

Talking to Babies: The Power of Emotion¹

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... When you talk I listen to you

No words, no presences...

When I speak you feel me

When I think... 'you know'...

This is an intense and intimate Dimension in the mother-baby relationship. There is union, there is language... The texture of emotion imprints the strength to maintain a conversation... a dialogue, a conversation between the two.

And here we go...

Starting our life

Knowing our worlds

Sharing Existence Your language is ready...

These are words... or... thoughts of a mother caressing her belly, engrossed in the undeniable presence of communicative ties with her baby. When does a baby begin to exist in the mind of a woman, of a man? Totally uncertain. I have proposed birth at the moment of conception. A starting point to start thinking about union, dialogue, conversation... the Relationship that becomes possible thanks to Emotion. An emotional relationship has begun to tell a story step by step. The exercise of motherhood was also born.

Many shared experiences from: let's call dad... let's go shopping... let's make a little juice... come on, come on... Come on, I'll 'show' you a sunrise, for when you arrive at last, let us return to it... there is so much here-now and so much of future prospects...

Let's then address the sounds that mark the harmony of an 'emotional' experience with a sense that we can call musical. Bion [1] comments on the auditory system and its mental-emotional counterpart are linked to transformations such as music ↔ and noises. Now, both sounds-music and noises are the first chords in contact with the baby, the 'sounds' inside his mother's body, the bloodstream, her

breathing, the beating of her heart... and their intestinal 'noises'. All of them are in rhythm and tone. These and others will be permanent, with certain variations, but they will be there. Now, the appearance of the mother's voice marks an extraordinary event, it imprints a warmth, a tone, a rhythm, an emotion, a special music... that gives vitality to communication. Its special and unique quality is that it is precisely not continuous, it comes and goes, appears, disappears, which generates in the baby moments (movements) of lack and need... [2], the voice speaks, the voice is silent, alternates times of presence and absence, which are not always in tune with the baby's need, unlike the other more permanent sounds, such as the rhythmic body sounds that make the background, a permanent basso continuo.

The strength of emotion commands the forcefulness of communication. This lack... this estrangement... repeated 'presences and absences' invoke in me an Imaginative Conjecture, thus: in these moments of voice-mom and non-voice-mom, those presences and absences are configuring different "emotional textures" [3] that promote a special vibration of emotional experiences in the baby, who resorts to a 'something' to contain himself and hope, to 'do' something for himself... searching movements, perhaps sucking the echoes of that voice vibrating in the amniotic fluid, in the cadence of movements in the uterus... fleeting encounters of laughter, anger, tears... everyone, especially those maternal emotional states with the narratives of the daily diary. However, the baby's participation is active and responds, proposing with the means at his disposal: heart rate, movements of various intensities during his waking states, etc. This exchange builds what we could call a commitment of these two beings, mother-baby who are one, who are two... which are Oneness: two in the condition of One.

There is evidence of these emotional dialogues: how the baby 'plays' in the womb with the umbilical cord!, and how it dances harmonically in the amniotic fluid!

I am going to share a very small fragment of some Imaginative Conjectures, written by a psychoanalyst who was a 'premature baby', who, 'evoking' emotional experiences Conjecture as follows: In the beginning, when a world was created especially for me, after the courtship between the egg and the sperm had been consummated, my desires and my will revolved around the love that moves the sun and the other stars... I swam in all directions and all directions were one [...] after each turn I swam upwards, towards the sweet scent of the clouds [...] It was on one of those usual flights, of adorable exuberance, that, to my surprise, I found Placenta, who had been created with the sole purpose of being my friend and companion [...] the two of us continued to play hand in hand.

A whole emotional story between mother and baby is woven moment by moment, a story that will create particular qualities in each relationship. There is a life rich in emotional exchange that inhabits as a preamble to future communicative exchanges. Curiosity and amazement are exhibited in so many intimate events and "remote times", which every day we observe and each day move us in a committed way.

For many years (1970), using Esther Bick's Baby Observation model, observations have been carried out by means of ultrasound and there have been many surprising findings of how the baby lives in a purposeful way and with amazing responses. Elizabeth Piontelli, as Pioneer, gives an account of this. With this technique we have many amazing observations. The dialogues of babies are evident, who even during gestation, use their hands and fingers in a subtle, deep and direct way. The baby's hands, those dim and sometimes unnoticed movements of his fingers are instruments of communication with himself and the environment... in their habitat first. Preserving the surprise at this journey of mother and son in recent times it has been possible to 'observe', in ultrasound recordings, how a baby played with a blood clot that had remained as his very close 'neighbor', after an amniocentesis performed on his mother... [4] and its Habitat, of course! Actually, he 'touched, followed, played catch' with his hands, his knees and his feet: The ultrasound of the "balloon fetus" shows a fetus - the author calls it a fetus - of 15 cm and 3 and a half months, "playing" to catch and release a blood clot, resulting from amniocentesis: hand movements are observed palpating the "balloon" that is thus placed in front of the face and then placed on the knees and rejected by the legs. One witnesses this "ball game" repeated throughout the time of observation" ([5], p. 22).

