



Babies, Aware Parenting and sleep



1 To sleep, babies need to feel three things: tired, connected and relaxed.

They tell us they are tired by yawning, rubbing their eyes, and seeking closeness.



2 Babies need to feel connected to go to sleep.

If they don't feel connected, they feel upset, and they need to repress those feelings by sucking on something, clutching on to something or tensing their muscles.



3 We don't realise that babies naturally know how to feel relaxed enough to sleep



and so we try to make them feel relaxed by jiggling, rocking, bouncing, singing, shushing, feeding, etc.



4 Yet babies have a natural relaxation mechanism.

Which is to express all the feelings of the day (and past days) by crying in our loving, present, calm arms, whilst all their needs are met.

5 If we regularly override that natural mechanism and bypass their true feelings

then their uncomfortable feelings accumulate in their body, so they feel more agitated. As a result, they start taking longer to go to sleep and start waking up more frequently, as they try to express those pent-up feelings to us.

6 Tiredness isn't painful. It's just harder to repress feelings when we are tired.



Babies, children and adults are all designed to express pent-up feelings when we are tired so that we can sleep more peacefully. That's why we all wake up more frequently when we have upset feelings bubbling.



7 If babies regularly express their uncomfortable feelings through crying in our loving arms

they can sleep peacefully AND be securely attached

