

MOTHER RHYTHM * GNM * THE AMAZING HUMAN BODY

pathways to family wellness™

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Natural Education



welcome to issue **75**

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FEATURE

THE AMAZING HUMAN BODY

BY JAMIE L. CORTESE, D.C.

Through innate intelligence, every cell of your body is connected and controlled by your brain and spinal cord. Your nervous system is the master communication network for innate intelligence.

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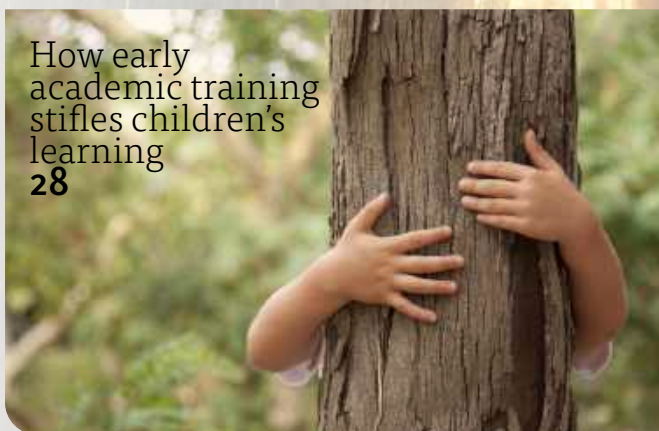
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*Children's health begins
in pregnancy and birth.*



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PATHWAYS TO FAMILY WELLNESS is an award-winning quarterly publication offering parents thought-provoking articles and resources to make conscious, informed choices for their families' well-being.

The individual articles and links to healthcare information in PATHWAYS TO FAMILY WELLNESS are based on the opinions and perspectives of their respective authors.

The information provided is not intended to replace a one-on-one relationship with a qualified healthcare professional and is not intended as medical advice. It is presented as a sharing of knowledge and information.

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*What if there were
an organization that recognized
your own unique expression
and human potential?*

What if that same organization represented
the most highly trained practitioners who could provide
specific, gentle care so that you could function at your greatest capacity?
What if this organization of practitioners knew how to care for children
by honoring women throughout their pregnancy and motherhood?

Imagine if doctors truly supported a woman's innate right
to make informed choices for her own family.

Imagine if a safe community of empowered parents existed
to support a mother's inner guidance and desire to grow.

These are the principles and promises of the ICPA and its community
of 6,000 doctors of chiropractic. These 6,000 ICPA members have come
together to serve families. Family is the heart and home of our human
potential. The loving and gentle care of chiropractic for each individual
strengthens the family, strengthens the community, and opens the
possibility for a greater tomorrow.

**Welcome to
PATHWAYS TO FAMILY WELLNESS...
our avenue for bringing
chiropractic principles into practice
for a more purposeful and fulfilling family life.**



*Reclaiming ownership over ourselves and our place
in the world is an exciting journey and a liberating path.*

Trust in Nature



Science is about understanding the natural world in which we live. Chiropractic is about affirming our trust in that natural world. We can trust Nature insofar as we can learn to comprehend the meaning and purpose of its manifestations. There is beauty and purpose in each manifestation, though it is invisible to us when we operate from a strictly mechanistic paradigm. Reducing Nature to a randomly generated, material, or chemical machine can be more blinding than we like to admit.

Chiropractic philosophy really expresses an ancient wisdom that respects Nature as more than a machine. Nature is the divine Mother of life, always in support of her living offspring. Nature is in constant communication with life through an innate intelligence that understands each body and soul, capable of supporting the whole of us with a timeless presence and love.

To get a direct feel for this, just imagine the warm, guiding, protective spirit of a mother or grandmother as she bestows the tenderness, love, and encouragement that causes a child to glow. A mother's innate, loving wisdom is a power of its own, and it extends far and wide even when the child is away. It is a supra-luminous, etheric presence that every child needs to grow and mature.

Mother Nature understands us in this way. She holds for us a luminosity and strength we all desire, though we've been misled to seek it in external authorities and idols. It is no wonder why society today is suffering. The wisdom of Mother Earth, the power within our body—known best throughout the ages by the tribeswomen's unspoken language of maternal bonding—has largely been forgotten by our culture. But it certainly has not been lost.

I am so grateful to say that there is a wonderful trend in chiropractic where women and mothers are becoming the largest force in the profession today. The reason why this is happening is beautiful and exciting. They are rallying to reawaken this natural light, and they go to make sure it is found and expressed in more families today.

Many who enjoy life within the chiropractic philosophy of health have become largely immune to the loud, outspoken fears that have darkened the collective mind of late. This shows me that chiropractic brings to the mind

an illuminating belief and trust in oneself. This level of trust goes against thousands of years of cultural conditioning. It goes against the idea that we are broken and in need of saving, or that the body works in opposition to our health, that nature is wrong or evil, or that it is somehow above our innate grasp to become wise, informed human beings by way of our own education.

To reach our true potential as living beings, we must first learn that it is necessary to trust our bodies. Only then can we hope to trust ourselves in the larger entelechy of life on earth—so that we may come to believe that we are good enough, that what we do is right, that our imagination is bright enough to manifest our dreams, confident that our children will know how to manifest theirs in time. Trusting ourselves means knowing that we are meant to be here on the earth, and that our story, with all its ups and downs, is the best one for us to have.

Reclaiming ownership over ourselves and our place in the world is an exciting journey and a liberating path. Though, it takes courage to stay the course amid our present culture. So above all, we hope to rally mutual encouragement as more families take the step onto their path. We hope to offer the scientific, educational, and healthcare premises that support our footing on this journey. And having stood on these premises throughout my lifetime, I'd like to offer what I have come to know as a result:

That you are exactly perfect, in body and mind, for the unique life you have been given. And the challenges you face today would not have been laid before you, were you not the one ready to meet them.

When we choose to meet them together with courage, we call into greater expression Nature's loving intelligence. And then, all that was thought to be above and beyond us, becomes possible from within.

With great love for who you are and what you do,
John Ohm





THE *Amazing* Human Body

By Jamie L. Cortese, D.C.

Have you ever wondered how your body heals when you fall off your bike and scrape your arm and knee? Or how every cell in your body just knows the exact reaction to mount a response to a threat in our immune system? The human body has an amazing ability to adapt, change, and heal all on its own. This is called innate intelligence. Every living thing has innate intelligence.

How does innate intelligence communicate with all of the body parts? How does it know to absorb some nutrients and to reject others, and at the same time grow and develop the muscles that you just worked out at the gym? The answer to these questions is we all have an inborn wisdom, innate intelligence. This wisdom, which God placed in our bodies, is designed to develop us and keep us healthy throughout our lifetimes.

With innate intelligence, every cell of your body is connected and controlled through your brain and spinal cord. Your nervous system is the master communication network for innate intelligence. The brain and spinal cord, also known as the Central Nervous System (CNS), controls all functions of the body by a process that sends signals from the brain via the nerves and then out to the body. This system



CHIROPRACTIC FREES UP THOSE SIGNALS OF **INNATE INTELLIGENCE** TO FLOW FROM YOUR BRAIN TO THE BODY, ALLOWING US TO **PROPERLY DEVELOP, HEAL, AND ACHIEVE NORMAL FUNCTION.**

is called the Peripheral Nervous System (PNS.)

It is vitally important for the body parts to always have communication and stay connected with the brain. One important reason for this connection is for restoring or repairing and healing from injuries that may happen on a daily basis. We all need to be able to adapt to our environment, which for many of us is always changing.

If a body part loses communication with that network, it will begin to lose its proper function and not be in sync with the rest of the body. This will cause us to become weaker and weaker, and more susceptible to or injury or trauma because it isn't performing and supporting us optimally.

The way for that body part to stay plugged-in to the innate intelligence is through the nervous system. Every nerve supplies every organ, every muscle, and every tissue. Those nerves need to properly relay their signals through the PNS all the way up to the innate intelligence headquarters in the brain. Our brain, being the master controller, sends signals that travel down the spinal cord, then exit out a small space between two vertebrae, which ultimately takes the information all the way to its destination.

If that network is disrupted at any point along its path, the signal will be weaker or even lost. The number one most common way for those signals to be disrupted is through misalignment in the spine. The space that the nerve needs to exit the spine is quite small and also contains blood vessels, lymph vessels, and fatty tissue. It only takes about 10mm of Hg (mercury) pressure on a nerve (about the weight of a dime) to cut the nerve signal off about 50%. The misalignment of the vertebra is called a vertebral subluxation. This mis-alignment causes pressure on the spinal cord and nerve exiting the space between the spinal bones. The result is that the intended body part for that nerve will not be receiving the full message from the

brain. So you can imagine if the brain cannot communicate with the body, then there will not be proper function.

The reason why so many people are helped with peripheral problems like muscle tension and weakness, digestive problems, and even asthma through chiropractic care, is because we remove the interference between those body parts and the brain.


It is not just about pain! So many people correlate chiropractic with helping back pain, neck pain, and headaches. Chiropractic is about restoring FUNCTION. Better communication between the brain and body is our driving force. Chiropractic frees up those signals of innate intelligence to flow from your brain to the body, allowing us to properly develop, heal, and achieve normal function.

Chiropractic's main goal is to allow a clearer expression of your innate intelligence.

Yes, we help with back and neck pain, but that is not what gets me out of bed every day to help more people! Most importantly, chiropractic allows your innate intelligence to be able to communicate freely throughout the body through the nervous system. Your innate intelligence is programmed to cause your body to thrive with health, and I'm here to support you now and throughout your lifetime. 🧡



Dr. Jamie Cortese has been a practicing chiropractor and a member of the ICPA for over 13 years. She knew early on she wanted to be a chiropractor and now she gets to help people every day.



The Craniosacral System

By Lynn Gerner, D.C.

Craniosacral therapy, as well as chiropractic care for children, is extremely gentle and is performed using acupressure, massage, light traction, and Activator (instrument) adjustments.

Most of you know by now that a passion and specialty of mine is caring for children. In addition to gentle chiropractic adjustments, Craniosacral therapy is a highly effective technique—for breastfeeding function, for neurological development, and for all vital functions of life!

To begin, it will be helpful to talk about some anatomy. I love anatomy! There is a thick, leather-like covering of the spinal cord inside of the vertebral canal called *the meninges*. This thick tissue extends the entire length of the spine—from the top all the way to the bottom. The posterior (back) end is attached to the bottom of the coccyx (tail bone) via a thin strand of fibrous tissue called the “filum terminale.” The superior end actually continues past the upper cervical spine (neck) and blends into the periosteum of the skull (the skin around the bones.) This is a key detail because any abnormal tension at any point all the way down to the bottom will affect the skull (also called the cranium.) The innermost layer of the meninges is called the dura.

The skull is made up of eight cranial bones and 14 facial bones that support the brain, eyes, inner ear, and Eustachian tubes. They form the sinuses and jaw (Temporomandibular joint or TMJ). A few of these cranial bones contain holes or “foramen” through which the cranial nerves pass. Cranial nerves emerge directly from the brain in contrast to spinal nerves, which emerge from segments of the spinal cord. There are 12 pairs of cranial nerves that are responsible for smell, sight, eye movement, sensation and movement of the face, jaw, and tongue (important for proper nursing,) balance and equilibrium, taste, salivation, swallowing, vocalization, heart function, lung function, and head and shoulder movement.

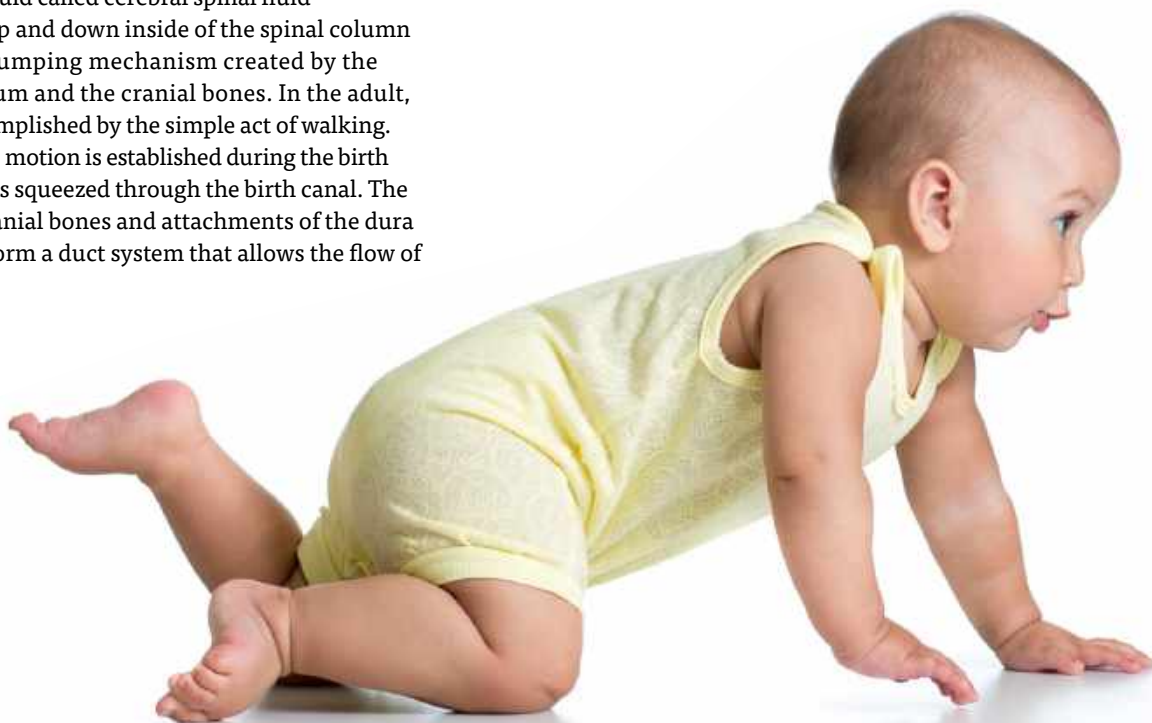
There is a clear fluid called cerebral spinal fluid (CSF) which flows up and down inside of the spinal column and cranium by a pumping mechanism created by the motion of the sacrum and the cranial bones. In the adult, this motion is accomplished by the simple act of walking. In the newborn, this motion is established during the birth process as the baby is squeezed through the birth canal. The alignment of the cranial bones and attachments of the dura inside of the skull form a duct system that allows the flow of

CSF throughout the brain and cranium. The CSF fluid controls the temperature in the cranial vault. Increased temperature leads to a tendency for seizure activity. The CSF fluid also provides nutrition and waste removal to nervous tissue and acts as a protective chemical and physical barrier for the brain and spinal cord.

