THE MOTHER HOOD

From Partners to Parents

10 Conversation Starters to Baby-Proof Your Bond

The Battery Check

"Instead of asking 'how are you,' let's ask: 'On a scale of 1 to 10, how much battery life do you have right now?'"

WHY IT WORKS

"How are you?" usually gets a generic "fine." A number provides real data. If you are at a 4 and your partner is at a 2, you know who needs the extra rest right now.

It turns exhaustion into a shared resource management problem rather than a competition.

THE MOTHER HOOD

The "Invisible Load" Audit

"What is one mental task, worry, or to-do list item that you are carrying right now that I might not be aware of?"

WHY IT WORKS

Resentment builds when one partner feels they are carrying the weight of the world unnoticed (the "mental load")

Naming these invisible tasks helps your partner appreciate the work you are doing and opens the door for them to take some of it off your plate.

Fix It or Feel It?

"When I come to you with a frustration, I will try to tell you: 'Do you need to help, a hug or to feel heard?'"

WHY IT WORKS

Most arguments happen because one partner offers logic and solutions when the other just needs empathy and validation.

Clarifying the goal of the conversation upfront prevents the listener from "failing" and the speaker from feeling unsupported.

THE MOTHER HOOD

The 3 AM Treaty

"Is our current night-shift arrangement working for us, or do we need to re-negotiate the contract"

WHY IT WORKS

Sleep deprivation severely impairs emotional regulation. This approach reframes sleep schedules as a business contract to be renegotiated, not a personal failing.

By treating it as a contract, the guilt and scorekeeping are removed from middle-of-the-night discussions, fostering open communication.

This is still a worthwhile exercise for expecting parents to discuss before baby arrives to be ready for night time from day 1.

Safe Touch

"How can I show you physical affection right now without you worrying that it's a request for sex?"

WHY IT WORKS

Many new or expecting moms experience feeling "touched out", leading them to avoid physical affection with their partner due to fear of intimacy expectations they aren't ready for.

This direct and open conversation re-establishes physical comfort as safe and separate from intimacy, which is crucial for maintaining connection during this sensitive period.

THE MOTHER HOOD

The "Tap Out" Code

"What is our code word for 'I am about to lose my cool and need to walk away for 15 minutes, no questions asked?'"

WHY IT WORKS

When sleep-deprived, parents are easily triggered into "fight or flight." This code word acknowledges this vulnerability and provides a pre-agreed solution.

The "Tap Out" code acts as a safety valve, allowing a parent to step away before saying something hurtful. The other partner steps in immediately without judgment, fostering understanding and connection.

The "Old Us" Flashback

"What is one specific thing we used to do before the baby (or before we got pregnant) that you miss the most? How can we create a 15-minute 'micro-version' of that this week?"

WHY IT WORKS

It's easy to become "Business Partners in Baby Inc." and forget you are friends and lovers. This conversation anchors you back to your identity as a couple, fostering connection.

This technique proves that you can still have fun and create joyful moments together, even in short bursts, reminding you of your shared history and mutual enjoyment.

THE MOTHER HOOD

The Gatekeeping Check

"Are there times I criticize how you do things (like diapering or soothing) that make you feel like you shouldn't even try?

WHY IT WORKS

I know this is a sensitive one, but "Maternal gatekeeping" can make moms the experts of their children by correcting a partner so often, they stop trying—it's a major cause of imbalance in parenting dynamics.

This honest check-in encourages the supporting partner to build their own competence and confidence with the baby, fostering shared responsibility.

SMALL WINS

"What is one specific thing I did today—no matter how small—that made your life easier or made you feel loved?"

WHY IT WORKS

Evolution wires our brains to scan for threats and negatives, especially when tired. Actively training your brain to scan for the positive fosters a healthier mindset.

Voicing appreciation triggers oxytocin, the bonding hormone, which strengthens connection and lowers defense mechanisms in relationships.

THE MOTHER HOOD

The Fantasy Future

"Let's take a mental vacation: In 5 years, when the kids are bigger, what does a perfect Saturday morning look like for us?"

WHY IT WORKS

Visualizing a future with independent children and peaceful mornings helps put the current postpartum challenges into perspective.

This mental vacation reinforces that the demanding postpartum period is a temporary season.

THE MOTHER HOOD

Ready to Reconnect?

If these conversations resonate with you, Dr. Shamtobi offers compassionate individual and couples therapy to help you navigate postpartum challenges and strengthen your relationship.

In person, virtual, and at-home visits available

Schedule your free consultation today

Call, Text, or E-mail

(310) 564-6466

hello@themotherhoodla.com

Dr. Sanam Shamtobi

Founder and Lead Clinical Psychologist at TMH