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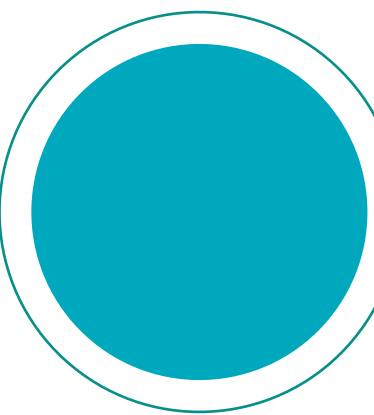
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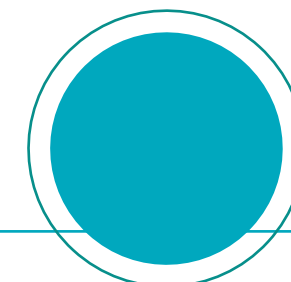
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DEAR FATHERS (OR FUTURE FATHERS)!

We present to you a publication which the Polish market has not seen yet.

We want to show you a completely new and different dimension of fatherhood. The Share the Care Foundation, which I am heading, has been monitoring the partnership of women and men in sharing family-related duties for many years. We have noticed that there is not enough concrete information for fathers - about your rights, your role in bringing up children and the positive influence on their development. This publication aims to change this.

We have invited recognised experts and Ambassadors of the Foundation - fathers who support our mission - to co-create this publication. We promote the idea of partnership

in relationships and the sharing of parental leave by both parents, because we know this brings benefits to women, men, and most of all, children. We believe that partnership in relationships is the answer to the challenges of this fast changing world in which equality and belief in human potential are two of the greatest values. It is these values that we want to spread.

We extend our thanks to the Partners of this publication who helped turn our idea into reality. We hope that this first edition will be built upon in the years to come. It is good to know that we are surrounded by brave people and organisations which join us in making the world a better place. Dear women - I know that you will be reading our publication, too - our Ambassadors assure us that

80% of fathers' sites' readers are women.

I hope that this publication will allow you to look at parenthood through men's eyes. Understanding the perspective of the other side is a necessary condition to build relationships based on the idea of partnership.

I hope you enjoy this publication

KAROLINA ANDRIAN

President of Share the Care Foundation



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FUNDACJA
SHARE THE CARE

SHARE THE CARE FOUNDATION

WE SUPPORT PARENTS IN ACHIEVING EQUALITY AT HOME AND AT WORK!

We promote a partnership family model, which allows parents to fulfil themselves in all spheres of life and gives children the chance to develop close ties with their mother and father.

TEAM RODZINA PORTAL

www.teamrodzina.pl

[Instagram](#)

A parenting portal focusing on parents rather than children.

We write about relationships between partners and between parents and children, the need for fulfilment in other spheres of life, as well as professional, financial, legal and social issues.

PODCASTS

'COMMON CHILDREN = COMMON DUTIES'

Inspiring conversations with experts from various areas and parents about parental leave in Poland and abroad, especially about how parental leave can be divided between a woman and a man.

We discuss all issues associated with partnership in relationships, bringing up children, legal aspects, social conditions and many other important issues.

WORKSHOPS FOR PARENTS-TO-BE AND NEW PARENTS

Free legal and psychological workshops for parents, which are to prepare them for their new role. The 'Parenting in accordance with the law' workshop discusses all formal and legal issues connected with the birth of a child, including the rules for various allowances and types of leave for parents. The 'Parenting in partnership' workshop, run by psychologists, is aimed at helping the family function better as a whole, where every family member is equally important.

WHAT'S BEST FOR MEN TODAY?

Responsible brands build their communication on values and ideas with which recipients could identify. They do not run away from social narratives and are not afraid to break stereotypes. Gillette, part of the Procter&Gamble portfolio of brands, sees global changes in the perception of masculinity and supports men being themselves. Today, that means being more engaged, valuing partnerships and the need to nurture relationships with loved ones, including those with children. The definition of responsibility has changed, and today it means participating in shaping new patterns of behavior for the next generation of boys and girls. The space for fathers to be involved in raising their children is huge and their role is significant. What is more, men want to have a greater influence on

the upbringing of their children, the opportunity to accompany them in their exploration of the world and also to spend time with them in everyday situations. However, every social change must be accompanied by promotion of new patterns, because in the world of strongly established stereotypes, it is sometimes difficult to leave the cultural role assigned to us by the society. As a global brand known for helping men look, feel and be their best selves, we want to support men who see their role in the family and society differently than the generation of our parents did. In Gillette's campaigns, we encourage consumers to become role models for the next generation raised to strive for a world of equal opportunity.

This change starts with ourselves. Starting in 2019, P&G is offering its employees an additional 6 weeks of paid paternity leave. Along with the statutory 2 weeks, men in our organization can spend up to 8 weeks with their families as part of their paternity leave.

There are some things that simply aren't worth putting off - taking care of yourself and your relationships.

I trust you will find this guide useful.

GORAN SUTINOVSKI

Brand Director, Gillette,
Central Europe



A FATHER TO A CHILD, A CHILD TO A FATHER

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF A MUTUAL RELATIONSHIP?

There is more and more talk about the changing approach to fatherhood and also how involvement in care and upbringing influences fathers, their bonds with the children and the children themselves. The benefits of this relationship for both parties cannot be overestimated.

Social expectations around the active participation of fathers in bringing up children are considered by some to be a change for the worse. However, engaged fatherhood gives many men satisfaction

and a good relationship with their children increasingly fulfils the psychological needs of fathers. This was the subject of the writings of German sociologist Ulrich Beck. He believes that in



the wake of social changes affecting families, the relationship between a child and a parent becomes the last unbreakable and irreplaceable primary social relation. Partners come and go, but the child remains.

Closeness right from the start

Research shows the benefits of a close bond of a father with his children, also from the child's point of view: "the positive effects of close and good contact of a father with his children can be observed from the very beginning of the child's development. Newborns who spend a lot of time with their fathers exhibit more socially-developed and creative behaviours than those without such contact" (Canfield, 2014). Experts believe that if a father actively participates in the care of an infant during the first six months, the child will be better at mental and physical development in the future. Infants who are looked after by their dads may also be more self-reliant and independent in the future. Why is it so important for fathers to engage in the care of their children before they turn one? Because this is when the foundation of a child's

personality is formed and it is related to the quality of the relationship between the child and the parent. The way in which the parent meets the basic psychological needs of the child - the need for safety, acceptance, belonging, attention and love - conditions the development of the bond between the adult and the child and the child's attachment to the parent. The creation of this bond is a key aspect of development which has a fundamental significance later on in life. Currently, many new fathers have bad memories of the relationship with their fathers who were not present in their upbringing. That's why they want the relationship with their own children to be quite different. Polish men are giving up on the traditional role of a father and looking for different ways of fulfilling it.



JOANNA WŁODARCZYK

Sociologist, coordinator of the Research Department of the Empowering Children Foundation. She has carried out multiple research projects related to violence against children, good parenting, and children and youths in contact with harmful online content. Author of many research publications.

The significant bond

John Bowlby, author of attachment theory, defined attachment as an instinctive, biological, deep emotional bond between a child and a carer. In his opinion, this is formed in the first year of a child's life and becomes the foundation of social relationships formed later on. Most research into the child-caregiver bond considered mothers to be the main attachment figures. However, the attachment process is not gender specific, nor is it restricted to biological parents. What is important is that attachment figures satisfy the child's physical needs and provide constant care. A child is capable of creating different attachment styles with different caregivers. The quality of interaction is important in creating this bond - responsiveness to the child's thoughts and emotions is key. Mirroring,

A GOOD RELATIONSHIP WITH THE FATHER MEANS MORE SUPPORT FOR THE CHILD, PARTICULARLY DURING ADOLESCENCE. CURRENTLY ONLY 40% OF POLISH TEENAGERS DECLARE THAT THEY WOULD APPROACH THEIR FATHERS IN DIFFICULT SITUATIONS. MOTHERS (67%) AND PEERS (43%) ARE BOTH AHEAD OF FATHERS.

RESEARCH BY THE EMPOWERING CHILDREN FOUNDATION

containing emotions and feelings and mentalizing the child's states e.g. through play - over time all this translates into trust, a sense of security and attachment.

Forming an attachment with his own child is more difficult for a father than it is for a mother due to the biological differences between men and women and the fact that women usually have the option to breastfeed a child during the first few months of a baby's life. However, not all mothers breastfeed but they still form a close relationship with their babies. Just like fathers, they have to make more effort. Some men who looked after their babies without the presence of their partners admitted that they had to learn how to be better at reading the signals of the child than the partners, as they lacked breasts - 'the universal pacifiers'. This experience positively influenced their bond with their children and their ability to be mindful of their needs.

Multiple relationships

Infants are able to form close bonds with more than one person. The child does not divide the

strength of his or her feeling between different attachment figures - it is not the case that the more attachment figures there are, the weaker the bond with these figures and the mother is. The child does not treat all those attachment figures as equal and exchangeable. An individual bond is formed with each of these people. What could be better for children than having the closest person in the world who knows them the best and has a unique relationship with them? Having two such people. Looking after children is good for men, because they can open up emotionally in front of their children. Men were often brought up to be tough and to repress emotions. That is why many fathers engaged in childcare discover emotions which they never thought could exist. It is good for their emotional development and mental health. The ability of adults to think about their own experiences and the child's inner world and to adjust to the non-verbal communication of the child are key factors in protecting children from experiencing the parent's violent behaviour. Mother and father are then able to understand what is happening to the child and to themselves and



WANT TO HEAR MORE?

Listen to a podcast on how engagement in childcare and upbringing influences fathers and their children:

[Leave for dads, benefits for children](#)

respond accordingly. The lack of such ability may cause anger and frustration with the child's bad behaviour and lead to violence as a way of venting and a means of subjugating the child.

Financial stability

Apart from the psychological perspective and bond formation, the child-father relationship may also be approached from the point of view of the family's financial stability, also important for child development. Men's involvement in childcare allows women to pursue their careers. Two incomes are safer for the family - even if one person loses their job, becomes ill, dies or needs to requalify, not all income is lost.

Such a solution supports men, who cease to be the sole breadwinners. In as much as a father's participation in childcare supports the mother and removes the burden of total responsibility for the offspring, women's participation in income generation supports their partners and alleviates the stress associated with the total responsibility for family finances. This gives men more freedom and better work-life balance (mostly family life), which



is good and healthy for any person, irrespective of gender. This also prevents burnout and may positively influence work.

In case of breakup

Sharing childcare and income generation with their partners is also good for men because it gives them a better position in case of divorce. More and more fathers want to actively participate in childcare after a breakup with the mother, they also

increasingly apply for shared custody. It is easier to obtain but it also has a good effect on the child. Not only because the close relationship with the father is retained but also because the mother is more financially independent and does not have to be dependent on alimony.

Research of American couples has shown that irrespective of whether the wife works or not, the risk of divorce is diminished if the husband is involved in domestic responsibilities. Common experiences of reconciling work and parenthood may be more successful at bringing the couple together than a sense of frustration and being misunderstood in two separate and increasingly alien worlds.

Sharing childcare is not only beneficial for children who have a better bond with both parents and a more stable family and financial situation, but also for fathers who gain a deeper bond with their children.



WANT TO READ MORE?

MASCULINUM FOUNDATION

Specialist articles for men.

DAD HERO

A lifestyle portal for fathers.

FATHER_ING DAILY

Blog and Facebook profil run by a psychologist-dad, where each post is supported by scientific evidence.

Fatherhood from a scientific and practical point of view.

OJCOWSKA STRONA MOCY

Blog and podcast about fatherhood.

TATO NET-CZYTELNIA

Specialist articles for men.

BLOG OJCIEC

Blog and podcast. One of the most popular parenting blogs. Advice, ideas, inspiration and a lot of empathy for parents.