The normal craniosacral rhythm and flow of CSF begins even before birth. Uterine contractions occur throughout the pregnancy to facilitate fluid and rhythmic impulses in the growing fetus. At the beginning of labor, intra-uterine pressure starts at 10mm Hg and rises above 100mm Hg in the second stage. If the baby is in the normal birth position (head fully tucked when entering the pelvic outlet), the pressure caused by the contracting uterine muscles actually stimulates the normal flow of CSF in the infant’s spinal column. Of course, this process is absent in the event of a C-section, resulting in a decreased or stagnant flow.

Dr. John Upledger, the main founder of craniosacral therapy, describes this process:

“Delivery of the newborn involves passage of the child through a convoluted birth canal. I believe vaginal delivery represents a child’s first craniosacral treatment, spinal mobilization, myoneural system treatment, and sensory-stimulation session. In my opinion, all of these serve to prepare the infant for the rapid transition from life inside the womb to the outside world. Nature seldom makes design errors, and I certainly don’t believe the birth canal is one of them.”



The delicate nervous system in infancy is protected not by bone, but by cartilage. In fact, the skull and bones do not fully ossify—become solid—until around 18 years of age. The skull at birth is extremely pliable and should be in a constant state of motion. This allows it to expand and adapt to the rapid growth of the brain for the first three years of life, and as mentioned before, this also functions as a pumping mechanism for the baby's CSF fluid. Misalignment of the sacrum and/or the upper neck and cranial bones also impedes the normal flow of CSF, causing nerve inflammation, increased pressure in the spinal canal and skull, and greater risk of damage to the brain and nerve tissues.

The brain grows 2.5 to 3 times its birth size in the first year of life, with 90% of the neurological development and synaptic connections completed by the age of six. During the first year of life, each cortical neuron develops 1,000-10,000 connections with other neurons. It sounds hard to believe, but the baby's developing brain makes almost 9,000 new synaptic connections per second during the first year of life! There is a covering on most of the major spinal tracts and the cerebrum called a myelin sheath made up mostly of protein and fat. This covering allows the nerve impulse to travel. The nerves of an infant are "naked" and just starting to form this myelin. This is why his motions are awkward and uncoordinated. This is also why those actions become much more purposeful and controlled as he matures. Partial myelination is completed by the end of the second year of postnatal life, while full myelination is completed after the tenth year. Compression on the brain or nerve pathway caused by bone, muscle, or dura tension, causes significant over-stimulation of the baby's sensitive system.

Stunted or delayed development at any point in the development of the CNS (central nervous system) will have permanent and far-reaching effects on the functional outcome of the nervous system. By age 6, all of the motor and sensory functions we use as adults have been fully developed. Damage at any stage prior to the preliminary development of these functions will cause compensatory patterns, that are either learned or naturally occurring, to allow us to interact with our environment to the best of our ability. If corrections are not made early in life, studies have shown that these children will function at a greatly reduced capacity later in life.

Dr. Upledger also speaks to this scenario in *Applications of CranioSacral Therapy*:

"If both sides of the occipital base (bottom of the skull) are severely compressed, it's common to see colic; food regurgitation; esophageal reflux; respiratory difficulties, rapid heart rate; and compromised bowel function (constipation or diarrhea). There also may be spasm of the neck muscles. If left untreated, the situation may result in a hyperactive child syndrome and attention deficit disorder."

Here's another quote by Major De Jarnette—the founder of the chiropractic Sacral Occipital Technique.

"The only true subluxation you ever see must be in a child prior to the age of seven years. If this subluxation goes uncorrected, it becomes a primary source of stimulus through life, but the tombs of distortion, which form from one traumatic experience to the other, soon bury this primary subluxation under that 'tomb of distortions.' The subluxation that all of us worry about occurred some time between birth and the seventh year of life, and the remedy would of course be careful chiropractic care from birth through the seventh year of life."

Childhood Conditions

A newborn suffering from increased intracranial pressure and abnormal CSF rhythm will often be "colicky," uncomfortable, have abnormal digestion and excess gas, and have difficulty sleeping. These children may show only minor symptoms in the first months of life, but later on at the age of 5-6, they often suffer from headaches, postural problems, or diffuse symptoms like sleep disorders, the inability to concentrate, difficulties with coordination, short-term memory loss, anxiety, and hyperactivity (overactive sympathetic nervous system) and lowered immunity.

Problems with nursing are often due to cranial misalignment; especially related to the TMJ (temporal-mandibular joint) or jaw. The inability to open the jaw fully, to turn the neck (due to vertebral misalignment), and/or pressure on the cranial nerves, which control the tongue and muscles for sucking, result in a frustrated baby and mom. Teething will also be much more difficult when the jaw and soft palate cannot expand normally.

Causes of Craniosacral Misalignment

The most common cause is birth! The sutures and fontanelles (soft spots) allow the bones of the cranium to overlap one another during the birth process as they compress while entering the birth canal. This process is called molding. In the event of a longer, more difficult labor, more pressure results in more molding. (For more on supporting an easier, safer birth, read pgs. 24-27 in this issue.) Because the sacrum is the other largest structure in the bony skeleton, it also easily rotates out of alignment during birth. Both situations can occur even while the baby is developing in-utero if they are in a compromised position for an extended time. The cranial bones should resume their normal appearance within one week after birth. Even if there isn't noticeable physical asymmetry, there can still be misalignment and increased pressure of the internal structures. Craniosacral therapy can restore normal motion, alignment, and function for your healthy growing baby.

It sounds hard to believe, but the baby's developing brain makes almost 9,000 new synaptic connections per second during the first year of life!



How is It Done?

Craniosacral therapy, as well as chiropractic care for children, is extremely gentle and is performed using acupressure, massage, light traction, and Activator (instrument) adjustments. There is no “twisting” or “popping” of the spine that is often associated with adult adjustments. Not all chiropractors are alike. Make sure to seek a chiropractor who has completed advanced pediatric and specific cranial training as well.

One last serious thought—What is your child's health worth? What would you do to help your child avoid learning, social, and emotional challenges? It is truly an honor to care for your children. It is incredibly rewarding to see

comfort return to a suffering baby (and very tired parents...) and to ultimately increase the lifelong health and potential of one human being who will affect many. 📌



Dr. Gerner graduated from Life Chiropractic College West in 2004 and has been in private practice since that time; focused on pediatric care and breastfeeding support. She founded the Good Life Learning in 2019 and currently teaches privately as well as through Life Chiropractic College West, Northeastern Chiropractic College, Gold Lactation Learning, and the ICPA. She is a wife, mother of 3 grown children, and lives in Davis, CA, with her family and rescued dogs.



TAKING THE STEP

The Prenatal Wave

A rush of
remembering,
power, and
intelligence

By Gabrielle Goldach, D.C.



While the season of life that is adulthood is solidified by rites of passage such as landing the dream job, moving to a new city (or back to the comfort of an old one,) getting a pet who requires just shy of full-time attention (good practice, right?), and perhaps even meeting a person who shows up for you as a companion, a mirror, a life partner, and a permanent pal who accepts you for all that we are and are not...nothing puts the hammer to the nail like realizing that it is time to do something completely and utterly irreversible and binding, like bringing a child into this world.

In today's fast-paced world with readily available information about quite literally anything at our fingertips, it can be overwhelming to try to understand where exactly to start when it comes to the light topic of pregnancy, birth and, well, how to do it.

So we want to make it easy. Well, easier.

With that, we would like to start by reminding you to breathe (yes, you.) Breathe! No really, take a breath.

Back in the day, men, women, and children lived in tribes. It was not the sole responsibility of two parents

Back in the day, men, women, and children lived in tribes. It was not the sole responsibility of two parents to raise a child, let alone a flock of them. There was support from aunts, uncles, cousins, mothers, brothers, sisters, elders, fathers, and maybe even some trusted animal support along the way.

to raise a child, let alone a flock of them. There was support from aunts, uncles, cousins, mothers, brothers, sisters, elders, fathers, and maybe even some trusted animal support along the way.

No one did this alone. No one kept quiet the secrets of how men and women alike (yep, men too!) prepared their bodies

in the best way possible in order to set themselves up for maximal success in bringing a healthy human into the world.

In the far more common than we discuss chance of miscarriage, there were ceremonies and rituals set in place in order to properly grieve, to recognize, and then to continue on living, which is a huge contrast to today's world in which miscarriage is not discussed as openly as perhaps it could or even should be.

Aunts and the elders of the tribe were there to support women throughout their pregnancies and their labors—not treating their pregnancies as a pathology, but as an immense show of the force of nature and godliness that lives within each and every one of us.

As chiropractors, we refer to that as innate intelligence.



We want to remind you that your body is intelligent. That your body knows exactly what to do. That you don't have to remind your body that at five weeks it is time to grow the placenta or that at week 27 it is time to develop baby's sense of smell. That your body is designed for this, no matter how trusting (or not) your Western-trained OBGYN is in that

This innate intelligence refers to the body's capacity to heal and to work for us always 100% and never anything less. There is no better show of this than during pregnancy and birth.

Have you thought about that recently?

The fact that you started as two very tiny, minuscule, cells, and have, by some miracle, grown into the beautiful, radiant, impactful, and contributing human that you are today? Take that in for a moment.

Jaw-dropping.

In a prenatal chiropractic studio or office, we like to hold this very concept at the forefront of all that we do.

We want to remind you that your body is intelligent. That your body knows exactly what to do. That you don't have to remind your body that at five weeks it is time to grow the placenta or that at week 27 it is time to develop baby's sense of smell. That your body is designed for this, no matter how trusting (or not) your Western-trained OBGYN is in that concept.

When we can move through these prenatal moments with that as the foundation, we are allowing our body to be the best home it can be for baby to grow and develop over the next 40 weeks.

Sure, we hear everywhere that we need to have a positive mindset, that we need to reduce stress levels of all sorts

(oh no, not my HIIT classes), and so on. But how does one actually do that? Life cannot just stop because there is a human growing within. We must continue on, do the dance of crossing off, only to add more to the to-do list, until we literally can do any more.

Prenatal chiropractors like to approach this from the standpoint of the nervous system.

If you've been following along, you'll recall that our nervous system controls everything in our entire body, not to mention the very perception of our entire world. Our nervous system is what's letting us know that baby is sitting a little too close to that stomach for our liking, instigating some reflux. It is what's letting us know that it is time to push, that this baby is ready to make an appearance earth side, like yesterday.

Our nervous system also perceives our stress and regulates just how we adapt to it. So, while we cannot take away the stressors of life, as chiropractors, we can help you adapt to them a bit more, gently, let's say.

When we get adjusted, we are able to relinquish a build up of "shtuff" that has gotten stored in our bodies over the years of "human-ing." It's inevitable. We are bound to pick up some things along our journey through this life that linger in tiny (or big) places in our bodies, disrupting the flow by which our brains and bodies can communicate with one another. These lingering bits may show up in the bodies of our quickly adapting and growing new mamas as sciatica, round ligament pain, tailbone discomfort, and even "oh so common" morning sickness.

As we restore the brain-body connection by way of the nervous system, we can allow for greater harmony to exist within. At our chiropractic studio, we have a saying we like to share with our mamas: Harmony in the body allows for harmony in the mind.

We strive to create more harmony in the nervous system, which allows for a more peaceful experience internally. This peaceful internal experience allows for decreased cortisol, norepinephrine, and other stress hormones that are beneficial in small bursts, but not when sustained for the duration of a pregnancy.

While we can help create a more harmonious state within mama, chemically, mentally, and emotionally, we of course cannot forget the physical harmony that is oh so critical for the end goal of birthing, as gently as possible, a vital baby.

As prenatal chiropractors, we want to focus on creating physical harmony in the pelvis. We utilize an approach called the Webster Technique, an approach that strives to balance a couple of the key pelvic players: The sacrum, the Sacrotuberous ligaments, and the Round ligaments. As more balance is created in the body, we create more space for baby to grow and move freely about, which, in turn, creates more space for mom to feel like her body is still, at least partially, her own.

As more space is created within the encapsulation that

is mama, our baby can then move into a more optimal birthing position—ideally head down and on the left side of the belly. While chiropractors do not turn breech babies, the beautiful act of creating more space for them to simply be, allows for many babies to turn on their own time—and typically just in time for birth.

What is really cool is research has shown that women who receive prenatal care using the Webster Technique have experienced markedly shorter labor times and experience decreased pain intensity during labor.

Sign me up!

So yes, of course, as chiropractors, there is a heavy emphasis on physical balance and harmony in the body during these experiential and formative months of the prenatal period.

But ultimately, what matters most is that baby's home for the first nine months of life is a safe, nourishing, and calming place to be in—physically, mentally, emotionally, chemically, and spiritually.

As a pediatric and prenatal chiropractor, it has been incredible to witness the real life result of mom and baby living synergistically for nine months. When mom takes great care of herself in all of the ways mentioned above, baby comes into this world with a much greater bandwidth to show up in the fullest expression of who they are in their earliest moments of arrival and beyond. There is no greater gift than to see our prenatal clients birth healthful children who are expressing nothing but life.

And if you didn't undergo prenatal chiropractic care from the beginning and you are just now reading this, don't worry, it is never too late to start and experience the benefit of care.

