

BY DEBBIE LAVDAS

Grin and bear it

Find the funny, so you can laugh off the trying times.

As a “new mom” for the third time now, I’m excited to be writing this column at OC Family and to share a day in the life with fellow new mothers. My new guy, Fox, is certain to supply me with a lot of ongoing material.

Every April Fool’s Day – the 1st of this month, I’m reminded to lighten up and laugh when this new mom wants want to run for cover.

Recently I looked at my daughter and said, “You’re really funny; I wonder where you get that from?”

She said, “Well, you’re not that funny. And Dad’s not that funny. Maybe it’s from Ms. Suzanne?”

Very funny, kid. (She was talking about my friend and OC Family’s own Suz Broughton, who, yes, is very funny).

My girl is right. I have a lot of stellar qualities: I decorate well; I have good, thick hair; I choose nice friends, and I make cute babies – but I’m not fall-on-the-floor funny. And I know that “finding the funny” is something every new mom needs to weather the inevitable meltdowns, messes and midnight feedings. Having a new baby is stressful, so it’s always good to stand back and take perspective.

I’ll never forget being out to dinner, having a lovely time (cue the quintessential baby story) when the smell wafted over us. The babe had left us something quite special. I gave my husband the eye (our code for “Get the bag; this one’s yours”). He grabbed the essentials and headed in search of a diaper changer.

He soon returned – no changer. Ugh. The odor was getting to me. Off I went. And, of course, there was no changer in the women’s room either. For the love! I improvised and went for it, with both sleeves up and a sliver of available



counter space. I unwrapped, and it was not pretty: a shade of green that’s humanly wrong, and it just kept comin’! I yelled for my girl (who is 8 and learning all things baby) to get the pacifier, stat, to stop the crying.

She bolted and was back in a flash. When she came through the door, she froze, backing up in shock and awe at the sight before her – and she tried to bolt back out!

“Oh no, you don’t! Get back in here and help me!” I barked as innocent bystanders entered and I fumbled about, sweating, begging: “Wipes, wipes, wipes!”

Of course, the green stopped, the blue sky emerged, and all was right in the world again. But this had been no laughing matter. Back at the table, my girl and I were almost in tears, recounting her instinct to get the heck out of diaper Dodge City.

PHOTO BY YANIK LABRIE / FOTOLIA.COM

These mini-crises happen about 20 times a day as a new mom. We pray to the Green-Light Gods to get anywhere on time. We cry when the doorbell rings. We live for 15 free minutes to meet deadlines and regain our sanity.

Now, not everything can be laughed off. We’re not talking postpartum depression here (which isn’t funny at all). When I delivered at 35 weeks, that wasn’t funny – and the week after in NICU wasn’t one bit amusing. But having a baby, and all that comes with it, has a zillion humorous happenings a day.

These days, my 6-year-old son’s favorite word is boobies (way too much nursing going on); my girl could demo strollers better than the best salesperson, and my baby now flashes the exact same amusing smirk that my husband does.

So here’s to looking for the funny when the you-know-what hits the fan.

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smile booster

Enjoy the moments

Hang some adorable photos of your baby around the house to remind you to laugh it off. O.C. baby photographer Kathryn LeBoye captured this shot of Fox. I smile as I look at them. kathrynleboye.com



Keep laughing

Amusing advice

The very funny (and not only “just-had-a-baby, pee-your-pants funny”) Jenna McCarthy, L.A. mom and author of “The Parent Trip: From High Heels and Parties to Highchairs and Potties,” shares these sage reminders with OC Family readers.

- If your baby has a little symptom of something – a tiny rash, a gurgly cough – steer clear of Google, unless you ENJOY filling your head with worst-possible-case scenarios. Instead, call a veteran friend and have her do the Web browsing for you.
- When you bring home a brand new baby, your body is jacked, your hormones are whacked and you’re an exhausted, emotional wreck. Therefore, at some point every other adult you have contact with (and a few you don’t) will bug you. Yes, that may even include the doting Daddy, your sweet, helpful sister-in-law, and your best friend who traveled 3,000 miles to meet the baby. Know this: No, you’re not insane and yes, these feelings will pass.
- When it all seems hopeless, remember this bit of wisdom: “The days are long, but the years are short.” In approximately five minutes (or what certainly feels like it), you will be looking at the walking, talking, cellphone-demanding child you produced and longing for these quiet, relatively sane times. Promise.

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