

An Open Letter to My Baby

Dear Baby Collins,

Having just entered life and found myself as your father, you're probably thinking, "Great, who's this schlub?" I know, I know, I'm not all that impressive on first glance, but before you decide to pack your things and leave – which is entirely your right – allow me to make my case. If you are willing to hear it, please proceed.

While it is true that you exist as a result of your mother and I engaging in intimate copulation, such should not be the reason you accept me as your father. Sharing DNA should not be the basis for voluntary association. Rather, I advise you to consider the merits of any given association and its effect on your future happiness. Having dismissed the presumption of default association by blood, I will now proceed to explain why I'm your best option for a father/progeny partnership.

Besides your mother and future spouse, nobody will love you as much as I, my love being completely unconditional. As a human child, you have a psychological need for unconditional love from your parents, a need that I will meet completely, from your perspective as much as mine. While we might not always see eye to eye, I promise to always respect your decisions, because whether foolish or wise, they will provide you a valuable learning experience. And when you err, as we humans are wont to do, I will not make you feel ashamed or unloved. You will never be punished for your mistakes, nor rewarded for your triumphs. Either would make you believe that my love is conditional, when its not.

Rather, when you do make a mistake, I will help you understand the natural consequences of your actions, and stand by your side as you face them. And your triumphs will be their own reward, though I'll likely reinforce them by asking about what they mean to you. I'll want to know in order to get to know *you* better. Further, I'll do my best to decode your messages to me about the way you feel.

Please forgive me if I have a hard time with this, as some messages are more difficult than others to convey at such a young age.

I'll also do my best to meet every other need you have. I'll keep you safe and warm, your belly full, and your bottom clean. I'll coddle you when you need me to and attend to every hurt you experience. And just as importantly, I'll try to never be the cause of your pain and suffering. Life is challenging enough without a father making it harder.

One of the most exciting things you'll get from me is a commitment to your intellectual needs, which as a human include complete academic freedom and noninterference with your natural desire to play around the clock with your siblings, friends, and sometimes, I hope, me!. That's right, unless your security is at risk, I will never force you to do anything or associate with anyone against your will.

Whether or not to attend school, participate in team sports or other organized activities, or give someone hugs and kisses, family or not, is completely up to you. And more, I will not only respect your choice, but I will defend it against any would-be encroachers. Your life, your body, and everything you legitimately acquire are your own. Nor will I encroach on these, your self-ownership and property rights. If I want a kiss or a hug, I'll ask for it. Of course, and this is me being completely honest, something else I plan to do, I will take a few liberties while you're still an infant on the kisses and hugs front. If this is a problem for you, I promise to make amends.

In conclusion, I will not be your ruler, master, or boss. Instead, I will be your partner in accordance to all that partnership entails. The course of your life is yours to chart, and I will be here to aid and mentor you every step of the way. That is, if you'll have me. Won't you?

Most sincerely,
Dad

PS: I've made a lot of promises here, but I'll be most grateful if you'll remember that I, too, am human and will undoubtedly err. However, I will do my best to make amends and seek to repair our relationship, which will always be at the top of my list of

priorities.