In summation, inviting a prenatal chiropractor to join you on your pre- and post-natal journey can be an absolute game changer. While we may not live in the tribal communities of yesteryear, we hope that we can be chunk't of the next best thing. We hope to occupy a space in communities in which that knowledge and wisdom can resurface and can spread like wildfire, serving as a reminder that you absolutely CAN do this. You've always been able to. Let us just help you remember. 🍷



Gabby, creator of the inside space, a family chiropractic studio, believes that true healing happens when we have the ability to feel at home within our own bodies, minds, and hearts. This holds true for the newest and oldest members on this earth alike. Gab is both passionate and humbled to be able to help people find their way back to physical, emotional, and spiritual wholeness by way of chiropractic. She is currently serving the Columbus, OH community.

Chiropractic and Children

Why Chiropractic Care for Children?

Birth is tough work for both mothers and babies. There are a lot of pressures and forces being exerted onto your baby during her journey into the world. A recent study by Viola Frymann demonstrated that 90 percent of newborns suffered the effects of birth trauma: associated strain through the neck and cranial areas following birth. Frymann, an American osteopathic doctor, studied more than 1,500 babies periodically across an eight-year period. She examined all babies within the first five days of birth; in fact, many were checked within the first 24 hours.

This study revealed that approximately:

- 10 percent of the newborn babies had perfect, freely mobile skulls or cranial mechanisms.
- 10 percent had severe trauma to the head, evident even to untrained observers.
- The remaining 80 percent all had some strain patterns in the cranial mechanism.

Birth in its many different forms can be quite traumatic. While each birth is unique, there is always a chance that the baby suffers some sort of strain due to a variety of reasons. Even the most natural births can result in trauma that goes undetected. As researcher G. Gutmann has written, "The trauma from the birth process remains an under-publicized and therefore significantly under-treated problem."

— *Compliments of Cole Bradburn, D.C.*

Safe, Gentle, Effective

More parents are discovering the many benefits associated with chiropractic care throughout childhood. Our doctors provide special care for infants, children, and pregnant mothers.



FIND A DOCTOR OF CHIROPRACTIC
DiscoverKidsHealth.org



Chiropractors who care for infants use very specific, gentle adjustments, and most ICPA doctors have taken advanced classes on specific techniques for infants.

Children's health begins in pregnancy and birth.



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What can cause birth trauma in infants?

1. Very short labor
2. Very long labor
3. The use of Pitocin to strengthen/induce uterine contractions
4. Pain medications
5. Restricted maternal birthing positions
6. Pulling or twisting on the head to deliver the infant's body
7. The use of forceps or vacuum extraction
8. Cesarean delivery

Left uncorrected, this trauma continues to impact a baby's spinal growth and development, reducing the healthy function of her nerve system. This can cause many health challenges later in life that could easily have been prevented.

Nursing difficulties, sleep disturbances, and an inability to be soothed and settled are all potential signs of spinal nerve stress in infants.

Although all infants should be checked right after birth, here are just three clear indicators to find a chiropractor who cares for infants.

1
His head tilts to one side, even after you straighten it.

2
She seems to have difficulty turning her neck to one side.

3
He has difficulty settling down or sleeping soundly.

It was a typical Monday morning at my house. The “get-everybody-out-the-door” routine had been at full throttle. The kids were dressed, fed, brushed, outfitted with backpacks and coats; their father had sped off to work, the school bus had come and gone. I stood at the kitchen sink, absentmindedly putting breakfast dishes away, occasionally remembering where my coffee cup was, sorting out my plans for the day. The only variation in our morning was the presence of my sister-in-law, Nina, who sat at the table sipping ginger tea and observing our activities with bemused interest.

Mother Rhythm

By Ann E. Michael

“Wow, I can see you really have a rhythm going here,” she observed.

“A rhythm?” I asked, sliding all the juice glasses in a row and folding up the dishtowel.

“Sure,” she said, “it’s more than a routine. It’s a rhythm. You’re still in it, even after they’ve left the house. Now you’re in the cleanup rhythm.”

I stopped for a moment, and I felt the “rhythm” stop, too.

“You know, you’re right,” I said. “I do this cleaning up thing; it’s a way to unwind after the commotion, to feel I’ve got it all in order. And meanwhile, I’m sorting out in my mind what my next tasks are. But, oh, the distractions! The phone calls, the interruptions, the stupid mistakes...”

“No wonder!” Nina exclaimed. “Anyone resents things that interrupt her rhythm. It keeps you from being effective, and from enjoying what’s going on.”

I thought about this later and realized that, despite hassles and interruptions, I often find pleasure in the pace of my days at home. And don’t tell anyone, but sometimes I even enjoy keeping house—not in a June Cleaver fantasy housewife way—but at times I feel efficient and capable. There are moments I sense the rhythm my sister-in-law observed. When that happens, even the endless nature of housekeeping (aptly described as “threading beads on a string with no knot at the end”) is not so daunting.

I think what happens is what brain researchers have identified as “flow state.” Flow is a way of engaging with



your own life and your surroundings, living in the moment. I compare it to the zen concept of awareness, but perhaps a clearer explanation is this one from Daniel Goleman, author of *Emotional Intelligence*: "...[I]n flow, the emotions are not just contained and channeled, but positive, energized, and aligned with the task at hand...a state in which people are utterly absorbed in what they are doing...awareness merged with actions. Although people perform at their peak in flow, they are unconcerned with how they are doing, their responses perfectly attuned to the changing needs of their task."

At first glance, this statement doesn't jibe with the realities of raising two active young children. That's why Nina's comment about my "rhythm" surprised me. Interruption seems a common theme throughout the long process of rearing a child, maintaining a home, keeping a sense of self intact. Housework alone is a series of distractions: Picking up the Legos® under the coffee table, I notice mashed rice grains in the rug. Are those barbeque tongs in the Tinkertoy® bin? Isn't it time to schedule another dental appointment? And when did we ever dirty so many clothes?

Small kids are demanding, period—regardless of who's doing the housekeeping. Not only do they require much in the way of basic maintenance, but much instruction, much comfort, much attention. Furthermore, their needs change as they grow. Any parent can tell you that the needs of a newborn are vastly different from the needs of a six-year-old or an adolescent. I find it hard to imagine that I am ever performing at my peak, that my responses are ever "perfectly attuned to the changing needs" of parenting. How is it possible?

It's no surprise that when our work makes little demand upon us, we get bored. Goleman describes how people get into flow when demands are enough to challenge us but not so great that we feel overwhelmed. In other words, it's a balancing act.


Keeping house, however mundane it may be, basically requires only a set of easily learned skills, which we repeat over and over. How many times in your life have you washed the breakfast dishes, put leftovers away, or swept a floor? Can you accomplish these tasks even as someone is crying that she can't find her raincoat, or asking for more juice? Chances are you can, and that most days of the week you can do them without feeling terrifically overwhelmed.

All of us manage to meet these demands, or find creative ways to refocus them. What's more, the interruptions that everyday life brings us can be incorporated into flow without missing a beat. I can stop loading the dishwasher long enough to help my 6-year-old with a particularly

When I start to experience the breaks in my rhythm, I muster my resources toward getting the rhythm back; let go of the anxieties, if possible: cut myself a little slack, and do the things I know by heart and can accomplish without missing a beat.

stubborn sock, sign my son's homework log, and pitch a clean towel into the bathroom before my husband gets out of the shower—and go right back to the boring and automatic dishwashing with no real "interruption" at all. The rhythm of flow enables us to do the routine and the difficult, without undue anxiety or boredom.

Let me quote Goleman again: "Watching someone in flow gives the impression that the difficult is easy: peak performance seems natural and ordinary." To my sister-in-law, who has no boisterous kids and can keep her own schedule, my equanimity in the face of apparent chaos seemed difficult and almost miraculous. But she had analyzed what she was seeing: The rhythm—flow—is a set of skills that led to a mastery of the situation.

Thank goodness she saw us on a "good" morning! There are plenty of days that flow is missing in our house, plenty of days I feel exhausted and unappreciated by three o'clock in the afternoon. Still, I'm grateful she made me stop and notice my own strengths. Too often I feel bogged down by the weaknesses, those distracting days when nothing goes right. Now, when I start to experience the breaks in my rhythm, I muster my resources toward getting the rhythm back. I let go of the anxieties, if possible, cut myself a little slack, and do the things I know by heart and can accomplish without missing a beat. I may not get into "flow" but I can remind myself that even housework has its moment, that stringing beads can be a relaxing task—as long as I ignore, or accept, that the other end of the string can never be knotted. 



Ann E. Michael is a poet, educator, and devoted amateur gardener who resides in eastern Pennsylvania's Lehigh Valley. She's the author of numerous poetry collections, and she posts essays, book reviews, and poetic observations on her long-running blog annemichael.blog.



How our Emotional Journey Manifests Physically in Labor

The Story of Birthing My Third Baby

By Meredith Ashton, C.D.

My story begins in the early hours of Saturday, August 21, 2021.

4:14 a.m.

I woke up to intense contractions concentrated in my lower abdomen. “Oh no”, I thought. “These feel different. Please stop, I am not ready for labor.” Internally, I spoke to my body and asked for labor to stop. I wanted a little more time to mentally prepare. I got up, used the restroom, and went back to bed. To my relief, the contractions subsided. My body knew I was not ready and gently quieted down.

8:00 a.m.

I woke up and started sobbing. I felt the familiar shift inward that happens on the cusp of labor. My contractions hadn’t returned, but I knew labor was coming and I was still feeling unready for it. I woke my husband Matt and asked him to feed our two kiddos. I needed some space.

Overwhelmed with emotion, I sobbed and sobbed. I needed to verbally process what I was feeling, so I called my doula, Destiny.

I spilled my guts over a 90-minute phone call. Remembering the intensity of labor had me feeling scared. But more than that, I was afraid of surrendering my old self to cross the threshold into parenthood again. It’s a terrifying process to let a comfortable version of yourself go to make room for something new. Giving birth to a baby is a rebirth process for me as a person, every time.

“Here I go. I am willing to have this experience.”

Each of my children has given me a deep lesson about life through the process of carrying and birthing them. My firstborn taught me about trusting myself and my intuition. My second child opened up my vision and capacity to call on the angelic support that is consistently surrounding each of us.

And this third baby taught me all about honesty. His gift is the call to face my life with honesty, to release the subtle pattern of pretending and hiding, which ultimately sabotages my progress.

You know how being brutally honest can be terrifying? That's the feeling I was overwhelmed by this Saturday morning.

Facing labor felt daunting and overwhelming. I seriously contemplated telling Matt to check me in at the local hospital and order me an epidural. Gosh, those seem really nice. At this point, I was unsure if I could follow through with my unmedicated, out-of-hospital birth plan.

My doula, Destiny, was the perfect listener and support; having her in my corner gave me so much peace and comfort to enter labor. She was the person on my birth team who saw me and knew what this birth experience meant for me and my life. Invaluable.

At the end of our call, we both affirmed that my baby was coming soon, and likely today.

Matt graciously took the kids out for the day while I spent my time gathering courage and support. I slept, cleaned, finished painting the kids' rooms, and soaked in the silence. The silence nourished me and allowed me the space to step into trust and willingness to enter labor.

My mantras:

I am willing to experience this labor.

I am willing to trust.

I am willing to be honest.

This labor is smooth.

By the end of the day, I felt ready but felt no significant contractions. Matt kept checking in and I felt a little sheepish updating him with no labor progress, only a thank you for the time and space to prepare for this birth experience.

Sunday, August 22, 2021 (happy sixth anniversary to me and Matt!)

I had some contractions in the night that slowed when I rested. With no significant contraction pattern by morning, I shrugged my shoulders and said, “I guess we’ll go to church.” During our meetings, I was on edge feeling like I

could go into labor any minute. While I feel loved and supported by the people in our community, I didn’t want my water to break in front of them.

After church and afternoon naps, a storm hit. Our two toddlers had a joint meltdown, Matt was in the middle of fixing our kitchen sink disposal (which was not going well), and my contractions started coming, one after another.

4:45 p.m.

I called downstairs, “Matt, will you make dinner? Maybe we could eat at 5 p.m. and get the kids down by 7 p.m.” All the while, secretly hoping labor would wait for my proposed timeline.

Matt called back from under the sink, “No one is making dinner down here!”

“Hmm. Okay,” I thought.

I started reading to the kids and peace settled into our home as the intense this-is-labor contractions began and reached consistent pacing of about eight minutes.

I fed the kids, Matt finished putting the kids to bed with me, and I found my ground breathing deeper into my belly with each wave.

8:00 p.m.

I called Destiny to summon my birth team and prepare the birth center for my delivery.

“This is it and I feel ready,” flashed through my mind.

Doubts about my ability to move through my unmedicated plan still lingered; the doubts faded as I whole-heartedly affirmed, “Yes, I can do this!” with every exhale.

I focused on breathing right into the belly of the sensation in my lower abdomen. With a couple of breaths, the intensity would pass, and my confidence grew with each contraction.

I could energetically feel my support team gathering as I lay there, and I was highly attuned to the nuances of the hormonal symphony of signals happening in my body. I was more sensitive and lucid during this birth than my previous two. I could feel the adrenaline and oxytocin shift as my wise body moved through each step of labor.

8:54 p.m.

We headed to the birthing center. I closed my eyes most of the drive, holding on to my affirmation with every exhale: “Yes, I can do this!” All the while hoping I was dilated at least above five centimeters.

9:09 p.m.

We arrived at the birth center. I paused outside and listened to my team set up, the music, and the water filling the tub. I paused to literally and energetically prepare to “step into my birth space.” I knew that if I stepped into that room, I would move through this experience and emerge transformed.

“Here I go. I am willing to have this experience.”

First, I labored leaning over a side table. I kicked off my flip-flops and felt Destiny’s light touch massage run up and down my back. Her gentleness made me cry as I melted into her loving support.

9:35 p.m.

I asked for my first check. My midwife reported, “Well, you are eight centimeters, 100 percent effaced, station -1, and he is OP, so we just need to turn him. He’s also slightly asynclitic and not well engaged in the pelvis.”

“Eight centimeters?! I CAN do this!” I cheered in my mind.

The information about how my baby was engaged in the pelvis explained the start/stop labor pattern I experienced the day before. At that moment, I was hyper-aware of the connection between our emotional experiences and how they manifest physically. My baby had settled into a less than ideal position, which created a start/stop labor pattern. Energetically, my body signaled to my baby a feeling of uncertainty, which created his less than ideal position. This allowed time for me to ease into labor and gather the courage I needed to finish the delivery.

