

So You Think You Can Parent by Jill Riley

So You Think You Can Parent is a 10-minute short comedy about becoming parents in the age of over-sharing.

Synopsis

So You Think You Can Parent begins with wife Janet and husband Mark as they announce to their Webcam that "they are pregnant". Planning to make a permanent, living record of their journey through pregnancy, birth and parenthood – Janet and Mark are excited and idealistic soon-to-be parents. They vow to avoid the mistakes their own parents made: Janet and Mark will employ a decidedly different style of parenting than the ones they themselves experienced. Devotees of all things holistic, Janet and Mark are set on a "conscious", all natural approach to bringing up kids.

Throughout the film, we cut between web cam postings and more traditional scenes as they navigate parenthood. We start with their straight to camera confessionals about their hopes and dreams only to then reveal the somewhat different reality unfold. They take us through their pre-baby *research and development* phase. A proud Mark explains how he's even more prepared than Janet. Then during the home birth, Mark nearly blacks out, fearing an ambulance will be called to the scene – for him! Janet's idyllic picture of gauzy mornings with a peaceful babe in arms gives way to frantic, hair-pulling when neither fledgling parent can figure out what the baby wants; baby books flying, insecurities abound - they're exhausted, confused and, frankly, anything but "conscious".

Janet's number one priority is to breastfeed exclusively. She tries everything in her power to make it work but she just doesn't have enough milk. The baby's doctor intervenes and prescribes formula. Janet's crushed, she feels like a failure. Later we find Janet in quite a different place. She's aglow with a new maternal confidence before running into Leigh, neighbourhood "Mother of the Year". Despite Janet's efforts to hide her case of formula, Leigh sees the offending product and takes every opportunity to offer friendly, helpful hints on parenting in general and breastfeeding specifically. Janet, meanwhile, feels attacked and soon is fighting back tears of humiliation.

We then flash forward a few years to discover Janet and Mark struggling with how to properly discipline precocious and willful Lola. We then flashback to 1970s childhood again: Janet's own mother administering the wooden spoon on a young Janet. Of course she's horrified by corporal punishment, but later when she finds herself having a sort of daydream *fantasy* of offering the same treatment to Lola, Janet's shocked and confused by her own baser instincts.

Finally we finish with another big announcement on the web: Mark and Janet are having another baby! A drunken but "happy" accident – they emphasize how much more "experienced" and "confident" they are this time, how much more they know now. As they touch on their new goals, what their hopes and dreams are – they're not quite as lofty. Now they just want to stay sane and get some sleep.