TATA W PRACY

Blog of a working dad.

SUCHY TATA

Personal blog of a dad. It contains many tips and

advice on how to spend time with the child. The author recommends tried and tested toys and gadgets for fathers and sons.

TEAM RODZINA

A parenting portal focusing on parents rather than children. It contains texts about the relationship between parents, parents and children, the need for fulfilment in other spheres of life, and texts on professional, financial, legal and social subjects.



PARTNERSHIP, BUT IS IT REALLY?

ABOUT SMART PLANNING OF DUTY SHARING

Many men want to become heavily involved in family life and actively try to do so. However, they still feel - as evidenced by scientific research - that it is they who bear the chief responsibility for earning a living to support their families. Combining the role of the main breadwinner with that of a partner and a father is a demanding challenge.

Achieving real partnership in a relationship requires two basic modifications. Firstly, men should become more engaged in childcare, bringing up children and looking after the household (cleaning, cooking, shopping, etc.). Secondly, women should take more responsibility for the financial situation of the family.

Therefore, it is worth approaching partnership holistically - both with reference to childcare and household chores and earning a living. Cooperation and engagement of both parents are necessary in all these areas.

Why is it important?

Joint responsibility in all key areas of family life creates conditions in which each parent may fulfil themselves on the family and professional

fronts. This generates many benefits.

Firstly, a sense of responsibility for a given area of family life makes it easier to become involved. Transferring all or most duties from a given area onto another person makes it easy to give in to the fallacy of thinking this is not your business and that it is the other person's responsibility. This is only one step away from holding various grudges.

Secondly, joint responsibility allows us to notice the efforts of the other person and to appreciate them.

Thirdly, such an arrangement means lower pressure experienced by each of the parties.

A large number of women feel overwhelmed by the fact that almost all household-related duties are on their shoulders. On the other hand, research shows that men experience equally



KAMIL JANOWICZ

Psychologist, PhD candidate at the Faculty of Psychology and Cognitive Science at the Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań, a certified academic tutor. His academic interests focus on development during adolescence and adulthood, preparation for parenthood and the influence of narrative activity on human functioning. He runs his own blog *Father_ing* where he popularises scientific findings.

high pressure associated with the fact of being the sole or main breadwinner. This often results in chronic stress or even more serious mental problems. Being the sole or main breadwinner may cause men to accept behaviour which is unacceptable (e.g. harassment or exploitation at work, which is not reported for fear of losing one's job and source of income for the whole family).

Lastly, sharing responsibility for all key areas of family life gives both parents an opportunity to become engaged in each area. The partners of men engaged in childcare and housework find it easier to return to professional activity and derive satisfaction from their work. The partners of women who significantly contribute to family finances find it easier to become involved in childcare and housework. This is evidenced by research on long-term effects of sharing parental leave - fathers who were able to take at least a part of the leave tended to spend more time with their children in the months to come, helped them in everyday activities and were more engaged in childcare. And this is

IT IS IMPORTANT THAT THIS CONVERSATION HAS THE COMMON GOAL AS ITS FOCAL POINT - CREATING CONDITIONS GUARANTEEING EACH PERSON OPTIMUM DEVELOPMENT.

this issue from a long-term perspective. Firstly, it is worth taking decisions concerning one's career path before the baby appears. To a large extent, educational and professional choices determine our chances for achieving partnership in a relationship due to the nature of our job, salary, location (e.g. frequent business trips) and flexibility (or its lack) in scheduling our work.

Secondly, partnership consisting of sharing housework and childcare and income generation may foster a better financial situation. Data collected from a dozen or so thousand families in a study conducted a few years ago in Denmark shows that sharing parental leave improved family income in a matter of several years (by up to 30%), even though in the short-term the income dropped slightly.

How to encourage and support your partner?

Just as many men may find it difficult to become involved in housework and childcare due to a perceived lack of preparation and

the base for building a better and more lasting bond between a dad and a child. It is difficult to achieve though without women taking greater responsibility for supporting the family financially.

It pays off!

Many parents are concerned about how a more equal approach to all these areas would affect their financial situation. It is worth approaching



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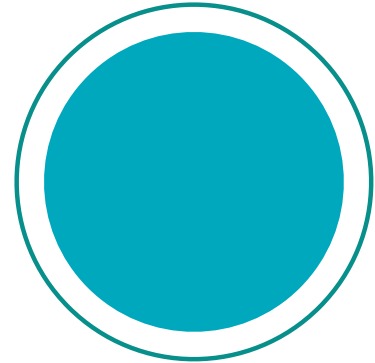
Visit the author's blog and Facebook profile [Father_ing Daily](#)

competencies, women may find it challenging to take more responsibility for the financial situation of the family. The process will certainly be easier with help from one's partner. Long before the decision to try for a baby is made, it is worth discussing in detail the future financial picture and the contribution that each person could make.

It is important that this conversation has the common goal as its focal point - creating conditions guaranteeing each person optimum development. It is worth telling the partner that you want to become involved in parenthood and housework but excessive burden of work and pressure to support the family may become a serious limitation in that respect.

SHARING PARENTAL LEAVE BY COUPLES IMPROVED FAMILY INCOME IN A MATTER OF SEVERAL YEARS (BY UP TO 30%), EVEN THOUGH IN THE SHORT-TERM THE INCOME DROPPED SLIGHTLY.

DATA FROM A STUDY OF OVER 10,000 FAMILIES IN DENMARK



Approaching this situation as a journey could be helpful. It is unreasonable to expect the woman to find a better paid job overnight, but together you can work out a plan that will help achieve your common goals. This may involve the female partner gaining new qualifications or using the support of someone who could help overcome the possible shortcomings and barriers preventing her from achieving her goal. Men wishing to become more involved in parenthood may require similar support.



TO BE READ WITH YOUR CHILDREN

'MY SMARTY' JAREK KANIA

Something more than a book about being safe online. Smarty is a digital education tool, which - contrary to most parenting guides - adults can (or even should) use together with their children. A practical guide to the digital world for the whole family.

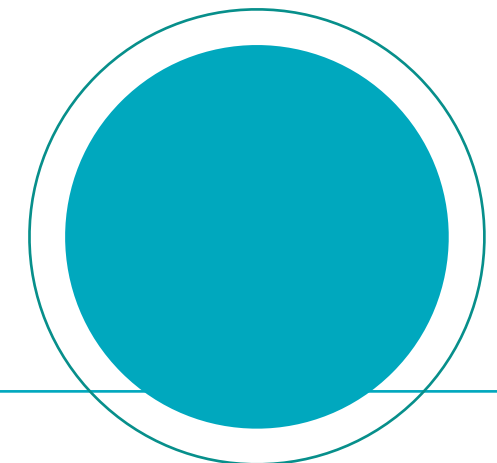
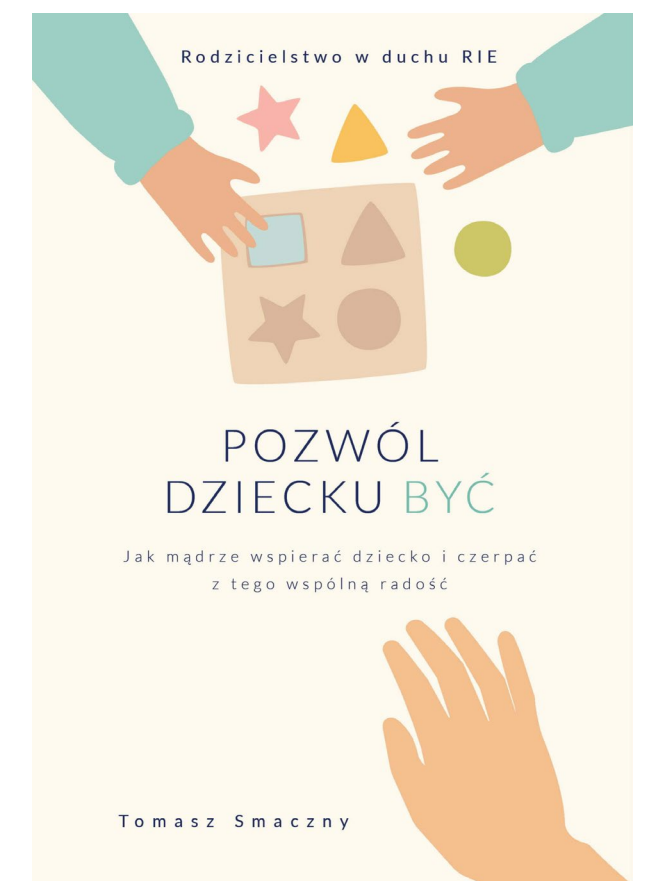


THIS BOOK WILL INSPIRE YOU

'LET THE CHILD BE' TOMASZ SMACZNY

The first Polish self-help manual in the spirit of RIE parenting. This parenting method developed for over 75 years is based on deep respect for the child and trust in its abilities. The book familiarises Polish readers with this inspiring parenting path, which the author has been exploring for some time with joy and curiosity. It is dedicated first and foremost to the parents and carers of children under seven.

The assumptions of RIE discussed in the book will help you support your child in developing competencies of the future.



CARE FOR YOURSELF AND YOUR RELATIONSHIPS

THERE ARE THINGS THAT ARE NOT WORTH PUTTING OFF

The world is rushing forward and we are rushing with it. Often it is easier to live on the proverbial autopilot learned during your childhood, than to stop and think whether what we are doing is consistent with what we want. Often, even when we know what we want, we put off the realization of our plans or the implementation of the desired resolutions. The question is why and is it worth it? No, because there are things that are better not postponed.



This applies, among others, to taking care of ourselves and relationships. These two areas are very intertwined because when we feel good about ourselves, we feel better about others. In the context of relationships, being able to engage and get to know your children from their earliest months is an important experience and one that will not be repeated. Children grow and even when they need us, they are already on another stage, in another area. Therefore, it is worth being present from the beginning, at different stages of our children's lives, because time cannot be turned back.

This approach is supported by the results of many global studies. We can see it, for example,

IN THE CONTEXT OF RELATIONSHIPS, BEING ABLE TO ENGAGE AND GET TO KNOW YOUR CHILDREN FROM THEIR EARLIEST MONTHS IS AN IMPORTANT EXPERIENCE AND ONE THAT WILL NOT BE REPEATED.

in Iceland, where men have been taking parental leaves for over 20 years. A recent study done by the World Health Organization (WHO) shows that Icelandic teenagers are more likely to say they are attached to their fathers than their peers in other countries. The WHO study looked at the first generation of Icelandic children whose fathers have earned the right to take three months of non-transferable parental leave.

The Gillette brand also released a global survey data from 2021 that shows having a trusted guide on the road to adulthood increases comfort, security and confidence. 76 percent of young men who have a role model are confident about their future, compared to just 59 percent without one.

The Gillette brand, part of the Procter&Gamble portfolio, has always accompanied men in the search for what's best for them. The brand sees global changes in the perception of masculinity and supports men being themselves. Seeing that the parental role is becoming an important element of men's identification, we want to tame



a certain new social order with our actions, in which dad is as important for a child as mom.



GORAN SUTINOVSKI

Brand Director,
Gillette,
Central Europe



IT'S NOT JUST ABOUT SUPER-ORGASM

HOW TO NURTURE A RELATIONSHIP GOING THROUGH DIFFICULTIES

Research shows that couples who share their duties in a partner-like way have a more satisfying sexual life. It is true, but what kind of partnership is this really about?

A partnership-based relationship can only be built by mature people and I do not mean maturity connected with age. I mean internal maturity, when each of the partners in the present relationship can feel his or her internal strengths, borders, understands his or her needs, including sexual needs, and has the ability to express them.

If a relationship of two people is characterised by immaturity, which unfortunately often happens, it can function quite well, but only when the external conditions are conducive. When problems or difficult situations arise, immature relationships enter crises. The birth of a child definitely cannot be classified as a conducive condition.