This is the power we have energetically to create our reality, for better or worse.

I asked my team what to do to turn this baby. They told me: stink bug position for two contractions, exaggerated SIMS position on the left side for two contractions, and finally, stand for two contractions.

Turning my baby felt easy. For the last few months, my focus was on creating space for this baby, physically, emotionally, and energetically. As a result, my body was primed and my baby responded beautifully to the encouraging movements.

As a birth doula, I have worked with clients whose bodies did not dilate in labor. Energetically, their cervix was telling the truth of the situation even though they verbally expressed something different. Childbirth can feel overwhelming and scary when the relationship with our body isn’t anchored in safety and trust. The fear can be all-consuming and when we experience that, our bodies respond by stopping the labor process because it doesn’t feel safe. Our nervous system and hormonal system are best buds that are constantly sending messages back and forth, to affirm danger or safety. We need safety hormones like oxytocin for labor to progress.

10:20 p.m.

My baby was OA, engaged with a straight spine, and my cervix was dilated to nine centimeters.

My contractions remained 4-6 minutes apart throughout labor. I checked in with my uterus and affirmed, “I trust you.” She responded, “Yeah, just like you, I’m not going to work harder than is needed. I am going to do what I need to do.” And she did, no superfluous contractions.

Our bodies are wise.

10:46 p.m.

I hopped in the tub expecting to push my baby out in 20 minutes max. Nothing. I felt no contractions and no urge to push.

“What happens next?” I asked.

Destiny said, “You hold a baby in your arms.”

The rest of my team affirmed this was probably the rest before the big push and to enjoy it.

11:00 p.m.

My thought was, he might wait till tomorrow to be born.

After 45 minutes of standstill, my intuition told me to get out and check in with the situation. There is no reason I shouldn’t be holding my baby in my arms right now. Something was not progressing.

12:02 a.m., August 23, 2021

I asked my midwife to check my cervix again for any information.

“Oh,” she said. “You have a lip of cervix on the left side.” She was about to ask me about moving it out of the way, but it gently slipped past her fingers over my baby’s head. I rolled to one side and had two VERY intense contractions.

“Oh no,” I thought. “I am so scared of pushing. I’m not sure I can do it.”

Again, this was a physical manifestation of my emotional journey. The lip of my cervix was holding on, preventing the advancement into the next stage of labor which paralleled my fear of pushing. I engaged my pushing muscles to see if I could remember how to do it.

The shift into active pushing came after I surrendered to each wave. The expulsion reflex to get the baby out is much stronger than uterine contractions leading up to it, and requires a deep surrender to a primal instinct. This is the transformative moment of crossing the threshold into parenthood, the part of the process when our old self dies and our new self is born.

The death and rebirth cycle in living presence.

12:29 a.m.

I hopped in the tub again to push my baby out. I paused, took a breath, and sat back.

12:36 a.m.

"Ohhhhhhh, here it comes!" The urge, a half-hearted push, and I felt my bag of water pop and my baby's head start to emerge. One big push through a solid ring of fire and his head smoothly glided out.

"That better be his whole head!" my mind yelled. It was. My midwife said, "Now stand up."

"I have a head hanging out of my vagina and you want me to do what?" I was incredulous. Her request felt absolutely impossible.

I screamed, "Get him out! Get him out!"

Immediately, Matt pulled me up by the arms, I pushed my pelvis up out of the water with the baby's head. My midwife slid her arms under my pelvis to keep it elevated. I leaned back over the ledge of the tub and brought my right leg up, then my left. I was suspended in the air, parallel with the floor. I thought, "What is this? The birth Olympics?"

"Okay, push your baby out!" the midwife called.

*Our bodies respond
to our emotions, whether
we are conscious of
them or not.*

I pushed again and felt his body emerge and the giant relief that immediately followed.

12:38 a.m.

My baby was born. Why the Olympic trick? Why had my midwife asked me to stand up?

After my baby's head came out, there was no restitution or turning of the head which allows the shoulders to come out, a sign of shoulder dystocia. I had felt the urge to push stop momentarily and I replied, "I can't" when she asked for another push which signaled a "sticky shoulder." My midwife asked me to stand up to change the shape of my pelvis to allow my baby to rotate and come out. My Olympic maneuver did the trick.

Our bodies are so wise and if we listen to them, they will guide us through the process of birth and of life.

Our bodies respond to our emotions, whether we are conscious of them or not. As we check in with our emotions and energy, we can find the answers we are looking for and continue progressing on our path forward. ♡



Meredith Ashton Cohen is a Certified Holistic Birth Doula and Women's Health Coach who supports families in natural birth and understanding the menstrual cycle for overall health and productivity in every area of life. She now teaches women and

teens how to access this power of the menstrual cycle for themselves. Download your free Cycle Map and start cycle syncing today at meredithashton.com/cyclemap





TWO VITAL TRENDS FOR IMPROVING BIRTH

CHOICE-BASED METHODS

Choice-based methods for childbirth preparation stress the importance of making informed “choices” and creating a birth plan. Choice-based informational classes cover many topics, such as what to expect in pregnancy, birth, and the newborn period.

SKILLS-BASED METHODS

Skills-based methods for childbirth emphasize the importance of learning skills to “do” the activity of giving birth. Skills can be self-learned by couples in the privacy of their homes, providing parents with greater body awareness and autonomy for an empowering birth experience.

EXAMPLES OF SKILLS-BASED METHODS

Birthing Better Childbirth Preparation **BirthingBetter.org**

This online course is a skills-based method for all births, developed by moms and dads for other moms and dads.

“Start around 24 weeks onward to prepare your body for birth and learn birth and coaching skills that you adapt and adjust that are sustainable in all medical and natural births.” –BirthingBetter.org

Calm Birth **Calmbirth.org**

“Calm Birth is a mind-body skills-based childbirth education program that prepares women and their support people to be active participants in their own labor and birth.” –Calmbirth.org

BOOK: *Calm Birth/Prenatal Meditation for Conscious Childbirth*, by Robert Bruce Newman

Hypnobirthing **Hypnobirthing.com**

“Hypnobirthing is a comprehensive antenatal course that teaches parents practical and empowering techniques for achieving a satisfying, relaxing, and stress-free birth.” –Hypnobirthing.com

BOOK: *HypnoBirthing: The Mongan Method: a Natural Approach to a Safe, Easier and More Comfortable Birth*, by Marie F. Mongan

Birthing From Within **Birthingfromwithin.com**

“Birthing From Within equips birth professionals with strategies to cultivate resourcefulness and resilience, both in themselves and the parents they work with.” –Birthingfromwithin.com

Grantly Dick-Read

BOOK: *Childbirth Without Fear: The Principles and Practice of Natural Childbirth*, by Grantly Dick-Read

Lamaze Method

BOOK: *Painless Childbirth: The Lamaze Method*, by Fernand Lamaze

The Bradley Method

BOOK: *Husband-Coached Childbirth: The Bradley Method of Natural Childbirth*, by Robert A. Bradley



BIRTH SKILLS

The Importance of the Chiropractor

By the Pathways Team

Webster chiropractors can play a revitalizing and inspiring role in a new childbirth conversation. Regardless of a pregnant mother's risks, choices, or unexpected circumstances, resources exist that can be offered to help the birthing family take charge of their birth experience in all births. Simply offering the message that pregnant couples can self-learn pragmatic skills to use in the activity of birth, allows any family to approach birth with newfound confidence. Please refer families to the list of skills-based resources found on the accompanying page.

When pregnant, it is normal and beneficial to self-learn birth skills and use those skills in the activity of giving birth, no matter the circumstances.

Creating a Skills-Based Birth Plan (Tips for Parents)

Pregnant mothers and their partners can choose one or more skills-based resources to learn in the weeks and months leading up to birth. In partnership with their birth providers, pregnant women can ask that the skills they learn be noted by the birth professionals at each appointment. When the activity of birth commences, they can ask that their providers acknowledge the use of skills, and to remind us to use the skills if any challenges arise, encouraging us in our continued activity of giving birth.

Learning skills and sharing a "Skills-Based Birth Plan" with the obstetrician, midwife, or doula, helps assure that the birth team is congruent with the mother's efforts. Birth skills help mothers achieve a positive birth experience, by providing an underlying sense of coherence amid the stresses of pregnancy and birth. Learning and applying skills for birth helps create a sense of comprehensibility, manageability, and meaningfulness during the birth experience. Birth is more than a physiological event that "happens to us." It is something we can actively engage in using skills, for the mutual benefit of ourselves and our babies.

What are Birth Skills?

Within these skills-based resources, you will find techniques and methods to utilize breath and relaxation to better cope with the pain and intensity of birth. In addition, you will learn practical ways to prepare the soft tissue of the birth canal; learn methods to soften the muscles within the pelvis; and how to position the body to create greater space for the baby in labor.

In addition to the chiropractor's ability to balance the pelvis and support greater physiological function within the body—self-learning birth skills equips the birthing family with knowledge to work with the baby's efforts during birth, in a conscious and empowered way.

Birth providers often will say: "I love working with skilled moms at birth!"

Mothers who learn skills will often say: "Nobody knew about my birth better than me."

Skilled fathers often say, "I'm so grateful for the skills we learned; they allowed me to play a truly helpful part in the birth of our child."



Purpose of Chiropractic Care in Pregnancy

Chiropractic Care During Pregnancy and the Webster Technique

How can a chiropractic adjustment affect baby positioning and birth outcome? By improving the mother's pelvic balance. When the mother's pelvis is out of alignment, the ligaments that connect the pelvis to the uterus increase their tension (tone), resulting in a distortion to the baby's environment.

For the baby, the surrounding walls of the uterus tighten with pelvic imbalance, becoming more and more like tight bedsheets that restrict movement. The chiropractic adjustment to the pelvis releases tension to the ligaments and uterus, allowing the baby to move freely and assume the best possible position throughout pregnancy.

Many women are seeking ICPA chiropractors and the Webster Technique throughout their pregnancy. For every stage of pregnancy, this adjustment reduces interference to the nervous system—a vital benefit to improve physiology for both the mother and her baby. When a mother's physiological function is at its best, her baby's development is optimized. Balancing the pelvic bones, muscles, and ligaments and improving normal physiology sets the stage for a natural birth.

Chiropractic care and the Webster Technique may allow for safer, easier births!



Do you want to **optimize**
your pregnancy and birth?

FIND YOUR WEBSTER-CERTIFIED DOCTOR HERE
ICPA4KIDS.org



More and more women are discovering the many benefits associated with chiropractic care in pregnancy. Chiropractors respect the body's natural design and function and support your desire for a safer, easier birth.



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Three Components of a Successful Physiological Birth

—WILLIAMS OBSTETRICS TEXTBOOK

POWER

1 The nervous system (Power) operates in all body processes, including childbirth. For birth to proceed as it was naturally designed to, the nervous system must facilitate the transmission of information through the body. By removing interferences and imbalances to the nervous system, chiropractic care helps lead to a normal, physiological birth.

PASSAGE

2 For the baby to descend through the birth canal (Passage), the balance of the mother's pelvis is vitally important. With chiropractic care, the muscles and ligaments of the pelvis and uterus are free to move and function for the benefit of the mother and the baby. The result is greater ease and comfort in pregnancy and birth.

PASSENGER

3 The baby (Passenger) wants to get into the best possible position to descend through the birth canal. The movements inherent to the birthing baby can be positively supported when the mother's nervous system is optimally functioning and her pelvis is balanced. Birth is a cooperative endeavor, where the mom and the baby play vitally connected roles.



Childhood EDUCATION

How early academic training stifles children's learning

By Peter Gray, Ph.D.

If there was ever a time to attend seriously to research concerning effects of early childhood education, it is now. If President Biden's plan for universal state-run preschool for 3- and 4-year-olds is approved, the results could be disastrous. I have previously summarized several well-controlled studies showing that academic training in preschool or in kindergarten, while improving test scores in the short term, causes long-term harm. One of those, which bears reviewing here before I move on to a more recent study in Tennessee, was a government-sponsored study conducted in Germany in the 1970s.

The German government was trying to decide whether it would be a good idea to start teaching academic skills in kindergarten rather than maintain kindergarten as purely a place for play, stories, singing, and the like, as it had always been. So, they conducted a

controlled experiment involving 100 kindergarten classrooms. They introduced some academic training into 50 of them and not the other 50.

The graduates of academic kindergartens performed better on academic tests in first grade, but the difference subsequently faded, and by fourth grade they were performing worse than the others on every measure in the study. Specifically, they scored worse on tests for reading and arithmetic and were not as well-adjusted socially and emotionally than the controls.

The Germans, unlike we Americans, paid attention to the science. They followed the data and abandoned plans for academic training in kindergarten. They have stuck with that decision ever since. Today we have much more evidence of long-term harm of early academic training than the Germans had in the 1970s, yet we persist in such training in

Some children, on their own, become skilled at reading or with numbers well before 6, but that's because it was their own decision to do so and they did so largely through their own efforts. There is a huge difference between self-chosen learning and that which is forced.





By third grade those in the Pre-K group were significantly more likely to have been diagnosed with a learning disorder and had a higher rate of school rule violations than those in the control group.

almost every public kindergarten in the country. Worse still, we now even teach academics in many, if not most, preschools! As a people, we are pretty good at putting our heads in the sand to avoid looking at data that run counter to our prejudices.

Now I turn to newly reported findings from the first well-controlled, long-term study that has ever been conducted of a state-wide publicly supported preschool program in the United States—the Tennessee Pre-K Program (Durkin et al., 2022). If this study doesn't put the nail in the coffin of academic training to little children, it's hard to imagine what will.

The Tennessee Pre-K Program

The purpose of the program was to provide free, “high quality” preschool for children whose family income was below the poverty level. Great effort went into designing the program. Unlike in many other Pre-K programs, the teachers would all have at least a bachelor's degree plus early childhood certification and would be paid on par with elementary school teachers and have the same benefits. The National Institute for Early Education Research (NIEER) evaluated the curriculum early on and judged it to be among the best.

