

Contents

Forward:

Introduction:

Chapter 1 The Passage: *Birth poem*

Chapter 2 Embracing mystery: *Accepting Birth as a Spiritual passage, not purely a physical process.*

Our Society's flawed perception

What is mystery

Connecting with the hidden baby

Giving your baby Birth

Why is Spirit so important in Childbirth

What happens when a woman is disconnected from her body-

And what does that have to do with Spirit

Meditation on Embracing Mystery

Journaling Chapter 2

Chapter 3 Accepting truth: *The buck stops with you*

What is Truth

The Unspoken Lie

Why accepting responsibility is empowering

Meditation on Accepting Truth

Journaling Chapter 3

Chapter 4 The Choosing: *To walk down the painful path, or take the way of the fearful*

Why not to opt for pain medication

What is the role of pain in the Spiritual aspect of Birth

Other cultures and their painful rites of passage

What happens to our souls when we choose the easy way out

What happens when the choice is taken from us

Meditation on The Choosing

Journaling Chapter 4

Chapter 5 At the feet of the wise: *Stories from within the circle of the wise*

The Wonder of Our Existence

Let Your Body do Its Job

Eggplant Parmesan: Better than Pitocin
Our Little Doll
Olivia and The Red Violin
Our Child Our Birth and Our PEACE about it All
It Was You All Along in There
Reclaiming my Body and Discovering my Strength
She Mewled Softly and Waved her Clenched Fist
Into Our Own Bed
It Looks Like a Circle
Breathe the Body Out
Just Breathe Through It and Know
Meditation on Other's stories
Journaling Chapter 5

Chapter 6 Releasing what hinders: *Letting go of fear, insecurity and negativity*

Finding your sacredness and trusting yourself
The Zen of childbirth- you are exactly where you are meant to be
Knowing where you come from
It's more than just positive thinking
Anger and Unforgiveness as roadblocks to the passage
Nurturing yourself through your passage
Meditation on releasing what hinders
Journaling Chapter 6

Chapter 7 Sacred tools for the journey: *A collection of wisdom for the journey*

A few touching moments in Birth from Birth attendants
What women around the world say about Birth
Meditations on Sacred tools for the journey
Journaling Chapter 7

Chapter 8 Walking the coals: *The truth about how Birth is meant to feel*

Is childbirth painful?
Childbirth as a Spiritual purifier
The rhythm
You're just a vessel.
Meditation on walking the coals
Journaling Chapter 8

Chapter 9 Wandering in the Desert: *The irony of Birth: solidarity and Spiritual solitude.*

The importance of Spiritual solitude
The solidarity of women
Entering the “tunnel” in transition
Surrendering and Floating
Meditation on wandering in the desert
Journaling Chapter 9

Chapter 10 Gathering at the river: *A woman’s natural inclination toward water during labor*

Weightless and womb-like.
Woman, water and the Goddess moon
Ways to welcome water into your Birth experience
Mediation on gathering at the river
Journaling Chapter 10

Chapter 11 Creating Sacred Space: *How your Birth environment affects your outcome*

Environment and perception of pain
Woman and symbols
Honoring the unborn
The 4 elements at your Birth
The importance of a Birthing-nest
Protector of your space
Meditation on creating sacred space
Journaling Chapter 11

Chapter 12 The Dance of the Spirits: *Knowing who to trust in the journey.*

Things are not always as they seem
Trusting yourself and your intuition
The Dance of the Spirits
Questions to ask your support person
Meditation on the Dance of the Spirits
Journaling Chapter 12

Chapter 13 Erect your altar and light the celebration fire: *The importance of celebrating the end of your Birth journey, both private and public.*
The trouble with “baby showers”.

What is an “altar”

The Altar in my Freezer

To Bury or Not to Bury

Celebrating your passage privately, and giving thanks

How to light a celebration fire

Meditation on erecting your altar and lighting the celebration fire

Journaling Chapter 13

Chapter 14 Becoming the wise: *Knowing you have crossed into a new place, and finding your power center.*

Entering a new life-stage and seeing the world through new eyes

Accepting the honor of being in the “circle of the wise”

Giving birth to your new self

Meditation on Becoming the Wise

Journaling Chapter 14

Chapter 15 Sharing your story: *Creating a new tradition, and sharing your story-your TRUTH with those “younger”.*

Why we must speak the truth.

