



Diem Doc: The Kid Decision

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What is a Diem Doc!? A Diem Doc is a resource populated by the voices of our community. We want others to benefit from your lived experience, suggestions and secrets. Your knowledge will collectively contribute to forming a social search engine that mirrors the way women have passed information to each other for centuries. The information you share with us will be made public, but you can contribute completely anonymously if you want.

Directions: If you are interested in contributing your stories, experiences or expertise to this Doc, you can do so by typing them, anonymously, below.

Why are we doing this? Diem is building a social search engine for real-world information, like how to make friends as an adult or how to stop people-pleasing. It's a dedicated place for people to search, collect, discover and share information that has utility. Think of it like the best and biggest group chat you've ever been a part of, where all the important, silly, quick, private, and frenetic knowledge you share is organized and stored for everyone to benefit from.

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Now let's talk about the decision to have kids...

Is there a so-called "motherhood switch?" How do you financially plan for a child? If you have children, was there a moment when you decided you were ready? If you conceived accidentally, how do you feel about the decision now? Have you always known that you don't want kids? If so, how did you make that decision? In this guide, we're honestly exploring the decision to have children (or not). As always, we're also looking for folks to weigh in and add to this Doc.

Community Stories & Guidance...

Type your questions below and/or drop your own answers!

1. Question: Is there a so-called “motherhood switch?”

Answer: I always wanted kids. I was super careful about birth control as a teenager onwards since I was convinced I'd carry any pregnancy to term. I have two daughters: one is just like me and can't wait to have kids, the other has no interest. Like just about everything else in life I think there's a spectrum and an infinite number of hopes, dreams, desires, preferences, etc.

Answers: Sounds like bs to me. I am a mother and i have always wanted to have many kids. But when i had my baby i found it hard to love him. Found it hard to find that mama switch. It was like the switch was turned off or there was no control to the switch to turn it on.

Answer: I've always known I want children, that's always been clear to me. But as I got closer to 'the age', I didn't feel ready, even after being married in a very stable, loving relationship. Now I am pregnant and I still don't feel ready, I still can't believe it really. I find it hard to picture having a baby in my life. But I'm hoping I will feel maternal and loving once the baby comes.

Answer: Around the time I turned 22 and was in a 3 year committed relationship was when the motherhood switch clicked for me. Throughout college I thought that I didn't want kids because of the environmental impact and to be very honest, personal impact. I wanted to focus on my future career, finding financial stability, and pursue my creativity. Now, I'm starting to question my own reasoning. I'm starting to see that having children might be a part of being an artist and understanding life outside of ourselves. Perhaps that will inspire me to be more precious with my creative time and more resourceful with my opportunities. I definitely want children now too because I have an amazing partner that I could see being a true partner and father. I'm only 23 now, but this is a very active conversation for me.

Answer: When I was in my teens I always thought this switch would suddenly happen to me one day, and I'd want kids. I'm 25 now and have had 2 long term relationship (am still in the second) and I don't have that feeling now and I don't think that it will ever come. I want a family, but being pregnant sounds awful, giving birth sounds grim, and then I'd have a baby? What am I going to do with one of those? I barely like kids... so no. I think this might be a made up thing, people say to girls to convince them to have kids. My mum always knew she wanted many kids and she did that. Friends at school who wanted to be mums now have kids. Maybe if you don't start with that want it doesn't come too easy?

Answer: It's funny, because when I was growing up, I always told family and friends that I would never have and never want children. They kept telling me that that was just a phase. My mother always said that it's not about wanting to have children just for the sake of having them, but you wanted to have children with a specific man. Thinking about it now being older and knowing so many other stories of women my age I know that that isn't true. But for me it eventually did change when my relationship with my current boyfriend became very serious. I just cannot imagine my future without us having children together and I would even go so far as to say that being infertile (or him being infertile) is my biggest fear at the moment.

Answer: It's quite largely another patriarchal idea I feel, this motherhood switch. I have always wondered how either the 'fatherhood switch' is never romanticised or that men are just expected to hesitate when it comes to wanting children, that it's difficult for them. And funnily enough, in my friend circle, the decision to want a child was initiated by the man, not by the woman. I'm 35 now, 10 years in a marriage and having kids was such a romanticised idea growing up that I felt like I will want them one day. But 3-4 years into our marriage and somehow, both of us didn't seem to want children. We NEVER once spoke

about it and it was such an organic decision. We were both grateful to be on the same page. Steering away from set ideas, from norms is so liberating. I cannot imagine my life with a kid anywhere in it. I do not want to take that big a responsibility and people seem to think of me as selfish when I say this. But where's the lie? A child is one of your biggest responsibilities and well, thankfully, it is a choice. Honestly, the more I sat on the 'no' side of this, the more it became an obvious choice. I still get asked (literally as of last week by my mother) about why we do not want kids. I give them this exact reason - the motherhood switch did not magically flip for me!

Question: How do you financially plan for a child?

Answers: didn't do much financial planning except subscribe for diapers and wipes because that stuff gets expensive fast and we knew we'll take any savings. Luckily didn't need to formula feed which also would have added up at express speed. But really I think the parent decides how much they want to give the child or not. Either way all a baby needs in its first few years are only the love and warmth of the parents and food. As they grow we figure out what we want to add to their learning experiences. Wasn't ashamed of thrifting because my thoughts were - No baby will grow up to complain they weren't bought brand new stuff boxed toys or clothes. Just some ways to save on money.