Based on the prejudice that early academic training would give the children a boost for their subsequent schooling, the program was heavy on academics. The researchers who studied the program, describe it as follows: “The program provides a minimum of 5.5 hours of instructional time per day, five days per week. Classes have a maximum of 20 students and are taught by state-licensed teachers using one of 22 curricula approved by the Tennessee Department of Education.”

I can't help but insert here that this may have looked good to the NIEER, but to me it looks like torture. Five and a half hours of instruction per day for 4-year-olds! I hope the term “instructional time” is being used loosely and

does not mean, literally, that instruction was occurring all that time.

How the Researchers Studied the Program

The long-term study of the program was conducted by researchers at Vanderbilt University, including Kelley Durkin, Mark Lipsey, Dale Farran, and Sarah Wiesen. For purposes of the study, they focused only on those preschool centers where more families who met the poverty criterion wanted to enroll their child than could be accommodated. In those areas, a random procedure was used to determine which children could enroll and which could not. Those who, by what was essentially a flip of the coin, could not enroll constituted the control group. So, this was a randomized, controlled experiment—the queen of methodologies.

All the children in the study had to be 4 years old by September 30 of the preschool year. In addition, to be part of the experimental group, those chosen for the program had to follow up by enrolling and then going on to a public elementary school in Tennessee. In all, nearly 3,000 children met these criteria and provided the samples used for data analysis. The procedure was a bit more complicated than I am describing here, but what I want to emphasize is that this is a very well-controlled study of large samples of children. The data for the study came from assessments made at various times in the children's school career, from kindergarten through sixth grade.

What the Researchers Found

The results leading up to third grade were reported in an article by Lipsey et al, in 2018. In brief, the Pre-K group (children receiving early academic training) performed better than the control group on all academic measures at the beginning of kindergarten, but the control group soon caught up, and by third grade, the control group performed better

on all academic measures. Moreover, by third grade, those in the Pre-K group were significantly more likely to have been diagnosed with a learning disorder and had a higher rate of school rule violations than those in the control group.

The new report (from 2022) reveals that the advantages to the control group were even greater in sixth grade than in third grade. Here is a summary of the sixth-grade findings:

- On all the achievement tests—which were in reading, math, and science—the control group scored higher than the Pre-K group. The differences in means were small to moderate in size, but in every case, the advantage to the control group was highly significant statistically and the differences were all larger in sixth grade than they had been in third grade.
- By sixth grade, 14.6% of the children in the Pre-K group, compared to 8.4% in the control group, had been diagnosed as having a learning disorder sufficient to require an IEP (Individualized Education Program). Stated differently, those in the Pre-K group were 74% more likely to have been diagnosed with a learning disorder than those in the control group. (Note: The researchers also used a different way of analyzing the results, in which the observed percentages were weighted to account for differences in the demographic profiles of those in the experiment and those in the full state-wide program. When this was done, the difference was even greater: The Pre-K graduates were a bit more than twice as likely to have been diagnosed with a learning disorder compared to the controls.)
- By sixth grade, 27.3% of the Pre-K group, compared to 18.5% of the controls, had a record of at



least one school rule violation. Moreover, 16.1% of the Pre-K group, compared to 10.9% of the controls, had a record of at least one major offense such as fighting or bringing a weapon to school. Stated differently, by both indices, those in the Pre-K group were 48% more likely to have committed a behavioral offense at school than those in the control group.

What Could Explain the Harmful Effects of the Pre-K Program?

So, the major findings of the study are that this expensive, carefully planned Pre-K program caused, by sixth grade, reduced performance on all academic achievement tests, a sharp increase in learning disorders, and much more rule violation and behavioral offenses than occurred in the control group.

It is worth noting that, according to the best estimates available to the researchers, 63% of those in the control group were cared for only at home prior to kindergarten, 13% attended Head Start, 16% enrolled in a private childcare center, 5% had a combination of Head Start and private childcare, and 3% were unaccounted for. It would be interesting to know how those cared for just at home compared to those in Head Start or private daycare in the outcome measures, but that data is not available. Remember, these were all families living below the poverty line, the very families that, according to common prejudices, are least equipped to provide a good learning environment for children.

The most striking finding in the study, to me, is the large increase in diagnosed learning disorders in the Pre-K group. It seems possible that this increase is the central finding, though the authors of the report don't make that claim. Previously, I've discussed evidence that learning disorders can be produced by early academic pressure, and that being

labeled with a learning disorder can, through various means, become a self-fulfilling prophecy and result in poorer academic performance than would have occurred without the diagnosis. It would be interesting to know if the deficit in the achievement test scores was entirely the result of poor performance by those diagnosed with a learning disorder.


A related possibility is that the early academic training resulted in shallow learning of the skills, sufficient to pass the Pre-K and kindergarten tests but which interfered with subsequent deeper learning. That could account for the finding that the deficit produced by Pre-K grew over the years. As years go on, success on tests may depend increasingly on real understanding, so anything that blocks such understanding might show up more in later grades than earlier ones.

Another possibility is that the Pre-K academic grind and pressure caused children to develop a hatred and rebellious attitude toward school. This might account for the increased rule-breaking and offensive behavior of the Pre-K group as they went through elementary school. The same rebelliousness might also have caused the children to take their lessons less seriously, which could, over the years, result in an even-greater gap in test scores between them and the controls.

Still another possibility is that the deficit shown by the Pre-K group was caused not so much by what was done in Pre-K as by what did not happen there. Four-year-olds need lots of time to play, create, socialize, take initiative, figure things out on their own, and learn to manage themselves. The time spent in academic training is time that they cannot spend on learning the much more important skills that come from self-directed activities. Perhaps the Pre-K children were less prepared for school, especially the later grades of school, because they had not had the usual opportunities to learn how to manage themselves before starting school. This suggestion is consistent with previous research

showing better long-term outcomes for play-based preschools and kindergartens than for those that have an academic component.

I suspect that all these hypotheses have some validity. I'm curious to know what your guesses might be about the cause or causes of the long-term harm of Pre-K academic training. Regardless of the mechanism, it is now abundantly clear that we should stop even thinking about teaching academics to tots. We should finally make the decision that the Germans made half a century ago and stop formal academic training for children below age 6.

Some children, on their own, become skilled at reading or with numbers well before 6, but that's because it was their own decision to do so and they did so largely through their own efforts. There is a huge difference between self-chosen learning and that which is forced. 



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The Activity of Birth

By Wintergreen

There are many resources available that support our ability to give birth. One important resource that is growing in awareness is the learning of birth skills, such as breathing, relaxation, and communication skills, as well as body and pelvic-centered skills. These skills teach us how to soften, open up, position, and prepare the “passage-way” for birth. All birth skills encourage a knowledge of how to cope and manage through the stresses of the activity of birth, leading to more empowering birth experiences.

Body Skills

Mothers and fathers who learn positioning and body-centered skills will know and understand the pregnant body with greater awareness leading up to birth, allowing both to work together as a team as the birth unfolds. When parents learn and practice birth skills, such as pelvic awareness, tissue softening, and body positioning leading up to birth, they instill hope and courage for countless circumstances, preventing potential difficulties from becoming problems. Here are two stories that demonstrate how important birth skills can be for women in labor:

“In a birth where a woman was advised to get off her back in labor, she was encouraged, and desired to squat. Unfortunately, after many hours of

pushing, she had a cesarean section. She was quite upset and felt that she had done everything possible. Wishing to have more children, she hoped for a vaginal birth next time. When she learned the birth skill of “mapping” her pelvis, she discovered that she was quite narrow between her sit bones and very long front to back. Working with various body positions, she discovered that squatting contracted her muscles that run from the sit bones to the sacrum, thus immobilizing her sacrum. Knowing this, she found positions that would permit her sacrum to be mobile. During her next birth, she paid attention internally and readjusted her body positions to stay open, subsequently birthing a larger baby vaginally.

One mother who had given birth to two very large babies, felt that her second baby had been stuck at one point, but she couldn’t quite explain why. On mapping her own pelvis, she found she had plenty of room, but when she went through the body positions, she found that many of the positions she had labored in before, actually made her feel “closed.”

In her third birth, instead of walking (which made her feel closed) she sat on a chair, having first spread her sit bones (another skill she had learned). She fell asleep for several hours, waking for contractions and feeling good about her progress. She then woke up, and chose to lie on one side. One of her helpers lifted her leg, but she felt that this closed her.

She wanted her leg lifted “just so,” and then no further. After several contractions she said, “The baby isn’t coming down like this,” got off the bed and knelt on one knee, bending forward. The baby’s head then birthed after the second contraction, but was having difficulty turning (to bring the shoulders down). Remembering to keep her baby over her pelvic outlet, she then straightened her upper body and the baby slid right out. This woman felt that she was able to position her body with the knowledge and practice of body positioning skills and pelvic awareness.”

Keeping your pelvis “open” during labor will naturally assist your baby. In addition, you and your partner can consider the baby’s position, aligning the mother’s body for their benefit.

As more families discover the benefits of learning birth skills—benefits that include greater mother-father relationships and family empowerment—a shift in the birth conversation will unfold. Rather than a focus on what “happened to us” despite

our hopes and wishes, our story will naturally highlight the things we “did for ourselves” during birth, regardless of difficult circumstances.

One common agreement about childbirth today is that birth-workers, especially midwives and doulas, are exhausted trying to help pregnant mothers navigate the complex systems of birth. It is our expectation that a chiropractor-initiated movement to inspire families to become

skilled for the activity of birth will lead to a greater “partnership model” between pregnant couples and their birth providers, and will advance a vital healing in the birth conversation. The knowledge and practice of birth skills help empower the family, which is where the heart of healing birth happens, so that birth can become the place where we heal the world. ☯

—Wintergreen, BirthingBetter.org



The *Mental Health* of our *Kids*

Over the past several years, our kids have largely been “removed” from their lives. Although we’re grateful for the slow pace and the one-on-one time, there is great concern over the impact that this has had on the brain development of our kids.

Our neurodevelopment depends on critical windows of time in which certain life experiences will act as a trigger for brain maturation. We are genetically designed to express appropriate brain development in response to specific interactions with our environment. These critical windows exist in age-specific clusters from birth until our early to mid-twenties.

How we experience our world in the first two decades shapes our neurological outcomes. Epigenetics teaches us that we have specific genes responsible for healthy development, but, these genes can remain dormant in the absence of specific cues. Missed critical windows will affect how we perceive our environment and how we interact with our world both physically and emotionally.

The birth of specific brain cells, beginning with the bottom of the brain (more primitive) and working up to the

top front of the brain (responsible for cognition, behavior, and emotional well-being) are dependent on input through the senses. This means that everything from tummy time and eye contact as an infant, to rolling over, sitting up and crawling, to jumping and falling as toddlers, to emotional, social, and movement experience into our 20’s will cause the genes of healthy development to be “turned on.” Some of this continues until we’re 48 years old, but the meat and potatoes happens before age 25.

Our “progenitor cells” are descendants of stem cells. These have a pre-programmed destiny to differentiate into brain cells, which are necessary if we’re to become healthy and well functioning. The catch is that this destiny specific differentiation is experience dependent!

Experiences of input through the senses, movement, and emotional connection are required for all of this to take place. We have to fall, jump, get dirty, crash, run, make eye contact, interact, be loud, be heard, be social, be certain, be empowered, and build trust. These aren’t just “healthy concepts”...they are genetically required. This the concern over experiencing a year on the couch or on a bed, with



By Anik Saint-Martin, D.C.

screen-led academics...all packaged in fear, avoidance and isolation.

Several years ago, the CDC reported that 1 in 6 kids in the United States had a diagnosed neurological disorder. After what our kids have gone through since then, it appears that the diagnosis of ADHD, ADD, and mental health challenges are on the rise. So what do we do now? The following is a list of dangers to watch for and tools to implement to help our kids find and catch up on “neurological nourishment.”

Due to our present circumstance, there appears to be an increase in the prescribing of drugs like Ritalin. In a paper, written in 2013 in *Med Hypothesis* entitled *Methylphenidate and the juvenile brain: enhancement of attention at the expense of cortical plastic-*

ity?, the authors look at young rats exposed to low doses of methylphenidate (Ritalin). The authors note that these drugs may alter normal brain development by interfering with these critical windows of brain maturation, particularly in the prefrontal cortex.

It is in the prefrontal cortex that we develop motor skills, which are connected to language acquisition, problem solving, memory, emotion, gratification, planning, and personality development. It's confusing that these drugs don't come with extensive informed consent for parents. Currently, 8% of children under the age of 15 are on a drug like Ritalin, with boys (1 in 7) being twice as likely to be diagnosed and “treated.”

In our hearts, we know that our kids are perfect. They may not be able to sit there for eight hours a day quietly reading and not moving. They may feel the need to crash and jump and be loud. When they can't, they may express frustration. They may become defiant. I know that's what happens to me when I feel stuck. This doesn't necessarily make us dysfunctional, maybe it actually means we're alive and paying attention to our innate needs. Maybe they're telling us that we owe them the finding of another

We have to fall, jump, get dirty, crash, run, make eye contact, interact, be loud, be heard, be social, be certain, be empowered, and build trust.

way. Maybe, the fact that they don't fit the mold is a gift and not a disorder. Maybe we should look them in the eyes and tell them this.

Protecting them from certain foods, well, not foods, but the chemicals in foods which have a similar effect to drugs, is also big on the radar.

Watching out for processed foods, including those with preservatives, MSG, and food coloring (particularly Red #40 and Yellow #5), is necessary. Many studies have looked at how these chemicals are brain altering, and can interfere with healthy function. In Europe, for example, foods with coloring must come with the warning label that “coloring agents can have an adverse effect on activity and attention in children.” Take a look at natural dyes like beet juice and turmeric as an alternative.

For brain development and neurological harmony, our critical windows must let in the following:

Sleep (no screens in bedrooms), proper food, movement, falling, crashing, emotional connection, outside play, jumping, ball throwing and catching, running, balance recruiting play (remember that they need to fall), and limited screen time.

