

Parenting

They desperately needed a solution.

Having babies was a lot of work, more than Jim and his partner had realized. They knew but here was reality. However, the baby part, sleepless though it was, was a piece o cake compared with toddlerhood. With toddlerhood, the demanding, unrelenting nature of parenthood truly emerged.

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It was a loveable desperation. The toddler was charming: giggling, grinning, grounded—contagious fun. Every day, every moment was new, full of discovery and joy. Crawling rapidly became walking, then walking holding something, then words. Life became following the ‘danger baby’ as she loved climbing up chairs and would leap off the bed if they let her. They picked her up after work (the transition was easier for her than them,) come home, made dinner, played, cleaned up, then bath and reading in bed. They fell asleep holding hands, toddler between them. Their days were programmed by work, their evenings and weekends by their toddler. They loved it but were exhausted.

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They tried something like a Roomba, a robot to follow the toddler. That worked for about five minutes—until they heard a book fall in the living room. The robot was too stupid. Their next step was an interactive hologram—far more intelligent, it was successful, accompanied the toddler to daycare and taught her Lego.

But something was missing. AI was bringing up their child. The choices the hologram made for their child were bland. That was not how toddlers grew—they experimented, took chances before they understood they were chances. AI was designed to prevent that. They stopped the hologram and returned to full time parenting (as time allowed.) It was still exhausting, but they looked forward to their daughter growing, become even more her own person. When she became a teen, they would have time to themselves. They were wrong on two counts.

First, about parenting, which continues when your child is an adult.

Second, they were pregnant again.

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Gradually, they realized there is no solution to life's cycle except to live with it, through it but never get past it-the cycle never ends.