

SECRET OF BREATH * EMOTIONAL INTEGRATION * CHIROPRACTIC PRINCIPLES

pathways

to family wellness

Issue 73 | Spring 2022

A NEW TREND IN
Childbirth

FEATURE

CHILDBIRTH REVIVAL Setting a New Trend

BY WINTERGREEN AND JOHN OHM

The present childbirth message in the world is to encourage families to make informed choices and create a birth plan. In our diverse modern societies, many people are not happy with how their pregnancies and births have gone. Parents' personal experiences of birth and how birth services were provided show a fundamental need for a new conversation in childbirth.

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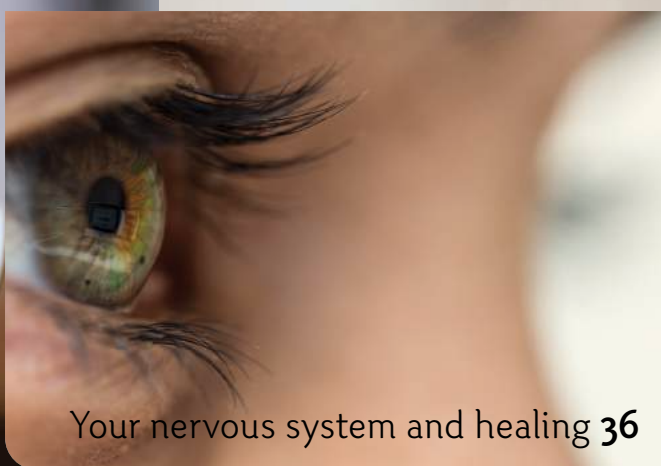
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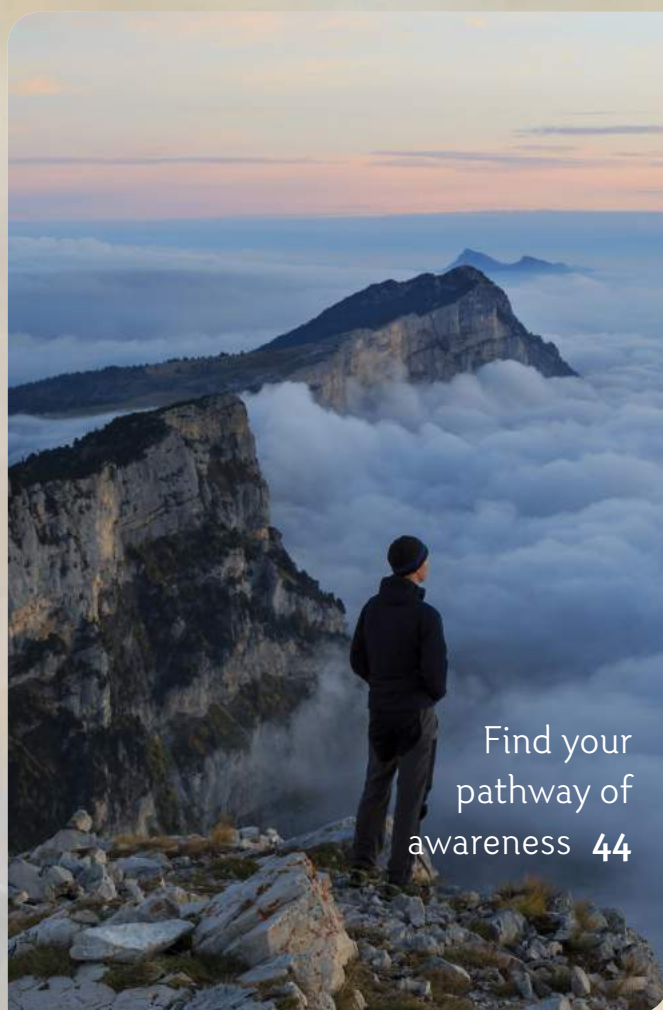
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Children's health begins in pregnancy and birth.

pathways to family wellness™

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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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PathwaystoFamilyWellness

*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.**





Freedom for FAMILY WELLNESS

Early in the 1950s, Grantly Dick-Read, Fernand Lamaze, and Robert Bradley, early obstetricians and pioneers of the natural birth movement, sought to reduce the incidence of medical births by helping families cope in labor through the use of practical skills. They developed very simple skills birthing families could use, such as breathing, relaxation, and husband-involved teamwork. Their goal was to achieve more natural births. However, they defined “natural birth” as a pain-free labor with no medical interventions—meaning no assessments, monitoring, or procedures. The concept of learning birth skills was quickly tossed out the window, because it couldn’t achieve these stated goals. Can anything achieve these goals?

It was overlooked by the natural birth advocates of that time that birth skills offer so much more beyond the hopes of a pain-free natural birth.

Birth skills empower the family. They help fathers and mothers create a lasting bond at birth, as co-adventurers and active participants in their journey. They empower the mother with confidence to be able to “run the marathon,” above and beyond the hopes of “crossing the finish line.” They evolve men into fathers, so that not only are they helpful during birth, they also become empowered to care for the baby after birth. (“If I can be helpful at birth, then I can learn to be present and helpful in child care, too.”)

No matter the political circumstances of birth, involving choices or lack of choices, the mother will always have the activity itself to focus on, using skills. Birth skills make birth more manageable and enjoyable; they make it about the journey and not the destination. And yes, skills can, by a large margin, increase the likelihood of a “natural birth” (when we define that as a vaginal delivery without extraction). This applies to all situations, and all people, regardless of a mother’s “high risk” or “low risk” status.

Why is it that birth skills—methods and techniques of “doing” the activity of birth—haven’t integrated alongside the movement for informed choices? Aside from the early, limiting definition of natural birth, which made skills appear ineffective, there was also too little focus in the birth conversation about a mother’s ability to actively support the Power and Passage—her uterine strength, her tissue and ligament softness and openness, and her pelvic balance.

When Larry Webster developed the Webster Technique for pregnancy in 1987, he saw a path for better birth experiences. One benefit of this technique is its ability to refocus on the body, creating an awareness and trust in the body’s wisdom and ability to birth. Birth skills go hand in hand with the Webster Technique’s goal of improving pregnancy and birth. Chiropractors can play a vital part in setting this new trend where birth skills exist together with informed choices.

This issue of PATHWAYS is about another trend as well, relating to the family’s ability to achieve health and well-being in all stages of their journey. Over the past 150 years, chiropractors have worked to address the underlying physical and emotional tensions that cause dis-ease and disconnection. Chiropractors help bring individuals forward into a sense of coherence through their focus on the balance of the nervous system. “I’m here with you” is the implicit message of every physical adjustment. The premises of chiropractic philosophy and practice have never been more important.

In the 1980s, a series of discoveries were made that demonstrate the brain’s operative role in physical diseases in the body. These discoveries provided a groundwork of understanding the deeper origin of disease. They show that the nervous system is absolutely vital to understanding the nature of health. And they remind us that no manifestation of the body occurs without an underlying adaptive intelligence.

Just as every healthy organ operates under the control and direction of the brain in accordance with biological purposes, so, too, do symptomatic organs exhibit a specific biological meaning and purpose, previously unknown in medicine.

Often, families are at a loss with the experience of disease. The more serious the disease, the more at a loss we become. The major importance of these discoveries is that they demonstrate how symptoms arise in accordance with logical laws of nature, offering us the gift of predictability in our explanation of disease, as well as a new way of approaching health holistically.

We are beginning to cross a threshold in our scientific understanding spoken of by many visionaries of the past—a shift from mechanism to vitalism. We are at the brink of uncovering a vitalistic science of life, one that can free humanity of so much fear. We are on our way to transcending the old mechanistic models of health. Because vitalism is about seeing the human being as a whole—seeing how their perceptions and emotions (mind), biology (body), and life story are all interconnected.

This issue is about two exciting trends in family well-being. Each can replenish the roots of the chiropractic vision of life, and help unleash a greater level of freedom for family wellness. 🧘

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





THE WEBSTER TECHNIQUE

Can Chiropractors Turn Breech Babies?

By Pamela Stone, D.C.

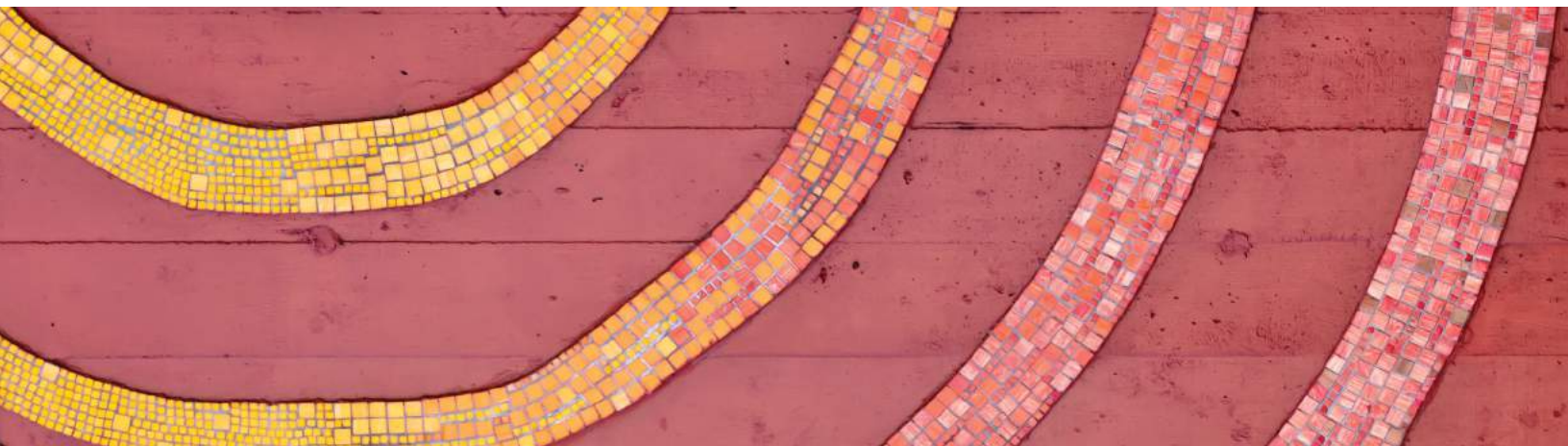


Can chiropractors turn breech babies? That is a question I've been asked before, and since I'm now teaching for the ICPA (I teach Perinatal Care with Webster Technique certification), it's a question I pose to the doctors at each seminar. The answer is, simply, no—that's not what we do. We leave the turning of babies up to the obstetricians. Or, really, it's up to the baby to turn themselves. And that is exactly where chiropractors come in.

