

AN AB DISCOVERY BOOK

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*HIGHLY REGARDED ABDL PSYCHOLOGY AUTHOR*

## BECOMING ME: THE JOURNEY OF SELF-ACCEPTANCE

*A GUIDE BOOK FOR ADULT  
BABIES TRAVERSING LIFE*

# **Becoming Me: The Journey of Self-acceptance**

A guide book for Adult Babies traversing  
Life

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Dylan Lewis

# Becoming Me: The Journey of Self-Acceptance

*A guidebook for Adult Babies traversing life*

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*Dedication:*

*To my wife, for her constant love.*

*To Rosalie and Michael Bent, who let the world know that  
regressive adult babies aren't mad, bad or alone.*

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# Foreword



Being an Adult Baby is not what anyone would choose – if such a choice were even possible. While we can enjoy some of the aspects of being ABDL, the strong desires and unquenchable drive to regress and to become as if we were infants again, is uncomfortable, confusing and for many, quite disturbing.

But we are not given this choice. It is instead, imposed upon us during the misty, unknowable times of our actual infancy and it leaves us craving a return back to that spot in our history when we were real babies.

Nappies so clearly represent the *age* of infancy, the *dependency* of infancy and the *security and comfort* of infancy. The protection they give us, draw us back to the time when we were protected and cared for, regardless of circumstance – a time when it was up to others to care for us.

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However, somewhere along the line, something went wrong and the plan that we leave infancy behind, embrace becoming a toddler, expand into teenagers and finally settle into adulthood... goes awry. We are those Teen Babies or Adult Babies for whom the allure of infancy with all the elements and trappings thereof, become an unquenchable drive and a deep need.

Is it any wonder then that our self-image and acceptance of ourselves, gets damaged along the way?

Are we surprised that those around us, our families, our spouses and friends are not just confused, but sometimes *offended* by how we act at times, while we have no idea what we have done wrong?

Dylan Lewis explores self-acceptance and self-image by addressing who we are inside and the conflicts and failures that have made us who we are. He then leads us on a journey to finding a path back to wholeness.

We are Adult Babies. That will never change, but how we live, breathe, act and relate to others as babies, does and must, change.

Explore and engage the journey of self-acceptance and understanding of the 'baby inside', and it won't just be you who is a great deal happier.

**Michael Bent**

# 1. Introduction



This book is for Adult Babies for whom being an Adult Baby is a part of their personal identity. That is, it's more than simply an optional 'extra' they can freely live without and it's more than a fetish, confined exclusively by sexual expression.

I am a regressive Adult Baby. That's the term used by Rosalie and Michael Bent, and it describes Adult Babies who have a *baby persona* with feelings and needs that must be recognized and met for the AB to live happily, without distress and disruption.

Being an Adult Baby can often be a roller coaster ride. At its best, there is child-like innocent happiness, wonder and security – the freedom to set aside the oppressive tyranny of potty training or to be comforted by cuddling a beloved soft toy that is more friend and protector, than mere toy. But at its worst, it is biting shame, scourging self-loathing, tormenting doubt, fear of rejection, and compulsive behaviours that tyrannise your life.

**The difference between these best and worst states is self-acceptance.**

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By self-acceptance, I mean living comfortably with our baby persona, and the needs of that baby persona, as an integral part of who we are. It is not the pursuit of ‘a cure’ that would see the baby persona disappear, as that is simply not a possible outcome. Self-acceptance holds many benefits beyond the freedom from negative states and conflicts. It also bestows unique gifts of security, resilience and creativity.

This book is about the depths and complexities of self-acceptance. Its aim is to help regressive Adult Babies navigate the journey to self-acceptance with more certainty and ease. Our self-acceptance deepens, but the journey towards complete self-acceptance never goes away.

I was prompted to write this book after I read an account by an Adult Baby who said that the answer to the difficulties of being an Adult Baby was simply to accept yourself. If only it was that simple!

I had also written an account of my own life as an Adult Baby and realized, in hindsight, that I had been grappling with fully accepting myself as an AB, long after I thought I had ‘gotten there’.

