Eyes Wide Open
Birth – Kelli B. Haywood, M.A.T., LCCE, CSBC
Pathways #42, page 40



## **Talking Points**

- Birth isn't something that will only last the duration of labor and the actual birth. The repercussions of the experience last a lifetime. It can have an effect on mothering in the years to come.
- ❖ Haywood asks, "What place does autonomy have in childbirth?" She explains autonomy as "the freedom of self-direction and the ability to declare what is right and good for you, independent of mainstream cultural influence." (41)
- ❖ "Autonomous decision-making and birthing are not possible in an environment where information is withheld or skewed in order to manipulate a woman's response." (41)
- There are care providers who will attempt to make decisions for you with scare tactics. A common scare tactic for recommending cesarean is that your baby is "too big". For your information, "ACOG does not recommend induction or cesarean for reasons of a suspected big baby." (41) There are ways to increase your pelvic outlet by squatting and getting off your back with your legs apart.
- How often do care providers leave out facts and informed consent to unethically encourage decisions that won't benefit the laboring mother but the doctors themselves? What can we do to change this? Do you consider this to be a legal issue?
- What brought us to this point in modern maternity care? Why do hospitals view birth and labor as an emergency medical condition? How does this affect the hospital's role in birth when they should be sitting on their hands? Are they doing this in fear of litigation?
- "...as our culture consistently paints the picture of childbirth being an agonizing medical emergency through our media and collective stories. This has fostered a state of distrust. Mothers cannot trust their care providers. Care providers cannot trust mothers. Mothers cannot trust their bodies." (42)
- Can we assume the responsibility and potential risks that come with carrying and birthing a baby as well as outcomes that are a result of personal decisions and stop placing blame on hospital staff (if they did nothing wrong)? Is it this fear and trust in the medical profession that instills the

- fear in our providers? Are we assuming that if they (medical professionals) are present nothing can go wrong?
- Whose ultimate responsibility is it when a baby is born unhealthy? (Taking care of ourselves during pregnancy) Is it healthy and ok to place blame when there is no one to blame in order for us to "feel better"?
- "It is time we come to understand birth, not fear it, and usher in an age of autonomous childbirth." (43)

## Resources

Full references for each article are available at http://pathwaystofamilywellness.org/references.html

Evidence Based Birth's mission is to get the research evidence on birth into the hands of mothers and families, inspiring them to make more informed decisions about their care during childbirth. <a href="http://evidencebasedbirth.com/">http://evidencebasedbirth.com/</a>

The Rights of Childbearing Women PDF www.childbirthconnection.org/pdfs/rights childbearing women.pdf

Public education program from the Midwives Alliance of North America http://mothersnaturally.org/

Henci Goer's website (author of The Thinking Woman's Guide to a Better Birth) has a great list of articles on a range of different topics <a href="http://www.hencigoer.com/articles/">http://www.hencigoer.com/articles/</a>

Citizens for Midwifery – a consumer-based group that promotes the *Midwives Model of Care* <a href="http://cfmidwifery.org">http://cfmidwifery.org</a>

The American Pregnancy Association is a national health organization committed to promoting reproductive and pregnancy wellness through education, support, advocacy, and community awareness. <a href="http://americanpregnancy.org/">http://americanpregnancy.org/</a>

Something different and meaningful as you prepare for birth and parenting <a href="http://www.birthingfromwithin.com/">http://www.birthingfromwithin.com/</a>

"The Pitfalls of Going with the Flow in Birth" by Melissa Bruijn and Debby Gould https://pathwaystofamilywellness.org/Pregnancy-Birth/the-pitfalls-of-going-with-the-flow-in-birth.html

"The Hard Science of Supporting Low-Tech Birth" by Alice Dreger <a href="https://pathwaystofamilywellness.org/Pregnancy-Birth/the-hard-science-of-supporting-low-tech-birth.html">https://pathwaystofamilywellness.org/Pregnancy-Birth/the-hard-science-of-supporting-low-tech-birth.html</a>

"Taking Charge of Giving Birth" by Cynthia Overgard, MBA, HBCE <a href="https://pathwaystofamilywellness.org/Pregnancy-Birth/taking-charge-of-giving-birth.html">https://pathwaystofamilywellness.org/Pregnancy-Birth/taking-charge-of-giving-birth.html</a>

## Responses

Melanie – This is my personal opinion as a doula: please don't read What to Expect When You're Expecting! Don't even give it away - throw it out! In Pathways Issue 24 they give their Top Ten Books for Pregnancy and Birth:

- o Spiritual Midwifery by Ina May Gaskin
- o Gentle Birth, Gentle Mothering by Sarah J. Buckley
- o Mother's Intention: How Belief Shapes Birth by Kim Wildner
- o Spontaneous Evolution by Bruce H. Lipton, PhD, and Steve Bhaerman
- o Birthing in the Spirit by Cathy Daub
- o Birthing from Within by Pam England, MA, CNM
- o Active Birth by Janet Balaskas
- o Pushed by Jennifer Block
- o Having a Baby, Naturally by Peggy O'Mara
- o Fathers-To-Be Handbook by Patrick M. Houser