The Webster Technique is a chiropractic analysis and adjustment, and it's all about balancing out the pelvic bones, muscles, and ligaments. When you do that, you create a better environment for the baby. And if you are making that environment as ideal as possible, then the baby has more space to move around. Babies know what is best. They have an amazing intelligence within them that created their body. Mom didn't take a special pill to form the legs or heart or eyes; the miracle of life within that little body is what created itself. And the same intelligence that created them is what will help birth them. Babies will move into the head-down position if they have the ideal environment. If the space they are in allows them to move head down, they will. That is where they want to be.

A baby will be breech, or sideways, or perhaps even posterior, if it doesn't have that ideal environment to live in. If their cord is wrapped around their neck too many times, or if the mother's pelvis is subluxated and is not moving properly, then the baby's space is restricted, and it might not be able to freely move. The baby knows what is best.

The body has an amazing ability to heal and regulate itself, and interference in the nervous system may



negatively affect the ability to adapt and function optimally. I take care of pregnant women every day, month in and month out. And making a difference in their life and in the lives of their babies is truly amazing. The Webster Technique is extremely effective—especially if done accurately and specifically, and with positive intentions.

Any chiropractor can adjust a sacrum and rub on a belly, but the specific contact points are what set a Webster certified doctor apart from a general chiropractor. During pregnancy, a woman picks her birth provider—either an obstetrician or a midwife, someone who is specifically trained in pregnancy. They wouldn't choose an internist or cardiologist for the perinatal care; they chose a specialist for their situation. Pregnancy and chiropractic should be no different: Pick someone who is certified in it. If I'm ever looking for a chiropractor for a pregnant person in a different city, I send them to someone who has the certification through the ICPA (ideally DACCP, CACCP, or is at the very least Webster-certified).

Taking care of pregnant women is so exciting. I love being on the journey with these people—to see their bodies change, to see how they change, to see how they handle pregnancy and then birth. I love adjusting them and checking the babies soon after. The Webster Technique can make such a big difference in their pregnancy and labor. No, we aren't turning babies. We are taking care of someone during pregnancy, reducing any interference in their nervous system, creating better movement in the pelvis, balancing out muscular and ligament stress, and providing a better environment for baby to be in. When done specifically and accurately, it can be life-changing. 🍓

**Babies know what is best.
They have an amazing intelligence
within them that created their body.
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miracle of life within that little
body is what created itself.**



Pamela Stone, D.C., has her diplomate (DACCP) in Pediatric & Prenatal care through the International Chiropractic Pediatrics Association (ICPA). She is also certified in the Webster Technique, a specific chiropractic sacral analysis and diversified adjustment, primarily for pregnant women, and is certified in animal chiropractic through both the AVCA and IVCA. View article resources and author information here: pathwaystofamilywellness.org/references.html.



Best People to Include on Your

BIRTH TEAM

By Ashley Gonzales, D.C.

It's happening. It's here. Your water just broke.

The moments that follow are what you have been planning for the last 40 weeks. You've packed, you've prepped. The nursery is beyond Pinterest-worthy. You are about to bring life into this world, and—PAUSE. Hold the phone. You just realized you have no idea who is on your birth team, except for the OBGYN you've seen sporadically throughout your pregnancy.

Cue a panicked Michael Scott-style "Everybody stay calm, what's the procedure?!"

Holy freaking mother of shirt balls.

Do not let this be you!

A birth (and postpartum) plan goes beyond delivering a baby, be it via cesarean or vaginal delivery.

A strong birth plan starts with assembling a solid birth TEAM.

Yes, a TEAM.

You need a group of individuals by your side for this life-changing transition from **woman** to **mom**.

A tribe by your side who fully grasps the concept that birth, like nature, requires no help, just no interference.

But, who? I mean, besides my OB?

Your birth team includes both your clinical team and your nonclinical support people. Your clinical team might include medical doctors, midwives, medical residents, medical students, anesthesiologists, nurses, physician's assistants, and birth assistants, to name a few. Part of the decision about who is on your team is made when you pick a birth location—all the more reason to carefully consider location. Some of these people, like your medical doctor or midwife, you will get to select and meet with beforehand. Some of them you won't meet until you are in labor, such as hospital or birth center staff like nurses, anesthesiologists, or birth assistants.

The list of birth professionals below are for the expecting mama who is choosing a birthing center or home birth as her delivery setting. For mothers considering a hospital birth, this list can still be useful when selecting a clinical and non-clinical support team. The ultimate decision is, of course, up to Mom and her partner, and every birthing situation is different.

However, an informed decision comes from knowing all your options.

BIRTH PROFESSIONALS TO CONSIDER FOR YOUR BIRTH TEAM

Certified Nurse Midwife (CNM): Midwives who are a part of the American College of Nurse-Midwives practice the midwifery model of care. The philosophy of this organization is that childbirth is a normal, physiological occurrence, and that a midwife only needs to intervene when necessary or if medically indicated. Many women choose midwives because they want a more personalized approach to birth.

Doula: A doula is someone trained to support a woman through labor, sort of like a birth coach. The goal of a doula is to help women and their families achieve the childbirth experiences they envision. According to DONA International (a doula organization), doulas are trained, experienced professionals who provide continuous emotional, physical, and informational support to mothers before, during, and after childbirth. Doulas view their role as nurturing and protecting a woman's memory of the birth experience.

Doctor of Chiropractic: Pregnancy-specialized doctors of chiropractic are trained to work with the pregnant mother by performing chiropractic adjustments, a gentle and effective means of restoring proper pelvic balance and function. With the overabundant levels of relaxin coursing through a woman's body during labor, it is common for the pelvis to get out of alignment. This is less than ideal. Women who have undergone chiropractic adjustments during their pregnancy, and more so during labor, report that their labors are easier and less stressful on their bodies.

Lactation Consultant (IBCLC): As clinical experts in the management of breastfeeding and human lactation, certified lactation consultants are trained to counsel mothers and families on initiation, exclusivity, and duration

of breastfeeding, and to assist amid any difficulties or high-risk situations. IBCLCs are sensitive to and support the needs of mothers, infants, children, and various family structures in working toward breastfeeding goals.

Postpartum Doula: Similar to a birth doula, a postpartum doula is someone who provides physical, emotional, and informational support to a woman and her family during the postpartum period (which extends beyond the traditional 6-week mark). They do more than just run the household during mother's recovery. These professionals understand that new parents may not have a full understanding of what a normal postpartum period looks like, and therefore fill the gaps in education, competence, and family cohesion by providing individualized care and support to the mother, partner, and baby.

Medical Doctor/OBGYN: Chances are you've already met the doctor who will attend your birth, if you are opting for the hospital route. However, if you go to a large practice or your usual provider is not available, you may be meeting this person for the first time on your birthing day. Your attending doctor will oversee your care during your delivery and may be present from the time you start labor, or they may not arrive until you are ready to give birth.



If you envision yourself giving birth in a **hospital**... GREAT! Know your options.

If you envision yourself giving birth in a **birthing center**... GREAT! Know your options.

If you envision yourself giving birth at **home**... GREAT! Know your options.

YOU. HAVE. OPTIONS.

Never let anyone make you think otherwise. ➡



Ashley Gonzales, D.C., draws on experiences from her 10-year dance career when addressing her community members. Her biggest dream is to make others feel as seen and celebrated as she felt every time she took the stage—starting with the tiniest of humans. When she isn't exploring the depths and intricacies of the human body and mind, Ashley enjoys being outdoors, creating macrame masterpieces, reading, and spending time with her partner, Ian Barwick, D.C. View article resources and author information here: pathwaystofamilywellness.org/references.html.

Childbirth Revival

SETTING A NEW TREND

By Wintergreen and John Ohm



choice +
birth skills

The present childbirth message in the world is to encourage families to make informed choices and create a birth plan. In our diverse modern societies, many people are not happy with how their pregnancies and births have gone. Parents' personal experiences of birth and how birth services were provided show a fundamental need for a new conversation in childbirth. Is there a gap in the present childbirth conversation?

Since the 1980s, we've had a choice-based childbirth trend. Pregnant women do research to discover what type of birth and medical care they want and don't want. With this research, they expect their birth providers to try and give them the birth they've chosen.

You may or may not know that in the United States, at least, there was an entirely different childbirth trend from the 1960s to the mid-1970s that was "skills-based." Women had few to no choices back then, yet a whole generation of men and women birthed with skills amid the assessments, monitoring, and procedures done in the hospital-based system of that period. Lamaze and the Bradley Method were taught extensively in most hospitals. There was a very high societal expectation that we all attend the very first skills-based childbirth preparation classes. Fathers were equally involved and trained to be excellent birth coaches.

This skills-based trend was replaced in the 1980s with the choice-based trend we have today. Classes shifted and focused on information. Women began to birth again without skills, and fathers were implicitly led not to offer coaching support, but to support choices.

Today, birth plans are the gold standard for preparing for birth. However, for many reasons, most women do not end up having the birth they plan. In fact, most women say: "It was nothing like I imagined."

For several reasons, skills were not joined together with the choice-based approach to birth, as they might have been. We can change that. In fact, you can help bring forth this common-sense change as expectant parents, and this article will explain how and why.

Women and men can bring forward a high societal expectation that all expectant families should learn birth skills in addition to making informed choices. If you are spending any amount of time doing research about what medical care you want and don't want, you can spend an equal amount of time learning and practicing birth and coaching skills.

