

Book Review for *Contemporary Sexuality*, Fall 2009

Love in the Time of Colic: The New Parents' Guide to Getting it on Again
By Ian Kerner & Heidi Raykeil. Collins Living, 2009. 258 pp. \$16.99.

Despite the sexy black patent stiletto boot coupled with a pink onesie on its cover, *Love in the Time of Colic* is as breezy as a Disney movie and nearly as G-rated, making it a non-threatening book for sleep and sex-deprived new parents.

Kerner and Raykeil recommend sexual intimacy as a way for partners to reconnect, describing baby steps, so to speak, couples can take to get back into their sexual groove. Tips are as easy as making “touch-deposits” throughout the day, in an effort to release oxytocin in preparation for intimacy at night. They explain that a twenty-second hug gets oxytocin flowing in women, but men need 60 seconds to reach similar levels.

Kerner and Raykeil share information about the sexual problems they experienced as new parents in their own relationships, establishing a sense of camaraderie. Liberal use of quotes from other new parents provides the same. Some readers may be taken aback by informality gone too far at points, e.g., when, Raykeil says she likes to have intercourse while straddling her husband on a lid-down “potty” because that’s how she had her first orgasm with a boyfriend. Kerner, too, admits that when his wife read Dr. Seuss’ book *Hop on Pop* aloud, a horny Kerner had erotic fantasies.

The authors have packed their book with practical information ranging from accepting one’s post-pregnancy body (male and female) to tips on putting the sizzle and fun back into a sexual relationship – even if only with quickies while kids watch cartoons.

The book is geared toward heterosexual couples, with chapter segments alternating between male and female issues and perspectives. The language may turn some readers off when it switches from breezy to cornball (e.g., male masturbation is referred to as “getting graphic with our graphics,” and liberal use is made of phrases like, “before long, you and your girl’s girls will be Breast Friends Forever again”).

The book covers communication skills, empathy, self-care, and intimacy well, but it is missing important details about sexual anatomy and physiology. Readers may scratch their heads while reading vague references to the “changes” women’s bodies go through during pregnancy and childbirth that can affect their or their partners’ sexual pleasure, without an explanation of what those changes may include.

I would recommend *Love in the Time of Colic* to straight couples dealing with the sexual challenges of first-time parenthood and also to experienced parents who have let time, and their sex lives, slip away.

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