What starts with laughter, ends in tears

The beginning of a relationship is a time, when partners are close to each other, spend time together and show each other a lot of tenderness and love, they love each other.

When a baby is born, the sense of togetherness is

theoretically strengthened - here we are having a child together and we enjoy it. However, with time comes exhaustion and fatigue. Couples are so engrossed in childcare, work and home responsibilities that they can suddenly feel a certain dissociation from one another. Taking care of a baby takes up so much time that the parents may in fact not spend time together anymore. This means that 'I, you and the baby' is replaced by 'I and the baby' and 'you and the baby'. The earlier 'us' does not function anymore apart from exchanging 'to do' lists. This is a mistake. The period after childcare should be a time for showing each other intimacy and tenderness, because this is what the baby needs for proper emotional development. Couples busy with external aspects of building a nest (renovating, furnishing, shopping) very often lose sight of each other. This is the reason for many serious crises in a relationship and many couples actually lose themselves during this time.

Where to start the repair?

Most couples split up for trivial reasons and,



DAWID RZEPECKI

Philosopher and therapist, together with his wife, Zofia Rzepecka, he conducts development workshops for couples strengthening natural sexuality with the experience of spirituality. He is a guest on TV and radio programmes and author of articles on personal and spiritual development and Tantra.

luckily, there is no need for huge changes to repair the things that do not work. Of course, realising that there is a problem is easier than persevering with the change. But change is possible. The most important thing is to acknowledge together that the relationship is in crisis. If both sides agree, you have to identify the source of the crisis and answer the question of what we have to do or can do to change.

Being together

It is very important to put time for oneself on the list of priorities. This means that I put everything aside, I don't think about anything, I don't plan, I just listen to myself. This allows for a real regeneration of the body and mind. Only this way can you reach your deeper needs and start noticing and satisfying them. One of these needs will probably be intimacy with your partner. It is worth putting in your weekly calendar an obligatory hour for just being with your partner. This could be about just being close to each other, you don't have to go out anywhere, just be side by side, cuddle, hold hands, 'feel' the other

person. It is about paying attention to each other rather than doing anything together.

Tender touch

Physical tenderness is key to rebuilding good relations between partners. It is about a tender touch, cuddling, stroking, looking into each other's eyes, holding hands, kissing. Everyday little tender rituals, which allow partners to feel close. While receiving physical tenderness our bodies produce oxytocin, the hormone of bonding and love, which makes us feel that our partners are important to us and which gives us a feeling of profound love.

But be careful - physical tenderness cannot be treated as a foreplay before sex. Why? If physical tenderness always initiates sex, the woman may want to avoid it, knowing where it leads to. After all, she does not always feel like having intercourse. Let us remember that cuddling, foot massage, holding hands, stroking the hair - these are little steps building closeness in a relationship. A lot of good feelings, love and bonding can be based on physical tenderness which does not



WANT TO READ MORE? THE SEXUAL LIFE OF PARENTS ZOFIA AND DAWID RZEPECCY

This book is for everyone who wants to consciously nurture their love. "Being ready for a relationship is the realisation that you cannot have everyone, but you can have everything you need with one person."

lead to sex, and it is much easier to move from the sphere of intimacy and tenderness to the sphere of sex.

Back to being within yourselves

Once a couple has built intimacy and tenderness between them, the return to satisfying sex can become a certain ritual for them, where partners connect not to fulfil the need for orgasm, but to experience mutual communion. This kind of fulfilment is what tantric sex is all about - not super-orgasms but a strong, unique union of partners. The strong mutual feeling of oneness with the partner makes us open to completely new sexual sensations, and this can be a truly mystical experience. In tantric sex it is important not to just focus on achieving orgasm by him and by her, but to meet in a mutual connection, breath, being in each other. This is when communion, love and pleasure appear. After all, sex is about love and the physical experience of love is possible only when the couple experience the moment of mutual tenderness and being fully together.

If the man and women remove the burden exerted by the pressure to reach orgasm at all costs, they can allow themselves to engage in slow, mindful and deep intimacy. Without this pressure, the woman does not feel trapped or forced to fulfil her obligation to her partner, and the partner does not have to prove that he always rises to the occasion. Such an approach is liberating and opens both partners to a completely different way of experiencing intimacy and love, a new ritual of being together.



WANT TO HEAR MORE?

[Partnership in life, work and bed - or Midsummer Night's Sex!](#)

Dawid Rzepecki talks to Karolina Andrian about partnership in #Team Rodzina podcast

THE POWER OF COMMUNITY

WHAT DO FATHERS GET OUT OF A MALE SUPPORT GROUP?

Only 15 years ago, parents groups rarely included fathers. Dads who did sign up for such groups usually felt forced to by a difficult family situation or serious problems with their children. Luckily, this has changed now and more and more fathers are looking for opportunities to exchange their experiences and expand their knowledge to become more aware as parents.

The main idea behind male support groups is to enable its participants to talk about themselves and fatherhood, and listen to others with similar problems. For men with pregnant partners these meetings are an opportunity to become familiar with the idea of parenthood. Leaders of such groups want the participants to stop and focus on themselves, as they rarely find the time to do this while carrying out duties connected with work, bringing up children and being a husband or a partner.

What do we talk about?

During the meeting we discuss changes which take place when a child is born, the problems with reconciling work and fatherhood, finding time for



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Psychotherapist specialising in psychological help for 25 years. Co-author of several psychoeducational programmes and support groups for fathers, parents and professionals.

LISTENING TO GROWN-UP MEN TALKING ABOUT THEIR CHILDREN IN A WAY WHICH IS STEREOTYPICALLY ASSIGNED TO MOTHERS - WITH ENGAGEMENT AND TENDERNESS - IS A POWERFUL EXPERIENCE. THE STRENGTH OF FATHERS' MEETINGS LIES IN SAFETY AND OPENNESS WHICH CREATE A SENSE OF COMMUNITY.

one's own needs, being a partner and a parent. We look at the relationships of the participants with their fathers and talk about the things they want to copy in the relationships with their own children and what they want to change. We discuss the relationships with their partners - what these relationships are like, what they get out of them, what causes problems - and consider how to look after the relationship. Fathers also talk about the pleasures and challenges associated with their parenthood. Listening to grown-up men talking about their children in a way which is stereotypically assigned to mothers - with engagement and tenderness - is a powerful experience. The strength of fathers' meetings lies in the safety and openness which create a sense of community. Men are able to share their problems and listen to one another without being judged and criticised.

The phenomenon of the meeting

Generally, society forbids guys to talk about their difficulties or weaknesses. The role model of a father who is expected to be able to deal with everything is very much present, but each parent

experiences both joy and parenting successes, as well as helplessness and anger and does not always know how to cope. The participants often emphasise the role of community and the phenomenon of the meeting devoted to real conversations free from distractions such as alcohol or a football match. When a cycle of group meetings finishes, some

men decide to continue to meet with us. When the difficulties faced by fathers exceed the possibilities of getting help within support groups, e.g. when a conflict with their partner is severe or their past experience makes it impossible for them to fully embrace the role of a father, we encourage participants to take advantage of other forms of aid, e.g. couples therapy or individual therapy.



WHERE TO MEET AND TALK ONLINE?

GRUPA PERFORMATYWNA CHŁOPAKI

A group of men who wanted to escape uncomfortable social

and cultural roles and stereotypes associated with masculinity. They talk about emotions and explore the idea of tender masculinity. They organise online circles, performances and live transmissions.

THE EMPOWERING CHILDREN FOUNDATION (FDDS)

Webinars, live transmissions and workshops with

specialists. Many cyclical and one-off events for parents.

ALL ABOUT PARENTING

A unique platform and mobile app associating the community of parents. It offers webinars, live transmissions and courses for parents wishing to develop their competencies and improve communication and collaboration within the family.

FACEBOOK GROUP – LEPSZY TATA, OJCOWSKIE INSPIRACJE (BETTER DAD - FATHERS' INSPIRATIONS)

The biggest Facebook group just for men! The men in the group look for ways of being even better fathers and inspire others to do the same. They want to be better at bonding with their children and building relationships within the family. They

encourage everyone to spend time with their kids and recommend books, toys and gadgets

SHARE THE CARE FOUNDATION

Legal and psychological webinars for parents. A source of knowledge about parents' rights and meetings with psychologists about parenthood and partnership..

NEW PERCEPTION OF MASCULINITY

WHY CHANGES IN PERCEIVING THE ROLE OF A MAN AS A CARER ARE SO SLOW

Many young men together with women want to redefine the rules of social life and social roles. They feel the need to change the definition of masculinity and look for ways to define anew what male power should be like.

Men and women are increasingly questioning the models associated with bringing up children which they witnessed in their family homes. In a quantitative and qualitative study 'New Men' commissioned by Noizz.pl and carried out by Kantar (April-September 2021), we wanted to identify the changes in men's approach not only to their own identity but also social roles they fulfilled. Only 9% of the respondents would like

their new families to be similar to the families in which they were brought up. Despite such declarations it is still women who take most decisions concerning children.

What do partners think of each other?

In the study, the majority of women indicated that it was they who cooked meals, fed their



OLIWIA BOSOMTWE

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children and took them to medical appointments. They also made decisions concerning education, duties and free time activities of their children. Less than 20% of men indicated that these were solely their responsibilities. 63 percent of those surveyed believe that mothers are more engaged in bringing up children than fathers. Men and women also differ in their perception of the division of childcare duties. The majority of men (67%) believe that they share childcare duties equally with their partners. Women are of a different opinion - only a fraction of them state

that they deal with childcare-related matters equally with their partners. Only 5% of women indicate that it is their partners who cook and feed the children, while 4% state that it is the fathers who take children to medical appointments. Men have a higher opinion of themselves - as many as 41% of them claim that they cook and feed their children, while 34% say that they take their children to the doctor's.

A different reality

It seems that men do wish to share the care equally with their partners but in practice things pan out differently. It is hardly surprising. Many of them experienced the traditional division of duties in their childhood, where childcare was assigned to women. This way of thinking is changing, but it is a slow change. Marketing is still dominated by communication based on the traditional division of duties. Adverts of products associated with looking after young children and cleaning products are largely based on stereotypes. It is only recently that new models of masculinity started appearing in films and TV series

WHO CAN HELP?

MASCULINUM FOUNDATION

The foundation organises numerous events supporting parents - webinars, workshops, live transmissions.

STO POCIECH FOUNDATION – HELPLINE FOR PARENTS OF YOUNG CHILDREN

507 599 033 – remember this number if you are a parent in crisis or know someone who is.

THE EMPOWERING CHILDREN FOUNDATION (FDDS) – PSYCHOLOGICAL HELP

Psychological help in the form of individual and group meetings for parents in difficult situations.

Change of stereotypes

One of the heroes of a multimedia documentary 'Crisis of masculinity' created by noizz.pl is Grzegorz Sobieszek, Muay Thai coach and founder of martial arts school Academia Gorila. He talked about his perspective on fatherhood, pointing out that men's childcare competencies are often questioned by those around them. By presenting his experiences we wanted to draw attention to the fact that men who decide to fulfil the role of carers and create new models of masculinity do not always get the support of the people in their environment. When more men decide to fully share childcare duties by taking parental leave, their experiences will become an example for others.

Another hero of the documentary, 23-year-old Mikołaj, looks after children professionally. He calls himself a 'male nanny' and work is his passion. Without a doubt, choosing caring professions contributes to the change of men's image, but men looking after children in creches and kindergartens are still a rarity.



WANT TO HEAR MORE?

Listen to a talk with family therapist Piotr Romanowski about how to start a conversation on changing the division of childcare duties - [Reorganisation of family life](#)

WHERE TO LOOK FOR SUPPORT?