Why? Because choices are what you want or don't want, and skills are what you use to "do" the activity of giving birth. In fact, while choices may change, skills are the foundation for how you will cope, manage, work through, deal with, handle,

**NOW IS THE TIME TO BRING FORTH
A CHILDBIRTH REVIVAL COMBINING
SKILLS AND CHOICES. WHEN PREGNANT,
IT'S COMMON SENSE AND BENEFICIAL
TO LEARN BIRTH AND COACHING
SKILLS, AND THEN USE YOUR SKILLS
TO WORK THROUGH THE ACTIVITY
OF BIRTHING YOUR BABY IN
ANY CIRCUMSTANCES.**

stay on top of, and feel in control as your birth unfolds.

In other words, now is the time to bring forth a Childbirth Revival combining skills and choices. You are part of this exciting change, as it's likely you have never heard of learning birth skills as a way to prepare for birth. But it's your choice to learn birth and coaching skills that will propel this movement forward and fill the gap in the childbirth conversation.

Most of us discover that babies don't "come to plan," and too often choices are lacking, or end up changing. It's frustrating, but true. However, all of us who have given birth know in the core of our being that we had to "do" the birth, no matter how it unfolded. We also know, upon reflection, whether we had skills to use or not.

This article is about planting a seed to nurture and grow birth skills into vibrancy and to share with as many people as possible so they can grow it too. Doing so is how societal trends change. Now is the time, because what we've been doing is not working for enough of us.

The core of this new childbirth trend is a simple, easy-to-repeat message:

"It's common sense and beneficial that all expectant mothers and fathers self-learn birth and coaching skills to work through the activity of birthing their baby in all births."

This is the concept that can quickly lead to a childbirth revival.

Birth skills are a common-sense resource to have, and when combined with informed choices, they make for a well-balanced approach to birth. However, it will take many of us to keep repeating this concept over and over again to

TAKING THE STEP

all who will listen to change societal norms.

In time, it will become common sense and beneficial for all expectant families to learn birth and coaching skills in addition to making informed choices.

Where do Webster chiropractors come into this new approach?

Your Webster chiropractor is a member of the ICPA, an organization dedicated to a philosophy called salutogenesis, which focuses on health and well-being and a sense of coherence, rather than pathology.


One way your Webster chiropractor adds a salutogenesis approach to birth is by providing a specific technique known as the Webster Technique. With this support, women are able to create and maintain pelvic balance and a well-functioning nervous system that can transform their birth experiences and safen their baby's vital well-being. When parents self-learn birth skills, especially body-centric skills, they support the Webster Technique's effectiveness for birth.

Webster chiropractors provide a service as auxiliary birth workers. They may also inspire you to use the philosophy of salutogenesis as you approach your coming birth, which often leads to increased resourcefulness including making excellent informed choices. The foundation for adding skills to choices—the basis of the Childbirth Revival—comes from how they benefit families in navigating some universal truths:

- 100 percent of pregnant women will give birth one way or another.
- Birth is an activity as well as an experience that happens to every birthing woman.
- When we lack skills, birth just “happens” to us and is largely dependent on circumstance.
- When we have skills and use them, birth still happens to us, but we can better participate in the activity by applying our skills, even when there is a great abundance of unexpected circumstances.

For any individual approaching birth, the salutogenesis approach is all about what you can do for yourself. In other words, when something happens to us and we lack resources, we tend to “react” in a state of disempowerment. When we have learned, practiced, and then use skills, we “respond” to what is happening to us, empowered to cope, manage, work through, deal with, handle, stay on top of, and feel in control. Skills can always be used one way or another in 100 percent of births. With skills, fathers can work with their partners through this activity. Self-learning birth and coaching skills serves as a foundation for how you work through the activity of birth, regardless of all other factors.

Anyone who has given birth understands how challenging it can be to cope, manage, work through, deal



**WOMEN AND MEN CAN BRING
FORWARD A HIGH SOCIETAL
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INFORMED CHOICES.**

BIRTH IS AN ACTIVITY
AS WELL AS AN EXPERIENCE
THAT HAPPENS TO
EVERY BIRTHING WOMAN.



with, handle, stay on top of or feel in control of the internal physical and emotional sensations, as well as what happens around us. Using birth skills is a conscious effort, and can be hard to do when internal and external sensations are intense, but they have a profound impact on feeling empowered and proud of our efforts. Lacking skills can leave us feeling disempowered, even when we get the exact birth outcome we want—and more so, when birth unfolds in unexpected ways.

Growing a skilled birthing population and elevating this Childbirth Revival requires a strong societal message that we hear and share often. Choices can be elastic, fickle, or even non-existent in some cases, but using skills is the bedrock of how we “do” this one-off, infrequent, life-transforming activity that we remember forever. Giving birth is an all-absorbing moment-to-moment experience we must navigate. The Childbirth Revival is about navigating the birth experience with resources by learning skills and by making informed choices.

We’re all part of this exciting and meaningful change. While choices are very individual, birth and coaching skills are universal. Some are incredibly basic, like breathing, relaxation, and communication.

Page 21 lists various skills-based methods to choose

from. Are these methods identical? No. Breathing skills can take many forms, as can relaxation and communication skills. But they are universally applicable, wherever you happen to be and whatever the circumstances. Pick the skills-based method that you resonate with, learn the skills offered, practice them, use them, and then reflect on how well they worked. We don’t get many times to do birth, so we can do birth as best we can each time.

Since the introductions of Lamaze and the Bradley Method (the very first skills-based methods, primarily about breathing and relaxation), there has been an evolution of skills. There is one area of birth skills that has been lacking until skilled fathers and mothers focused their attention on it in the 1980s, around the time the cesarean rate was beginning to rise. This area has to do with how we prepare our pregnant body for birth and how we use those body-centric skills during birth. These skills became known as Birthing Better.

If you like a specific skills-based method but it lacks body-centric skills, then you can combine it with Birthing Better body skills, which have been honed and developed since the 1970s.

Let’s begin to look at the breadth of birth and coaching skills that can help birthing parents prepare for birth.

TAKING THE STEP

Here's a specific list of skills that you can start learning (ideally beginning at 24 weeks).

- Breathing
- Relaxation
- Teamwork
- Communication
- Preparing your body to open up
- Preparing your birth canal to become soft and flexible
- Finding positions that keep your labor progressing

The last three are examples of adaptable body skills.

Other birthing skills include:

- What to do when you don't like the experience but want to manage it well
- What to do if you have a prodromal (late to start) labor
- What to do if you are afraid
- Forms of touch that help you relax internally
- How to use your skills in a planned/unplanned cesarean

Being skilled during your birth is an internal experience—you won't be holding up a sign saying: "I'm now using breathing skills." You have to use your mind to apply skills to your body, intimately. This is a very private experience. You want skills that adjust and adapt on a moment-to-moment basis, because the activity of birth can change moment-to-moment. The skills must also be sustainable. There should be no time during your birth when you can't use some skill or other. When you keep using skills, you are less likely to lose control or feel overwhelmed.

Communication skills, especially nonverbal ones, help you and your partner work together effectively during birth. While you're doing this private experience of birthing your baby, your birth providers and your birth coach always see and hear you externally and can tell how well you are coping. If your birth coach has learned skills with you, he or she might know what skill you're using at any moment, because the two of you have learned as a team.

Your birth provider will only know that you're using skills if you've created a skills-based birth plan and given it to them to add to your notes. Birth providers attend many births and can see and hear whether someone is coping or overwhelmed. They can observe that women who use skills birth with less overwhelm, just as they see skilled birth coaches or fathers to be more involved at birth. Birth providers love to work with skilled birthing families. They wish more families were skilled!

Chiropractors

Webster chiropractors can be an auxiliary birth worker along with:

- Doulas
- Pregnancy yoga instructors
- Acupuncturists
- Therapists
- Childbirth educators
- And anyone you want to add

Like some auxiliary birth workers, your ICPA chiropractor is unlikely to be at your birth. However, they play a huge role within the salutogenesis model of birth. Obviously, one thing they offer is a very specific technique to keep your pelvis aligned and your nervous system open so they are functioning ideally for your upcoming birth. Within the Childbirth Revival, chiropractors can also play a large role in advancing the concept that it's normal and beneficial to learn birth skills, and they can offer insights into the value of learning body-centric skills for birth.

While your ICPA chiropractor may encourage you to become skilled, you can also take the initiative and approach your chiropractor and any others involved in your birth to tell them you are learning birth and coaching skills. Then, you can ask them to put all this information in your notes:

- What skills-based method you are using
- What skills you've learned between appointments
- And, after birth, how those skills worked during your birth

Birth Providers

Salutogenesis "focuses on factors that support human health and wellness rather than pathological factors." From this framework, there's a real difference between midwives and obstetricians. For example, most people see that midwives look at birth from a positive viewpoint and believe that pregnancy and birth are normal and natural life events that rarely require medical care. In other words, midwives are part of the salutogenesis model of care.



AT THE PRESENT TIME, IT'S UNLIKELY THAT YOUR OBSTETRICIAN WILL INFORM YOU OR ENCOURAGE YOU TO BECOME SKILLED. LIKE MANY OTHER THINGS, IT'S UP TO YOU.

In contrast, the medical maternity profession of obstetrics looks at pregnancy and birth from a potential problem point of view. Therefore, they use assessments, monitoring, and procedures more often. Obviously, modern medicine hopes to reduce or prevent pathology with these assessments, monitoring, and procedures.

Sadly, since the 1960s, when the first skills-based methods became available, an oppositional approach in childbirth led the conversation: medical versus natural, obstetricians versus midwives, etc. Yet every family's birth is important to them. That is why the Childbirth Revival is so valuable. Your baby's birth is important to you. You can become skilled to do it, wherever it occurs, however it unfolds.

The salutogenesis model focuses on you having resources. When you have resources for your own health and well-being, they can be applied even when your health and well-being meet challenges or unexpected external circumstances. This is the power of the Childbirth Revival. It's applicable to 100 percent of pregnant women, regardless of external conditions.

At the present time, it's unlikely that your obstetrician will inform you or encourage you to become skilled. Like many other things, it's up to you. If you are suffering during birth (without any other problems present) obstetricians will likely offer you pain relief. If you or your baby have risks, they will do assessments, monitoring, and perhaps procedures or interventions. Skills can prevent suffering, and they can be used even when you or your baby have potential risks.

