

PARENTING

A Dialogue by John Dixon

1M 1F

FATHER: Come in, son. And Happy Birthday. Your Mummy and I would like to talk to you. When we first had you, all those years ago, we agreed that we would ...

MOTHER: We certainly did.

FATHER: And now the time has come.

MOTHER: It's about your body, my dear.

FATHER: You're ripe.

MOTHER: Daddy's prepared all the relevant documents.

FATHER: I surely have. To start with – here's a photo of your Mummy and me on our wedding day. It was taken in the church porch. As you can see your Mummy was still a virgin, because she's wearing white. But not for long after that, eh? And this is the photo of your Mummy the next morning. Can you tell the difference? Yes, that's right. She's wearing red! Well spotted!

MOTHER: We didn't try for a baby till about a year afterwards. Daddy didn't wear a condom that night. That's one of those things in this glossy catalogue. You can keep it. And here's a photo of your Daddy not wearing a condom. He does look eager to become a father, doesn't he? Positively stiff with excitement.

FATHER: We also delayed having you so we could save up for a camcorder. And all the trimmings. Including a timing device.

MOTHER: Daddy set it up, and leapt into position just as the tape started. So here's what happened the night you were conceived.

- FATHER: Ho! Ho! That didn't take long, did it? As you can see we waited till summer so we didn't need any bed clothes to keep us warm. And we could get better angles.
- MOTHER: In every sense. A few weeks later, and we got the good news.
- FATHER: Here's Mummy holding her tummy in delight. Look at that sparkle in her eyes.
- MOTHER: Yes. The next pictures are very special for me. They are X-rays of your development inside me. You did grow quickly, and you moved around a lot. I like to think you were making yourself comfortable. A womb of your vewy own.
- FATHER: In no time at all it was back to the camcorder. Your Mummy wanted to give birth to you in a swimming pool, but we had to settle on the maternity ward because the municipal baths weren't keen. Here comes your head. And then the rest of you. Look, you can see it's a boy. It gets clearer once the afterbirth has been washed off.
- MOTHER: All the nurses said you were the most beautiful baby they'd ever seen.
- FATHER: I don't know when it went wrong.
- MOTHER: We took photos of you every day for the first three months.
- FATHER: Your mother was so proud of you. She took you to all the local cake shops so she could show you off, being breast-fed in public.
- MOTHER: Here's one of you asleep, with my left nipple half in your mouth. Can see what you preferred to yummy cream cakes!
- FATHER: Looks like you're going be a titman, just like your old Dad.

MOTHER: Here's one of you at your circumcision. Before ...

FATHER: ... and after.

MOTHER: The look of surprise on your face!

FATHER: Did we keep the foreskin? I can't remember.

MOTHER: We took photos of you at every important time.

FATHER: School uniform.

MOTHER: Sports Day. Holidays.

FATHER: First pair of long trousers. I expect you can remember some of these.

MOTHER: And one, of course, on every birthday.

FATHER: It really is a wonderful photographic record of every stage of your development to maturity.

MOTHER: We will, of course, leave this chronicle to you in our will. So you can show your children.

BOTH: Our grandchildren.

FATHER: It will a) inform them of the basic facts ...

MOTHER: and (b) help them overcome shyness and inhibitions ...

FATHER: ... and most of all c) respect the importance of handing down such skills.

MOTHER: Now, if there's anything you want to ask us please feel free. We'll always be here, keeping an eye on you. I think your Daddy's got a word of advice for you.

FATHER: I have indeed. It might be an idea to make a record of yourself to hand down to your children. Unfortunately our record – good though it is – is not complete.

MOTHER: Daddy and I forgot to photo the bloodied sheet.

FATHER: A once-in-a-lifetime chance lost forever.

MOTHER: Also . . . there's nothing about the time before your Daddy and I met.

FATHER: Well, to make sure you don't make the same mistakes we made, Mummy has kindly said she'll be happy to film you having your first masturbation.

MOTHER: Daddy doesn't do that sort of thing anymore, do you, Daddy?

[DADDY splutters a lot to hide his embarrassment. He does, it seems.]

MOTHER: However, he might be able to remember a few helpful tips for you. So he'd like to be in the room as well. And ...

FATHER: ... we were wondering ...

MOTHER: ... if we could make it more a family occasion if your Daddy and I made love, so as to give you the necessary stimulus.

FATHER: Then you could show your appreciation ...

MOTHER: ... and come all over us.

BOTH: It would mean so much to know that our only son had turned out alright.

BLACKOUT