ANTENATAL CLASSES

Participating in antenatal classes may be the first place for future fathers to gain and develop knowledge. Such classes consist not only of lectures and workshops but also

conversations and meetings with other future parents. Antenatal classes may help fathers gain the necessary knowledge about looking after their newborns but they can also teach them how to look after themselves and their relationships once the babies are born.

SUPPORT GROUPS

Support groups and men-only meetings allow fathers to share their fatherhood-related experiences, develop their competencies and support one another. They are an opportunity to share various difficulties, gain knowledge and receive emotional support. If you have concerns about using this form of help, remember that there are other forms available, such as crisis lines.

A WOMAN NEEDS A MAN

HOW CAN FATHERS SUPPORT MUMS' PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITY?

Research carried out by the 'Parent in the city' Foundation reveals that 94 percent of women declare their willingness to return to work after giving birth. Mums want to work because professional activity grants them a sense of financial independence and development. However, reconciling childcare with work is not easy. Luckily, the child's father may help with that.

Mum at home, dad at work - only a few decades ago that was the most common family model. Today the situation is different. Women want to work and combine it with family life. But they want to do this in a way that gives them satisfaction. Juggling different roles is not so simple after all. Inflexible employment forms, a lack of understanding by employers, unavailability of care for children under three - these are just a few of the obstacles making it difficult to be a working mum.

Mum as a higher risk employee

Currently it is usually women who give up work for a longer period due to having a baby. Only



ACCORDING TO EUROSTAT, THE ADJUSTED PAY GAP IS AT ABOUT 17% IN POLAND. ON AVERAGE, TEN YEARS AFTER GIVING BIRTH A MOTHER EARNS 20% LESS THAN A CHILDLESS WOMAN. THIS IS THE SO-CALLED MOTHERHOOD PENALTY.



KAROLINA BURY

Deputy CEO at 'Parent in the city' Foundation. Expert in work and family balance. She participates in initiatives reducing barriers to parents' employment and promoting equal opportunities for mothers in the job market.

support of the partner was one of the three most frequently listed solutions facilitating the return to work. Women expect that:

- **childcare duties should be shared equally**
- **working conditions should be adjusted to the needs of the family, including flexible working hours and the right to work remotely**
- **men should take parental leave**
- **men should use their entitlement to take time off work associated with caring for a child.**

It is therefore very important for fathers to use their rights and support their partners. First and foremost, this will make women more satisfied and happier. Secondly, this may alter the employer's perception of mothers and change the damaging stereotypes and unfair treatment.

With more support from fathers, equal opportunities for mothers in the labour market may become a reality.

1% of fathers take parental leave although they are equally entitled to it. If the child is ill, it is also the mothers who usually take sick leave or work remotely to take care of their children.

What are the consequences? Mothers tend to be perceived by employers as higher risk employees, which reduces their chances for promotion and pay rises. As a result, they earn significantly less than men and also childless women. This affects not only their family financial situation, but also their safe financial future and pension.

What do mothers need?

Women need men's support to be professionally active. According to the research carried out by the 'Parent in the city' Foundation entitled 'Motherhood and professional activity', the



PATERNITY, MATERNITY, PARENTAL LEAVE...

FATHER'S LEAVE ENTITLEMENTS AFTER CHILDBIRTH

When a couple plan to have a baby, they usually think about the entitlements of the future mum. They often forget that the law also provides privileges for fathers. Unfortunately, lack of detailed knowledge about them results in only a few men using their entitlements.

Paternity leave

It is independent of the mother's entitlements. This means that in order to use it, the father must be paying social insurance contributions (e.g. be employed on the basis of an employment contract, contract of services or be self-employed with the voluntary sickness contribution paid). It is worth remembering that a dad can use this entitlement when the mum is on either maternity or parental leave. Parental leave lasts two weeks irrespective of the number of babies the mother gave birth to. The leave can be used in one go or divided into two parts of seven days each. Remuneration during paternity leave comes to 100% of the allowance base. The leave can be used before the child turns 24 months. It is worth pointing out that the amendment to the Labour Code scheduled for August 2022 includes a shortening of this period to 12 months. A leave request has to be submitted seven days before the start of the leave. The employer is obliged to grant the leave. Dads who run their

own businesses submit relevant requests to the Social Insurance Institution (ZUS). They are allowed to continue running their businesses when on leave. No money equivalent is due for unused leave when changing employer. Instead, the entitlement is transferred to the new workplace.

Caring for the child's mother after the birth – carer's allowance

Every new dad can assist their partner after the birth by using a carer's allowance. This concerns those employed under an employment contract or contract of services or self-employed and paying the voluntary sickness contribution. In principle, those entitled to the allowance include the closest family members defined in the Sickness and Maternity Cash Benefits Act (the so-called Allowance Act). They include: spouse, parents, parents of a child, step-father, step-mother, parents-in-law, grandparents, grandchildren, siblings, children over 14 years of age. Since the allowance act lists not only a spouse but also the other parent of the child, the



**MARZENA
PILARZ-HERZYK**

A lawyer specialising in labour law, and a mum of three sons. She supports women in pregnancy, maternity, starting and developing businesses, professional development and fighting for equal opportunities in the labour market. She runs a blog - mamaprawniczka.pl.

right to carer's allowance is also due to couples who are not married.

This allowance can be used in case of a family member's sickness. It can therefore be taken if the woman requires care and help after delivery. It is enough to request a sickness certificate from the doctor on discharge from hospital, a gynecologist or simply a GP. Dads are entitled to 14 days of such a leave. The remuneration during this period is at 80% of the allowance base.

Maternity leave for dads

It is usually assumed that maternity leave of 20 weeks is a woman's entitlement. However, the law provides another solution as well. The mother must use the first 14 weeks of maternity leave. She can then decide about discontinuation, provided that the next six weeks are used by the child's father (immediately after the mum). The regulations include one exception associated with women's health. A woman may halt maternity leave if she becomes hospitalised during the leave and her condition does not allow her to personally take care of the baby. However,

two conditions must be met in this case:

- the mother must have used at least 8 weeks of maternity leave from the day of delivery,
- part of leave or personal care of the child must be taken over by the father or another family member.

The allowance during maternity leave amounts to 80% of the allowance base when booking the leave 'upfront' or 100% when booking the leave in parts (see below).

Parental leave

Both parents are entitled to parental leave - it needs to be remembered, however, that its total length is for both the mother and the father. The duration of the leave (when the mother gave birth to one child) is 32 weeks.

The leave can be used in one go directly after maternity leave, with the allowance at 80% of the allowance base (the so-called 'upfront' leave). However, there is also an option of dividing the leave into parts. The allowance comes to 100% in the first six weeks and 60% in the following 26 weeks. The leave can be divided into four parts, bearing in mind that the first part (at least 6 weeks long) must be taken directly after maternity leave. The next two parts must last not less than 8 weeks. The final part (equal to remaining weeks, but not longer than 16 weeks) must be used before the end of the calendar year in which the child turns 6 years of age. Parents can alternate going on leave or take leave at the same time.

It is worth pointing out that the amendment to the



WANT TO HEAR MORE?

In this podcast, the author of this text talks about various scenarios of dads going on parental leave and fearing dismissal – [How to be on parental leave and not get fired](#)

Labour Code associated with the transposition of the work-life balance directive assumes that parental leave remuneration will be paid at 70% of the allowance base. Another new solution includes the introduction of nine weeks of additional leave just for fathers without the option of transferring it to the mother.

Extra days off

After the birth of a child, the father may use two days of special leave. The request must be effectively submitted before the beginning of the leave.

It is also worth remembering about two additional childcare days under article 188 of the Labour Code. If the mother is on maternity leave, she is not able to use this entitlement and unused days are lost. In both cases described above, remuneration is at 100%.

THE PLANNED AMENDMENT TO THE LABOUR CODE ASSOCIATED WITH THE TRANSPOSITION OF THE WORK-LIFE BALANCE DIRECTIVE ASSUMES THAT PARENTAL LEAVE REMUNERATION WILL BE PAID AT 70% OF THE ALLOWANCE BASE. ANOTHER NEW SOLUTION INCLUDES THE INTRODUCTION OF NINE WEEKS OF ADDITIONAL LEAVE JUST FOR FATHERS WITHOUT THE OPTION OF TRANSFERRING IT TO THE MOTHER.

REMOVE THE MASK OF MASCULINITY

MEN AND FATHERS ENTERING A NEW PHASE

It is difficult to describe the emotions which you feel when you find out you are going to be a father. In my case it was a mix of incredible joy, uncertainty and fear whether I would cope. I had always been positive about fatherhood, but I most feared losing one thing - travelling.

I was passionate about long trips to Asia and I knew that it would be difficult to go backpacking with a young child, be independent and spontaneous. Today I am a dad of a seven-year-old and I am convinced that being a dad is the most wonderful journey in the world. A journey which offers new views, perspectives and surprises round each and every corner - pleasant

and less pleasant ones - but it is a journey which I wouldn't exchange for any other ticket, however expensive it might be.

It used to be simpler

Masculinity and fatherhood have been undergoing dynamic changes in recent years. Only 40 years ago being a man and a father was



simpler than today... Or should I have written: more simplistic? A man had to find a wife, get married, produce a child (preferably a son), maintain his family, plant a tree and be able to make basic repairs such as fix a broken toilet flush. No one mentioned childcare. In fact, in some circles it was considered unmanly. "Seriously? You're going to be changing nappies? You're going to do a woman's job? Be a man!" - that's the kind of words our fathers heard from their fathers. Because childcare in our culture was reserved for women. An average man did not embark on this parental journey, apart from the financial obligations mentioned above. It was women who usually played with children and brought them up. Men were often absent from our homes. First, they went to war, then they disappeared behind a newspaper in front of the TV and then in corporations pursuing their careers. Most of us did not have good models of masculinity and fatherhood, which now results in difficulties. I remember one more concern in my

becoming a dad - I didn't know how to be a good father. I had various guys around me, but none of them were fully worthy of following. I created my own patchwork vision of fatherhood from the expectations of my mum, my partners, from the behaviour of my father and fathers of my friends, my uncles, grandad, older cousins, film characters, etc. I was watching them all.

A conscious choice

Because children learn mainly through modelling and they unconsciously choose patterns which they later use as adults, consciously or unconsciously. They define their world and themselves. Of course, the more positive the



WANT TO HEAR MORE?

[Mask of Masculinity](#)



MARCIN CAPIĢA, PHD

Traveller. In life he travels between a number of roles: a father, partner, personal development enthusiast, trainer, lecturer, founder of a consulting and training company, TRAINING TREE, and a passionate explorer. Author of the [marcincapiga.pl](#) blog and the *Maska Męskości* (Mask of Masculinity) podcast.

models, the better. Growing up, some of us repeat the patterns of our parents, some don't, but interestingly, not repeating the patterns of our parents does not mean we don't follow a pattern. We do not follow such patterns only when we consciously choose who we want to be. What kind of guy and father do you want to be?

It is good that the perception of masculinity and fatherhood has been changing in recent years. We are expected to become more involved in parenting. We ourselves also want, at least declaratively, to fulfil ourselves as parents. We feel, instinctively, that this journey can also be fascinating for us.

Being a father changes a lot

Obviously the presence of a positive father figure (whatever that is) is beneficial for the child, but this presence can also be beneficial for the man. The role of a father can change a lot about ourselves. It can teach us empathy, sensitivity, love, communication, show us how to control emotions, give greater self-awareness,

encourage us to develop competencies which were ignored in the education of a typical man. A man who was supposed to get down to work, not whine and fret like a girl, and deal with everything himself. Oh, and I almost forgot - and not ask for help, because that's an embarrassment. It is probably because of belief in these stereotypes that men in Poland are seven times more likely to commit suicide than women.

