

The Things That Made You Before



The threads that made you you — work, hobbies, friendships, taste — are load-bearing for your sense of self.



Losing those threads is one of the strongest predictors of depression and resentment in early parenthood.



One friendship. One hobby. One ritual. That's enough to keep something recognizable alive.

What people typically lose first

- Reading. Sustained attention disappears with sleep deprivation.
- Friendships that aren't local or aren't fellow parents.
- Hobbies that require uninterrupted blocks of time.
- Solo time outside the house — the cafe, the walk, the hour at the library.

What you can realistically preserve

- Important friendships — pick one or a few and keep them alive in a capacity that feels authentic.
- Five minutes of a hobby. Sketchbook in the diaper bag. Music in the kitchen. A book by the bed.
- One small thing that's just yours — a shower, a coffee, a podcast on the walk to daycare.
- A version of your work identity, even if reduced. The professional self holds psychic weight.

What helps and what doesn't

- Helps: scheduling specific time, even small, on the calendar. "If there's time" doesn't happen.
- Helps: a partner or support person who covers the gap so you can actually take it.
- Doesn't help: "I'll get back to it when the baby sleeps." The baby's sleep is not a reliable timeline.
- Doesn't help: guilt about taking the time. Sacrifice doesn't make you a better parent.

Gaux Note

The work isn't to have your old life back right away. The work is to keep something alive that's recognizable as you. One friend, one hobby, one small ritual in the first year — that's enough to start. Future you will thank present you for fighting for it.