Answering questions honestly

Remembering to honor Spirit as part of the process

Being willing to tell your story

How telling our truth will change the world

Mediation on sharing your story

Journaling Chapter 15

Chapter 16 When your passage has been denied: *How to heal and honor yourself when your passage has been denied.*

Meditation for those whose passage has been denied

Journaling Chapter 16

Foreword

Birth. In this day and age, it is often considered something to fear. At best, women are told to learn ways to circumvent the pain through unnatural breathing and visualization methods, and at worst through medical pain relief or a planned, optional C-section. Those who choose the natural path are too often viewed as martyrs or accused of being self-sacrificing. I have heard many stories of women who were coerced into opting for pain relief in the middle of active labor by well-meaning medical staff.

I have always loved the traditional rites of passage required of so many of the Earth's people, and admired the strength and courage of those who stand at the beginning of their passage into adulthood, marriage, or other life transition. While the actual ritual or requirement may seem unnecessarily harsh to me as an outsider, the choice they make to brave their fear and the pain, and the celebration and communion they look forward to once they have succeeded has always inspired me.

I have often wondered what that final moment is like just before they step onto the coals, start the race, or endure the branding. I have contemplated the intensity of that final anticipatory breath, and I'm sure the profundity is not merely physical. Many of these rites of passage have a deeply Spiritual element—a task given by their god(s), or the fulfillment of attaining the privileged title as “wise”.

It is this admiration that led me to the comparison between a birthing woman's journey and these rites of passage. In both situations, the journey begins with choosing the more difficult road. There are similar emotional and mental challenges, and celebrations. There is loneliness, there is physical discomfort for a purpose, and there are those on the outside who just do not understand.

It is my hope that this book will help women to reconnect with their inner-power, help them understand the importance of this primal experience, and take back their right to choose natural birth, in spite of the conventional pain relief recommendations.

This book is intentionally one-sided in its approach. I know that there are times when medical intervention has saved lives. For that I am grateful. However, I want this book to create conversation—to stir up indignation in the belly of its female readers. I want to counteract the money-driven, medically-based media, which always shows surgical procedures as safe alternatives, and never once mentions the emotional and Spiritual healing required by those who have walked that path by choice or by coercion, and does not express what that woman is missing when she does not birth naturally.

Whether you are a mom-to-be, a woman who has experienced natural birth for yourself, or a woman who has been robbed of the chance to birth naturally or altogether, *She Births* has powerful truths you can apply to the way you see yourself in the world.

Introduction

I've had the pleasure of giving birth 3 times, in three different countries, in three very different situations. My last child, who as I write this, is just a few months old, was born at home into a pool in the basement of our first home. I was surrounded by those I love, in the environment of my choosing, and this Birth was my favorite, and one of the gentlest births the midwives had ever seen. I was able to be present for every moment—experiencing the sensations of Birth calmly and in control, allowing my own inner power to be the strongest voice I listened to, and my Birth was perfect.

It was this experience that inspired me to tell my story to others, sometimes being met with wide-eyed interest and probing questions, and at others by skeptical “she’s a kook” expressions. Others still, would smile a knowing smile, and open their hearts, telling me of their similar passages, and it was these moments of solidarity that led me to this project.

Whether in a supermarket, movie theatre, or on the street, women everywhere have shared their stories of transformational Birth. It is this transformation I believe can change not only our female experience in the world, but the world itself.

Birth is a Spiritual rite of passage, and understanding this, provides a woman with resources and tools not accessible by reading a book, or watching mainstream birth shows on TV.

The Truth about Birth is ethereal and mystical, and every woman who can get in touch with her Divine Feminine, instinctively knows that there is more to Birth than bringing a baby into the world.

Chapter 1: *The Passage*

The Passage

By: Marcie Macari

The earth shook. The women gathered.
The chanting

of The Women Of a Thousand Generations began, their hands intertwined.

I breathe low, moaning deep through my body to touch the depth of sound they generate.

And for a moment I am with them.

“We’re here-with you, you are one of us-you can do it!”

One of them

I breathe.

The coals glow-mocking my strength

Embers flick their tongues tormenting my courage.

I step onto the coals-

The Women From a Thousand Generations push closer to the embers-
their faces glowing from the coals.