IT IS GOOD THAT THE PERCEPTION OF MASCULINITY AND FATHERHOOD HAS BEEN CHANGING IN RECENT YEARS. WE ARE EXPECTED TO BECOME MORE INVOLVED IN PARENTING. WE OURSELVES ALSO WANT, AT LEAST DECLARATIVELY, TO FULFIL OURSELVES AS PARENTS. WE FEEL, INSTINCTIVELY, THAT THIS JOURNEY CAN ALSO BE FASCINATING FOR US.

As I already mentioned, nobody taught us how to be a father, there are no role models and society still feeds us norms excluding women or men respectively and moulding them into standard roles - the man is supposed to be the main breadwinner and the woman is to take over childcare. As a result, when a baby is born, parenthood is compartmentalised and mostly occupied by women.

New times

We live in a time when we can finally change this negative trend, when masculinity and parenthood change for the better and become more of a partnership. The time has come to take a new and better direction and to get rid of the old rigid patriarchal models, which harm not only our children, but also us - men. Let us cast off the mask of masculinity, which is definitely outdated, in order to embark on a journey which does not last forever but changes you forever - fatherhood.

IF YOU'RE FED UP WITH EVERYTHING AND TIRED – CHECK THESE PROFILES AND GET A NEW PERSPECTIVE ON YOUR FATHERHOOD

TATA NA MACIERZYŃSKIM (DAD ON MATERNITY LEAVE)

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TATA NIE MA SIŁY (DADDY IS EXHAUSTED)

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SUCHY TATA

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USE IT OR LOSE IT

NINE WEEKS OF EXTRA PARENTAL LEAVE JUST FOR FATHERS

In 2019 the European Union passed the work-life balance directive which every member state is obliged to implement by August 2022. The Polish government is currently working intensely on the transposition of the provisions of this document. On the date of this guide's publication, a second draft bill implementing the directive was available. What regulations does it include?

The EU Directive includes a range of regulations on parental entitlements concerning paternity, parental leave and flexible work arrangements. It provides for care leave and the right to time off work due to force majeure, which apply in situations when a family member requires care or an emergency situation demanding the employee's presence occurs. The biggest challenge will be introducing the modifications to fathers' entitlements for parental leave in the Polish legal system.

On parental leave in the directive

The Directive provides for two months of paid and non-transferable parental leave for each of the parents. On the date of this guide's publication, despite the best efforts of the Share the Care Foundation, maternity allowance for the non-transferable part of leave is still set at 70%.



KAROLINA ANDRIAN

Founder and President of Share the Care Foundation, which encourages men to take parental leave and women to share leave with men. She acts for the benefit of women and gender equality. She co-hosts 'Common Children = Common Duties' podcast.

We believe that the allowance should come to at least 80%.

Aims and assumptions of the directive

The work-life balance directive aims to improve access to solutions ensuring balance between professional and private life by means of a fairer distribution of parental responsibilities between men and women and the provision of more flexible working arrangements. This benefits all the parties involved in employment - employees (both women and men), employers and the state itself. Children, on the other hand, are able to spend more time with their parents - particularly their fathers. The introduction of individual parental leave entitlement for fathers (independent of the mother's employment status)

recognises their right to be with their children and emphasises their equal status as carers.

Key entitlements for fathers resulting from the directive

The Polish government has published the first draft bill implementing the directive. Below is the list of key changes which concern fathers.

- A 10-day paternity leave on the occasion of the birth of a child - this already exists in the Polish legal system, but the time for taking it will be shortened from 24 months to 12 months.
- Parental leave will be extended by 9 weeks and each parent will be granted an individual right to leave. The additional 9 weeks will be non-transferable. This means that if the father does not use the leave, it will be lost (the mother cannot take it over). A 'divided' leave can be taken in no more than 5 parts. The leave can be used before the end of the calendar year in which the child turns 6.
- Maternity allowance associated with

THE ADDITIONAL 9-WEEK LEAVE FOR FATHERS WILL BE SUBJECT TO THE 'USE IT OR LOSE IT' PRINCIPLE.

maternity leave will be paid at 100%, while the allowance during parental leave will be paid at 70%. In case of leave booked 'upfront' (maternity leave immediately followed by parental leave), maternity allowance will be paid at 81.5%.

Transposition of the directive's principles into Polish law

Member states are obliged to effectively implement the regulations of the directive in their national legal systems by 2 August 2022. Polish regulations should ensure the assumed result - in this case, supporting equality of men and women in the labour market and effective reconciliation of work and family life.

As of the date of this report, the government published the second draft of the bill and carried

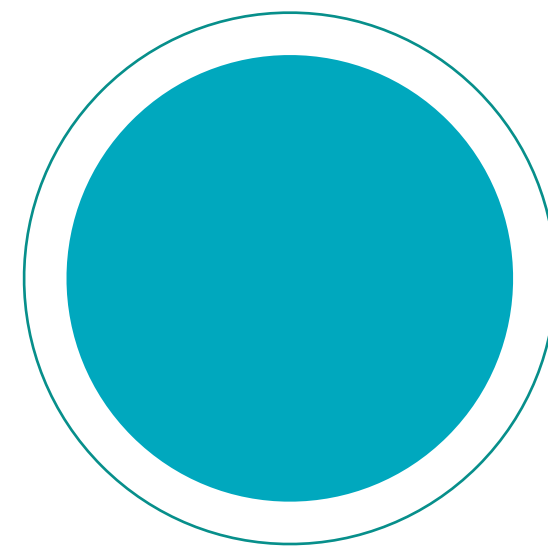
THE TIME FOR TAKING PATERNITY LEAVE WILL BE SHORTENED FROM 24 MONTHS TO 12 MONTHS.



WANT TO HEAR MORE?

Marta Podedworna, director of Remuneration and Employee Matters Department at Bank Gospodarstwa Krajowego, talks about what the implementation of the directive in Poland means for employers. [The EU work-life balance directive - challenge or opportunity for employers](#)

out consultations with social partners - unfortunately, the government failed to take into account the postulate of the Share the Care Foundation to establish maternity allowance for the nine extra weeks for fathers at at least 80%.



I CAN'T DO IT, I WON'T COPE WITH AN INFANT

It's a thought which appears many times in the course of our lives in various situations. The longer we think, the more doubts will appear. From my perspective, a father of twins I have been raising single-handedly, it's a bit like New York. In his famous song, Frank Sinatra sang - if we can make it there, we can make it anywhere. Only those who take a risk win. And fatherhood is a great prize. A prize consisting of happiness, undying love, pride and many other beautiful things. Therefore, if we want to achieve something, let's not hesitate but just do it! A good father is present and engaged. I believe that good organisation is every parent's best friend. Nothing can scare or overwhelm us then and not many things can surprise us. Unless grandparents buy scooters for your kids and one

goes right and the other left, which happened to me... I really didn't know for a moment which way to run.

The most important thing is not to be scared. Don't be scared to hold the baby, don't be scared to give them their first bath. Keeping calm in a crisis situation is really important - if a child senses that the parent is scared, that's it, we're done for. I remember when my girls were just over 12 months, I caught myself thinking how long I would have to wait for them to be old enough

1. DON'T BE AFRAID OF CHALLENGES.
2. GOOD ORGANISATION IS KEY.
3. DON'T LOOK INTO THE FUTURE, FOCUS ON THE HERE AND NOW.

MACIEJ LISOWSKI – MATATA

Matata is a combination of two words: MAMA (mum) and TATA (dad). Before he became MaTata, he was widely known in the fashion world. First, for many years, he was one of the most recognisable models in Poland, later he set up his own agency New Age Models. Today he's a dad to twins Małgosia and Madzia.



WANT TO READ MORE?

Maciej Lisowski is the author of a book on the dangers of children using digital devices inappropriately.



WANT TO HEAR MORE?

A talk with Maciej Lisowski – MaTata, who has been raising his twin daughters independently from birth.

[I don't think about it, I just do it](#)

I CAN'T LOOK AFTER THE CHILD AS WELL AS THE MOTHER

No one can take care of a child as well as a mother, so there is no need for the father to become more involved - this approach is one of the reasons why men do not tend to look after young children.

In a short-term perspective, this might even make sense, but when we look at our lives in the longer run, it turns out that the father's ability to look after his children is like an insurance policy for the future.

And I don't just mean acquiring practical skills (which is important) and forming a bond with the child (which is even more important), but preparing for unexpected situations that life may bring.

In order to understand this better, ask yourself these two simple questions:

- Would you be able to look after the children and home during your partner's long absence?
- Given the choice, would you prefer to be prepared for this?

The last year was like a rollercoaster ride for my family. For three months my wife and I saw each other for two days a week, because my wife often travelled to look after her sick parents. During that time, almost all childcare and household duties befell me. And although it wasn't always easy, I'm sure it would have been more difficult if it hadn't been for the months I had already spent voluntarily with my children at home before.

Despite considerable psychological stress, my wife was calmer knowing I won't freak out in front of the washing machine or because of a

sleepless night or fever which often appears without warning.

That experience showed us that sharing responsibilities was actually effective risk management, so we decided to even more actively exchange duties, so that no area of life was dedicated to one person only.

JAREK KANIA

Author of blog and podcast Ojcowska Strona Mocy. Dad to three daughters. Co-founder of the biggest Facebook group for fathers 'Lepszy tata-ojcowskie inspiracje' ('Better dad - fathers' inspirations'). He published a guide about children's safety online 'My Smarty'.



1. DON'T BE FOOLED BY THE STATEMENT 'THE MOTHER IS BETTER AT LOOKING AFTER A CHILD.'
2. GET INVOLVED IN CHILDCARE TO PREPARE FOR SITUATIONS WHEN THE ORGANISATION OF FAMILY LIFE BECOMES YOUR RESPONSIBILITY.
3. EXCHANGE DUTIES WITH YOUR PARTNER SO THAT ONE PERSON ISN'T BURDENED WITH ANY ONE AREA OF LIFE.

#BARRIERSTOFATHERHOOD2

It did not take long for the results to show, as our rollercoaster changed direction by 180 degrees. Today I am the one who leaves home for work about three weeks per month. During one of my business trips, the gas boiler providing heating for the whole house broke down. My wife, whom I have already managed to introduce to some technical issues, managed to organise specialist help and solved the lack of heating and hot water in a few days instead of waiting for me. Perhaps your lives will lack such extreme events, but I think it is worth being ready for various scenarios, because it is easier to face challenges if you are at least a little bit prepared. So if you sometimes wonder why you should look after a young child when your partner does it better, or - which sometimes happens - does not want to let you do it, don't give up. Just think you're doing this to provide extra security to your family. And is this not what we care about most?



WANT TO HEAR MORE?

We recommend an interview with Jarek Kania, author of Ojcowiska Strona Mocy blog and podcast and father to three girls, with whom he spent some time home alone. He had a chance to be, as he called himself, a 'housewife'.

[Guys don't just talk about money and career](#)



IF I LOOK AFTER MY CHILD, MY PARTNER WILL DUMP ME

Many modern men want to spend more time with their children as they can remember their fathers failed to do so. However, they are worried that this could make them 'unmanly' in the eyes of their partners. I don't think they are afraid of taking care of children - after all, many listings suggest that fathers looking after children are considered the most sexy. Instead, they seem to be concerned that staying at home will make them lose the status of breadwinners providing safety, including financial security. And this can lead to the loss of the partner. Why? Because the man can be the best father in the world and be happy in this role, but the very thought of having to bear the main financial burden may be overwhelming for his partner. Irrespective of the fact that the decision was joint.



WANT TO HEAR MORE?

An interview with Rafał Myśliński – Suchy Tata, who has been sharing care of his son with his partner, while at the same time developing his new business.

[A vision for your life, an idea for a business while on parental leave](#)

Unfortunately, the stereotype of a father who should be responsible for supporting the family financially as he wouldn't otherwise be considered a real man, is still strongly rooted and many women are not able to accept the fact that their families can be different. If the partner does not earn money, his attractiveness and manliness can drop in the eyes of his partner.