¹Este pie de página corresponde al título del artículo. Mira el original. El primer pie de página es acerca del título.

There is a repertoire of experiences that the baby already brings from all his history in the womb, questions, games, rhythms. He has participated in the emotional states of the mother, the father and the parental couple, states that, tolerated or not... Moments of stress for the mother; and hers, therefore. Once the birth occurs, she will have to adjust her language, her existence, to a new and unknown world. This can be done to the extent that the mother is a fertile continent for their proposals. Learning, if it is by emotional experience, allows for emotional growth.

All the 'colloquiums' during pregnancy, so many moments of varied emotions, so many signs of comfort-discomfort... so many questions to mom and so many answers and proposals from mom... All of this undergoes a 'breakup' if mother and baby are separated. It will continue to emit the signals, the proposals for dialogues that will now fall into the void; helplessness and vulnerability are imposed. And mom, lost in silence, without also receiving the baby's daily signs, the enjoyment of his proposals... the loving companionship of this relationship will enter dangerous terrain of loneliness and 'emptiness'... Mom and baby in emotional dialogue will have to continue climbing heights of different peaks towards growth. They will have to make transformations in codes, signs, demands, requests for help and solutions, with the responsibility that comes with growing emotionally for each one.

However, babies propose to the mother - or caregiver - gestural dialogues, with their hands, with their fingers, they welcome and demand... they look for contacts, approaches, distances... the mother responds with all her intuition focused on her child... This is how mother and baby talk. The baby clearly expresses his emotional states, especially with different movements of his hands: he brings his hand in fist to his mouth to calm moments of helplessness, confusion or, as a grasp and support... He joins his closed hands on his chest, or near his face to 'integrate and contain himself' when he experiences falling, lack of limits, sensations of fragmentation, he advances his outstretched hands to seek to be taken in his arms, or requesting attention and cuddles... There is a peculiar hyperextension in very young babies, especially premature babies, of their hands, fingers and limbs, which communicate to us how stress hurts, how unbearable the fall into fragments in a void that finds no containment... a hug that gives limits to that uneasiness to that panic, there is no hug, a voice, a cuddle... There are many expressions of the baby such as language and dialogues with mom, dad, caregiver etc... Thus, I believe that the mind emerges and our emotions are organized through emotional engagement with others minds and other emotions, not in isolation. The human baby develops and grows in response to interactions with other humans, and different emotional textures are created as shared experiences. And this depends more, to a greater extent, on the mother and father than on the baby.

The forces that bring our emotional responses to light are not primarily our biological urges, but the patterns of emotional experiences with others more powerfully rooted in childhood. These patterns are not immutable, but, like habits, once established they are difficult to break ([6]: p. 16).

Non-verbal communication is fundamental in any approach to social relationships; we are capable, we are equipped to first intuit, then to know what others feel and the intentions they have. The expression of emotion and intention are processed by the baby to maintain the bonds of the relationship. Non-verbal communication unconsciously configures all forms of verbal exchange. Making a decision isn't, after all, so rational. Emotion plays an important role, both in judgment and in reason [7].

I call, in this context, Interaction or Conversation, a series of exchanges between two participants, the mother's speech and sounds, mimes and postures of the baby, vocal productions of any kind: a proposal and a response to it. The discourse and communication that a mother has with her baby are quite revealing of the place she gives him in the interaction. These productions reveal the mother's expectations for her baby, even if she is not aware of them. A mother can carry out a communication that is implemented addressed to the baby, not as his partner in communication, because she does not share affections, nor judgments to face the world: she does not try to convince him of what he thinks of objects and events, that is, she can only be an exchange partner, but not a co-thinker, from whom he

expects development and growth. This is revealed more than by the amount of discourse and exchange, but by the quality of these [8,9].

Let's look at three actions that are put in place during these exchanges:

- Invocatory drive: The baby shows interest in certain specific elements of the mother's voice.
- Scopic drive: The baby shows interest in looking and being looked at.
- Oral drive: The baby shows interest in eating and being eaten or eaten as a game. This action, in turn, also has three phases to complete this circuit (eating action):
 - Active phase: The baby looks for the object of satisfaction
 - Auto-erotic phase: The baby takes part of his own body as an object of satisfaction. This is different from 'accompaniment' actions (sucking their hands, their fingers...)
 - Passive phase (being the passive object): The baby becomes the familiar object of another and seeks the satisfaction of that other.