Our genetic code knows what it's doing. It behooves us to respect it, nourish it, and not interfere with the process. Our kids deserve the certainty that, given the proper foundation, they can trust in the expression of their health and their potential to flourish. 🍀



Anik Saint-Martin, D.C., received a B.A. in psychology from Carleton University, in Ottawa, Canada. She met Dr. Darin, her husband and favorite chiropractor, at New York Chiropractic College where she graduated cum laude with a Doctor of Chiropractic degree in 2000. She became certified through the International Chiropractic Pediatric Association in 2014 and received a Diplomate in Pediatric Chiropractic in 2016. Dr. Anik is the mother of two vibrant teenage boys, both of whom have been her greatest teachers. You can find her blog at yourtruenorth.com.

HOMESCHOOLING

Don't let it scare
you, children are
learning all the time.
By Patrick Farenga



Children learn deeply from conversation, play, touch, feelings, animals, nature, their environment, and other people, young and old.

I think homeschooling is getting a bad rap from the past 2 years. Parents are pulling their hair out trying to teach their children at home and cursing "homeschooling" as a result. However, participating in daily classroom lessons sent from school to do at home is *remote learning*, not homeschooling. However, for most of the public, homeschooling is simply doing school at home and now that perception is further primed by our school's need to supply conventional schoolwork through the internet. This is why many homeschoolers use the word *unschooling* to describe what they do: Learning at home doesn't have to occur only at home nor resemble learning in school.

Experienced homeschoolers and those who study education alternatives know you don't need to use grades, standardized test regimens,

and school's seat-time metrics to judge how well a child is learning. You know because the child can demonstrate knowledge and mastery of topics by performing and documenting their ability to do the science, history, math, and so on.

Homeschoolers see how reading, writing, science, and math are integrated and learned outside of school settings—often in the course of participating in the tasks of daily life (fixing things, cleaning, cooking, using the computer, and so on).

Children want to join us in our efforts to make things, do things, learn things, and we can invite them. If there are things children want to learn that parents can't help with, they find school classes, outside help from friends or relatives, online courses, books, videos, or tutors to help them.



Learning at home doesn't have to occur only at home nor resemble learning in school.

Duplicating the Problems of School at Home

When your children resist their schoolwork, they will probably ask why they have to learn something that you don't remember from school and that you're struggling to teach them. If you say, "Because it will teach you self-discipline" or "Because the school said so," or some other excuse, that doesn't truly answer their question. Children eventually get the

message that though we adults don't really believe this particular thing is important, we're forcing them to do it "just because."

Children can revolt from such treatment in school—silently through self-harm, openly with their parents and society, or through passive-aggressive tactics.

For example, Chinese students in 2020, learning the state curriculum at home, had to download and use

an app called Dingtalk for all their schoolwork. The students organized a large-scale effort to post one-star reviews of Dingtalk to get it removed from the Apple App Store. This effort was copied by American students who targeted Zoom and Classroom apps.

The students made the news but lost the fights, but their fights are worth noting for their creativity and effort. What students present to us externally as compliance is not necessarily what's happening inside them: Resentment, anger, humiliation, revenge for being made to do busy-work. Those are likely the thoughts and emotions percolating inside in them.

We don't have to teach nor structure schooling so it feels constraining to so many students, which is why I



Homeschooling shows us the many possibilities that exist when children are reintegrated into the real world.

"What is most important and valuable about the home as a base for children's growth into the world is not that it is a better school than the schools but that it isn't a school at all."
—John Holt

see homeschooling as a hopeful path for education. Homeschooling shows us the many possibilities that exist when children are reintegrated into the real world. In the words of George Bernard Shaw, "What we want to see is the child in pursuit of knowledge, and not knowledge in pursuit of the child."

Since schooling seems stuck in the economic and social models of the 19th century—education as a factory where schools manufacture children into educated adults—shouldn't we be updating our model?

Being Me and Also Us

The curriculum post 2019 cannot be ignored. It is forcing us to face how we live alone and together, how we can provide socialization and privacy at home and in the world. This is a difficult dynamic for homeschoolers in the best of times, but it could easily be mitigated with visits to friends, family, and events. Curtailed socialization can be disastrous for children's learning far more than missing time in school. Children learn deeply from conversation, play, touch, feelings, animals, nature, their environment, and other people, young and old.

Children learn more from how they are treated by adults than by what they are taught by adults, and it's refreshing

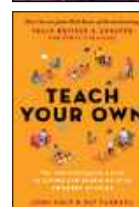
to see parents who see the value of supporting their children's self-directed learning and efforts.

In *Teach Your Own*, John Holt wrote:

"What is most important and valuable about the home as a base for children's growth into the world is not that it is a better school than the schools but that it isn't a school at all. It is not an artificial place, set up to make 'learning' happen and in which nothing but 'learning' ever happens. It is a natural, organic, central, fundamental institution, one might easily say and rightly say the foundation of all other institutions. We can imagine and indeed we have had human societies without schools, without factories, without libraries, museums, hospitals, roads, legislatures, courts, or any of the institutions which seem so indispensable and a permanent part of modern life. We might someday even choose, or be obliged, to live once again without some or all of these. But we cannot even imagine a society without homes, even if these should be no more than tents, or mud huts, or holes in the ground. What I am trying to say, in short, is that our chief educational problem is not find a way to make homes more like school. If anything, it is to make schools less like school." 🐾



Patrick Farenga continues the work of author/teacher John Holt, first as publisher of *Growing Without Schooling* magazine from 1985 until 2001, and now at the website johnholt-gws.com. Farenga is also a founding member of the Alliance for Self-Directed Education: Self-directed.org





Germs get a bad rap,
but are they really as
predatory as **we think**?

German New Medicine:

I Stopped Believing in Germ Theory to Improve My Health



By Meg Anzalone

Germs get a bad rap, but are they really as predatory as we think? I conquered my fear of the invisible boogeyman inside my child's nose, and my health is better for it. A health paradigm called German New Medicine (GNM) helped me stop being scared of things I can't see.

Ah, cold season. It comes for us all, especially those with tiny human beings sneezing directly into our eyes, or so I thought before discovering GNM, a scientific theory as controversial as it is obscure. I used to feel defeated and hopeless when someone in my family got sick because I took it as a forgone conclusion that I would also get ill, due to the theory of contagion. Developing a body-positive mindset and separating my health from the people around me is helping me stave off illness this cold season.

So far I've made it through hosting our large events during the Christmas season without contracting anything yucky from my friends and relations. I attribute this to my new mindset: I refuse to see my body as prey.

What I learned about GNM

So what is German New Medicine, exactly? GNM refers to the discoveries of Dr. Ryke Geerd Hamer (1937-2017). Dr. Hamer's discoveries originated from a personal crisis: In 1978, Dr. Hamer's son Dirk was accidentally shot and killed. Shortly afterward, Dr. Hamer developed testicular cancer. He believed that the development of the cancer was due to the unexpected loss of his son. Dr. Hamer posited that all disease originates from a "conflict shock," and that specific types of conflict shock lead to disease in specific organs. Over his career, he amassed in excess of 40,000 patient case studies all corroborating his findings.

Dr. Neal Robert Smookler, a GNM practitioner, describes a conflict shock as a "Biological Catch-22." It's an unexpected biological dilemma that threatens an individual's self-preservation, but that cannot be resolved right now. The body enters "an emergency adaptation response" to aid the psyche in resolving the conflict. Once the conflict shock is resolved, we experience "healing symptoms" or "disease" in our bodies. These "healing symptoms" are part of what Dr. Hamer calls a Special Biological Program of Nature designed to return our bodies to homeostasis.

Current medical practice views the body as something that constantly needs fixing and plays "whack-a-mole" with disease, seemingly causing another disease by "treating" the first. In contrast, Dr. Hamer stressed that the body has remarkable self-healing capabilities, that it is wise, and that nothing it does is meaningless.

Do Germs Always Mean I'm Going to Get Sick?

Dr. Hamer discovered that colds are the result of a "stink conflict," i.e., an actual bad smell, a stressful situation ("this stinks!"), separation from a loved one ("losing their scent"), and/or fear of a predator ("needing to sniff out a predator"). A cough stemming from the lung alveoli is the result of a "death-fright conflict," for example, a situation that "knocks the wind out of you," or makes you "gasp."

If this sounds ridiculously literal and cutesy that our bodies would assign smell issues to the nose and "gasp" issues to the lungs, it's because our bodies are ridiculously literal. This is not the "mind" with all its highfalutin metaphors, this is the "lizard brain" we're talking about here.



Bacteria and microorganisms are ubiquitous and vital aspects of nature. To fear them is to make an enemy of your own body and the **whole world**.

According to GNM, this also means that colds are not contagious! Dr. Hamer states that microscopic germs, rather than being the cause of illness, are the “clean-up crew.” Much like police, they are always on the scene at an accident, but they didn’t cause the crash.

Dr. Hamer isn’t alone in his insistence that bacteria and viruses are nothing to fear. Terrain Theory holds that the issue isn’t pathogens, but toxicity buildup. Even Western medicine, with its zealous overuse of the PCR test during the Covid-19 shutdowns, has glossed over the suspiciously large number of “asymptomatic carriers” we’ve uncovered over the past three years. You know, people just chillin’ with some super deadly mini-beasts in their systems, walking around unfazed, often without even knowing! It’s almost as if the virus doesn’t cause the illness. While others are arguing over the origins of viruses, the inaccuracy of the PCR test, and whether or not masks, lockdowns, and vaccines are safe or effective, my main takeaway is that **I don’t have to get sick from germs!**

We can simply coexist, as millions of “asymptomatic carriers” around the world have already attested.

Dr. Melissa Sell, a GNM practitioner, says this on the subject of germs: “Bacteria and microorganisms are ubiquitous and vital aspects of nature. To fear them is to make an enemy of your own body and the whole world.” Dr. Sell describes bacteria, fungi, and other parasites as “microsurgeons” that decompose tissue that is no longer needed. So, according to GNM, the bacteria and viruses that live inside us are always there, there are more of them inside us than there are people on this earth, and they are there to help clean up the damage from the conflict shock in the affected area of the body.

My Experiment

I realized that my fear and hopelessness in the face of the invisible germ predators in my children’s noses were putting me on high alert. After changing my mindset—recognizing when I was overwhelmed, and no longer believing that I must get sick because of a contagion—I stopped getting colds from my kids!

The first time I attempted this thought experiment was back in October, when my family was set to go on a whirlwind weekend road trip to my alma mater for my 10-year homecoming. Everyone knows you get sick after travel. With two preschoolers and a baby piled into the back of a compact car for 12 hours both ways, my husband and I knew that this was going to be hard, but we weren’t going to fight about it.

That mantra, as it turns out, was integral to my success in not getting sick after the road trip. We calmly cared for kids in meltdown, we took being unable to check into our Airbnb at 1 a.m. in stride, we handled finding a babysitter on campus at the last minute with clear eyes and even tempers, we encouraged each other the whole way. We got home late on Sunday, dog tired, happy for the experience, and happy to be home. After a day of rest—because your body doesn't initiate the healing symptoms until the conflict is over—my kids started getting the tell-tale runny noses. But this time, I was prepared. Rather than go down the spiral of contagion fear, I told myself, "This is not my conflict. I handled this trip well. My kids took it rough and they are healing, but I do not need to be afraid of my kids' boogers."

Over and over, during the long, full days of caring for them, I reminded myself that I had fun, I was calm, and I don't need to be afraid. The result was that I didn't "catch" the sickness, something that has honestly never happened before in my five years of parenting.

Tips for Trying at Home

If you would like to try this thought experiment at home, I've compiled some helpful tips:

1. Recognize and reduce overwhelm

This cannot be overstated: Recognizing and removing environmental stressors whether they be things, people, or situations is essential for health. We, as a species, are not meant to be always "on," always productive, always triggered, always emotional, or always performing. Adopting a good circadian rhythm, getting natural stimulation outdoors, expending physical energy, connecting with family, and eating nutritious food help keep us biologically grounded.

2. Downgrade your problem

If you're unable to avoid an unexpected stinky, stressful, or predatory situation, like travel mishaps, prying family members over the holidays, or sudden government shut-downs that want to control everything you say, see, and do, try downgrading through partial resolutions, an attitude change, or distractions. Downgrading should be done both during the conflict and after it has resolved for the best results. For instance, we recently got our hallway painted, and because our house was built in the 1960s we had to use oil paint on the chair molding, a super uncomfortable smell. We opened windows, circulated air, and went outside, but it was impossible to completely avoid the smell as it was drying. According to GNM, our bodies use our emotions as a GPS system to assess threats, so not letting our feelings spiral is actually helpful for our health. I talked to my body, "Yeah, that paint smells pretty bad. It will be over soon. I can move further away and shut the door."

3. Believe in your body, and stop believing in snot

Dr. Sell says to "Speak empowering words over yourself. My body heals quickly. I'm strong and healthy. I'm good at what I do. I trust myself. Your inner words create your life."

Protect your mindset. Your mind and your body have more control over your life than you realize, and that includes your health. If you're looking for a calmer perspective to pandemic hysteria, GNM might be your antidote. Carolin Markolin's online compilation of Dr. Hamer's work (learninggnm.com) is incredibly helpful, as is the index of diseases for perusing. If you're on Facebook, look into Dr. Neal Robert Smookler's GNM Facebook group. Or go follow Dr. Melissa Sell on Instagram. She's known for her punchy, perceptive one-liners and makes easy-to-follow YouTube videos.

Protect your mindset.
Your mind and your body have more control over your life than you realize, and that includes **your health.**

Closing Thoughts

Recognizing that my body has a dogged will and unfathomable capability to protect me has turned my understanding of health on its head. As a mom, I can't help coming into contact with little coughs and baby sneezes, but choosing not to be afraid of them has made the winter a lot more tolerable. While I'm not about to ask someone to cough in my face, I don't fear respiratory illnesses anymore. Now, my reaction to seeing someone sneeze is empathy, not fright. 🧡



Meg Anzalone is the lead singer of The Blood Harmonies. She writes hauntingly beautiful songs for freedom-lovers, ethics-powered women, and natural-minded mamas. Go to thebloodharmonies.com to be notified when her song *Wild and Free* releases.