On the other hand, a partner who works all the time and is never at home also loses his attractiveness. His absence as his children grow up cannot be compensated for.

It's a lose-lose situation. How to get out of this? In my opinion, the only way is to keep the balance. After all, you can work and spend time with your family, share household chores and carry out work projects, use paternity leave and go back to

RAFAŁ MYŚLIŃSKI

Professionally, an unfulfilled engineer and a would-be project manager, privately, dad to two-year-old Teodor.

On the Internet, he is known as Suchy Tata sharing the moments experienced with his son and showing how he is coping at this extraordinary stage in life.



work. Of course, this isn't easy, but it is possible.

Paternity leave is necessary for the child and the father. Bonding cannot be put off. The earlier you become involved, the easier it will be for you to talk to your children when they grow up. I experience this with my son, Teo - the more time I spend with him, the easier it is to care

1. TRY TO KEEP THE BALANCE IN ALL AREAS OF LIFE.
2. DON'T PUT OFF BONDING WITH YOUR CHILD.
3. GET 100% INVOLVED IN CHILDCARE FROM BIRTH, AS THIS WILL BEAR FRUIT IN THE FUTURE.



for him, the more emotions I experience and simply, the more I miss him. He reacts in the same way. Now I am certain that I would not have risked not becoming engaged in childcare from birth, because the later you start building your relationship, the harder it gets.

The arrival of a child at home can put your relationship at risk. Although the state has tried to support parents through social programmes, I suggest you also take care of your work-life balance yourself. In today's world no one can give us enough time for a good night's sleep, healthy eating, sport, relaxation, a good easy job and fulfilling family duties. You have to organise your time appropriately, e.g. through project management on Trello or monitoring your tasks on LifeCycle. This helps, but it does not get the job done.

That's why, every day you have to make decisions to reconcile your needs with those of your partner

and your children. All of them should be satisfied and it is your job to find out how to do it! Good luck.

IF I STAY HOME WITH MY CHILD, THIS WILL AFFECT MY CAREER

The decision about who should stay at home is usually purely economic - this tends to be the woman, because her partner earns more. Unfortunately, her break from professional work caused by childcare only exacerbates the gender pay gap. If a woman decides to take parental leave, her career break will greatly extend, especially if she has more children. This makes many women returning to work change their employers - they are worried that they would not fit back in after a long break, they feel uncomfortable, because their female colleagues who did not go on leave usually became promoted and developed professionally. The stress is considerable for a mother returning from leave. For this reason, it's so important for men to take over a part of maternity leave, because

1. DON'T WORRY THAT TAKING PARENTAL LEAVE WILL SLOW DOWN YOUR CAREER - A FEW WEEKS CAN'T HAVE SUCH A BIG IMPACT.
2. BY GOING ON LEAVE YOU WILL SUPPORT YOUR PARTNER IN RETURNING TO WORK FASTER.
3. SHARING PARENTAL DUTIES WILL IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF YOUR WORK.

sharing care by both parents reduces the adverse effects on the professional lives of both women and men.

Men's fears that a few weeks of leave will cause irreparable damage to their career are, frankly speaking, exaggerated. In reality this time is too short to deal a blow to men's careers, but for women this will be great support, as they can return to work earlier.

Creating a bond with his child is an additional value for the father. It's not easy to build it later on and it definitely cannot be nurtured by giving the kids a goodnight kiss at 8 p.m. after returning from work. Staying at home with your child gets you to a different level of the relationship, which is valuable for both sides. Of course, with some professions taking parental leave is more difficult

ŁUKASZ DOMINIAK

He has over 12 years of experience in recruitment for the pharmaceutical industry. He currently works for Friisberg, where he leads recruitment projects for management staff. He runs a popular parenting profile 'Who's your daddy'.



than with others, but there are few jobs where this is completely out of the question. As a recruiter with many years of experience, I believe that taking parental leave has little impact on slowing down one's career and does not affect it in the longer run. It does not change the fact that some companies are still slightly reserved about this solution. I hope, however, that in some time this will become the norm in Poland, as it is in Scandinavian countries. It's important not only for family life, but also for the labour market. If life at home is healthy, the quality of your work will be better, too.

WILL I FEEL 'MANLY' WITH A CHILD?

It has been eight years since that challenge but I still remember the sweetness of watermelon juice which filled every cell of my body. I still had about 20 km to the finish line, which meant I had already run 90 km. At my last stop, tables were bending under the weight of this fruit. My stomach was tight, water had evaporated from my body, so I devoured big chunks of the red fruit while walking, which took me to heaven for a while.

This is how I pursued my vision of masculinity. I ran a mountain ultramarathon. I was supported by my wife and admired by my friends. I felt like a sailor, eagerly awaited by his beloved in the port, or a solitary knight who fought the world to return to his princess in full grace.

And so I returned, but to everyday life and

parental responsibilities. However, it is my duties which made me realise that the ultramarathon was not a race to the finish line but an escape from... masculinity.

What is masculinity? For some it is a particular appearance and behaviour. If asked to identify a more manly man, we will point to the one who is closer to our preconceptions. A problem

1. DON'T SUCCUMB TO THE VISIONS OF MASCULINITY PAINTED BY OTHERS.
2. CREATE YOUR OWN MODEL AND CONVINCe THE WORLD IT'S VALID.
3. DON'T JUST HELP THE FAMILY, BUT TAKE RESPONSIBILITY FOR BUILDING YOUR FAMILY.

Father of five sons and one daughter, entrepreneur managing two companies. He runs a blog wojtekolszewski.pl, where he educates others on how to effectively combine fatherhood with professional activity and personal development. Author of a book entitled

'Extreme Fatherhood'.



WOJTEK OLSZEWSKI



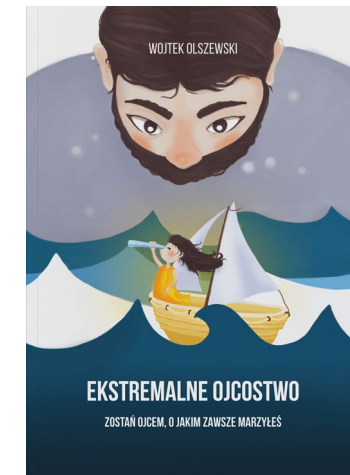
WANT TO HEAR MORE?

[Extreme fatherhood according to Wojtek Olszewski](#)

arises when we try to convince another person of our choice. There is no right or wrong answer. The concept of masculinity changes. For some strength and clearly outlined muscles will be an obvious sign of masculinity and for others a sign of stereotypical thinking and parochialism. God, honour and motherland. This is another set of slogans ascribed to masculinity. However, on hearing these words many of us visualise a shaved head, muscular neck and a leather jacket. It is then a symbol of fear covered up by aggression rather than an ideal worth pursuing. For me masculinity is about:

- being able to live by the values which go beyond every day matters,
- willingness to devote myself to the values I appreciate the most,

- taking responsibility for those I am close to. This model is one of many but for me and those who have a similar system of values, this is the best one. And that's all.
- Is a father pushing a stroller less manly? He may be perceived like this if we evaluate him through the lens of selected stereotypes e.g. a man cannot do a woman's job - bring up children. But stereotypes have to be changed. It is enough to look at ancient heroes Gilgamesh and Hector or the medieval knight Roland. They set the standards and convinced others they should respect them. They did it through their loyalty to values, taking responsibility and convincing others. Masculinity is not defined by what I do, but by how I do it and why.
- If during parental leave, I go out with a pram, I can be manly to the extent I define myself. I will not be manly if I take my child for a walk because my wife tells me to do so, because it's actually



**WANT TO
READ MORE?**

'EXTREME FATHERHOOD'

Wojtek Olszewski is a dad of six who put all his vast fathering knowledge on paper. The book will tell you how to raise a child with self-esteem, how to be consistent and how to look after your authority. And, most of all, how to find time for all of this. As a dad with 20 years of experience, Wojtek must know that!

trendy these days, because women find young men pushing prams attractive. I will be manly if I go out to build a relationship with my child and my partner, to take responsibility for myself and others, to create a family, rather than being a 'home help'.



MY PARTNER DOESN'T WANT ME TO GO ON PARENTAL LEAVE

When we become parents, especially for the first time, we do not realise what a big difference this makes to our relationship.

Research shows that the brains of mums and dads change dramatically at this time. A massive change occurs in the limbic system after the birth - we become more alert to the needs of the child, e.g. when we can't hear the baby's breathing, we get nervous. The female body goes through a massive change, which seems obvious to everyone, but we are not always aware that the male body also changes rapidly.

Round-the-clock childcare makes the woman exhausted. New mums suffer from sleep deprivation, exhaustion, lack of 'me time', which also means they often do not have time for their partners. Men are also tired, because they are

expected to take over childcare after their return from work. Parental leave taken by the father may come as a great help for both parents. It is an opportunity for taking some time off work, but also a chance to build a stronger relationship. It is a time for bonding with the child, but also for bonding with each other in a new situation. Even if dad's parental leave is two months long, he will still get a taste of parenthood and will be able to better understand his partner, while she can get some rest. It sometimes happens, however, that the woman does not want her partner to go on leave. It is worth considering what the reason for her decision may be.

Perhaps she was brought up in a traditional family model, where her mum and grandma were always at the child's side and being supportive?

PATRICK NEY

A father of two daughters, an active parental consultant. The main trainer at All About Parenting, the only parenting method based on recent research on motivation, such as self-determination theory. He has international accreditation as a facilitator, coach and trainer.



1. THINK ABOUT WHAT MOTIVATES YOUR PARTNER NOT TO AGREE TO YOUR PARENTAL LEAVE.
2. HAVE AN EMPATHETIC HEART-TO-HEART TALK ABOUT HER DECISION.
3. PREPARE THE ARGUMENTS WHICH JUSTIFY YOUR NEED FOR PARENTAL LEAVE AND SHARE THEM WITH YOUR PARTNER.

Perhaps she is so scared of being judged by her own family or yours that she represses her own needs. It is worth talking about. Prepare for this discussion with great calm and empathy. Check the possibility of taking parental leave in your company, list the arguments you would like to present to your partner.

Presenting the family as the main value for both of you is an important point of reference. Try to



see the situation through your partner's eyes: what is important to her, what she talks about, what is she thinking? Ask her a question and let her talk. Do not interrupt, just listen. She may say that she wants to protect the children. She thus clearly formulates her need. Now try to respond to this need by saying e.g. "I understand that you want to protect our children. However, if you go back to work, we will have double income, you will also be more likely to be promoted, which would provide our family with better financial security. You are not a worse mother if you do not spend all your time with the children - on the contrary. You give them a fantastic example, you are resourceful and care for your family. You will be happier being able to fulfil yourself professionally." Perhaps, your partner will then still feel she is a good mother who protects her children even if she does not spend the whole day with them. You can also do a simple exercise. Sit down

together and make a list of all the ways your partner supports your family. He may write that she cooks, does the housework and looks after documents. She may observe that her partner: earns, plays with the kids and prepares breakfast every morning. It is a great exercise for realising how much you support and complement each other in your relationship. You can also use this exercise to jointly decide what to change in your relationship. Perhaps you can swap certain competencies, which would allow you both to develop in the long run rather than just here and now.