I keep my eyes on them, focusing on THEIR ability to push through the pain,
to keep walking in spite of their fear-
remembering that they made it to the other side.

I find MY courage and step again.
I feel the embers, and wince.

The Women start beating a drum.
I find their rhythm in my abdomen, and slowly move forward:

One step- look at the face.
Second step- focus on the eyes.
Third step.

I see the African dancers, rehearsing their steps as I walk my last few.
I see the circle being set-the fire at the center, the food and festivities.

This will be the stage for my welcoming into this elite group-
this *Women Of a Thousand Generations*.
my heart swells.

I am close to the end now, and my body starts to shake-Spirit stronger than flesh.
I want to give up-to step on the cool grass
And off these coals.

I look for the faces, and my eyes meet theirs.

One of them smiles.

She who is *With Woman*, reaches out her hand

Her face is the clearest, eyes at my level.

“Listen to your body and do what it tells you” She says-no trace of
concern.

The chanting changes: “Listen to your bo-dy”

In rhythm, hands are again joined, like an infinite chain.

I realize just how many have gone this way before me.

The one who smiled places her hand on the shoulder
of the One who is *With Woman-*
with me,
and I breathe, stretching out my hand to grasp the outstretched.

I am about to cross over-
Silence comes over the Universe.

I near the end-
my body aches,
my mind is empty of everything but that last step.
Last step.
Hands grasped.
Cool grass.

On my toes, cooling my feet-
my arms reach out to claim my prize-
“Reach down and take your baby.”
I hold him to me tightly, and proudly take my place in the chain.
I am now a *Woman Of a Thousand Generations*.
The celebration begins.

Giving Your Baby Birth

Giving Birth.

This phrase has become so commonly used, that few people consider the words they are saying. The phrase: “She gave birth to a son.” is a widely an accepted way of verbalizing the woman’s passage, and I think it’s a beautiful phrase. If more people took the time to consider what the words mean, perhaps it would lead to asking what the gift is, and who the givers and recipients are. If this shift in thinking were to occur, imagine how differently Birth would be understood!

Birth is absolutely a gift to women. It’s wrapped in an unexpected package, requiring much of the woman, in order for her to receive it, it is offered freely. Only those who understand the intricacy of the passage, and take the time to enjoy its depths will truly receive the gifts offered them.

Birth is joy, release, metamorphosis, new beginnings, and empowerment. It must be accepted as it is-pain, unknown outcome and all, or the gifts the Universe offers to the mother through the act of Birth will be diminished.

But Birth is first and foremost a gift we give to our children. The chance to come into the world, onto this planet with dignity and a gentle transition is a priceless gift to our yet unborn. It is such a blessing to have the opportunity to bear and care for children. If we do

not do everything we can to offer them the gentlest of beginnings, how can we be worthy of their choosing?

Our modern age, with ways to peek into the womb, has created a double-edged sword. While it is a blessing to know that all is well, it can be detrimental to the mother's relationship with her unborn if something is found to be wrong. Not to mention that many of these tests provide false negatives. Whether the results are accurate or not, it means several months of stress and worry on the part of the mother, which isn't good for the baby or the mother's experience of pregnancy. For some mothers, giving their babies a gentle Birth is important, even when the baby is unhealthy or not viable. In reality, aside from opting to abort a baby on the chance it may be in need of extra care, there is very little one can do before Birth, in response to the difficult news that something MIGHT be not quite right. Many mothers who have not opted to learn the negative possibilities that lie with their unborn, have expressed upon this discovery post Birth, that they are so glad to have had 9 or so months of uninterrupted, joyous connection with their unborn. It is never a good thing to have the gestation period filled with medical tests, warnings and questions about why one is choosing to keep an imperfect baby.

Babies are trusting. They trust us to listen to their communication, to do our absolute best to honor their needs, and to treat them as the vulnerable yet amazing beings they are. The first and primary way we do this, is through natural childbirth. Women, who choose to walk this path, find in the end, that their relationships with their babies are more instinctive than those who do not choose this path. There is a deeper bond formed when a mother listens to her baby from before Birth, and whenever possible, allows natural childbirth to occur. Women who take the path of natural childbirth are more likely to "wear" their babies, breastfeed, and form strong and lasting bonds. Women who birth naturally also tend to be more confident in their ability to parent, and more intuitive in answering the needs of their children.