Consider this reality. Risks are common. Risks are also normal and natural and were accepted prior to cesareans, which became more widely utilized in response to risk-aversion in the 1980s. Few risks become problems and even fewer problems become tragedies. Your skills, particularly if you've prepared your pregnant body beforehand, can perhaps reduce or prevent risks from becoming problems. And skills can help you move through a non-progressive labor.

Obstetricians may provide continuity of care. But even if you see different obstetricians at each appointment and don't know which one will be at your birth, here is the reality: You have to do the activity of birthing your baby, no matter who is around you, or what they are doing. It's that simple.

Inform your obstetrician that you are learning birth and coaching skills and that you have a skills-based birth plan in addition to your choice-based plan.

Inform your obstetrician:

- To put both birth plans in your notes so they can be referred to
- Inform your obstetrician and staff once you get to the hospital of the skills you will be using
- Then ask the staff and obstetrician to praise you and your partner when you are coping well
- Ask the staff and obstetrician to encourage you to use your skills if you look overwhelmed
- Remember to thank them for both of the above

If you are having a midwife attend your birth at home or at a birth center, you can give her the same information.

Inform your midwife:

- You are planning to make choices and to learn skills and will create two birth plans.
- Ask them to put both birth plans in your notes so they can be referred to
- Show your midwife at each appointment after 24 weeks what skills you've been learning
- Use your skills even before your midwives arrive to your home or before you go to the birth center
- Ask your midwife to praise you when you are coping well
- Ask your midwife to remind you to use your skills if you appear to be struggling
- Ask your midwife also to praise and encourage your birth coach
- Remember to thank them

No birth worker will stop you or your birth coach from using skills, even when they are doing their assessments, monitoring, and procedures. You can use your skills to work through the activity of birthing your baby, whether or not you like what's happening to you or around you.

In reality, whether you have skills or how you use them ultimately has no relationship to how your birth provider functions. *Read that sentence twice.* Keep in mind always

that you have to “do” this coming birth, no matter what. And since giving birth is a stressor, whether natural and at home or in a hospital, you can choose to do this activity with skills that will help you cope and manage.

Birth Women

Even if you or your baby have potential or identifiable health challenges, within the salutogenesis model you can and should have sufficient resources to cope and manage even when there are stressors.

Everyone acknowledges that pregnancy and birth are stressors. The resources at your disposal should help you navigate through the stress. Birth skills, informed choices, and chiropractic care are valuable resources.

Since babies often don’t come according to plan, and since there’s no way to know what your birth will be like beforehand, it is beneficial to include more than a choice-based resource such as a birth plan. Since you are the only one “doing” the birth with your baby, you can learn skills to prepare for and work through the activity instead of letting it just happen.

You are in partnership with everyone: your partner or birth coach, auxiliary birth workers, and your birth provider. You set the framework for those relationships, by whether you are coping or not, managing or not, overwhelmed and freaking out or feeling in control. (Note: This is not to suggest you shouldn’t behave however you feel or desire in birth. “Coping” is not the same as “behaving appropriately”.)

You are the one whom your partner or birth provider sees and hears. They don’t know what you’re thinking, but they see and hear how you are either reacting or responding. Everyone wants you to have a positive experience. But you are the one who will have the lasting memories.

**OFTEN, SKILLED DADS ARE ASKED:
“HOW DO YOU HELP YOUR PARTNER IF
SHE BECOMES FREAKED OUT DURING
BIRTH?” THEIR RESPONSE, WITHOUT
EXCEPTION: “DON’T LET HER.”**

Remember and apply these simple things that you can do.

- Research what you want and don’t want for your birth
- Choose one or more skills-based methods (see page 21) and start learning at about 24 weeks. If you’re 40 weeks, still try to learn some skills. Any skill is better than none (see “Fathers at Birth” on page 22)
- Create two birth plans: First, what you want and don’t want. Second, what skills you’re learning and plan to use
- Have those two birth plans added to your notes so anyone can reference them

Why are we repeating this over and over again? We are giving you the practical steps and framework to implement this Childbirth Revival trend for yourselves. Once you understand the power it gives you as an individual, you can begin to tell others.

Ask those who will be with you to praise you when they see and hear you coping well. Ask them also to encourage you if they can see and hear you are having trouble. Giving birth is always big, phenomenal, dramatic, dynamic, life-transforming, monumental, all absorbing, moment-to-moment, and it launches you into parenthood.

Giving birth is so important that we should want to be highly skilled. You are the generation of women and men who we believe will claim your power in birth.

Men

In many cultures, birth is women’s business. In some, women go off and birth on their own. In many other cultures, women birth wherever it occurs, including in one’s home.

Men are human beings. Men and women blink, cough, and can tighten/soften their pelvic muscles. All human beings thrive on a variety of skills—from parenting, to work, to cooking. Today, when women get pregnant, most men and women fall into an uncomfortable gap of not having skills. This continues as birth nears and during birth. Men and women often feel spit out into parenthood, having spent almost one year of their lives feeling a bit helpless in this very first activity of becoming parents. It doesn’t have to be that way.

In most modern countries, fathers are encouraged to attend the birth. If both mothers and fathers lack skills, this can be really challenging. Women will often feel the men didn’t help, while the men feel that they didn’t know how to help.

For a generation in the U.S., childbirth preparation focused on skills. Active women successfully pressured the maternity system to permit husbands to be at the birth because too many women suffered alone in birth.

In the 1960s and 1970s, labor and delivery nurses and obstetricians saw millions of birthing women and men work together. The result was that the maternity system began to change for the better.

Unfortunately, fathers as birth coaches became less observed. Fathers were told, directly or indirectly, that their new role was only to support and protect their partner's informed choices. When we take a skills-based approach to birth, then birthing women and men have a renewed experience of birth. Everyone loves to be skilled. Learning skills together and using skills together means that you'll work better during birth, and thereafter as a parent when your baby is born.

One very important birth coaching skill: to learn to see and hear when you need to help the birthing woman so she continues to cope, manage, and work through the birth, and to have the skill to do that right away. Often, skilled dads are asked: "How do you help your partner if she becomes freaked out during birth?" Their response, without exception: "Don't let her."

Birth is hard work. That's why it's called labor! And if you're having a non-laboring cesarean, it's still your baby's birth, and it can still be empowering. Don't let anything stop you from becoming skilled and using your skills.

Sometimes it's strange to begin learning birth skills. Learning birth skills is different than many other kinds of skills we learn, since birth is a normal, physiological process of the body in addition to an activity we do. Still, it can still be likened to other kinds of skills, such as learning how to drive a car, how to cook good food, or how to have good sex.

For driving, you have to learn diverse and complex skills: how to use the steering wheel, brakes, mirror, and gas pedal, and how to appropriately respond to everything that's happening around you. Moment-to-moment, you have to adjust your driving skills appropriately.

Giving birth is not like driving from one physical location to another, but it's about learning to move *through* the birth experience, which traverses us into the realm of parenthood.

We drive frequently, but give birth infrequently. Each road trip we take is not stamped into our long-term memory like each birth. And since we know driving requires much more than knowing what car we want and which route we plan to take, similarly we must learn that in birth there's more than knowing what we want, we must learn how to do the activity and how to move through the terrain of the experience itself.

Just as cooking skills help us satisfy the natural physiological urge of hunger, birth—a natural physiological experience—benefits with the addition of practical skills. If we gave birth as frequently as we dealt with hunger, then we would have as many skills-based resources for birth as we do for cooking!

Sense of Coherence

The more resources you have for birth, the greater your ability to experience a state of coherence during the process. Coherence has three ingredients:

- Comprehensibility
- Manageability
- Meaningfulness

We want birth to be comprehensible, manageable, and meaningful. We can comprehend birth as something that happens to us naturally, but also something we "do." To make it manageable so that we are in control amid internal or external stimuli that bombard us with pain or other negative signals, we need resources. When we have the resources to navigate through the birth process, we are able to derive positive emotional meaning from our experience, because we are working through this experience actively engaged in it, even if it's quite challenging.

There is far too much shame, blame, guilt, disappointment, anger, frustration, and trauma in birth. Implementing a Childbirth Revival that brings skills and choices together has profound potential to improve our relationships within the childbirth conversation, and to heal our societies at the root level of family wellness.

What is the purpose of this Childbirth Revival and growing this new trend?

- Greater engagement!
- Doing something for ourselves
- Improving our ability to cope (with pain or discomfort) and manage our moment-to-moment experiences, and not to lose the plot but to feel empowered and in control
- Building stronger families
- Reducing suffering
- More well-being around circumstances that have risks
- Fewer risks, and preventing risks from becoming problems
- A better approach to resolving problems without victimization
- Creating lasting change in society, regardless of its health care system, when all birthing women become skilled and empowered in birth. ♡



Wintergreen is the founder and director for Common Knowledge Trust, which hosts Birthing Better online classes, teaching birth skills that hundreds of fathers and mothers developed since the early 1970s. She's helping to grow the concept that it's normal and beneficial in pregnancy to learn birth and coaching skills, then use those skills to do the activity of birthing your baby. Visit BirthingBetter.org to explore more body-centric birth skills.



John Ohm is a champion of the chiropractic lifestyle and way of mind. He believes people can collectively align with each other in ecstatic ways when they are connected to the innate intelligence in their bodies, hearts, and minds. He serves the ICPA and *PATHWAYS* magazine to help families realize their greater freedom and innate potential.

View article resources and author information here: pathwaystofamilywellness.org/references.html.

LEARNING BIRTH SKILLS

Testimonies of Parents

To give a firsthand experience of how powerful Birthing Better skills can be, we're turning to the people who know it best: The parents who've used these skills to bring their children into the world.



“I feel very proud of the way I handled the births of both my boys. I felt empowered and in control (most of the time), and when I lost it a little, I was able to refocus. I put this down to the skills my husband, Matt, and I learned by working through the Birthing Better resource.”

