Dealing With An Unwanted Pregnancy
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An unplanned and unwanted pregnancy can dramatically affect an otherwise loving long-term relationship. Some men rejoice, but others simply aren't ready to be fathers. If they discussed the possibility and specifics at the start of the relationship, he may hope she's going to stick to the original plan and terminate the pregnancy. And she might -- but for some women, getting pregnant can start clocks ticking and make them suddenly want to be mothers, despite previous agreements.

In either case, the final decision is hers, which means she has ultimate say in whether or not you become a father. This can put tremendous stress on a relationship, particularly if you don't want to have a child, but don't want to lose the girl, either. While you can't force her to do your bidding, you can get her to consider your wants and desires if you approach her correctly. After all, your life could be drastically altered by her decision, which certainly entitles you to speak your mind you just need to take care with the presentation.

Read on for tips on dealing with an unwanted pregnancy.

Ask her what she thinks

Even if you're certain you don't want be a father, the first step in dealing with an unwanted pregnancy is to find out where your woman stands; she's going to have a lot on her mind and she'll probably express most of it freely. Letting her talk it out before giving your own opinions shows that you care about her -- and that's extremely important right now. If she thinks otherwise, she'll write you off as being selfish and place far less value on your opinion.

Prenatal prep: If possible, have this conversation at home while sitting together on the sofa. This will provide enough intimacy to prevent any feelings of sudden distance, and since you're sitting side by side, the reduced eye contact will make it easier for her to speak openly.

Tell her what you think

When you're ready to share your opinion, you'll want to use a calm, steady tone. You'll also want to take care with your word choice; pregnant women tend to feel like they're carrying someone, as opposed to something, even if she is just a month or so pregnant.

You can't just talk about having an abortion the same way you'd talk about having a cavity filled. Sensitivity is key. Toss words like "it" around too many times, and she's going to start feeling like she needs to defend "it" from you. If you want her to really listen to you, paraphrase her own word usage.

Prenatal prep: Try using words like "we" and "our" when discussing the situation. This will make her less defensive and more open to hearing your opinion.

Be honest
This is not the time to sugarcoat your true feelings. If you don't want to be a father, you have every right to come out and say so. You don't have the right to berate her in the process and you should be kind, but you don't need to understate anything. Fatherhood will last for the rest of your life; if you're not going to be able to cope with that, you need to make it clear so she can factor it into her decision-making process.

Prenatal prep: When giving your opinion, use phrases like "I need" instead of "I want." This will be easier for her to process on an emotional level, and will also sound less demanding.

Give good reasons for your opinion

Once you've given your opinion, back it up with good reasons. Don't just tell her you don't want to be a father; some women aren't going to consider that a good enough reason to have an abortion. A new baby means significant life changes: Food, diapers, medical care -- these things cost money you may not have. Who's going to care for the baby while you're working? Will you have to move to a new home? Will you have to sell your Harley and get a station wagon? These things may sound like normal changes in the life of a new parent, but if you don't want to be a new parent, these changes can be pretty overwhelming.

Prenatal pros: Take care that you don't come across as whiny. These changes are significant, but you don't want to make it sound like you'll be more affected than she will.

Don't make threats
Blaming a woman for getting pregnant, or threatening to end a relationship, rarely gets positive results. This is a gamble you'd be better off avoiding; if it works, she's bound to resent you for it down the road, and your relationship will suffer in one form or another. You may view this as a welcome alternative to fatherhood, but the threat is actually just as likely to lead straight to it. If a woman is undecided about her pregnancy, being ordered to end it could result in a desire to prove that she can have a baby if she wants to. Neither of these scenarios is rational, and both are likely to result in extreme bitterness.

Prenatal pros: If you feel the need to make strong declarations, use words like "can't" instead of "won't."

Don't withdraw

As difficult as this situation is, it's in your best interest to be there while she's struggling through it. She needs your emotional support or she could wind up feeling isolated to the point of despair -- and women in despair rarely make rational decisions. If you vanish into thin air, she's bound to assume your relationship is over anyway, which will instantly negate any needs of yours that she may have been considering.

Prenatal pros: You don't have to talk about it 24/7; it's enough to just physically be there when you can, and call her to let her know she's in your thoughts.

Stand by your decision
If you've followed all of these steps and your woman decides to have the baby anyway, this does not mean you're required to get married or move in together. You'll probably want to provide for your child regardless, but if you've been clear about your intentions from the start, you are not obligated to contribute beyond what your conscience and the law expects of you. This was her decision, not yours, and the bulk of the responsibility is now hers.

Prenatal pros: Take a moment to spell this out for her when she gives you the final decision; it may just sway her over to your side.

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