This third phase of the oral drive is the most obvious as an interaction, however, it is the least addressed and perhaps the least stimulated:

- The baby offers a part of his body for the mother to try, to see if he likes it (finger, a foot).
- The mother 'tastes' and pretends to eat and taste and so she says... Promotes the action of tasty, likes...
- The baby shows his charm for having caused the pleasure he 'reads' in the expression of the mother's face, the action of the look (scopic drive) and in the intonation of his voice, the action of invocatory drive [9,10].

As the dependent and vulnerable baby feels less scared, instead of moving away from the mother, he moves his hands towards the mother/father by gently touching their bodies. The baby's gesture of joining them and inviting them suggests the beginning of a dependent love and gratitude towards the parents. While the mother talks to the baby, the baby accompanies the rhythm, contour and intensity of her vocalizations with synchronized movements of the hands, fingers... [11,12].

The Observation of Babies, Bick method, throughout the years of its implementation and its different fields of application has provided us with a wealth of knowledge and intuitions of the emotional life of the baby since its beginnings. In this task of being a baby observer, the 'detail' is of 'vital' importance... Lots of detail. How the baby's interaction with his mother is proposed, his father, even when he fixes his gaze on the observer talks, proposes dialogue and comments with his gaze, for example, he extends his hand, his finger... when he puts his fingers in his mouth, when he offers a stuffed animal, or just his hand... All these are examples of how he interacts in the process of putting together each function of his personality, of his 'emotional growth'.

Let's observe in our imagination, now, a baby using his own language: calling, talking, proposing, responding... just as I could 'trust' the communication in that womb-mind throughout gestation. Several of these resources, once extra-uterous, will implement all that communicative baggage that they will have to adjust 'to the new world'. I am inspired by a proposal Ferenczi [13] about how the baby is, little by little, renouncing its omnipotence to better propose a dialogue with reality and its characters in the interaction. I am going to use them only to observe, think and propose my own Imaginative Conjectures that allow us to 'realize...' of what is actually the exploration and forcefulness of relationships that admit clear and efficient communications. We learn from personal experiences with babies, to navigate communication and dialogue. Let's observe how this wonderful process of talking with the baby and talking with mom takes place. From the experience of keeping that Emotional Relationship alive and palpitating from its intrauterine Habitat, once now in a gaseous world the baby begins to 'try' to sustain that atmosphere with all its 'continent' qualities.

We witness in the first instance the unconditionality of omnipotence, as if the baby were saying: I am 'everything', I can do 'everything' and I do 'everything', I give myself all satisfaction. It's the baby's 'megalomania'... only 'desires and his desires are fulfilled'. The mother has 'read' her proposals, in her tears... in his groan, and responds to it. The baby still does not realize that 'someone' is coming to his call. It is he himself who responds immediately to their need.

Later on, some of his 'mandates' are not fulfilled in the course of his new life, in a gaseous world, so different... So, since there is no wish fulfillment, the baby will have to come up with 'something else'. He then 'opts' for a re-edition of the moments of satisfaction and to achieve this he resorts to the magic of hallucination. The mother or caregiver guesses the baby's 'hallucinations', intentions, requests, and complies with their wishes.

Once again, the hallucination is no longer enough for him, each time he 'realizes' that there are more conditions to achieve the fulfillment of his desires, and he adds a new attempt: he must form signals, now carrying out a motor effort that, although inadequate, seeks his satisfaction. He will have to resort to magical gestures, which, perhaps, are clearer and that get answers to his demands, he is still so powerful that 'he can violate the order of the universe'.

Desires are becoming more and more complex, therefore, they demand more Power. This raises the increase in the 'conditions' to which the baby must submit or devise, in order to satisfy his desires. Experiences are also increasingly imposed in which these desires are not realized. The conditions are no longer so effective for their demands. He then resorts, with more emphasis and confidence, to give life to each object. All objects, animate or inanimate, come to life and obey his 'commands': He appeals to the Animism of objects that, now more often, actually 'come' to him when he needs them. This is the moment that gives way to the capacity for symbolization. It is interesting that with this ability he ends his recourse to magical gestures. However, he still does not completely renounce his omnipotence. He then takes the initiative to use 'imitation'... The sounds and noises produced by things or people are now going to be instruments to order reality to fulfill its desires.