“I wish to tell you of my experience of Birthing Better skills and how the information I learned from this helped me to have the most wonderful and empowering birth. I can say this because I was absolutely terrified about giving birth. I gave birth seven months ago to my first child. He was born after eight hours of labor, during which time I was able to relax and internalize the pain of labor and turn it into a positive pain, with each contraction being a step further toward meeting my child. It really helped speed up the whole process with the midwife using the hip lift (one of the bodywork moves learned in the course), taking, I believe, hours off the birth (I went from 5cm to pushing in about 10 minutes after the lift!).

The “internal work” [preparing the muscles and tissues of the birth canal prior to birth], I believe, also made the pushing part a lot easier and quicker. Although it felt like hours at the time, it was only 45 minutes and I had no stitches. When anyone ever asks me about my birth, I cannot shut up. I had such an amazing and confidence-building experience, and I feel very lucky to have learned the skills. I can tell every terrified mom-to-be that you can manage labor pain. Learn the skills!”

—Pam

“I am feeling pretty good about my upcoming labor and delivery, and made an interesting discovery last week while practicing the hip lift with my husband. This babe sits quite low in my pelvis and has introduced me to a number of nerves I didn't know much about. It has also been leaning quite heavily on my inner left hip (near the sit bone).

These past weeks I have often found walking to be a challenge (I do a fair amount of it to get the older one to and from school). I have been taking daily baths and right lying to get some relief. And then last week, after practicing a left hip lift in the evening, I found the next day (and ever since) to be so much better. The babe is still very low but has hopped off my left inner hip and feels more centrally placed. I felt so pleased to find the Birthing Better resource working for me even before labor has begun.”

—Melissa

“I studied the pink kit and my husband was all for learning the different positions, especially if it was to help my birthing experience be drug-free, which was what I was aiming for. Our beautiful baby girl was born after a relatively stress-free and drug-free labor. What an amazing experience! Go, sit bone spread! My husband was my rock; the men have to be involved! He kept my breathing focused and overall contributed to our wonderful experience. I recommend Birthing Better birth skills to every family who is willing to learn and be open-minded toward learning about their bodies.”

—Christie B.

"I feel very proud of the way I handled the births of both my boys. I felt empowered and in control (most of the time), and when I lost it a little, I was able to refocus. I put this down to the skills my husband, Matt, and I learned by working through the Birthing Better resource.

Images portrayed on the TV of the screaming woman swearing at her partner don't help when you are facing birth for the first time. Instead, I think that society should expect women to learn how to give birth. I was told many times throughout my pregnancy that my body would know what to do, but how could that be possible if my mind hadn't connected with it?

The classes at the hospital were all about information and choices—the choice of hospital, pain relief, natural birth, caesarian, etc. I really felt that there was something missing. Where were the breathing classes that my Mum went to in her day? We are expected to make choices but are not expected or given the opportunity to learn the necessary skills.

I believe that all pregnant women should have access to Birthing Better skills to learn about their birthing body, mentally prepare for what lies ahead, and have communication skills and coping mechanisms in place before their birth. If you've done the work for yourself, it will come naturally on the day. You'll instinctively know not to tense up, and if you do start to feel tense, you have the practiced skills to release that tension. If you don't realize you are tensing up, your birthing partner will have learned to recognize your breathing signs and will know the best way to communicate that to you, because you have practiced it together. If it doesn't quite go the way you planned, you've learned the skills to adapt and cope with every eventuality.

Many dads I know felt powerless at the births of their children, and hated seeing their partners in pain and unable to do anything to help. They felt totally unconnected to the birthing experience. If you do the Birthing Better work together, it's a shared experience. As a birthing woman, you don't feel like you're out

there on your own, and your partner is providing very valuable support.

All I can say now is I had two great birthing experiences, and I look back on them with a sense of pride. For a lot of my friends (who didn't have access to Birthing Better skills), it's a very different story."

—Girlie

"In practical terms, the knowledge Birthing Better skills gave me about my wife's body, what was going to happen to it and the baby, and what we could do to prepare, was immense. We went through the resource in stages, bit by bit; the video, the book, the skills. The crux of it was, that as we went into labor, yes, I was as nervous as the next person—but I also knew that I had the skills and knowledge to draw on when they were needed. As labor progressed, we were able to make life more comfortable and help things along with the hip lifts, sit bone spreads, and sacral rocks, to name a few.

I wasn't the one doing all the hard work, but I did seem to spend the whole 16 hours of labor telling my wife to relax and focus on her breathing. Simple stuff, really, but as I came to realize, essential. Focus, breathe, focus, breathe. Here comes another contraction, focus, breathe. At times during the labor, we needed to do the exercises to help move the baby down and to help relieve some of the pain, so we just got on with it, as we'd been shown. Take it from me: If you try nothing else, the sit bone spread gets great results!

Had the Birthing Better skills not enlightened me as to what was going on and just why breathing, relaxing, and moving into certain positions was beneficial, I would have been one of those guys at the back of the room feeling helpless and passive. For me, the tangible benefits of the skills are really highlighted not just by me recalling my own experience, but also when I see

“Many dads I know felt powerless at the births of their children, and hated seeing their partners in pain and unable to do anything to help. They felt totally unconnected to the birthing experience. If you do the Birthing Better work together, it's a shared experience.”

fathers-to-be without those skills—like going into unknown territory without a map. Sure, they will get through in the end, but I found that investing a little time and effort made me a lot better prepared for the journey and what I needed to do to stay on track. And so as it was, I was right there, helping. Helping out with the birth of our son in a very real way. It was an honor and an experience which will stay with me for a lifetime, and it's thanks in no small way to Birthing Better skills."

—Thomas

"I am 100% certain that without the knowledge of the Birthing Better skills we would have had a very different birthing experience. If you are a male and extremely lucky in life, you not only get to witness the birth of your child, but also actively take part in that birth. I would only have cut the cord without the knowledge of Birthing Better. Instead, I worked through each contraction, painful as they were. Being with my wife through her pain, and knowing that what we did together made each contraction more manageable, made me feel so GOOD. You have to go through the pain together. It's important. We had an absolutely amazing birth. I'm a changed man. Absolutely every man who is going to be a father must help his wife for the last 8 to 12 weeks of pregnancy. The payoff is so big. Don't miss it."

—James

"I have been taking daily baths and right lying to get some relief. And then last week, after practicing a left hip lift in the evening, I found the next day (and ever since) to be so much better. The babe is still very low but has hopped off my left inner hip and feels more centrally placed. I felt so pleased to find the Birthing Better resource working for me even before labor has begun."



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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

Birthring Better Childbirth Preparation

BirthringBetter.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.” –BirthringBetter.org