LOSE THE LICENSE

Why Doula Certification is **Not** Part of the Birth Work Revolution

by Margo Nelson

Does something about doula certification just not sit right with you? Welcome to the club! Sometimes I genuinely forget that being anti-certification and pro-autonomy is still a radical position to take. Thankfully, I am a part of some pretty mainstream birth worker groups so every now and then I get a stark reminder—oof! This article is for you if you have ever wondered why certification just feels...off, and is especially for you if you are looking for something to share with others who don't understand why you might feel that way!

How Licensing Leads to Eradication


The cultural beliefs in the US are so bizarre. We are supposedly rooted in the idea of individualism and that each of us has the power to shape our own destiny. Conversely, we are taught to rely on the government and experts to protect us from other people by way of permits, certifications, licenses, and laws...

How did we get into this birth mess we are in: the high cesarean rates, total disrespect for birthing women, the near eradication of traditional birth attendants (midwives and other birth helpers)? The way all of this came to pass was through the application of rules, regulations, certifications, and licensure. Read the books *Making Midwives Legal*, and *Birthing Justice: Black Women, Pregnancy and Childbirth* for some background on what happened to Black Midwifery in the US as well as the resurgent midwife movement of the 70s and 80s. In both instances, the dominant group methodically delegitimized midwives and home birth by first creating hoops to jump through to gain legitimacy, and then once that took root, subsequently eliminating the option to jump through the hoops at all. This is an abusive process of power and control, making the box smaller and smaller, and the remaining midwives more and more compliant with Western medicine's demands.

Do We Want to Be “Legitimate”?

Certification is touted as a way to seem legitimate in the eyes of the hospital system. But the question that I want you to think long and hard about is this: Why do we need to prove our legitimacy to them? That assumes they are in a position of power over us, where they can hand down their stamp of approval. Shouldn't they be proving their legitimacy to us and to our clients? And further, isn't it curious that they would assume a doula was illegitimate as the starting point? It is because in our culture, women are not to be trusted, and infinitely less if they are entering an arena (the hospital) with the intention to use their voice, ask questions, and possibly interrupt the hierarchal power dynamics. A doula COULD be dangerous to the system, and a potentially revolutionary person, which is why many hospitals didn't allow them in (and yet women continued to go there...but that is another big topic). Now doulas are looking for legitimacy, but aren't stopping to ask the question: What is the price?

If a woman is planning a hospital birth, and wants a doula, I would ask her this: Do you want a doula who the hospital thinks is “legitimate” or do you want a doula who makes the hospital staff a little nervous? Because a doula that the hospital staff “respects,” is probably a doula that



Licensure is a process of looking OUTSIDE for validation. How are we supposed to support our clients to look INSIDE for the power and authority over their own body and birth when we weren't able to find that ourselves?

doesn't ever question the status quo. And if you wanted the status quo, why did you hire a doula? There is a subset of clients who perhaps want this sort of doula—someone to rub their back while they get the status quo kind of care. But there is also a huge swath of birthing people who want a doula who is willing to stand for something, and who is there to guide them, coach them, and stand beside them as they make their own choices. And until hospitals become radically consent based, or until women start birthing at home in much larger numbers, this second type of doula is the kind that women need.

Licensing Means Deflecting Personal Responsibility

Licensure is a process of looking outside for validation. How are we supposed to support our clients to look inside for the power and authority over their own body and birth when we weren't able to find that ourselves? If you can't imagine calling yourself a doula without a piece of paper to point to, then you have some serious work to do around your self-worth. Study, educate yourself, never stop educating yourself, of course! Work with amazing birth work mentors. You will know when you are ready, and you can look to those mentors to help you decide when you are ready if you need that additional support. The process is messy and non-linear, which is why a clear cut (very masculine) "now I'm certified" moment is alluring to so many. But birth, my friends, is not linear, and neither is birth work. Another argument is that certification makes us accountable. I am all for the idea of accountability, but accountability to who? DONA? How about being accountable to the clients you work with? To the community where you live? This taps into a much larger conversation about restorative justice and strengthening our communities so that we are able to solve our own problems. This may seem unrelated to birth, but it isn't. Jump back to the start of this article, and you'll be reminded that we are partially in this mess because of legislation that was meant to remove community autonomy around justice, and instead have the State be in charge of sanctioning and punishing midwives. To restore health and wholeness to birth, we need to create healthy, whole communities that can be in charge of their own accountability processes. This is not to say that all of us need to spend our time working on these issues (shout out to all the people who do work on these issues), but that you need to be aware of them, and how you fit into these other moving pieces.



Birth Work is Part of a Larger Revolution

If birth work isn't part of a larger vision of social change for you, then I would invite you to spend some time thinking about that. Do you want to just help some clients have marginally better births? Or do you want to see the system turned on its head, restoring and honoring the life-bringing power of women? This revolution is not about needing more evidence, or more legitimacy to try to help women get their voices heard in the hospital. It certainly is not about a certification. If you're on our team, which is a RADICAL shift towards love and life, then it is about envisioning and leading the way towards that fundamentally more life affirming society. That would include a radical shift in all of our institutions—hospitals, prisons, policing, schools, and the government structure itself. If your birth work doesn't include looking at all of those areas, it will feel hopeless, and like you are trying to put a bandaid on a fire hydrant.

Hang out with us online at Indie Birth, where we are turning the fire hose off, and restoring balance to the sacred birthing year. 🍷



Margo is a midwife and educator who co-runs the Indie Birth Association. The IBA offers epic education for mamas, midwives, doulas, and birth nerds around the world. When not doing birth-related work, you can find her wearing her other hat as a budget coach, reading romance novels, or playing with her two gorgeous kids. Visit indiebirth.org for more.

Why you should and how you can

PLAY



By Clay Drinko

When you think of the characteristics of an adult, what do you think of? Responsible, boring, mature, serious, tired? **That's a problem.**

Sure, we have more responsibilities when we enter adulthood—raising children, making money, saving democracy as we know it, but that doesn't mean we have to be boring and stressed out all the time. It's time play for adults entered the mainstream. Here's what it is and why and how you should add it to your life today, you stress-bucket you.

What is play? Google tells me that "play" is an "activity engaged in for enjoyment and recreation, especially by children," and I have some notes. Sure, children are super good at playing. It's their job to play. But that doesn't mean they should be the thought experts on the topic.

Let's reclaim play for adults.

A man in a green hooded raincoat sits on a white couch, smiling and holding a stick fishing rod. Two young girls are also on the couch, each holding a stick fishing rod. The girl on the left wears a yellow raincoat, and the girl on the right wears a white raincoat with yellow polka dots. They are all holding up colorful, hand-drawn fish on their rods. The background is a plain white wall, and there are some pillows and a potted plant on the couch.

Let's reclaim
play for adults.

Types of Play

The first way you can find enjoyment in activities is to be more childlike. Now, I'm not talking "childish." I don't want you screaming and yelling and pooping your pants. Being childlike means you aren't afraid to get silly.

Being childlike might mean you find joy in the ordinary things in life like marveling at a mushroom you spot on the ground or imitating the hoot of a barn owl. Children aren't afraid to act silly and make mistakes. They haven't started worrying so much about what everyone thinks of them. So learn a lesson from the kids. Enjoy the moment, be curious about the world, and don't think about what people think of you.

Just don't poop your pants.

Another kind of play is game-based. Board games and sports are both types of play, and you can even make other

activities more fun by gamifying them. This means adding points, rules, and some competition, so you get more into the activity and have more fun.

To gamify doing the laundry, you could time yourself and try to beat your old score. I've gamified my daughter's morning routine by giving her points for each task she needs to complete and then timing her to see if she can do all her morning tasks in record time.

You can also do something that improvisers call "finding the game." Finding the game isn't the same as gamifying. When you find the game, you are paying close attention to your surroundings, so you can notice fun details that can be exaggerated or enhanced. When you turn something into a fun pattern, you've found the game.

For example, if I notice that my friend has told an embarrassing anecdote, I can tell my own embarrassing

anecdote to turn it into a game. If I notice my daughter singing, I can join in the fun and make singing with her the game. Finding the game is about being genuinely tuned in and curious about the world and then joining in the fun when you can.

Another type of play is collaborative or team play. When a group of people is riffing, improvising, or just generally collaborating, this is a type of creative play.

One of the best ways to get the most of this type of creative group play is to “Yes, And” each other. “Yes, And” is the improv principle that says teammates should agree with each other’s realities and then add onto those realities.

The idea behind “Yes, And” is that more people contribute more ideas when they feel like everyone’s ideas are being heard and valued. There will be plenty of time to critique and delete ideas later, but when you’re playing, it’s best to “Yes, And.”

Reasons to *Play*

Why is play for adults important? Why is it valuable for adults to get silly, play games, and be creative?

1 Live in the Moment | First of all, play helps you live in the moment. Have you ever had that experience of playing a sport or some kind of silly kid’s game and you just get so into the zone that time flies by? That’s what Dr. Csikszentmihalyi calls “flow.” Flow is an optimal psychological state that occurs when our skills and the difficulty of the task at hand match. It doesn’t happen when things are too easy or too difficult.

Play is a great way for adults to experience flow states, especially since you have to focus so intently on what you’re doing when you’re immersed in playing.

2 Stop Overthinking | Another benefit of playing is that it helps us stop overthinking. Try thinking about what you need to buy at the grocery store while you’re playing a rousing game of Pictionary. It’s tough to do. See, our conscious brains can only focus on one thing at a time, so getting into the zone while playing is a great trick to stop those pesky worries and enjoy the act of playing.

3 De-Stress | Play can also be a natural stress reliever. Studies have shown that laughter, a side-effect of play and playfulness, helps to reduce stress hormones and increase endorphins. But it doesn’t take a scientist to tell you that laughter makes you feel good.



4 Boost Your Brain | Play is also great for your brain development. Playing games can help lower your risk of dementia and boost your memory.

5 Buff Up Your Body | It’s also good for your overall health and physique. Play helps you get your body moving, which is essential for your muscular and cardiovascular health.

6 Make Friends | Play can also be a social affair, which means you have to collaborate with others. That means you build your social skills while setting yourself up to make new friends but keep the old.

Whether you join the local volleyball league or throw a frisbee in the park, play helps you connect and reconnect with other humans, which helps you live a longer and more fulfilling life.

7 It’s Fun! | And last but not least, play is fun. I shouldn’t have to convince you to play at all because it’s, by its very nature, fun. The bonus of play is that it keeps us coming back for more. Turn eating healthy or cleaning the house into a game and you’re much more likely to stick with it. That’s why book clubs and exercise buddies are so powerful and popular. When we turn activities into games, we have more fun and are much more likely to invest more of our time doing them.

How to Add *Play* to Your Life

So, let's say I've convinced you that play for adults is no laughing matter. You're eager to start playing but don't know where to begin. Here are some ideas for how to add play to your everyday routine.

1 Observe Children | Children are natural play experts, so watch and learn. Notice what kinds of games they play and then try them out for yourself.

2 Get Silly | You can't be too cool for school when you're playing as an adult. So get silly and throw caution to the wind. Think dance breaks and funny faces.

3 Gamify Unavoidable Tasks | Have a task or errand that you loathe but can't avoid? Turn it into a game. Race against the clock or come up with a scoring system to make your otherwise boring task a blast.

4 Keep a Play Journal | Keep track of things that make you laugh and different ideas for how to play in a journal. If your life is play-free, you might need to do a play inventory to gather some ideas before letting loose and playing.


5 Be a Copycat | Mimicking is central to many types of play. Find someone you can play with and copy each other. Play follow the leader or exaggerate each other's movements.

6 Move Your Body | Get off the couch, go outside, and move your body. You don't have to have a game plan. Just start moving and see what happens. Dance, walk, run, wiggle. Try all the action words.

7 Be Curious | It's tough to be playful when we feel like we've seen it all, so pretend like you haven't and get curious about the people, places, and things around you.

8 Dedicate the Time to Play | Carve out time to play each day. This might mean joining a local sports team or putting your phone away and playing with your kids. It might mean playing fetch with your dog or playing cards

with friends. The key is to let yourself get immersed in whatever it is you're doing. Focus on the game at hand, so you can enjoy all the benefits of play.

And I don't care if you're 23 or 103, play for adults is the magic ingredient that's going to help us stay connected and sane and enjoy a fulfilling, long life. 




Clay Drinko, Ph.D. is an author and educator. He writes for Psychology Today about the intersection between improv comedy,

*science, and everyday life. He's also the author of the first academic book connecting improv and cognitive science, *Theatrical Improvisation, Consciousness, and Cognition*. His most recent book, *Play Your Way Sane*, was published by Simon & Schuster and is a fun and accessible guide for how to integrate improv principles into your daily life.*

EVERYTHING IS CONNECTED

Morphic Resonance AND Morphic Fields

By Rupert Sheldrake, Ph.D.



Editor's note: In this article, we explore the hypothesis of "morphic fields," which provides us with the science and research to back up the unseen forces that keep us connected with just about everything. This new study of fields, memory, consciousness, and biology helps explain many of the phenomena we experience together, from telepathic predictions of someone coming home, to common symptoms that are felt in a community.

In the hypothesis of formative causation, discussed in detail in my books *A New Science of Life* and *The Presence of the Past*, I propose that memory is inherent in nature. Most of the so-called laws of nature are more like habits.

My interest in evolutionary habits arose when I was engaged in research in developmental biology, and was reinforced by reading Charles Darwin, for whom the habits of organisms were of central importance. As Francis Huxley has pointed out, Darwin's most famous book could more appropriately have been entitled *The Origin of Habits*.

Social groups are likewise organized by fields, as in schools of fish and flocks of birds.

Morphic fields in biology

Over the course of 15 years of research on plant development, I came to the conclusion that for understanding the development of plants, their morphogenesis, genes, and gene products are not enough. Morphogenesis also depends on organizing fields. The same arguments apply to the development of animals. Since the 1920s, many developmental biologists have proposed that biological organization depends on fields, variously called biological fields, or developmental fields, or positional fields, or morphogenetic fields.

