Parents

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Hey there! If you're reading this, congratulations. You're about to embark on the wildest, most sleep-deprived, and deeply rewarding project of your life.

As a non-birthing parent, taking leave isn't a "nice-to-have" vacation—it's a critical investment in your family and your own long-term sanity. But we get it: the professional world hasn't always been great at making space for dads and partners. Let's change that narrative with a plan that's as professional as it is personal. In here you'll find:

1. The Leave Myth: Stepping Away Actually Makes You A Better Leader
2. The Parental Leave Transition Timeline: Tips for 60, 30, and 15 days Prior to Your Partner's Due Date
3. The Script: Handling Unwelcome Comments in the Workplace
4. Tips for the Return-to-Work
5. Helpful Resources: What to Listen to, Read, and Watch



The Leave Myth: Stepping Away Actually Makes You a Better Leader.

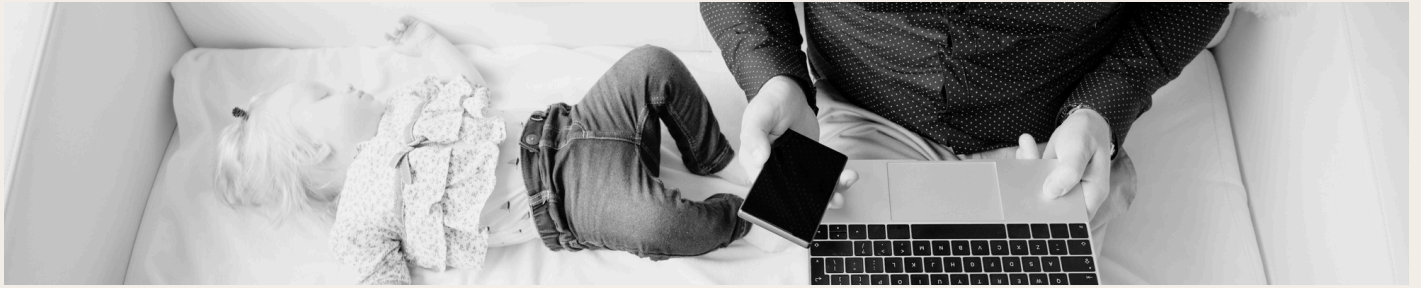
HAVING A BABY IS A BIG LIFE TRANSITION - IT DOESN'T MEAN YOU'RE LESS COMMITTED

There's a lingering myth that if a non-birthing parent takes full leave, they're "less committed" to their career. While society historically gives men a "fatherhood bonus" for just having kids, actively taking time off to raise them can still carry an unfair stigma. In fact, fewer than 50% of fathers will take their full parental leave due to that stigma.

The Reality: Research actually shows that men who take leave are often viewed as more empathetic and better leaders.

The Stigma: It usually stems from outdated "breadwinner" tropes where a partner's only job is to provide financially. By taking your leave, you aren't just bonding with your baby; you're actively shaping a supportive workplace culture for everyone who comes after you.

Your Mindset: You aren't "*stepping away from work.*" *You are managing a transition.* Treat this like any other major project handover. Professionalism and presence aren't measured by sitting in a chair; they're measured by how well you set your team up for success while you're gone.



The Parental Leave Transition Timeline

A LITTLE PROACTIVE PLANNING CAN GO A LONG WAY. CLEARLY COMMUNICATING EXPECTATIONS AND RESPONSIBILITIES AROUND YOUR LEAVE WITH YOUR MANAGER, TEAM, AND CLIENTS (IF APPLICABLE) WILL ENSURE A SMOOTH TRANSITION BEFORE, DURING, AND AFTER LEAVE. CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING TIMELINE:

Don't wait until the "due date" (which, let's be honest, is more of a "due window"). Start early so you can cruise into leave without a frantic 2:00 AM email.

60 Days Out: The Blueprint

- The Audit: List every recurring task, active project, and "in-your-head" process you own.
- Stakeholder Sync: Meet with your manager to confirm your dates and discuss who will cover your high-level responsibilities.
- Succession Planning: Identify the "point people" for your specific workstreams.