Calm Birth

Calmbirth.org

“Calmbirth 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

Birthring From Within

Birthringfromwithin.com

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

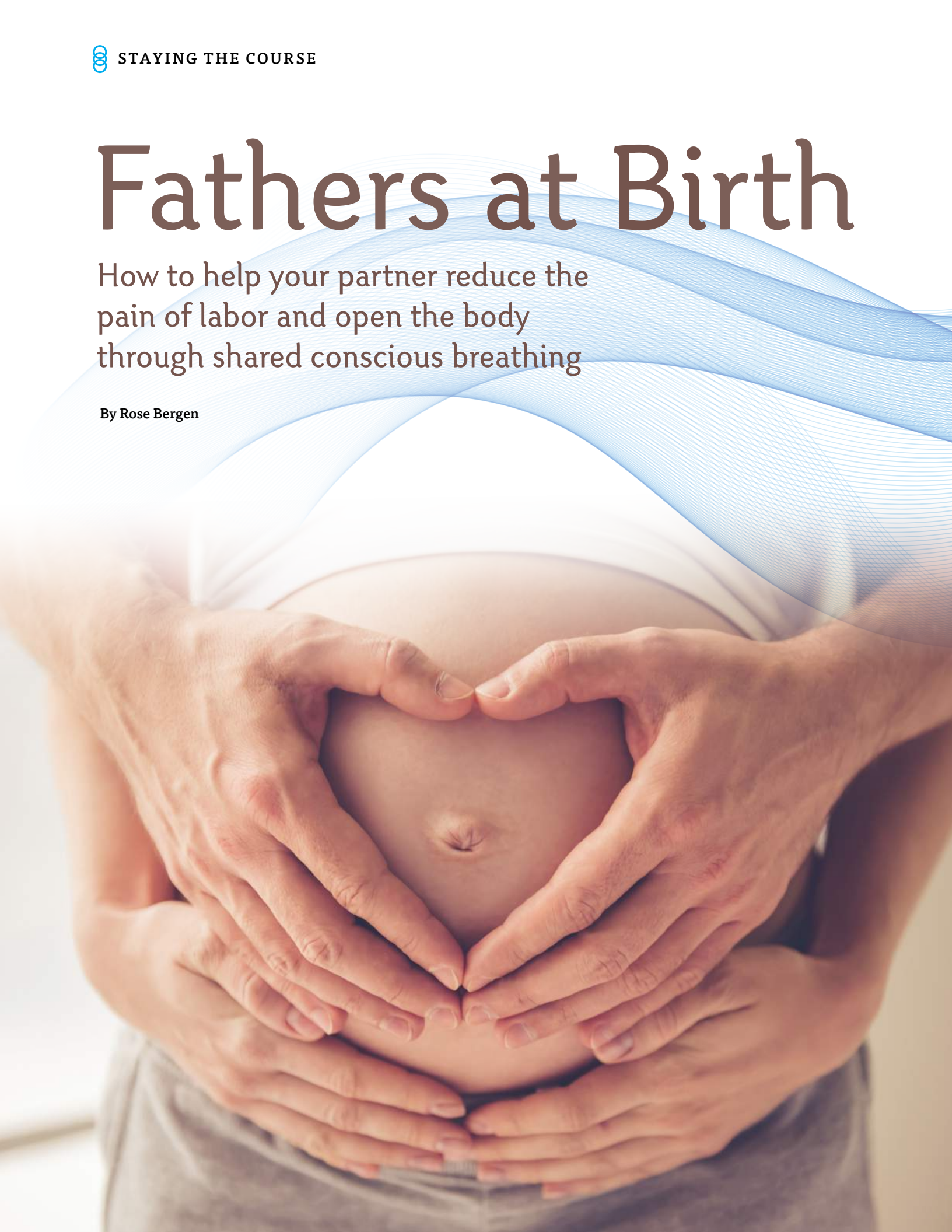
The Bradley Method

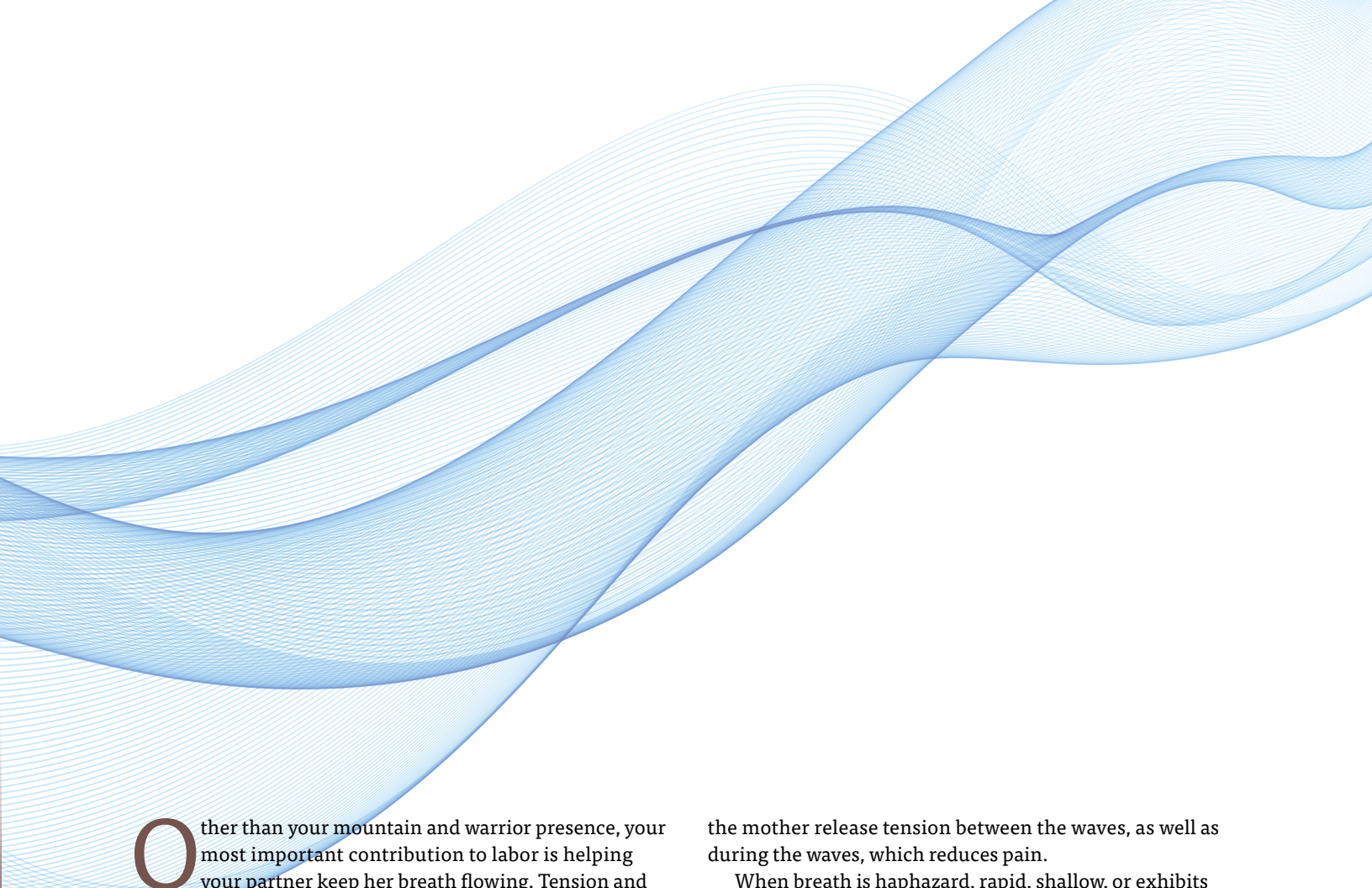
BOOK: *Husband-Coached Childbirth: The Bradley Method of Natural Childbirth*, by Robert A. Bradley

Fathers at Birth

How to help your partner reduce the pain of labor and open the body through shared conscious breathing

By Rose Bergen



A decorative graphic consisting of several overlapping, flowing blue lines that create a sense of movement and depth, resembling waves or smoke. The lines are more concentrated in the upper right and fade out towards the bottom left.

Other than your mountain and warrior presence, your most important contribution to labor is helping your partner keep her breath flowing. Tension and anxiety increase the minute breath becomes shallow or restricted, and they decrease the minute breath becomes smooth and flowing. Breath is the most powerful tool you can use to keep you both centered. It is also the most powerful tool your partner can use to decrease pain.

The first action you take in any situation is a breath. The breath affects the lungs, immediately cueing the nervous system. The nervous system responds by sending messages, which impact the mind-body system. Messages sent from the nervous system affect us physically, emotionally, and mentally. If we alter how we breathe, we alter the constellation of messages and reactions in our entire system.

A focus on the breath keeps you both grounded in the moment, and gives each of you the ability to work with one wave of labor at a time. You cannot breathe in the past or in the future. By focusing on the breath, you help your partner stay focused in the now. Most women can deal with one breath, one wave of labor at a time. When a woman cannot release tension from one wave, she carries it into the next wave. As tension accumulates from one wave to the next, labor becomes overwhelming. Then the mother either accelerates or shuts down the breath in an effort to cope.

Rapid, shallow breathing, hyperventilating, or temporarily holding the breath seems to help the mother cope in the moment. But the result is escalating pain, which creates a downward spiral. Simple intervention with her breath prevents it from continuing. Rhythmic, flowing breath helps

the mother release tension between the waves, as well as during the waves, which reduces pain.

When breath is haphazard, rapid, shallow, or exhibits long pauses, it cues the nervous system to release fright, flight, or fight responses. Then tension, anxiety, and pain levels soar. Getting through labor with recurrent fright, flight, or fight cues is like scaling a cliff that goes straight up with no rope to hold onto. The minute you assist your partner to focus on breath, it is like giving her a rope so she can continue her climb.

One birthing mother, Julie, shared how important it was to have her partner assist her with breath: “I couldn’t have made it through labor without drugs if my husband hadn’t been there to keep me focused on the breath. It helped me to anchor whenever I panicked.”

Effective breathing is critical for your partner, but how you breathe can make a big difference in the effectiveness of your contribution. Your stable presence is anchored in your own fluid breathing.

Alexander, a birthing husband, shared how breath was a key element during his labor vigil: “Labor was like this giant observance of the breath—both my breath and my wife’s. The breath kept us connected. By keeping tabs on my breath, I kept connected to myself and by keeping tabs on her breath, I kept connected to her and how she was doing. And it really is true; there are few things as stabilizing or reassuring as flowing breath.”

Simply diving into your breath has a profound influence on you both. Breath literally has the power to revolutionize your experience.



RHYTHMIC, FLOWING BREATH HELPS THE MOTHER RELEASE TENSION BETWEEN THE WAVES, AS WELL AS DURING THE WAVES, WHICH REDUCES PAIN.

The Great and Simple Teaching of Breath

Breath is the link between body and mind. You can relax a tense body or focus an agitated or distracted mind when you attend the breath and allow it to be:

- Diaphragmatic
- Flowing without exaggerated breaks
- Smooth and fluid, without jerks or restrictions
- Quiet, refined, without noises (this does not mean your partner should not combine the exhalation with groaning during her waves)

Do not be deceived by the simplicity of this practice. The simplest practices are the most powerful and profound. Fluid, rhythmic, diaphragmatic breathing is so effective that within 40 seconds, a biofeedback machine can record the body's physiological alteration. I witnessed this when I went through a series of biofeedback sessions as part of a holistic therapy program. Tension levels measurably decrease, and body temperature measurably increases, indicating enhanced levels of relaxation. This is called the relaxation response.

Breath is intimately connected to the nervous system, which immediately affects your entire psychophysiological system. Breath has the power to turn an unnerving situation around in less than a minute. Engaging the relaxation response by rhythmic, smooth breathing is the most powerful tool you and your partner can use during labor.

When breath is diaphragmatic and flows smoothly, without exaggerated breaks or restrictions, it is physiologically impossible to be in a state of agitation. This is not a belief system. It is a practice. I ask my clients not to simply believe this, but to use it to discover whether or not it is true.

Breath and Alignment

The quality of breath is intimately connected to alignment. Misalignment inhibits effective breathing, creates unnecessary tension, detrimentally affects body organs, and requires the body to use additional energy to support its weight and position. If your partner's breath is constricted because of collapsed alignment, she not only has to cope with the powerful force of labor, but also with the emotional impact of the nervous system firing fight, flight, or fright cues. One way you help ease this impossible cycle is by attending your partner's alignment.

Comfortable alignment supports the mother to breathe more proficiently, reduces a measure of discomfort, and

conserves energy. By keeping the mother as aligned, supported, and comfortable as is practical, you increase her ability to breathe and relax.

The Mechanics of Alignment

The body has three basic weights: pelvis, chest, and head. Observe the mother's alignment from time to time and help keep these three body weights as aligned, supported, and comfortable as is practical. Think in terms of observing and supporting her whole body, from the crown of her head to the tips of her toes. The position of the spine is pivotal because it reflects alignment of pelvis, chest, and head. She will need periodic support of her head, lower back, and legs. Use pillows or rolled towels for additional support when needed.

However, don't get trapped in the details of alignment and lose the larger perspective. Too much attention to detail will annoy and distract your partner. Supported comfort is the main idea.

Keep Her Body Warm

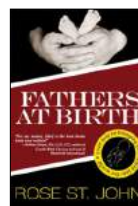
Another easy way you contribute to your partner's alignment and breath flow is to keep her warm. A chilly body cannot relax. If the mother gets chilly, her muscles contract, which causes misalignment, unnecessary tension, restricted breath flow, and increased pain. When your partner is in deep labor, she may not realize on the rational level that she is cold. It is your job to ensure she is not.

