

When terrorism strikes--re-evaluating having a baby
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- A tragedy as great as the terrorist attacks often motivates people to re-evaluate their lives. Are they happy in their relationships, careers, financial status with friendships? Are they living the type of life that is productive and fulfilling? This can be a wake-up call to stimulate what is really important and to help people to strive for a greater balance in their lives.
- Some folks will react with greater caution—staying at a job that they were considering leaving, being more conservative with spending and investing, and not adding in significant ways to the status quo.
- Others react to tragedy as a stimulus to move ahead with plans that they were considering, but kept putting off. There may seem to be no “later”, so it’s now or never in their minds.

In terms of family planning, individual personality differences, the mesh between partner’s desires, financial situations and fear levels all impact. Some folks feel that a larger family leads to a buffer against the world—more people to count on when the going gets rough. Others fear bringing a new child into an unknown political climate, as well as potential financial changes that are difficult to predict and might make child-rearing a more onerous process.

Here are some common-sense suggestions for those questioning the baby-maybe process:

- **Consider why you want to have a baby.** Taking on the responsibility for another life, and doing it right, should be well-thought out. Do you and your partner yearn to have a product of your love and devotion? Does the idea of a child (or a sibling for your current children) add to the family? Do you look forward to teaching a little one even the smallest of tasks? Is the idea exciting, fulfilling and something that you’ve been planning for? If not, think again, as a child is forever and should not be a product of impulse or whim.
- **What are the four or five basic life events that need to be in place when you consider starting or increasing your family?** Many folks consider financial stability, marital happiness and communication, a stable living situation that is safe and pleasant for children, and career satisfaction as basics. Every couple should seriously consider what has to be in place before making the important decision to begin or to increase their family size.
- **Is this a mutual decision?** Certainly both of you may not be 100% sure of the idea of becoming a parent all of the time, and one of you may be more interested in parenting than the other. In many relationships one partner seems more intent on starting a family, and the other warms to the idea over time. That’s okay, as long as the baby is not being forced on the less willing partner. If there is a difference in opinion between the two of you, especially since the terrorist attacks—talk it out, and really listen to the other.

- **Respect your partner's feelings.** Just because you are not deterred by the attacks and are gung-ho to have a kid, your partner may have been jolted into indecision by the recent world events. We are not clones of each other, and our feelings, anxieties and desires don't always ebb and flow together. If your partner is not ready to have a baby at this time—don't force it.
- **Gather information.** If you're unsure if now is the time to begin a family, consider waiting six or twelve months before making the decision. This time period will help the two of you to gather important information about how your world is or isn't changing. There's no rational reason to jump into something as important as baby-making when you are unsure and not on the same page of the book.
- **Know yourself.** If you tend to be a nervous person, realize that the next several months or even year or two may frazzle just about everyone's nerves. A pregnancy marred by anxiety and fear may not be conducive to the unborn baby's health. However, if you tend to let events roll off your back then you may be a very good candidate for a pregnancy at this time if you and your partner are in agreement.
- **Whatever you do, do not conceive a child to prove that life goes on and that the attacks cannot affect you.** That is not a rational reason to bring another child into this world. Life will go on just fine, and you don't need to prove it by having a kid. Confirm your resolve and belief in democracy by raising your current brood in a responsible manner, by helping others to deal with the tragedy, by putting your best effort into your work at home or at the office, and by being a good friend or partner.