MY COLLEAGUES WILL NOT RESPOND WELL TO MY PARENTAL LEAVE

The assumption that anyone could think that parental leave is all about resting and relaxing is surreal. If that was the case, men would be much more likely to go for it (which, as we know from statistics, is far from the truth) and women would not be fighting for years for the recognition of childcare as equally important as paid work. However, the above conclusion does not exhaust this topic. It may turn out that in your particular situation there may be circumstances in which the people in your environment may regard parental leave as a way to escape from work duties. Maybe you think so too? Perhaps it seems to you that compared to the stresses of worklife, looking after a child is pure pleasure? Perhaps you are considering what to do with your career and leave could be your chance to escape

professional decisions? I've been there too... After the birth of my daughter, I spent over 11 months on parental leave. There were many reasons why I decided to do so, but it is a fact that I needed to take a step back and reconsider my role in the company where I had worked for seven years. My then role no longer gave me joy and the search for another job within the organisation was fruitless. I therefore regarded parental leave as a wonderful opportunity to gain a fresh perspective on everyday work issues, while retaining financial security. I needed space to reconsider my career. That is why I believe you are right in thinking your colleagues may think you are leaving them with the work duties to go to pastures new. They may point out you no longer have to respond

TOMASZ SMACZNY

Parental educator, team coach, promoter of leadership inspired by mindful parenting. Author of the book ['Pozwól dziecku być'](#) ('Let the child be'). Co-founder of one of the biggest parenting groups on Facebook: [LepszyTata - ojcowskie inspiracje](#) ('Better dad-fathers' inspirations')



1. DON'T TRY TO FIGURE OUT WHAT YOUR WORK COLLEAGUES THINK ABOUT YOUR DECISION.
2. USE PARENTAL LEAVE TO BUILD A RELATIONSHIP WITH YOUR CHILD, BUT - IF YOU ARE SO INCLINED - ALSO TO RECONSIDER YOUR CAREER.
3. REST ASSURED THAT YOUR ATTITUDE MAY BE AN INSPIRATION FOR OTHERS.

to unclear emails and suffer Teams meetings marathons. As a result, they may have some bitter thoughts and share them with others in your work kitchen, but their emotions will be associated with their own dissatisfaction with work. We are inclined to bear suffering for longer if others suffer with us. Even if this suffering does not make any sense, does not help anyone and results only from the lack of courage to

implement the necessary changes to alleviate it. It's likely that similar comments would appear if you told everyone you were quitting your job. First, people would be envious that you no longer have to do anything in your current job. Would you give up on changing your job for a better one for fear of your colleagues' opinions? I don't think so. Perhaps you would even inspire those staying to reconsider their career choices, which could be valuable to them.

This case is similar to taking parental leave. Your example may awaken dormant desires in other employees, which at first may manifest themselves through snappy comments, but in the longer run may motivate your colleagues to re-organise their own lives.



WANT TO HEAR MORE?

[Why should fathers change, tuck into bed and feed their children?](#)

Many fathers believe playing is the basis for their bonding with the child. Tomasz Smaczny says this is not the case.

Tucking into bed, changing, feeding or bathing are much more important for bonding. Why is this the case? Have a listen!



I WILL FEEL LONELY LOOKING AFTER MY CHILD

Many fathers are afraid of taking over care of an infant, because this means they would be... alone with the child all day. I can confirm. That's exactly the case. And this loneliness will be acute after several weeks. But this could also be a cathartic experience!

I spent a month and a half with Helena on maternity leave (my wife transferred six weeks to me) and then some months more on parental leave. I admit: most of my worries and fears came true. But because I had considered them before and tried to get ready, I managed to get to like them. Yes, get to like them, because there's no way you can win with them.

A sense of isolation which accompanies full-time care of an infant is a frequent problem for many mums. It can be observed on any forum



WANT TO HEAR MORE?

[A man in his prime on maternity leave.](#)

Dad on maternity leave on IG and FB and in real life Tomasz Rusek talks to us about his life choices and about the differences in his being a father and partner now, compared to 14 years ago.

for mothers. Fathers who are afraid of taking over parental leave may think: "Am I going to go through the same thing?!"

Let me answer: you probably are. I went through the same thing. When you go on parental leave, your world suddenly shrinks. Everything becomes less important and distant - your son or daughter steals all your attention, time and thoughts. You are responsible for someone's life and health, as well as a clean nappy, walk, changing of clothes, playing, development, doctor's appointments... This really takes all of your time. And you, even with your family and friends having your back, will be all alone with it for most of this time. Because your family and friends will be at work.

But you will quickly learn to live with this

TOMASZ RUSEK

He is 41 years old and he's a dad of two daughters. He's present on Instagram and Facebook as Tata na macierzyńskim (Dad on maternity leave), where he purposefully ridicules his fatherly reality to make it more bearable.



1. WHEN LOOKING AFTER YOUR CHILD, FIND TIME FOR YOURSELF - GO TO THE CINEMA, TAKE A WALK, MEET WITH YOUR FRIENDS.
2. BELIEVE IT IS POSSIBLE TO LIVE WITH THE LONELINESS OF A FATHER, AND EVEN GET TO LIKE IT.
3. DON'T THINK YOU ARE ALL ALONE. USE THIS TIME TO BUILD A RELATIONSHIP WITH YOUR CHILD BUT ALSO TO EXAMINE YOUR LIFE. THIS MAY CHANGE A LOT.

loneliness - perhaps you'll even like it and you'll definitely accept it. Because there's no other way! This loneliness will teach you to be better at time management - you will respect time and become more organised, you will give up the

#BARRIERSTOFATHERHOOD8

things that had wasted your time before, while pleasures and hobbies will taste good again, as they will be a luxury!

You will discover yourself anew (I bet you will start talking to yourself), you will get a new perspective on who you used to be, how you lived and what's important in life. Childcare may make you a bit lonely, but at the same time it will give you a lot of time for thinking. Use it!

That's why I encourage you to take parental leave. It will turn your life on its head and - perhaps - it might even hit you over the head at first. But you will gain new experiences and create a bond with your child which cannot be created in any other way.

Just don't forget to look after yourself! Good parents are good to themselves. Find the time to go to the cinema, hairdresser's, a match with your friends, a trip to the lake. An angry, exhausted adult means an angry, exhausted

child. You will soon find out for yourself. Good luck, dad. I can't promise it will be easy. But I promise you will make it!



BEING A PARENT IS A FULL-TIME JOB WHICH YOU CAN SHARE – THAT'S WHAT AMICA THINKS

Every employee of Amica group, both male and female, is guaranteed 100% of base salary by the company when going on parental leave - even if Polish regulations provide just 60% or 80%. Irrespective of the decision as to which parent will go on parental leave, they will receive their full salary. This applies to all employees who become parents.

? Why is it worth doing?

The company believes in a partner-like division of duties and parental equality. As a responsible employer it not only wishes to ensure friendly work conditions but also enable the employees to fulfil themselves in other areas. The company makes efforts to ensure that from the very beginning of parenthood and later at the stage of reconciling childcare with work every employee is

confident that the company will share this challenge with them as far as possible. Research shows that in Poland women are still responsible for domestic duties although we are beginning to see some changes. It is important for employers to take part in this process of social change. Employers should give families a choice and support women in returning to work earlier if this is what they want. In other words, Amica Group wants to be an employer who offers choices and responds to the needs of its employees.



SEWERYN BEDNAREK

Purchasing
Manager
at Amica
Group

I RECOMMEND THIS!

Fatherhood is a beautiful experience. I really wanted to be able to build a strong bond with my son from the very beginning. I am deeply convinced that the ability to form a close relationship early on will pay off in the future. Sharing parental leave by both parents helps fulfil this need to the benefit of each party.

The company allowed me to combine parental leave with part-time work (0.5 FTE). During this time my wife and I will share childcare without the need to give up on work.

I recommend going on parental leave, because from my perspective this is a significant added value of parenthood, including fatherhood.

Parental leave allows me to form a strong bond with my son, at the same time giving me the satisfaction of watching him develop and change. These are fleeting moments, which pass irrevocably, and thanks to parental leave I can be part of these precious moments.



MASTERCARD CARES ABOUT EQUAL RIGHTS AND OBLIGATIONS

For Mastercard, fostering a culture of diversity and inclusion is paramount. Since January 2021, the company has been offering an additional - over and above the legal entitlement - fully-paid 16-week leave for parents (including fathers). It can be used flexibly within 12 months from the birth or adoption of a child.

It can be taken both by parents who had a baby and guardians who adopted a child. The benefit is available for all families - irrespective of whether the parents are in a formal relationship.

? Why is it worth doing?

Campaigns carried out at Mastercard have visible results, such as no gender pay gap and the fact that globally as many as 60% of female employees work in areas strictly connected with technology and half of all employees in the Polish office are women. Thanks to fully paid leave, parents may more easily plan for childcare - the mother can return to work or choose to look after her child together with the father, building an extremely important bond.



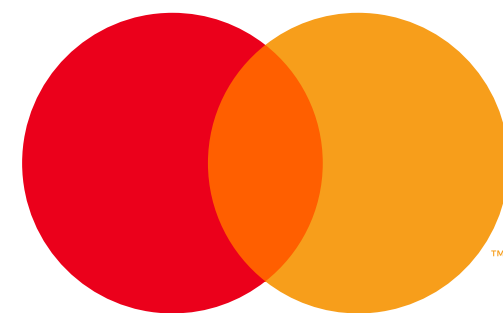
JERZY HOŁUB

marketing director at the Polish branch of Mastercard Europe



I RECOMMEND THIS!

While working at Mastercard I've been on paternity leave twice. These were absolutely priceless weeks, which allowed me to fully participate in the infancy of Wanda and then Rysiek. I was given the time to engage in active bonding with my children, which can only be achieved in one, quite tedious way: by wiping their noses, changing nappies and cleaning their rompers day by day. From a professional point of view, this was also a valuable period which allowed me to take a fresh perspective on my projects.



HAPPY PARENTS AT PHILIP MORRIS

Philip Morris supports equal parenting. In 2019, the Happy Parents programme was created with parents working at Philip Morris in mind. Those returning to work from parental leave have been given a soft landing in the first month - at Philip Morris Poland new parents can work part-time but retain the right to full salary during this time. At the end of 2021, the company announced a more extended version of the programme supporting equal parenting, which makes it much easier for working fathers to go on parental leave. The company offers new fathers who decide to take parental leave the option to receive 100% salary for a full 8 weeks.

The programme is addressed to all parents

working at PMI. It offers solutions supporting equal parenting, so that anyone who chooses to care for a child may count on company support.

? Why is it worth doing?

The Happy Parents programme was created for working mums and dads and in response to their needs which were identified through internal research. The results clearly showed that 9 out of 10 employees believe that time spent with the father is equally valuable for the child as time spent with the mother, that men and women should have the same rights and obligations with regard to childcare and that fathers are as good carers as mothers. For this reason, the Happy Parents programme is a tool which offers support for both parents, so that every family can freely decide which solution is the best for them. Regardless of whether it is the dad or mum who takes responsibility for childcare, each parent will receive support from the employer.



ŁUKASZ ZIELENIN

Manager
B2B Channels
Development,
Philip Morris
Poland

I RECOMMEND THIS!

Taking part in this programme is a natural course of events if you become a parent. I think that the extended version in particular, with the 8-week leave for fathers paid at 100% salary, is a great solution for men who are afraid of taking over childcare for some reason. Receiving full salary during this time will definitely encourage those whose fears were associated with financial matters.



PHILIP MORRIS
INTERNATIONAL

PROCTER AND GAMBLE PROMOTES CO-RESPONSIBILITY

The company offers eight weeks of fully paid leave for fathers to be used within two years from childbirth. It is available with the birth or adoption of every child. The company encourages fathers to use the leave in one go but there is also an option to split it into two parts. New fathers are also granted a special voucher for P&G products (e.g. Pampers). The leave benefit was introduced in March 2019 and since then nearly 100% of eligible employees have used it.

The programme applies to all men who become fathers while working at P&G who have been employed for at least 12 months.

? Why is it worth doing?

Procter and Gamble's intention is to promote the culture of shared responsibility ('share-the-care') among all employees with respect to care of a newborn and to provide equal opportunities for both parents to engage in this important task. The extended leave allowance allows fathers to devote more time to actively take care of their children, mark their presence in family life and explore their new role.



JAKUB OBIDZIŃSKI

director of the
Department
of Human
Resources for
Poland and
Ukraine



I RECOMMEND THIS!