I realized that, as a regressive Adult Baby, self-acceptance is not a simple issue. It has hidden depths and complexities. And if we don’t understand those depths and complexities, the route to self-acceptance is like a game of snakes and ladders – full of painful pitfalls and demoralizing setbacks.

## **Self-acceptance is about resolving the internal conflict within our psyche.**

Our baby persona is opposed by our punitive ‘Inner Parent’. It is that internal conflict which drives shame, fear and doubt. It drives compulsive behaviours like bingeing and purging diapers and baby clothes, or compulsive masturbation. This internal conflict also causes us to sabotage ourselves and our key relationships. It intensifies our craving for acceptance by others, while at the same time sabotaging our prospects of receiving it.

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To resolve that internal conflict, we need to have some understanding of its source. A widely supported empirically based theory of childhood development, *Attachment Theory*, provides an explanation relevant to regressive Adult Babies. In essence, this book is about recognizing the damaging extent of the internal conflict and using the insights of Attachment Theory to help heal that conflict.

**Self-acceptance is about our comfort with ourselves, not the acceptance of others.**

Adult Babies crave recognition and acceptance of their baby persona by others – usually their partner. But paradoxically, the best way to gain a partner’s acceptance is to deepen our own self-acceptance.

What if you don’t have a partner? It doesn’t change the fundamentals of the journey. Self-acceptance is ultimately something you do for *yourself*. My wonderful loving wife is older than I am. At some point, I will be by myself. But I will still have my healthy, stable personal identity as an Adult Baby. My wife’s love has *contributed* to that identity, but it is still *my* identity.

There are also challenges in deepening our self-acceptance. For many years I was ‘stuck’, living with my baby ‘thing’ largely as a sexual fetish. Although the heightened sexual excitement was some kind of compensation for all the turmoil, I knew deep inside that I wanted something more. However, I didn’t know what a healthy, stable personal identity as an Adult Baby even felt like, or how to get there and this is one of the problems that confront Adult Babies – we have no experience of *not* being regressive and so, finding self-acceptance is a more difficult journey – a journey into the unknown. I hope this book helps those who want something more.

Self-acceptance is a journey worth taking. I found that coming out to myself and fully accepting a personal identity that I had denied for most of my life, was profoundly healing. That identity is my saving grace.

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Its gifts have stopped me being the prisoner of an emotionally austere childhood and continually living a partial life.

If you are a regressive Adult Baby who has no conflict about being AB, then this book is not for you. You have already moved on with your life. But if you have any unease with being an AB, then this book might have something of value for you.

This book is based on the pioneering work of Rosalie and Michael Bent in identifying and understanding regressive Adult Babies as a personal identity. I recommend their books and website [www.abdiscovery.com.au](http://www.abdiscovery.com.au). I refer to their insights and understanding throughout the book.

This book starts where I left off in my account of my life as a regressive AB – *Living with Chrissie*. It is a self-help book. It is based on my personal experience and reflections. I have a lifelong interest in psychology. Every Adult Baby is different. Take what fits or works for you from this book and leave the rest behind.

If you are a conflicted, regressive AB, the journey of self-acceptance is not an easy one to undertake completely alone. You need a confidante whom you can trust and who will be an ally in your healing. If there is no one in your life with whom you can safely share your feelings about your life as an Adult Baby, seek professional support – preferably from an LGBTQ-friendly counsellor or the like, who understands issues of personal identity. If you are in crisis or deep distress about being an Adult Baby, then seek professional counselling.

## 2. The Adult Baby Identity



Being a regressive Adult Baby is a part of personal identity. By that, I mean it's innate – hard-wired into who you are. You don't consciously choose to be an Adult Baby – in fact, it's pretty much impossible to consciously choose *not* to be a regressive AB if you are one. As research shows, many – if not all - adult babies can trace their first consciousness of liking nappies or wanting to be babied, back to their earliest childhood recollections. For regressive Adult Babies, this is commonly well before puberty and obviously, didn't start out as a fetish.

Thanks to the historic struggles and victories of the gay and lesbian community, we now have a better and more open understanding of personal identity. We know that it can't be 'cured' away by psychology, therapy or religious faith. It can be denied – at great cost to a person's wellbeing – but it can't be wished away. Ultimately, the best and only sustainable choice is to accept and gladly embrace your personal identity and find a way to manage and deal with it all.