30 Days Out: The Training

- Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs): Create a simple "If This, Then That" document for your tasks.
- Shadowing: Have your colleagues sit in on your meetings or "drive" a process while you watch.
- The "Fire Drill" Folder: Put all essential links, files, SOPs, and contact info in one shared folder.

15 Days Out: The Taper

- Stop taking on new projects. Period.
- Draft your OOO (Out of Office): Make it clear who to contact for what.
- The "Status Update" Email: Send a final summary to your team outlining where everything stands and where the "files" live.



The Script: Handling Unwelcome Comments in the Workplace

PEOPLE MIGHT ASK QUESTIONS THAT FEEL A BIT... WELL, INTRUSIVE OR SKEPTICAL. HERE IS HOW YOU CAN HANDLE THEM WITH GRACE AND A TOUCH OF WIT.

Question: *"Are you taking the whole time?"*

Response: "Absolutely. It's a rare chance to set a solid foundation at home so I can come back ready to dive in."

Question: *"What if something big happens while you're gone?"*

Response: "I've spent the last two months prepping [Colleague Name] to handle the heavy lifting. I have total confidence in the team's plan."

Question: *"Must be nice to have a long vacation!"*

Response: "I'll remember you said that when I'm up at 3:00 AM doing a diaper change! It's definitely a different kind of work, but I'm looking forward to the challenge."

Question: *"Won't you be bored? I'd probably just end up checking my email anyway."*

Response: "I doubt it! I'm treating this like a different kind of 'deep work' phase. I want to be present for my family during leave so I can be present for this team when I get back."



Tips for the *Return-to-Work*

WALKING BACK INTO THE OFFICE AFTER WEEKS OR MONTHS CAN FEEL LIKE JUMPING ONTO A MOVING TREADMILL. GIVE YOURSELF A "RE-ENTRY" PERIOD.

- **The "Wednesday Start":** If possible, return mid-week. A two-day week is much more manageable than a five-day marathon.
- **The 1:1 Blitz (Days 1–3):**
 - **Manager Meeting:** Discuss priority shifts. Ask: "What is the single most important thing I should focus on this month?"
 - **Peer Catch-ups:** Schedule 20-minute "coffee chats" with key colleagues. Don't talk shop immediately- ease into it and if comfortable, share what both the joys and challenges you experienced during leave.
- **The Inbox Strategy:** Filter your emails by "Sender" or "Subject" rather than date. It's easier to delete 50 thread updates than to read them one by one.

Pro-Tip for the Return

- When you get back, keep your auto-replies on for the first 24–48 hours. It buys you a "grace period" to dig through the mountain of emails and have those 1:1 meetings without people expecting an instant response to a new ping.



Helpful Resources

GET BY WITH A LITTLE
HELP FROM MY FRIENDS:
JOSIE'S FAVORITE
RESOURCES

WANT MORE RESOURCES?
CHECK OUT JOSIE'S
"I WISH I HAD THIS"
DATABASE TO SEE OUR
CROWDSOURCED LIST OF
THE BEST NEW PARENT
RESOURCES!

Things to Listen To

- For the Balance Seekers: [Work-Life Equation](#) by Paul Sullivan and Bright Horizons
- For the Data Lovers: Emily Oster's [Parent Data Podcast](#)
- For the Practical Advice Lovers: Dr. Becky's [Good Inside Podcast](#)
- For Navigating Toddlerhood: [Big Little Feelings Podcast](#)
- For the No-Nonsense Lovers: [Big Time Adulthood](#)
- For the Modern Family: [Stork'd Podcast](#) (try [this episode](#) 😊)
- For the Real Talk Lovers: [We Can Do Hard Things](#) (try [this episode](#) 🤝)

Things to Read

- [Ready to Dad](#) newsletter by Javaree Walker
- [Good Inside](#) by Dr. Becky Kennedy
- [The Company of Dads](#) Blog by Paul Sullivan
- [Cribsheet](#) by Emily Oster
- [Peaceful Parent, Happy Kids](#) by Dr. Laura Markham

Things to Watch

- [Fatherhood](#) (Netflix)
- [Dads](#) (Apple TV)
- [Working Moms](#) (Netflix)
- [Babies](#) (Netflix)

HAVE MORE QUESTIONS?

Get in touch with team Josie:



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