Answers: No idea, I feel like we're going to wing it and hope for the best! We've done the math but it barely adds up when living in New York.

2. Question: If you have children, was there a moment when you decided you were ready?

Answers: Not really. I had nieces and Nephews before i had my own kids and they were cute but I never knew if i was ready. I sort of knew the things that would get thrown out the window-like my precious sleep, my flawless skin, me time, etc. But, once the Lil guy arrived and a few weeks of hormonal up and down and 2 weeks after he finally decided to wake up more often and interact with me I couldn't believe my thoughts prior to having him. It was the best decision in the world. So for me it really was getting into the mom mode a few weeks after I became a mom. No switches for me.

Answer: I had always thought I wanted kids, but despite marrying at 30, by 35 I still didn't feel ready. The longer I waited the more panicked I became - maybe I wasn't meant to be a mum, maybe my marriage couldn't survive parenthood, what if I felt trapped by being a mother, what if I was giving up other opportunities, some other great life? I eventually decided I would regret not having kids more than I would regret having them, and I worried that waiting much longer would make my mind up for me, so we started trying. I was half expecting to struggle as many of my friends had, but luckily we didn't. Six years down the track, we have two children, 6 and 3. I don't regret having children, they have enriched my life beyond measure. It is the hardest thing I've ever done, and I do miss the freedom I used to have, though interestingly, I don't miss my old life at all.

Answer: Yes. I mean, I always wanted them and would have had them sooner, but I couldn't really find the right guy, and I wasn't in a financial position to do it on my own. I met someone who also really wanted kids. I remember the day I decided it was time. I remember exactly where I was standing when I told him I wanted to try. I stopped birth control that day and was pregnant within the month.

3. **Question: Have you always known that you don't want kids? If so, how did you make that decision?**

Answers: Ever since I was around 11 and you start to think about what your life in the future will look like, I haven't been able to picture a future with children. So I suppose I've always known, although I was always willing to believe that one day my biological clock would start ticking and some need to procreate would kick in. It hasn't. I'm sure everyone loves their own kids and wants to see them happy and developing and if I had a kid I'm sure I would be a good parent but aside from having no desire to have children, I actually wouldn't want to do what you have to do to be a good parent. Ultimately, for me, it was never the case of making the decision not to have children in the same way that I never decided not to have a parrot, it was just never something I wanted.

4. **Question: For people who struggled with the decision and decided to have kids, what's your advice for someone trying to figure out the right course?**

Answers: Think about what you would regret more: having kids or not having kids. There's no right answer, and despite the fact that I have kids, I don't feel as if it's something that everyone (even me) HAS to do.

5. **Question: Is there anything you wish someone had told you (good or bad) about your decision?**

Answers: I wish that seasoned parents always always told me that kids are hard and kids grow up in the most unexpected ways and love in the most unexpected ways - if only I knew this I wouldn't be so hard on myself and have to deal with all the mom guilt because I definitely felt like I was falling short always when I compared myself to the older generation parents.

6. **Question: For those who struggled with the decision and decided NOT to have kids, what's your advice for someone trying to figure out the right decision for them? How do you deal with the inappropriate societal shock around your decision?**

Answers: I used to have to root myself in my own decision and remind myself why I made this choice, it's not easy fielding all the questions to start with but over time I found it affirmed my decision.

7. **Question for moms: how did you decide you were ready to "try"/have unprotected sex? Did you hit a number in your bank account? Did you decide where you wanted to live? Did you reach some other milestone?**

Answers: my husband and I wanted to spend some time together and enjoy our time alone before kids. He had a student loan he wanted to close off in the meantime. So we decided on 3 years of marriage after 5 years of dating to have kids. We still crave time alone but we know now is our time to parent and are learning to embrace it. Fortunately we had jobs that paid to make our ends meet so we didn't approach it with much financial planning.

Answer: I'd been with my partner for around 18 months and couldn't wait another minute! We didn't have a lot of money and he was all over the place with jobs. We both really wanted kids, we were in our early 30's, and I figured there's never a "right" time. It turns out we weren't a good match, which obviously caused pain and difficulty for both us and for the kids. But I don't regret it - I don't think my life would have been any better putting off the thing I wanted so badly in order to have all my ducks in a row.

Curated resources from around the Internet...

Add your resources below!

Powerful books

1. [Selfish, Shallow, and Self-Absorbed: Sixteen Writers on the Decision Not to Have Kids](#) by Meghan Daum
2. [Olive](#) by Emma Gannon
3. [Motherhood](#), by Sheila Heti

Interesting articles

1. [How People Decide Whether to Have Children](#) by Olga Khazan (The Atlantic)
2. [Researcher wonders about parents of the future](#) by Anne Craig
3. [How to figure out if you really want kids](#) by Katie O'Malley (Elle)
4. [There's never a 'right' time for a baby — but these questions can help you decide](#) (NPR)
5. [I help people decide if they want to have kids. Here's my advice.](#) By Ann Davidman

Other Diem Docs...

1. [Adult Friendship](#)
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