



The Best Baby Shower Gift Ever Given



P R E G N A N C Y

MACKENZIE DAWSON APRIL 30, 2016



When I was pregnant with my son 3 years ago, I was queen of the baby registry, signing up to receive things that bounced, swaddled, swung, hooted, swished, and comforted; adorable outfits and tiny booties and crib bedskirts and and other items that would look sweet in the nursery I was building.

But the best baby gift I received didn't come from my registry.

It was a box of onesies, and it came from one of my closest friends. We were 19 when I first spotted her across the college dining hall wearing an awesome pair of silver Doc Martens (hey, it was the 90s). I knew right away that I needed to seek her out.

So it came as no surprise that this woman who's seen me through breakups and marriage and career and grad school and a career switch and moves and all the other changes of adult life would know

exactly what I needed when I was pregnant. And that was this: A reminder that while my life would certainly change with a baby, the essence of who I was wouldn't change at all.

Each baby onesie had the cover of my favorite books emblazoned on the front. They ranged from *To Kill a Mockingbird* to an obscure French novel by Marguerite Duras to *Gone With the Wind* and *The Great Gatsby*, and so on.

Each one was better than the last, and the minute I saw them, I knew what she was trying to say.

For me, reading is like a therapist appointment and a vacation and a workout and a spa visit, all in one book. It can be paper — I still love the heft and smell of an actual book — or an e-reader; as long as there are words on a page, I don't care. If I go through periods of time where things are hectic and I'm not reading as much, I notice a difference in my patience (I get snippy and short) and my overall happiness level. If I find myself with time to kill and I haven't brought a book, that's a bad day. Reading is my thing.

And this wonderful, hilarious gift was my friend's way of letting me know that I'd still be the same person after my baby was born — and yes, I'd still be able to make time for my favorite hobby, just as she had managed to make time for her daily run despite having 3 kids. "You will still be you and still love the things you love doing most," she wrote on the card. "It's just a matter of prioritization. No, you won't be able to do everything you used to do. But if it's important, you'll make the time."

There's so much noise in our culture: the "frazzled" mom, the mom who literally doesn't have time to shower, who puts orange juice in her coffee because she's so sleep-deprived. We're so used to having these ideas reinforced — you'll have no time! No time! No time! — that we accept them as fact. My friend's box of onesies might have been for my baby, but it was really for me. And while each book cover had different words in its title, they all had the same message: You are you. You will be you. You will be all this, and more.

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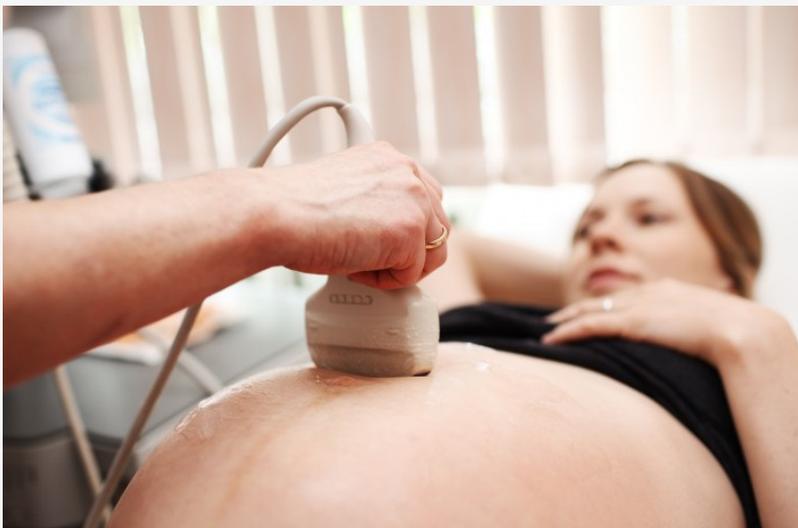
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