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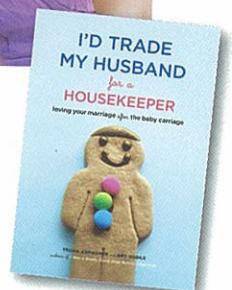
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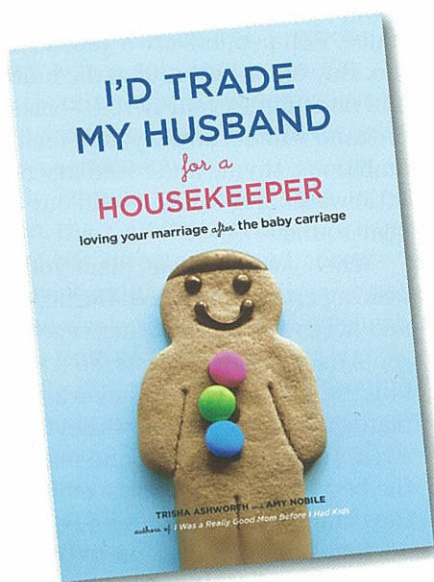


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# GREAT EXPECTATIONS

A Reality Check with authors  
Trisha Ashworth and Amy Nobile

by KELLY POLLARD



EVERY POTENTIAL PARENT harbors expectations about how their life will play out when they step into the roles of parent and spouse. The media, our parents, and our well-meaning friends, their own children influence our expectations. Then the wedding vows are said and the baby carriage comes into play, and in the absence of that expected bliss to color their days in these new lives, many parents are left wondering what happened.

Sassy, straight-talking authors Trisha Ashworth and Amy Nobile tackled motherhood and expectations in their bestselling first book *I Was a Really Good Mom until I Had Kids* in

2007 (Chronicle Books), validating the conflicting feelings of moms, who like me, are facing unrealized expectations. They quickly followed up that title by expanding a popular feature of the first book into the follow-up, *Dirty Little Secrets from Otherwise Perfect Moms* in 2008 (Chronicle Books). Now, in their latest book, *I'd Trade My Husband for a Housekeeper: loving your marriage after the baby carriage* (due for release in April 2009 from Chronicle Books), they're back to answer their audience's demands to explore expectations set up within the framework of marriage and having children, and why they aren't what we dreamed them to be.



“Most of us don’t sit down and honestly ask ourselves what life will look like once we have kids, and definitely don’t have this talk with our husbands.”

– Trisha Ashworth  
(pictured here with Amy Nobile)



Their findings—from once again interviewing hundreds of moms, and even some dads—will strike a chord. The two moms—both of whom call Northern California home—sat down with *Bay Area Kids* amidst a buzzing pre-release publicity schedule (they were scheduled to appear on *The Today Show* this April 2) to chat about the effects of kids on marriage, and how we can put the spark back in our relationships.

“Our expectations are a huge part of the puzzle of marriage and kids,” says Trisha Ashworth. “Most of us don’t sit down and honestly ask ourselves what life will look like once we have kids, and definitely don’t have this talk with our husbands.”

The authors first explored the role of expectations in their bestselling first book. Their chapter about marriage—“Just Give Us a Rule Book. We Can’t Read Minds. (Tell Him What You Need)” —was destined to expand.

“The chapter in the first book really resonated with a lot of people,” says Amy Nobile.

With the runaway success of *I Was a Really Good Mom*, they realized that what started as the trading of stories as two new moms—Trisha’s three kids are now ages 5, 7, and 9; Amy’s two kids are 4 and 6—could have a huge impact on parents everywhere, especially

mothers. It helped that they’ve been close friends for fourteen years now.

“We had always had an open relationship before kids, so when we had our own kids, we compared notes. We’d say we’re going crazy, judging ourselves and feeling guilty,” Ashworth says. “So we started talking to other moms to make sure we weren’t the only ones.”

Part of their conflicted feelings about motherhood affected how they expected life to play out post-baby.

“We were raised to believe we could do it all. We had these choices and we felt like we had to be happy with the choices we had made, so why weren’t we?” Nobile adds. “And those expectations definitely affected the marriage. When we put our kids first all the time, the marriage becomes last on the list.”

So when these two moms rolled up their sleeves to start their most current project—addressing marriage expectations—their findings were a bit shocking.

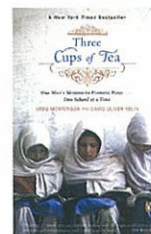
“We found that 80 percent of the three hundred moms we interviewed about their marriages admitted that theirs were only so-so on the happiness scale,” Nobile says. “They were waiting for the happiness to appear, which just doesn’t happen.”

We ask  
Trisha Ashworth,

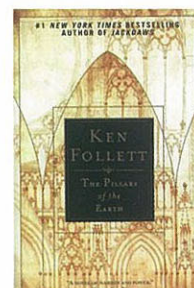
**What three things are on your nightstand?**



1. *People* magazine



2. *Three Cups of Tea*, by Greg Mortenson and David Oliver Relin (Penguin, 2006)



3. *The Pillars of the Earth* by Ken Follett (New American Library, 1989)