



If you believe the data, becoming a parent is a terrible idea

And yet, the human race lives on.

From the 1950s to present day, studies have shown that having a baby is less happiness than divorce or unemployment, that children weaken marriages, and that parents prefer just about any activity — including cooking, shopping and cleaning — over child care.

And yet, the human race lives on. Today, we'll explore the complex psychological and sociology of childrearing in *All Joy and No Fun: The Paradox of Modern Parenthood* by Jennifer Senior.

Senior concludes that, while the negative headlines are valid, they don't tell the whole story of the psychological transformation of parenthood. In fact, one of the most common things seen in new parents is that **both the highs and the lows of life become new lows**. It's often the first time in a person's life that they're stricken with chronic sleeplessness, constant uncertainty and a host of new and unusual demands on their time, thus creating an extreme swing toward unhappiness.

But when you get out of the day-to-day and start asking broader, existential questions, parents report increased purpose, meaning and overall joy in their lives. Think up the adage that the years are short and the days are long. Raising a child involves very high physical, emotional and financial costs — and very high long-term costs.

The most fascinating analysis in this book is the contrast between modern parenthood and that of a century ago. Until the first half of the 20th century, children were invaluable because they could provide financial gain to a family at a very young age. They worked in farms and factories and contributed to the bottom line as soon as