There are times, when a woman and baby do everything in their power to have a natural Birth, but still end up with a birth not of their choosing. I don't believe that all of these "emergency" situations are in fact, emergencies. But women, who have listened to their babies, and communicated with them regularly, are also less likely to suffer the long-term guilt and depression associated with unwanted medical intervention. I believe this is because they already have a positive relationship with their unborn, and in their communication, the mother knows the baby understands. She feels the baby knows she listened, and did her best to offer the Birth he or she wished for.

Birth is not just a verb. It is also a noun. To "give Birth", means to offer to our children an opportunity they only have once in their lifetime. And to the Universe, "giving Birth" means belief in its ability to support us, and sustain us through this rite of passage. It is a gift-to the giver and the recipients.

It is a leap of faith.

The Altar in my Freezer

“Honey?” my husband called to me from the kitchen innocently, “Where’s the candy bar we bought yesterday?”

He asked this completely unaware that the next phrase out of my mouth would become one of the most significant memories I had about the Birth of our son Jordan.

“It’s in the freezer between the popsicles, and the placenta”. I said, without blinking. I was in the middle of changing our 2 week old, and out those words came as matter of fact as directing someone to locate the clean towels in the hall closet.

It wasn’t until I heard my husband put his footsteps in reverse, and saw him lean back around the kitchen corner to peer at me with a mixed look that I realized what I had said, and giggled.

To an outsider, that phrase may have sounded like a line from CSI or another equally human-organ driven storyline. But to me, it was just a matter of fact part of a glorious Birth and my evidence of this transformational experience.

Next to the Placenta.

My placenta. The organ that sustained my baby while he was inside, growing into the little person he is today. It struck me that it came so naturally out of my mouth, without so much as a second thought.

People I know act horrified, when I tell them my story of birthing my baby at home into a blow-up pool. They ask me about “disinfecting” the pool, “sterilizing” the room, and about practical matters such as: “What if the cord was around the baby’s neck!?” Never-mind that a large percentage of baby’s find themselves at the end of the birth canal wearing their umbilical cord like a scarf, and that all Birth assistants the world over, no matter their location handle it the same way...THEY REMOVE IT!

They cringe at the thought of a Birth without anything medical to help or assistance. Personally, I don’t understand that stance. I see very little medical need during Birth- isn’t it supposed to be a natural process? When did we stop seeing Birth as a beautiful, albeit difficult journey, and start seeing it as something we need to monitor and bring to an end just as quickly as possible?

C-sections are becoming more and more common, and not because there is an increase in medical need, but because more and more women are convinced that Birth is something to fear, and that trying to birth naturally is equivalent to “playing the martyr”. In many instances, a woman may be birthing naturally in the hospital, moaning and vocalizing as is common in most situations, and the medical based Birth attendants encourage the mother to allow for interventive, or pain-relieving methods. So many of these women end up with Births they are ashamed of, and they cannot feel the power and release that is part of this sacred passage.

In many cultures men and women are required to endure and conquer a rite of passage-it is never pleasant, and usually has some aspect of physical and emotional pain. At the successful completion of this difficult task, they receive a prize-sometimes the prize is simply

a welcoming into a group of the “wise”, and sometimes it is something tangible, such as a costume or signatory of honor.

In our western culture, we look at these ritualistic expressions of courage and the ability to withstand pain, as something vulgar, uneducated and pointless. But there is something deeper and eternal about this accomplishment, and many groups in our society are realizing the value of these rituals, trading in the company picnic, for a group fire-walk, or rope course. They are finding a greater sense of unity and confidence by doing something extreme, and suddenly the concept of “rites of passage” is not so foreign.

Erecting an altar is something meaningful to the process, and keeping my placenta was my way of honoring my passage and reminding me regularly of what I achieved. It is my Altar in my freezer.

I open my freezer door at least once a day. Each time, I am reminded of what I accomplished. The path I chose to walk in spite of pressures to conform, the informed choices I made to do things my way, and the courage I dug deep to touch in my moment of weakness.

Many women have placentas in their freezer, like me...waiting for the right moment to bury it respectfully in a place it can nourish a fruit tree-but until then, it sits right there in our freezers, next to the frozen peas and chocolate chips. These women know certain Truths you cannot know about Birth without walking through it unaided.

These women are members of a secret society the FPS...Frozen Placenta Society.

And we know that Birth is possible.