All cells come from other cells, and all cells inherit fields of organization. Genes are part of this organization. They play an essential role. But they do not explain the organization itself. Why not?

Thanks to molecular biology, we know what genes do. They enable organisms to make particular proteins. Other genes are involved in the control of protein synthesis. Identifiable genes are switched on and particular proteins made at the beginning of new developmental processes. Some of these developmental switch genes, like the Hox genes in fruit flies, worms, fish, and mammals, are very similar. In evolutionary terms, they are highly conserved. But switching on genes such as these cannot in itself determine form, otherwise fruit flies would not look different from us.

Many organisms live as free cells, including many yeasts, bacteria, and amoebas. Some form complex mineral skeletons, as in diatoms and radiolarians, spectacularly pictured in the 19th century by Ernst Haeckel. Just making the right proteins at the right times cannot explain the complex skeletons of such structures without many other forces coming into play, including the organizing activity of cell membranes and microtubules. Most developmental biologists accept the need for a holistic or integrative conception of living organization. Otherwise, biology will go on floundering, even drowning, in oceans of data, as yet more genomes are sequenced, genes are cloned and proteins are characterized.

I suggest that morphogenetic fields work by imposing patterns on otherwise random or indeterminate patterns of activity. For example, they cause microtubules to crystallize in one part of the cell rather than another, even though the subunits from which they are made are present throughout the cell. Morphogenetic fields are not fixed forever, but evolve. The fields of Afghan hounds and poodles have become different from those of their common ancestors, wolves. How are these fields inherited? I propose they are transmitted from past members of the species through a kind of non-local resonance, called morphic resonance.

The fields organizing the activity of the nervous system are likewise inherited through morphic resonance, conveying a collective, instinctive memory. Each individual both draws upon and contributes to the collective memory of the species. This means that new patterns of behaviour can spread more rapidly than would otherwise be possible. For example, if rats of a particular breed learn a new trick in Harvard, then rats of that breed should be able to learn the same trick faster all over the world, say in Edinburgh and Melbourne. There is already evidence from laboratory experiments (discussed in *A New Science of Life*) that this actually happens.

The resonance of a brain with its own past states also helps to explain the memories of individual animals and humans. There is no need for all memories to be "stored" inside the brain.


Social groups are likewise organized by fields, as in schools of fish and flocks of birds. Human societies have memories that are transmitted through the culture of the group, and are most explicitly communicated through the ritual re-enactment of a founding story or myth, as in the Jewish Passover celebration, the Christian Holy Communion, and the American Thanksgiving dinner, through which the past becomes present through a kind of resonance with those who have performed the same rituals before.

The memory of nature

From the point of view of the hypothesis of morphic resonance, there is no need to suppose that all the laws of nature sprang into being fully formed at the moment of the Big Bang, like a kind of cosmic Napoleonic code, or that they exist in a metaphysical realm beyond time and space.

Before the general acceptance of the Big Bang theory in the 1960s, eternal laws seemed to make sense. The universe itself was thought to be eternal and evolution was confined to the biological realm. But we now live in a radically evolutionary universe.

If we want to stick to the idea of natural laws, we could say that as nature itself evolves, the laws of nature also evolve, just as human laws evolve over time. But then how would natural laws be remembered or enforced? The law metaphor is embarrassingly anthropomorphic. Habits are less human-centred. Many kinds of organisms have habits, but only humans have laws. The habits of nature depend on non-local

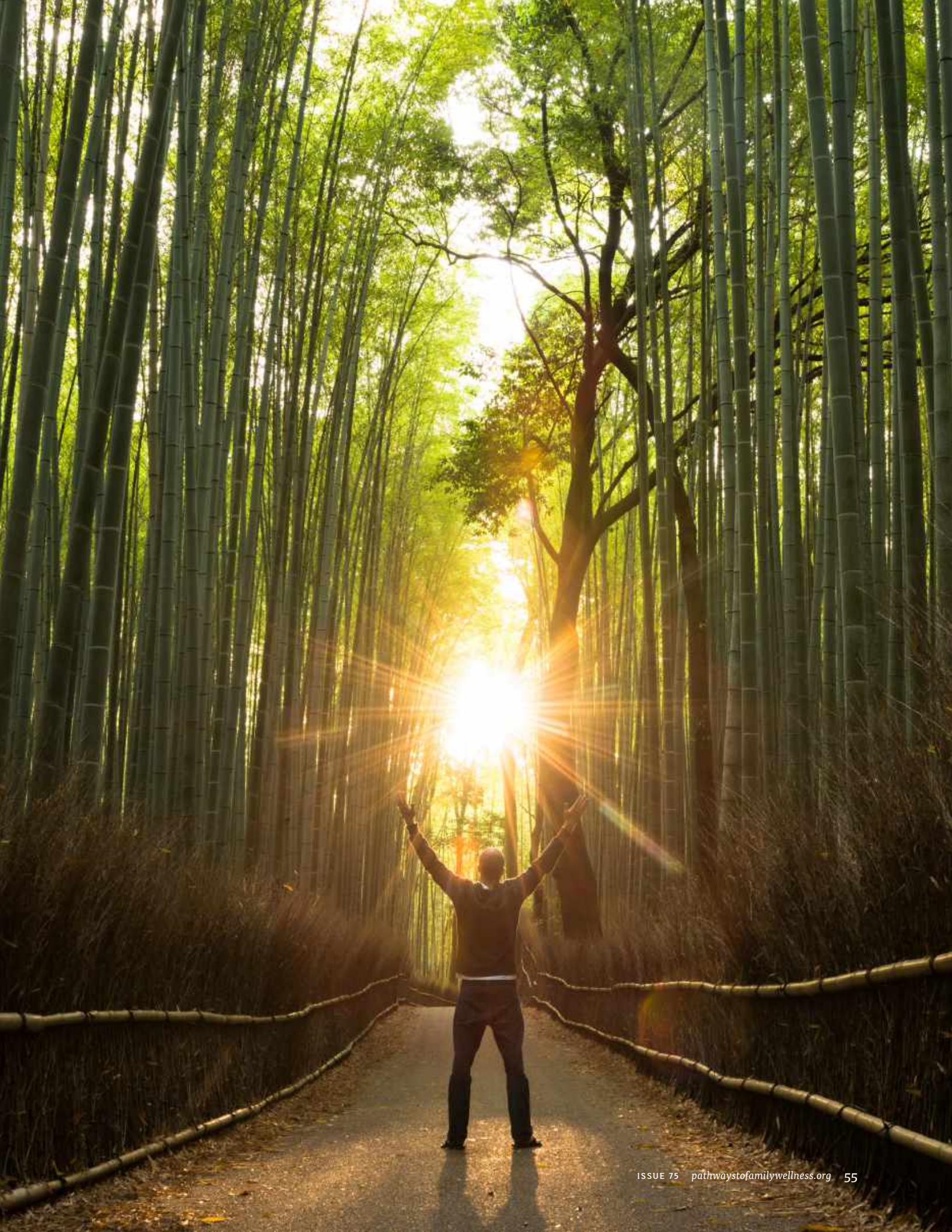


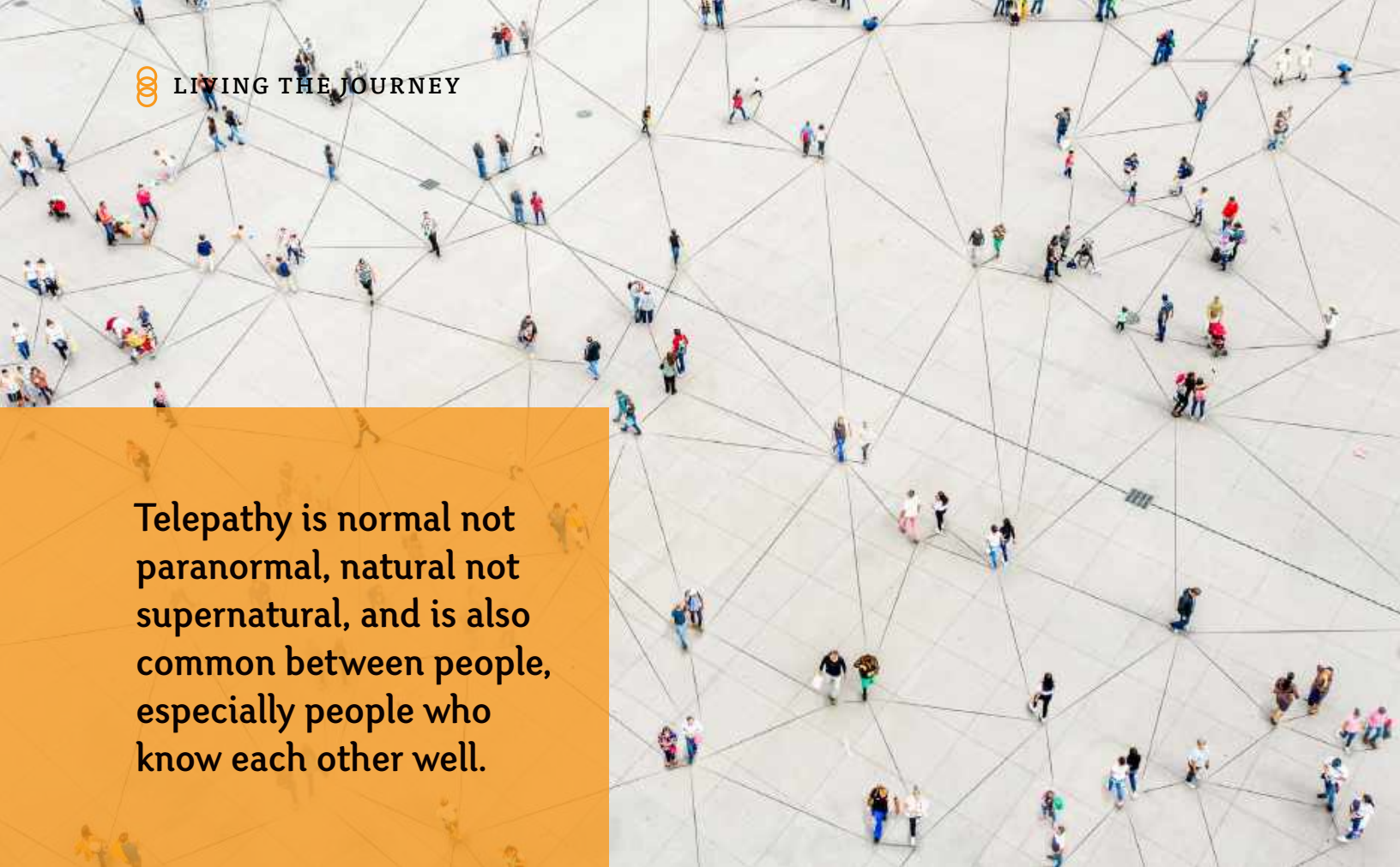
Habits are subject to natural selection; and the more often they are repeated, the more probable they become, other things being equal. Animals inherit the successful habits of their species as instincts. We inherit bodily, emotional, mental, and cultural habits, including the habits of our languages.

similarity reinforcement. Through morphic resonance, the patterns of activity in self-organizing systems are influenced by similar patterns in the past, giving each species and each kind of self-organizing system a collective memory.

I believe that the natural selection of habits will play an essential part in any integrated theory of evolution, including not just biological evolution, but also physical, chemical, cosmic, social, mental, and cultural evolution (as discussed in *The Presence of the Past*).

Habits are subject to natural selection; and the more often they are repeated, the more probable they become, other things being equal. Animals inherit the successful habits of their species as instincts. We inherit bodily, emotional, mental and cultural habits, including the habits of our languages.





Telepathy is normal not paranormal, natural not supernatural, and is also common between people, especially people who know each other well.

Fields of the mind

Morphic fields underlie our mental activity and our perceptions, and lead to a new theory of vision, which I discuss in my book *The Sense of Being Stared At*. The existence of these fields is experimentally testable through the sense of being stared at itself. There is already much evidence that this sense really exists. You can take part in your own experiments and read more about this evidence on my site: sheldrake.org/participate/.

The morphic fields of social groups connect together members of the group even when they are many miles apart, and provide channels of communication through which organisms can stay in touch at a distance. They help provide an explanation for telepathy. There is now good evidence that many species of animals are telepathic, and telepathy seems to be a normal means of animal communication, which I discuss further in my book *Dogs That Know When Their Owners are Coming Home*. Telepathy is normal not paranormal, natural not supernatural, and is also common between people, especially people who know each other well.

In the modern world, the commonest kind of human telepathy occurs in connection with telephone calls. More than 80% of the population say they have thought of someone for no apparent reason, who then called; or that they have known who was calling before picking up the phone

in a way that seems telepathic. Controlled experiments on telephone telepathy have given repeatable positive results that are highly significant statistically. Telepathy also occurs with emails, as shown in my paper: *An Automated Test for Telepathy in Connection with Emails*, *Journal of Scientific Exploration* 2009.

The morphic fields of mental activity are not confined to the insides of our heads. They extend far beyond our brain through intention and attention. We are already familiar with the idea of fields extending beyond the material objects in which they are rooted: For example magnetic fields extend beyond the surfaces of magnets; the earth's gravitational field extends far beyond the surface of the earth, keeping the moon in its orbit; and the fields of a cell phone stretch out far beyond the phone itself. Likewise the fields of our minds extend far beyond our brains. 📶



*Dr. Rupert Sheldrake is a biologist and author of more than 90 technical papers and nine books, including *The Presence of the Past*. He is currently a Fellow of the Institute of Noetic Sciences in Petaluma, CA and of Schumacher College in Dartington, Devon. He lives in London. His website is sheldrake.org.*

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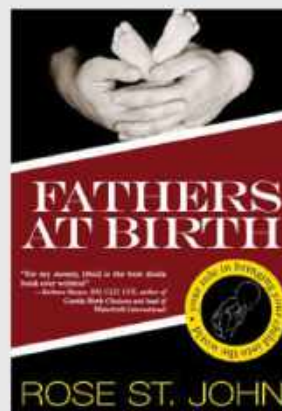
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I will walk with you through
the darkness as you remember your light."*

– A MEDICINE WOMAN'S PRAYER