Warmth conveys nurture and safety. If your partner gets chilly, she releases adrenaline, which inhibits oxytocin, the hormone that sustains labor. The caring act of keeping your partner warm supports alignment, breath flow, and encourages labor to progress with more ease. Cover her with an extra blanket, and offer hot packs.

There may be times when your partner feels hot. Offer an ice pack to place on her forehead or neck. Keeping the mother's body temperature comfortable is one way to support her.

Fathers, when present and focused on offering practical support, can play an extremely valuable part in the family's birth journey. 🡕

Originally published in the book, *Fathers at Birth*.



*Rose (St. John) Bergen is the mother of three wonderful children, certified yoga instructor through both the Himalayan Institute and Yoga Alliance (E-RYT 500), birth attendant, speaker, mentor, and author. She has trained extensively and logged over 5,000 hours working with clients and is author of the books *Fathers at Birth*, *The Secret of Breath*, *Psalms for the Braveheart: A Call to Revival*. View article resources and author information here: pathwaystofamilywellness.org/references.html.*

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SUPPORT, CAN PLAY AN
EXTREMELY VALUABLE PART IN
THE FAMILY'S BIRTH JOURNEY.



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.

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.

THE *Secret* of *Breath*

By Rose Bergen

Humans come into the world the least developed of all mammals. Because the nervous system is not sufficiently developed at birth for infants to use the upper chest muscles as breathing muscles, they cannot be chest breathers. Infants can only breathe diaphragmatically. Since everyone is born a diaphragmatic breather, we are merely reestablishing what we have already experienced—what we already “know.”

If you observe an infant breathe while lying on its back, it is easy to see that the area around the navel rises with inhalation and falls with the exhalation, but the upper chest does not rise and fall. Also note that with each inhalation not only does the area around the navel rise, but the lower ribs, which are attached to diaphragm by connective tissue (fascia), flare out slightly to accommodate the inflow of breath. With each exhalation the navel region falls, and the lower ribs retract, assisting the lungs to expel the air. To observe a baby breathe is to witness diaphragmatic breathing—the way the body is optimally designed to breathe.


You may also observe that a baby’s respiration rate is more rapid than yours—around 40 to 50 times per minute. And you may notice jerks and noises in an infant’s breath especially when the startle reflex gets tripped, which happens frequently in newborns.

TRYING TIMES

Some of us remain diaphragmatic breathers throughout life. Others maintain only a shadow of proficient diaphragmatic breathing. And some become habituated chest breathers or worse. But how?

In childhood, if you go through trying times that you are too young to deal with, you may (like me) subconsciously figure out that if you breathe shallowly, you won’t feel as much. You won’t be as connected to the hurt, anger, fear, confusion, and pain. To cope with distress in childhood, some of us learn to use breath in a counterproductive way.

Those who do so use shallow chest breathing and a rigid diaphragm as a defense mechanism to shut down emotions and “separate” from circumstances that are overwhelming. They use the diaphragm as a “lid” to lock down emotions and keep them at bay. On that level, breath seeks to protect



The diaphragm unlocks some of the unprocessed “stuff” so we can release it, heal, move on, and be free.

and help us cope. It keeps painful, shocking, fearful, confusing, or overwhelming conditions at bay temporarily so we can get through the crisis. And it keeps unprocessed “stuff” locked up, controlled, buried low—so we can continue to function. And many of us do so at a high level. Thus, some fall into the habit of chest breathing as a strategy to cope with ongoing distress. It works, but it’s limiting.

BRUTAL CRAGS

While restricting the breath may seem expedient and necessary to “detach from” or “control” the situation, the result is increased anxiety and tension, not to mention a host of other problems.

For those who have “frozen” the diaphragm to navigate the brutal crags, returning to diaphragmatic breathing can be a challenging ride. Unlocking the diaphragm also unlocks some of the unprocessed “stuff” so we can release it, heal, move on, and be free. Because free-flowing diaphragmatic breathing frees us from deep-seated conditioning, we also get increased confidence, competence, awareness, better results, and much more. The payoff is huge.

Even though many of us emerge from childhood with an intact diaphragmatic breath pattern, there is still much to be done to hone, refine, and develop a relationship with breath. But breath is a worthy teacher. It takes us on an exploration into our greater potential.

WIRED

Breath has an energetic component that influences and is reflected in our posture.

Whatever breath pattern we developed in childhood gets habituated, conditioned, “wired” into the brain and neuro-muscular system, and a breathing habit that is as individual as a fingerprint crystallizes. Then, our bodies form around our energetic breath pattern.

We get locked into a conditioned pattern of breathing, which affects us physically, emotionally, and mentally. Posture, body language, moods, thoughts, and behavior are affected by the habitual breath pattern developed in youth.

Unfortunately, when we grow up and want to respond differently, this entrenched breathing habit continues to play out, affecting thoughts, moods, behaviors, actions, relationships, and results.

NERVOUS SYSTEM: QUICK OVERVIEW

Diaphragmatic breathing initiates a higher level of cognitive functioning, which helps us break free of the wired-in programming. Below is an explanation.

The autonomic nervous system (ANS) consists of two main parts: the sympathetic nervous system (SNS), which gears us up; and the parasympathetic nervous system (PNS), which calms us down. In her article, “Tapping into the Power of the Vagus Nerve—How Breath can Change your Relationships,” B. Grace Bullock, Ph.D., explains how the opposing but complementary branches of the autonomic nervous system have a profound effect on state of mind and physiology:

The SNS is often equated to a physiological “gas pedal.” When an organism perceives threat, the SNS dumps a cascade of stress hormones into the blood stream that increase heart rate, blood pressure and respiration, contract muscle, and depress all nonessential functions like digestion.

In this state, the brain’s fear circuitry, which resides in the limbic system, is also dominant, drawing important resources away from the prefrontal cortex and other regions of the brain where planning, reasoning and effective communication occur. When the SNS is dominant, social behavior becomes limited to survival strategies such as aggression, avoidance or withdrawal.

The counterbalance to the SNS, the PNS, is often thought of as a physiological “brake pedal.” Under conditions of safety, the PNS initiates a relaxation response, which depresses heart rate, blood pressure and respiration, reduces muscle tone/contraction, and allows the organism to engage in reparative and restorative functions such as digestion. In this state, the brain’s fear circuitry is no longer mobilized, freeing up higher order cognitive functioning and enabling a wider and more flexible range of behavior.

Diaphragmatic breathing not only activates the vagus nerve (the tenth cranial nerve), which reduces stress, it

WHATEVER BREATH PATTERN WE DEVELOPED IN CHILDHOOD GETS HABITUATED, CONDITIONED, “WIRED” INTO THE BRAIN AND NEURO-MUSCULAR SYSTEM, AND A BREATHING HABIT THAT IS AS INDIVIDUAL AS A FINGERPRINT CRYSTALLIZES. THEN, OUR BODIES FORM AROUND OUR ENERGETIC BREATH PATTERN.

also activates a “higher order cognitive functioning,” which opens options that impact results. When we feel threatened, survival behaviors kick in. When in survival mode, options are limited to actions that protect. We run, attack, or shut down (vacate). It is a predictable script. But we have a direct pathway to moderate activity in the amygdala—the center in the brain’s limbic system that fuels emotions. Through breath, we can disarm the brain’s fear circuitry (which triggers fight or flight and fuels aggression or avoidance) and calm the survival anxieties.

Diaphragmatic breathing initiates a higher order of cognitive functioning, opens options, and positively influences relationships and results. And it can do so in a minute. All we need to do is partner with it.

VAGUS NERVE

One reason diaphragmatic breathing is so effective is because it fires up and tones the vagus nerve, which calms us down and reduces stress. The vagus nerve is often referred to as the wandering nerve or the gut-brain super-highway. Wandering from the brain to the gut, it innervates internal organs like the lungs, larynx, heart, pancreas, liver, and digestive system.

In “Diaphragmatic Breathing Exercises and Your Vagus Nerve,” Christopher Bergland explains:

Diaphragmatic breathing...is something you can do anytime and anywhere to instantly stimulate your vagus nerve and lower stress responses associated with “fight-or-flight” mechanisms. Deep breathing also improves heart rate variability (HRV), which is the measurement of variations within beat-to-beat intervals.

For millennia, yogis and sages from Eastern cultures have understood the importance of diaphragmatic breathing.

In an article explaining how to hack the vagus nerve, Bergland further explains:

During the inhalation phase of a breathing cycle, the sympathetic nervous system (SNS) facilitates a brief acceleration of heart rate; during exhalation, the vagus nerve secretes a transmitter substance (ACh), which causes deceleration within beat-to-beat intervals via the parasympathetic nervous system (PNS).

HRV [Heart Rate Variability] is used to index the robustness of someone's vagus nerve responses and vagal tone (VT). Higher HRV is associated with stronger vagus nerve function, lower chronic stress levels, better overall health, and improved cognition.

Breath is wired into both the sympathetic and the para-sympathetic nervous system. Inhalation fires the sympathetic, while exhalation fires the parasympathetic. So, it is easy to see how conscious use of breath has the power to balance the nervous system.

Diaphragmatic breathing not only balances the nervous system, it also lowers blood pressure, heart rate, and tension. Thus, it prevents fight, flight, or freeze reactions, and promotes relaxation and focus.

Fluid diaphragmatic breathing contributes to health and well-being, but chronic, shallow chest breathing diminishes it. Not only does chronic chest breathing increase tension, it restricts movement of the diaphragm, which reduces oxygenation and lymph flow. This contributes to a host of other problems—both physical and psychological.

Developing a relationship with breath is profoundly beneficial for both body and mind. It also supports and advances personal development. As you repeatedly turn attention to flow of breath, the practice of diaphragmatic refines, embeds itself in the neuromuscular system, and habituates. Then it gets easy because when you forget, your neuromuscular system remembers.