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That's particularly tough for Adult Babies because of the unique nature of this identity. In an accepting community, you can be gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgender and live so openly with all, without any conflict with your adult responsibilities. In almost all cases, that's not true for Adult Babies. Partly, that's because of the present lack of public understanding and acceptance, which means that real harm could result from the ignorance, fears and prejudices of others. However, that's not the only or main reason.

Being an Adult Baby is about embracing an identity with infantile or child-like feelings and needs. That identity is essentially vulnerable, and just like a very young child, it needs to be protected from unsafe environments. In that sense, a baby persona can only be a part of our personal identity if we are to continue to function as psychologically healthy and responsible adults. Michael Bent describes being an Adult Baby as a *sub-personality* (see *Appendix B*). It's a very real identity, but it is incomplete, and it is not all of who we are. This is analogous to the difference between the full-time identity of a transgender person and the *sub-personality* of a crossdresser / transvestite.

So, being an Adult Baby for most of us is always going to be secret or, at least, a private part of our personal identity, shared with only a carefully chosen few. And that's a big issue because everyone - people with 'vanilla' personal identities as well as LGBTQ identities - have a human need to be understood and accepted for who they are. If you're a woman, a man, a mother, a father - you want at least some people to know that part of your identity, to respect that identity and to like and relate to that identity. Having to live in secret, often in doubt and shame, gives Adult Babies an intense need to have that personal identity validated by being known and accepted by others. At its strongest, that need is like a hunger. The longer you have spent 'in the closet', the more ravenous that hunger for recognition and validation becomes. Unsatisfied, it can drive Adult Babies to risky, desperate behaviours.

Research sums up what is most important to an Adult Baby:

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*"We have identified that the regressive adult baby wants basically two things: 1) to be recognised and accepted as a genuine, actual baby and 2) to be in a parent/child relationship to some degree. We find that is pretty much the truth." (R.Bent 2012)*

It's so true!

As Adult Babies, we fervently want to be accepted by at least one other person – usually our partner. Given that being an Adult Baby is necessarily a private identity, where else can we turn? We often focus on our partner's acceptance – dream about it, obsess about it – as the answer to our prayers. I did, and most others do the same.

*If my partner accepts my baby persona then I will be happy – complete – my journey will have reached its wonderful, intended destination.*

That's not how it works with personal identity.

Don't get me wrong; having the loving acceptance of my wife for my baby persona is wonderful. With hindsight, I can see that my wife only fully accepted my baby persona *after* I fully accepted that persona myself. How could it be otherwise? Before that, there were decades of tension, frustration, disappointment and heartache – for both of us.

If you're an Adult Baby who is not currently in a partnership, then self-acceptance is even more important – if you don't accept *yourself*, who will? It's really the same, even if you're in a partnership, but perhaps it's easier to see it, if you're not.

After decades of living with my baby 'thing', including amassing a large wardrobe full of baby clothes, I only fully accepted my baby persona in the course of writing my account of being an Adult Baby. Writing it down made it 'real'. Only then did I 'come out' to myself. It was the first time I had been fully honest with myself about the ups and the downs – of

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my deepest baby needs and desires – and the depth of shame and self-loathing that went with it. The tipping point was writing about the future and contemplating a prospect, at the end of my life, of having to go into aged care as an Adult Baby – someone who needed to go to bed wearing a nappy and cuddling soft toys to sleep well. It was the deepest acceptance that being an Adult Baby was an innate, essential and permanent part of my identity.

Writing our own story can be a big part of self-acceptance, as it allows us to be brutally honest - but at a distance - and then to view – again at a distance – the story of our lives. The act of purging this history onto the page has the effect of putting everything into perspective -both good and bad.

With the benefit of reaching that self-acceptance I can now see clearly how conflicted I was before. I don't hold that against myself or my wife. Until Rosalie Bent's 2012 book *'There's Still A Baby In My Bed'*, there was nothing out in public that was much help in recognizing that being an Adult Baby was a matter of personal identity, and how I might come to fully embrace that identity.