Eight weeks of 'share-the-care' leave spent with my son in the first year of his life was a very important experience for me. It allowed me to get close to him and to feel more confident dealing with all care-related matters - before that many of them were taken care of by my wife. These months spent with my family and caring for my son paid off also when I returned to work - I found it easier to juggle childcare and work. In a month's time I am starting another eight-week leave, this time to look after my daughter. I can't wait!

IKEA

IKEA has been striving to promote gender equality in the workplace for many years. An employee who becomes a father is entitled to an additional four weeks of fully-paid leave, which he can use in one go or divide into two equal parts. The leave can be taken at any time, but no later than the 18th month after the birth of the child. Every dad employed at IKEA may use this entitlement.

NESTLÉ POLAND

Every father fulfilling the role of the so-called second carer can take advantage of four weeks of fully-paid additional leave for fathers within a year from the day of birth or adoption of a child. All company parents also have the right to an additional day for childcare, flexible working hours, shorter Fridays, preferential medical care packages for the whole family and welcome packs for new family members.

The additional leave for fathers can be used by any person who cares for a newborn or adopted child after it arrives in the family. This may include - but is not limited to - the biological or adoptive parent, the life partner (also of the same gender) and the child's legal guardian.

NOVARTIS POLAND

From 1 January 2020, Novartis has been offering 18-week fully-paid parental leave. The benefit can be used by fathers after the birth or adoption of a child or obtaining the status of a foster family. The introduction of this solution not only allows parents to enjoy the time with their new family member, but also makes it easier for them to reconcile work with parenting, upbringing and caring. The leave is available for all Novartis Group employees hired under an employment contract, including those employed part-time.

SNOWFLAKE

The company ensures that employees can take parental leave. This policy reflects company values and responds to the needs of new parents. A 12-week fully-paid leave can be used at any time during the first year following the birth, adoption or admission into foster care. Employees also have access to a range of free services supporting parents, and can expect to receive a layette from Snowflake. The leave is available to all parents who do not give birth.

DAD, WHO DO YOU TALK TO ABOUT YOUR CHILDREN?

ABOUT A FATHERS' GROUP FOR BANK EMPLOYEES

Women have a range of opportunities to talk to other mothers about their parenthood. Everybody believes this to be natural. But is it the same for men? The experiences of Bank BNP Paribas show that it is.

When a child is born, our heads are filled with questions - how to take proper care of the baby, do we do this or that well, is our daughter or son's reaction to a given situation normal? But there are also questions which we often ask ourselves - am I the only one who's so tired, am I the only one who does not always know what's good for my child, am I ever going to regain a bit of the independence I had before the birth, am I the only one who argues with my wife/husband/partner about parenting issues every now and then? Women have many opportunities to talk about this. For men, this space

is lacking, although the need is definitely there.

Dad can bank on it

This need gave rise to a wonderful initiative at Bank BNP Paribas, which we called 'Dad, you can bank on it'. Konrad Siedlecki, a dad of two, spontaneously started talking to his male work colleagues about parenting. It soon became apparent that there was a great need among fathers to share the experiences connected with childcare and to talk about fatherhood in a male only group. A fathers' group was formed to plan and carry out our organisation's activities for fathers but also for parents in general. As part of these activities, fathers are actively engaged in sharing their knowledge. They organise webinars and workshops, which address the parental needs associated with both younger and older children.

Taking the male perspective into account when discussing parenthood is important and inspirational for both fathers and mothers. Without it, it is difficult to build a partnership, which seems to be an important and desirable value in today's world. The research conducted by CBOS in December 2020 shows that already 58 percent of Polish men and women want to implement a partnership-based family model in their lives. Bank BNP Paribas is the bank of a changing world, which is why we join in activities promoting gender equality, openness and diversity. And the best lesson in diversity we can teach our children is to have both parents actively involved in raising them and supporting them in their everyday lives. Because mums and dads do many things differently. That does not mean 'better' or 'worse'. Just different.



MALGORZATA PETRU

Diversity & Inclusion
Manager, Diversity
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NINE WEEKS FOR FATHERS

WILL FATHERS USE THE ADDITIONAL PARENTAL LEAVE?

Santander Bank Polska is preparing for the implementation of the work-life balance in Poland. It needs to come into force by August 2022. It will provide fathers with nine additional weeks of parental leave, which they will not be able to transfer to the mother. It is an important change, which will benefit both children and parents. The question arises: will fathers decide to take advantage of this opportunity?

The declarations inspire optimism. Looking at the results of a survey which we conducted in 2021 among our employees, parental equality seems to be an important value to them. 92% of those surveyed pointed out that men and women should have the same rights and obligations when it comes to childcare and that time spent with the father is just as valuable for the child as time spent with the

mother. When we asked specifically about the nine additional weeks for fathers, 75% of men declared their willingness to use this entitlement.

What is it going to be like in practice?

We know that as an employer we can help parents implement these arrangements in their lives, because the workplace is also a space for shaping new social norms - especially when concerns about sharing parental leave are so closely connected with professional life. Fathers are most concerned about their careers and are worried that their decision would be frowned upon by their employers. Mothers do not want to be labelled 'career women' and accused of choosing career development over childcare.

A change in perception

At Santander Bank Polska we have implemented a

range of activities to make our employees feel equal as parents both at work and at home.

Contrary to appearances, women are not the only ones who care what others say, which they openly expressed in the survey. When asked what would motivate them to share parental leave with the child's father, they spoke of their employer's efforts to change gender stereotypes.

At Santander Group, we also conducted an experimental study. We told men that most of their colleagues supported parental leave for fathers. This increased the willingness to take a longer parental leave by as much as 62%.

We hope that our employees will take advantage of the new entitlement resulting from the work life directive and thus become ambassadors for parental equality and the sharing of parental leave in our society.



**MARTA
PSZCZÓLKOWSKA**

Head of Employer
Branding,
Organisational
Culture and Talent
Acquisition at
Santander Bank
Polska

GIVE THE MAN SOME SPACE

CAN WOMEN COMMUNICATE THEIR NEEDS?

As an employer, State Street Bank in Poland, as well as globally, is committed to increasing the diversity of its employees and to helping local communities. Apart from running aid and educational programmes, we are also involved in employment support programmes.

Our activities include, among others, cooperation with foundations, employee volunteering and competency boosting programmes. This year we also got involved in this current campaign. We have long cooperated with the Share the Care Foundation, because we believe that the essence of partnership in a relationship is to understand the perspective of the other half and that everyone has the right to fulfil themselves in all areas important to them.

This is well explained by the Self-Determination

Theory formulated by Richard Ryan and Edward Deci (2000). It says that a person, in order to develop properly and use his or her potential to the full - which ensures well-being - should have their needs met in three areas: competence, relationships and autonomy. These are basic human psychological needs.

Translating this theory into practice, we could say that in order to be happy and achieve psychological balance we need: close bonds with others (friends, family), professional activity, a sense of agency and the option of self determination and the ability to make our own choices. When we have all this, we can effectively fulfil our own development potential.

Parents at the centre of attention

At State Street Bank we strive to support the work-life balance of our employees through various

activities. One of them is the Working Parents Club, which has been thriving for over 10 years. The main objective of this network is to support parents working in the organisation in achieving a good work-life balance. The Club creates a friendly environment for sharing experiences, motivating and meeting other parents and is involved in creating pro-family solutions, such as a development programme for parent employees and their managers, themed support groups and a parenting and work-related skills development programme.

At State Street we advocate a hybrid solution, which makes it possible to combine office and remote work, often with flexible hours, where it is easier to juggle childcare and work. Women are still learning how to give up certain duties and give space to their partners and motivate them to become more involved in everyday family life.



MONIKA LIS

Agile Program Designer, leader of Parents' Club at State Street Bank.

FEEDING IS A COMMON CAUSE

A MAN CAN ALSO TAKE PART IN IT

Breastfeeding in the first weeks after giving birth is exhausting for a woman. The presence of a man, assisting his partner at that time, is a great support for her. Fathers should not be afraid of this.

The image of a father assisting his partner during childbirth, skillfully changing the nappy or tucking the baby into bed is becoming an everyday reality for many families. Involved fathers are among us and from the very beginning of their fatherhood they want to be close to their baby and take an active part in childcare. Dads - do not be afraid to become involved in lactation issues too! It's a common cause.



AGATA RZESZUTO

Senior PR Specialist,
Philips Polska



it may be the support of the dad in the initial period of feeding difficulties that determines the success of natural feeding.

When lactation is developing, dad can be responsible for sterilizing and preparing the breast pump and bottles for the next feed. In the first days of their lives newborns can feed very often, so quick assistance in preparing the necessary accessories will be a life-saver. Dad can also take over some of the morning duties, so that mum could sleep longer after the night feeds and recuperate.

A feeding dad

Breastfeeding is definitely a wonderful time, so it is important for the dad to be part of it too.

Particularly as he can feed the baby with mum's expressed milk, when she has to or simply wants to leave the house. In such situations, a breast pump comes to the rescue - e.g. Philips Avent Natural Motion electric breast pump, which is inspired by baby's physiology - it reproduces the natural process of suckling and nipple stimulation.



The Philips Avent Natural Motion electric breast pump is simple to use and effective.

The technology behind it is inspired by baby's physiology - it reproduces the natural process of suckling and nipple stimulation.

BREASTFEEDING IS DEFINITELY A WONDERFUL TIME, SO IT IS IMPORTANT FOR THE DAD TO BE PART OF IT TOO.

Expressing is therefore comfortable and gentle and dad quickly gets the necessary milk supply.

This is one way in which dad can build a bond with his baby, who continues to receive the best food.

And it doesn't have to be just a one-off feed! Dad's attitude influences the continuation of

breastfeeding after mum's return to work. All it

takes is some willingness, a comfortable and effective breast pump and an appropriate bottle,

such as Philips Avent Natural, which allows alternate feeding and does not interfere with the

sucking reflex. Now it is the dad who can take over feeding while the mum is at work.

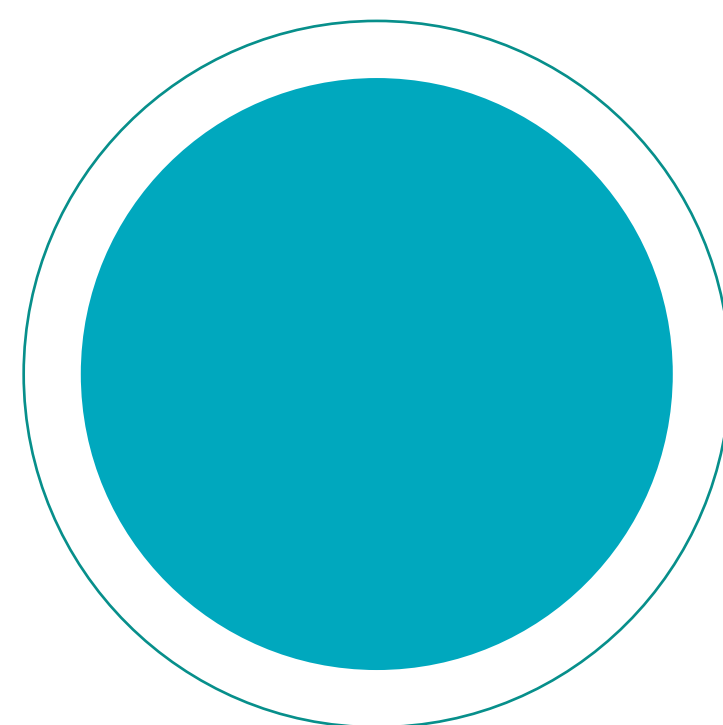
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We write about relationships between partners and between parents and children, the need for fulfilment in other spheres of life, as well as professional, financial, legal and social issues.

We do not judge. We do not impose any one way of thinking.

We're in this together!



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