

Preface

To: Kirstie

From: Graham

Subject: An exciting new project

Kirstie

Will be good to see you back in the office next week. There's an exciting new project that's coming up in Newcastle which I thought would be a great fit for you. I'm catching the train up first thing next Wednesday if you want to book on the same one as me, and then back on Friday evening. That should give you a couple of days back in the office to settle in after your break.

Graham

To: Kirstie

From: Jane

Subject: Welcome back

Hi Kirstie

Hope that you're enjoying your last week of maternity leave and that you're excited about coming back in. I'm in the office on Monday as well so would be good to have a chance to catch up and talk through potential projects that are coming up over the next few months and what's a good fit for you. I've had a chat to Graham and told him to put Cameron on the Newcastle project – there's no way you'll want to be away from home your first week back, or probably your first month back. Look forward to seeing you.

All the best

Jane

When I returned to work after my first maternity leave, I was excited about coming back in, although it was definitely intertwined with a deep sense of uncertainty about how I was going to juggle both roles and get my head back into it after six months of baby talk. I had mixed views about the emails from my two directors. Although it was great that Graham thought I'd be up for the Newcastle

project, “hooray they still think my brain works ok”, it did feel daunting. Conversely it was very helpful to have that level of empathy and understanding from Jane, but was that because she thought I wasn’t up to it?

This book is designed to guide you through this tricky transition back to work whether you’re the manager, like Graham and Jane, trying to support in the best way, or if you are the returning parent trying to figure out how to maintain both your career and your role as a mum or dad. This was all more than 20 years ago and the research, coaching and expertise I’ve built up over the intervening years, and shared in the following pages, will hopefully help you manage this adjustment into working parenthood.