view this was what it was going to be like forever.’

‘You feel selfish,’ says Mark, dad of a 10-month-old. ‘But watching my wife totally in love with our baby, who I loved completely too, but then have nothing left for me, was hard. I tried to initiate sex, but she’d tell me she was tired. It made me feel pretty unhappy but it’s hard to talk about.’

Dr Karen says the trick is to make your partner still feel important to you as a sexual being, instead of just being a co-parent and your housemate. ‘It’s those little things like remembering to say they look attractive and give them a proper kiss before they go to work. Thoughtful moments like these help rebuild that sexual spark and the chemistry.’

For the couples who came to see her, it worked. ‘He said that respect to their relationship was enough for now. And I really believe that you just need that to keep you ticking over in the early years.’

### Sexy tweaks

If you follow Dr Karen on Instagram (and we suggest you do @thesexdoc), her feed is full of tips to improve intimacy (she also runs an online desire workshop). ‘Sometimes sex can feel like a big event,’ she says. ‘In my experience it’s the little things, the glances or the looks or the compliments, these things are what I call sexual currency and they lend on to a good sexual relationship.’

Of course, there is hope that sex will return to some semblance of normality at some point. ‘We’ve seen a mega turning point in our sex life, recently,’ says Elizabeth. ‘Now that the children are three and five, they’re at an age where they’re a bit less dependent on us to do everything for them, and we can regain a bit of intimacy ourselves.’

Her recipe for ten minutes of quiet time? Nipping the kids with a pile of sandwiches and an iPad cured up with Pippa Pig Aren’t mums inventive?

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**4 STEPS TO GETTING BACK IN THE SACK**

We asked The Hotbed Collective for their top tips. Find more at thehotbedcollective.co.uk and on their podcast, The Hotbed.

1. Don’t rush. Your body needs time to heal and life has to adjust to the new arrival. Sex naturally takes a back seat. It’s no reflection on your relationship.

2. Keep communicating with your partner. This will help you stay close until you get sexy again. You might say, ‘I want to want to have sex again but not yet.’

3. If full-blown sex is out, experiment with alternatives. A kissing session or a massage can keep you bonded as a couple.

4. There’s no shame in using lube; it can help combat any vaginal dryness you might have while breastfeeding. Make sure the lube is water-based if you’re using condoms. Try Yes Organic.

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