

"Everyone needs people around them". We can all agree on that, but what does that mean in practice? Angelique van Dam explains how she answers that question with her MattieClick method.

"Young parents face huge change"

What is MattieClick?

It is a tool, a practical instrument that allows you to easily map your network in five steps: who are the people around you, near and far? We didn't call this MattieClick for nothing; with it, you get to know who your "mates" are.

But is that necessary? Surely everyone knows which people they know?

Yes, of course you know who your family members and who your friends are. But when it comes to acquaintances, it is already less clear. In addition, there are service providers, such as the baker, but also the nurse, the GP. And finally, there are occasional contacts, people you only see occasionally. All these people are part of your life. With MattieClick you can make your own network transparent. Moreover, this method also helps you think about what to ask for if you suddenly need someone.

Who is MattieClick intended for?

It is a tool for expectant parents and parents with one or more small children. This group in particular may feel lonely, whether they have a partner or not. When you become a parent you face a huge change. First, you were used to living in a certain way and then a little baby comes into your life.



*Angelique van Dam
MattieClick founder and trainer*

And really everything changes. A lot for the good, but also a lot of unexpected things will occur. And then there is so much more need to share your life with others. Who can be there for you and your baby? MattieClick helps you to be prepared. So you know who you can count on. Very reassuring.

Being responsible for another person changes so much. At the same time, the world around you goes on as usual: you have to go to work, you have to pay the rent, you are expected to come to that cosy get-together. As a new parent, you have to make new choices in your life, that can be very overwhelming. It's nice if there are people who can support you with that.

As a parent what support can you ask for from those around you?

There are so many things. A few examples:

it is nice if there is someone you can call from time to time to share

what is on your mind.

Or when a neighbour wants to keep an eye on your baby through the baby monitor. Or if someone can run an errand for you, or give advice on financial matters.

You talk passionately about this. Do you have experience of the challenges of motherhood yourself?

Definitely! That's my inspiration for MattieClick. My children are grown up now but as a mother I found myself alone. My youngest was two months at the time, and I had moved to a city where I didn't know anyone. That's when I experienced how important it is that you have people around you, because I really couldn't do everything on my own either. I also learned during that time that reciprocity is essential here. You build relationships and friendships step by step. After all, friends and acquaintances are not for sale in shops.

So how do you do that, build friendships?

By paying attention. Everyone needs a chat now and then, that's where it starts. Be open, strike up conversations, listen to people.

These days there are lots of fleeting contacts through social media, but a Facebook friend is no match for someone sitting next to you on the sofa.

It could be that you discover through MattieClick that you don't actually have any people in your neighbourhood. With MattieClick you are to find out what is your next step in reaching out to family or friends. Little steps, and in your own way.

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I'm sure the MattieClick method is also of interest to healthcare professionals.

I think so too, which is why we also offer a workshop for people working in healthcare or social care. Also, people who would like to volunteer with MattieClick are welcome. In two consecutive workshops you will be trained as a MattieClick coach.

Finally, what are your further plans with MattieClick?

We partnered with Maasstad Hospital in this project, as part of Interreg- 2Seas/PATH, a European programme to support new parents. It would be great if we can introduce MattieClick in other countries too; England, France and Belgium have already shown interest. And of course I want MattieClick to spread all over the Netherlands and the UK.

My mission: A social network for everybody, because everyone needs people around them.

More information on:

- The MattieClick method
- MattieClick training



www.mattieclick.nl

MattieClick