Oh, and they work better than gestures! He no longer imagines - hallucinates - he no longer dramatizes - magical gestures. You will even save on efforts to achieve your satisfaction. Conscious thought resorts to its imitative gifts, and formulates, expecting the satisfaction of desires, its magical thoughts with their correlate of magic words. The mimic expressions that accompany thinking facilitate the 'interpretation' of their claims by their caregivers. The formulation of dialogues grows in abstraction and increases... of the conversation. Each time he mobilizes his entire environment to respond to his requests. He still has "magical abilities"!!

Reality is gradually imposing itself, there will be more and more rules, limits and all the conditions that are imposed on emotional commitments and social interaction. This permanent exchange, as growth progresses, purifies thought, knowledge and especially intuition, to propose, respond, dialogue and converse. The protagonist in all these achievements will be Creativity at the service of emotional commitment.

Each of these events, in addition to many others... although natural in the daily interaction of mother and baby, in the UN they get lost in routine and overflowing work. My real concern for more and better care of the emotional health of these little ones is therefore permanent. This whole area of occurrences, when early contacts with life and humans is essentially an 'emotional' right, does not seem to be looked at that way. It is undoubtedly a 'time of risk'...

Let's see some details of my daily work at the UN, about how to talk with mom and mom with their baby, delineates a circuit of trust and affection added that propose an undeniable emotional growth that strengthens the mother-daughter relationship.

This morning I am going through each incubator and each crib greeting and "talking" with each of the babies present there: Alejandro, Emma, Saúl, Gabriela..." I approached Emma now Emma has just reached intermediates, this is a baby girl who has really survived due to

the permanent presence and emotional strength of the mother; María del Mar. There were the two of them, mother and daughter, happy M. del Mar to have her baby already in intermediate care after three very intense months of struggle for her survival. I have followed all this happening, accompanying each achievement, each setback... with the tenacity of his mother's presence and loving companionship. I talked with her for a long time. Emma was taken out of her incubator and the mother was radiant. I was present and cradling this first one attached to Emma's nipple. The mother had told me that she was afraid that her milk would dry up, that she thought she did not have good milk.... M. del Mar had the baby in his arms for the first time! ... he took it with enormous delicacy... and between smiles, she began to talk to her as she did every moment she was with her since the birth and Emma's stay in Intensive Care. He called her by her name, told her that he was going to give her from his little milk that he had been saving for her, as soon as she could eat; The baby, with huge eyes open to the mother, did not stop looking at her, this is a baby girl who has always positively impressed me because she clings to her mother's face tenaciously with her eyes, she looks at her non-stop for enormous periods. Following every intonation of the mother's voice, every cadence... they have been linked by the strong threads of emotional dialogues. M. del Mar took the baby to her breast, who, when she brought her mouth close to the nipple, narrowed her eyes, but immediately opened them more and with a really strong expression she continued to cling to the mother's face, she latched on intensely moved and Emma, immediately, without taking her eyes off the mother, adjusted herself tightly and began to suck. The mother, with tears of happiness, looked on and couldn't believe it. After this calm beginning, mom and Emma began to settle, disarrange, as if looking for what would be the ideal position in which the two of them would be confident and comfortable, connected and working the whole spectrum of this action of breastfeeding. Emma was there on, with nipple protrusions, search and new accommodation of the mother. Trying to find a way to settle in harmony, they were for a long time like this united and fighting... nothing anxious or frustrating, neither for the mother nor for Emma. The nurse, who has been affectionate and close, helping in this connection, looks at the mother's breast and proves that she has 'jets of milk'. M del Mar, he comments with genuine surprise, look... Yes, I have milk! My little girl has eaten a lot and she continues to eat, and I do have milk...! The girl at this moment gently stops sucking, looks towards me, almost detaches herself and then looks at the mother, sucks once, stops, does it again, settles down, that is, stretches her body without letting go of the nipple, squints, returns her body to the position accommodated to the arms and lap of the mother, He looks intensely at his mother and sucks without taking his eyes off her.

M. del Mar laughs and says: what's wrong with you, my little girl, what are you thinking... that you really like mom's milk?, I really like my little daughter... and it's the first time you get on my boob, I was saving all my milk for you, because I knew you were waiting for it too...

It is wonderful to observe this intense dialogue of the two, mother and daughter, already harmoniously intertwined by the loving contact of those familiar heartbeats that envelop their lives, the arms that cradle, the smell, the music of their voice, the mind of the mother with all her sweet presence for emotional containment.

It is the Power of Emotion that directs us towards communication... conversation or dialogue... it is the Power of Emotion that builds, proposes and arranges different ways to put oneself in "contact" and give opportunity to Emotional Growth.

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