I hope this book will make the journey easier for others whose path is similar, albeit uniquely their own.

So, if being a regressive Adult Baby is a personal identity, where does having a sexual fetish for nappies fit in? As current models of Diaper Attraction explain, it's not either/or. It's likely many regressive Adult Babies also have a fetish for nappies. I do.

For me, wearing a nappy is a constant part of my sexual fantasies and sexual arousal. I can't say for certain - but, for me, the origins of my regressive baby identity came first as a very young child. Then in puberty, my sexuality developed on the foundation of that identity. Voila – nappy fetish! For many years, I experienced my baby side mostly as a nappy fetish linked to compulsive masturbation. The rest of my Adult Baby

identity was largely confined to non-sexual daydreams of being babied by strong loving mother figures.

After I 'came out' to myself and fully accepted my Adult Baby identity, the compulsive masturbation fell away. It was a symptom of my life as a conflicted Adult Baby. No more internal conflict, no more compulsive masturbation. As I wrote in my account of being an Adult Baby masturbating every so often or even regularly, is fine and good, but I don't miss the *compulsion*. The compulsion was the problem, not the act. I still have a nappy fetish, but it's a lesser side of my personal identity now, as an Adult Baby.

I realise that while I was living as a conflicted Adult Baby, my nappy fetish and the compulsive masturbation associated with it, masked the real nature and depth of my personal identity as an Adult Baby. Hurried, episodic bouts of masturbating in a nappy, was at the time, all I felt I could fit into my life without blowing it up. However, it concealed from myself, and from my wife, the real understanding and acceptance of myself as an AB. It was a vicious cycle. The internal conflict drove a compulsive fetish. In turn, the compulsive fetish fed the internal conflict and self-loathing, which pushed genuine self-acceptance further away.

**The cycle had to be broken, otherwise, no progress would occur.**

I liken this to the compulsive, furtive, anonymous sex in gay 'beats' that were linked to gay men in the days before there was broader social acceptance for being gay. When the world at large is ready to say you're perverted, some of that gets internalized as self-loathing. It seems to me that in both instances, compulsive, furtive sexual conduct is a product of internal conflict, specifically the denial of a fundamental part of your personal identity. It is a transitory release of the pressure of a deep internal conflict and shame. It is an attempt to 'scratch that itch' without dealing at all with the underlying cause and identity conflicts.

And so, I propose adding to Rosalie Bent's axiom about the first need of a regressive Adult Baby.

**The most important thing for a regressive adult baby is to fully accept their own adult baby identity as real, healthy and permanent.**

*Rosalie and Michael Bent are authorities on the regressive adult baby identity. Rosalie is the wife of Michael, a regressive adult baby. In 2012 Rosalie published the landmark book 'There's A Baby in My Bed' intended for the partners of adult babies. It was the first published work to seriously address adult babies as a personal identity, beyond a sexual fetish. It was updated in 2015 as 'There's Still A Baby in My Bed. Rosalie has also written a book for the parents of teenage adult babies. Michael has published a text 'Adult Babies: Psychology and Practices' and an anthology of insightful articles 'Being an Adult Baby'. Rosalie and Michael are the owners of the website [abdiscovery.com.au](http://abdiscovery.com.au) which is dedicated to helping regressive adult babies understand themselves and fostering public understanding of the identity.*

# 3. The Journey of Self-Acceptance



What is self-acceptance?

It is the freedom from negative states – doubt, fear, shame – concerning your own image. But it is also a freedom to enjoy being yourself - without needing to pay a price for it – or having to apologise for who you are. And from that enjoyment in yourself, springs confidence, resilience and creativity.

Self-acceptance can sometimes feel like an intangible, but the effects of its presence, or absence, are very real. I can give an example from my own life as an Adult Baby. In my thirties, I ordered my first custom made baby dress. After weeks and weeks of saving and waiting, the dress arrived. It was lovely. I threw it away within a day because my internal conflict was so strong. That conflict meant that I couldn't let myself enjoy the dress and the 'me' that it represented, without paying an unbearable price of shame. It was like holding onto a red hot fire poker.

