

It Ain't All Sunshine

Sometimes being a father means digging deep.

BY DONALD FRASER

“You gotta suck it up.” Such was my response to a younger friend when he stated that there was to be no changing of diapers in his future. I had just stripped, wiped, and dressed a newborn Clara in record (for me) time and he was looking a tad squeamish.

“That’s the secret to fatherhood,” I said, proudly playing the role of wise, experienced father – and completely making things up on the spot. “You just gotta suck it up.” Now, I may have been putting on a bit of a show for a friend, but the line seemed to resonate as I spoke it. I put it away in my back pocket, convinced that I would use it again in the future.

And really, I thought at the time, diapers aren’t that bad.

Fast-forward 5 months. Our entire young family is bedridden and completely ravaged by a nasty stomach bug. Queasy, nauseous, barely able to keep things down, I had already successfully tackled messes that had come from both ends of the baby. And these diapers were nothing like the ones I bragged about earlier.

“Suck it up,” I reminded myself repeatedly. But when I approached the completely full – and astonishingly aromatic – diaper bucket, sucking it up was the last thing I was capable of doing. Hand covering my mouth, I bolted to the washroom. Half an hour later, I re-emerged to empty the pail.

As great as fatherhood is – and it is truly, amazingly, wonderful – there are no shortage of “suck it up” moments.

Let me take you through a few:

- ❖ It is game six of the Stanley Cup finals and it’s your turn to put the insomniac baby to sleep.
- ❖ You’ve just had a rare night out with “the boys” and it is your turn to be on early morning baby duty.



Photo: Kayla Jolly, Kay Jolly Photography

- ❖ It’s your first day off in weeks and the chore list is twice as long as your arm.
- ❖ Your in-laws really, really want to visit the baby every weekend (actually, that one is fine, but who doesn’t like an “in-law” joke?).

The fact of the matter is that there are countless times where you think that you would rather be doing something else... until you realize how much you love the little critter that you’re caring for.

That game six night? I missed 3 goals, but was filled with a soft glow as Clara beamed at me and cooed along to my hour of lullabies. The early morning baby duty? Clara was absolutely goofy and fun. Our laughter chased away my grogginess.

Looking back, I wouldn’t have traded these moments for the world.

The chores? Well, the chores still aren’t much fun. But they come with the territory. Both you and your partner have a lot more than you used to on your plate and, trust me, life just goes better with a clean house and food in the fridge. Oh, and also with a happy and (somewhat) rested wife.

Speaking of doing things that you don’t want to... That flu is still running rampant in our house. Clara, Krista, and Cedar the Dog are laying in a pile on the couch. Despite the dizziness, there is a bathroom to clean and sheets to launder. To top it off, *Local Parent* is waiting for this column.

It’s time to suck it up.

Donald Fraser writes for television, radio, print, and web publications. He fought the flu and won.



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