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So the dress had to go. My desire for the dress, and being the baby I wanted to be, had gotten too far out in front of my self-acceptance of that identity.

Decades later, I delight in wearing my pretty baby dresses. I feel wonderful. I feel like an adorable cute baby girl. There's no feeling quite like it – carefree happiness and freedom.

**My self-acceptance has caught up with my personal identity. There is no longer an internal conflict.**

I can wear my pretty baby clothes without paying a price. When I'm ready, I carefully put them away, knowing they'll be there ready whenever I want to put them on again.

That's the difference between the *absence* or *presence* of self-acceptance for an Adult Baby!

The 'traditional' route to self-acceptance is to stumble through, hoping for the best. That's like finding your way in the pitch dark – there's lots of bumping into things, falling into holes and the like. We have to bump into the same walls many times before we learn to go around them. We often resign ourselves to growth being a slow process. It seems as if we only accept ourselves when we feel we've been through enough pain and struggle to have earned it as if it is a reward for effort rather than a personal right. Stuff that! This book is about seeking a better way to self-acceptance – with less hit and miss – and less pain.

In terms of an Adult Baby identity, there's an iterative relationship between our desires and our acceptance of who we are. As we inhabit our baby persona, it will push us to 'try out' behaviours, clothes and/or fantasies that will challenge our self-image. If those behaviours, clothes or fantasies and self-*image* are a little ahead of our self-*acceptance*, they will be 'guilty pleasures' – something we enjoy, but not without a price in terms of self-recrimination. If those behaviours, clothes or fantasies are too far out in front of what we can internally handle, then the downside

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can be biting shame, scourging self-loathing and binge and purge cycles. That can be an awful, vicious cycle of snakes and ladders.

Deepening the self-acceptance of our Adult Baby identities is a way of shortcutting that awful cycle, sparing ourselves unnecessary pain and struggle, and with a much better prospect of a positive outcome.

Shame is a scourging, corrosive emotion, but it can also be an indicator of the gulf between our Adult Baby *desires* and our *acceptance* of our AB identity. If I'm feeling ashamed of a facet of my baby side, whether that be a piece of clothing, a behaviour or a fantasy, that shame is telling me one of two things.

Firstly, it can be a signal that what am I doing or wanting may be ultimately okay - but it has outpaced my self-acceptance - and could be disruptive and counter-productive until that level of acceptance deepens. The example I mentioned above about my wanting to wear baby dresses illustrates this perfectly. We cannot run ahead of our own acceptance of our nature without incurring a penalty of shame or disgust. This is what powers the dreaded Binge and Purge cycle.

Alternatively, shame could be telling me that a behaviour, a desired behavior or a fantasy will be harmful to myself, and likely always will be. This might be because it involves the reactions of others and doesn't depend on what level of acceptance I attain personally. For example, attending some non-ABDL friendly public gathering in my baby clothes. Or it might be because it is psychologically unsafe at any level of self-acceptance. It is important not to disregard 'shame' entirely, as it might be helping you understand and respect the boundaries that society or others imposes and for good reasons.

The only way to know which one of the two signals applies is, to consciously re-examine our own level of self-acceptance.

**So, what is the journey of self-acceptance – what are its hidden depths and complexities?**



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Achieving self-acceptance is more than just telling yourself that wearing nappies and baby clothes, liking soft toys and pacifiers, and wanting to be babied is okay - that it's harmless and doesn't hurt anybody. That's all true. But that doesn't cut it psychologically. That is nothing more than intellectual assent. The sources of our conflicts about being an Adult Baby go deep into our psyche. I believe we have to discover and understand its roots before we can fully accept ourselves.

So, the journey of self-acceptance involves:

- Understanding the conflict within us
- Discovering what behaviours are driven by our internal conflict
- Discovering how the internal conflict sabotages us and sets us up for more stress and disappointment – and particularly how it sabotages other's acceptance of our baby person
- Challenging ourselves, by confronting why we are holding onto the internal conflict and the behaviours it drives
- Understanding the sources of our internal conflict and baby persona in our childhood experience
- Making our peace with those childhood experiences
- Building a new healthy, joyful stable Adult Baby identity.

Each of these elements are discussed in separate sections below.