TREASURE

Breath is a treasure we can tap into at any moment. It is under our nose. Right here. Right now. Our constant companion. Always with us. Always available. Always willing to serve. It is like an unceasing endowment we can cash in anytime. All we need do is partner with it. Partnering with the breath does not take an act of faith. It is not a belief system. It does not take a degree. It does not take fancy or expensive equipment. It takes a bit of accurate instruction. A willingness to practice. Persistence. And that is about it.

The goal is to develop an underlying habit of smooth-flowing diaphragmatic breathing along with an ongoing subliminal awareness of breath that you can bring into conscious awareness, partner with, and use for your benefit at any time. 🧘

BENEFITS OF DIAPHRAGMATIC BREATHING

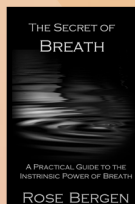
There are so many benefits to the simple life-skill practice of diaphragmatic breathing that it is worth the effort to partner with breath and become a proficient diaphragmatic breather.

Diaphragmatic breathing is scientifically proven to enhance and improve:

- calmness
- relaxation
- focus
- concentration
- memory
- immune function
- lymph flow
- oxygenation
- asthmatic conditions
- digestion
- detoxification
- healing (both physiological and psychological)
- well-being

Diaphragmatic breathing is also proven to reduce:

- tension
- stress
- anxiety
- panic attacks
- heart rate

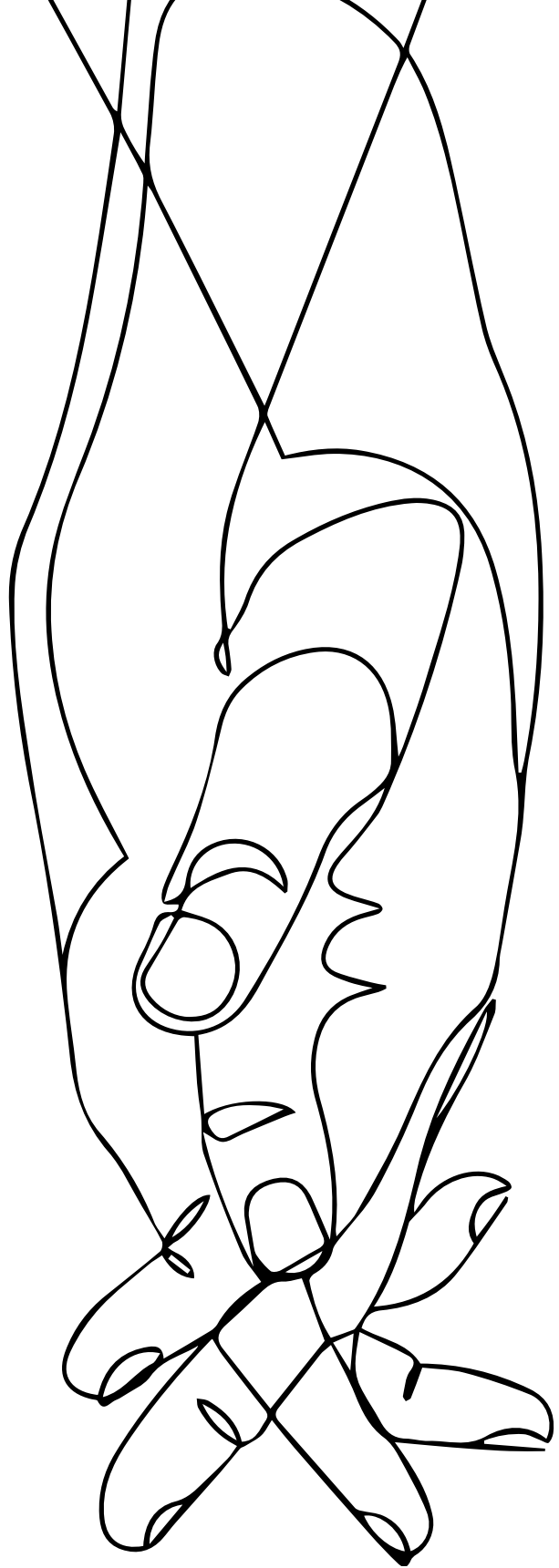


Rose (St. John) Bergen, Ph.D., is the mother of three wonderful children, a certified yoga instructor through both the Himalayan Institute and Yoga Alliance (E-RYT 500), birth attendant, speaker, mentor, and author. She has trained extensively and logged over 5,000 hours working with clients. Her books include *Fathers at Birth*, *The Secret of Breath*, and *Psalms for the Braveheart: A Call to Revival*. View article resources and author information here: pathwaystofamilywellness.org/references.html.

Chiropractic Principles

THE STORY OF *Conjoined Twins*

by Daniel Roytas



Radhika and Dudhika Nayak (known as the Orissa twins) were conjoined twins born in September 1889, in the Indian province of Orissa. In 1902, at the age of 13, Dudhika contracted tuberculosis. A medical doctor by the name of Professor Doyen attempted to separate them. Unfortunately, Dudhika died, but her sister Radhika remained completely healthy and survived.

Tuberculosis is considered to be a highly infectious and potentially lethal disease affecting the respiratory system, caused by mycobacterium tuberculosis. How is it possible that only one twin contracted this highly infectious disease, despite being in such close proximity to one another?

Then there is the case of the conjoined twins Masha and Dasha Krivoslyapova, born in Russia in 1950. The sisters shared an interconnected blood supply and immune system, but had separate central nervous systems. Despite sharing an immune system, the twins reacted to illness completely differently. Dasha was prone to colds and had measles during her childhood, while her sister Masha remained completely healthy.

Finally, there is the story of the conjoined twins Rosa and Josepha Blazek, who were born in 1878. Just like Masha and Dasha, Rosa and Josepha had an interconnected blood supply and immune system, but had separate central nervous systems. In February of 1922, Rosa first became ill with a cough, which then developed into influenza. Josepha was unaffected. Three weeks later, Rosa had convalesced, but within days, Josepha experienced severe abdominal pain and jaundice from an inflammation and swelling of the gall bladder, diagnosed as cholecystitis.

How is it that the disease of influenza, tuberculosis,

or measles was not spread to the other twin, given they were in such close and constant proximity to each other? Why didn't the original source of infection infect both of them? Is it possible that they were both exposed to similar environmental factors, yet their diseases manifested in different ways—for example, one suffered influenza while the other experienced cholecystitis? In these cases, the twins shared a blood supply and immune system, but had separate nervous systems. Could the nervous system play a more significant role in the development of illness than we currently understand?

Editor's note:

The reason for the conjoined twins experiencing separate illnesses didn't make sense within the infectious model of disease, and these stories continue to challenge medical researchers today. However, chiropractors, then and now, maintain that the mystery is revealed once we realize that the individuals, though sharing many things in common, each had their own separate nervous systems from which they perceived the world. Differences in nervous system function can explain differences in health and wellness.

How important is the brain and nervous system in the cause of health and disease? The nervous system may be more important than we ever imagined. ➡



Daniel Roytas is a naturopath, nutritionist, and physical therapist with over 10 years of clinical experience. He has lectured at many of Australia's leading natural medicine colleges and universities and currently runs a health education website called Humanley. View

article resources and author information here: pathwaystofamilywellness.org/references.html.

Discoveries of



Humanity is going through a great awakening, where the focus of attention in matters of health are shifting from external factors to the internal workings of the nervous system. Groundbreaking discoveries have been made regarding the intelligent operation of the brain and central nervous system that offer key insights into our health. With these discoveries, scientific medicine can no longer stand firm on a strictly mechanistic interpretation of biology. There is, in fact, an innate intelligence orchestrating all manifestations of life. Through the process of our own conscious integration, we can free the power of this intelligence. This means we, ourselves, hold the key to our health.

the Nervous System

by John Ohm

The following is an excerpt from the introduction to *German New Medicine: Experiences in Practice* by Dr. Katherine Willow, N.D. It is my hope that this awareness grows and that the calling to evolve our understanding of life reaches all who are interested. Let us enter a new paradigm of medicine!

Thank you for taking the time to investigate German New Medicine (GNM), a set of proposed discoveries about disease and healing. I hope they will benefit you and your family. Furthermore, my hope is that influential readers will be inspired to initiate and support the research necessary to begin integrating GNM into our medical system.

I am convinced that these discoveries are important contributions to medicine and can change how we understand and treat disease. GNM may be a pivotal insight that leads us to success with cancer, heart disease, diabetes, mental illness, and many other conditions.

The core premises of German New medicine were discovered in the late 1970s by Dr. Ryke Geerd Hamer, a medical doctor in Germany. Dr. Hamer continued to unravel their mysteries amidst the controversy that tends to surround groundbreaking discoveries until his death in July 2017.

After encountering GNM in 2001, I have been using it in my practice of naturopathic medicine since 2003. The startling results I have seen with my patients compel me to share my experiences. This book is a summary of the new laws described by Dr. Hamer together with patient stories that demonstrate how they work.

From what I have seen, these new principles have the potential to improve our understanding of medicine, both mainstream and alternative. I have observed that applying them correctly can increase the survival rate and quality of life for people with many diseases, both physical and mental, with less treatment than I ever thought possible.

Unlike energy medicine and its parent, quantum physics, GNM is based on our primordial past, still imprinted on our brain and displayed by our embryology, no matter how civilized we like to think we are. By showing us how this past still influences us, GNM gives us revelations about how we understand ourselves as human beings.

Please be patient as you read this book. GNM is a wholly new paradigm, flying in the face of what we thought we knew about disease and cure. It takes time to digest and understand. Many outspoken critics of GNM have skimmed its parts and condemned it without comprehending its entirety. When thoroughly understood and correctly applied, it offers verifiable results as I have experienced firsthand.

Voices from all corners of medicine make similar claims of cures using various substances and techniques. I have investigated several in hopes of helping my patients; some of them are useful while others mainly support commercial interests.

GNM is different from anything I have seen in the health-care field. It is not a product or technique, nor does it limit the type of medicine used in treatment to either mainstream or alternative practices. GNM offers a set of new principles for all of medicine, a new understanding of how and why we become ill and how we heal—which can be applied by any practitioner for better results with their patients.

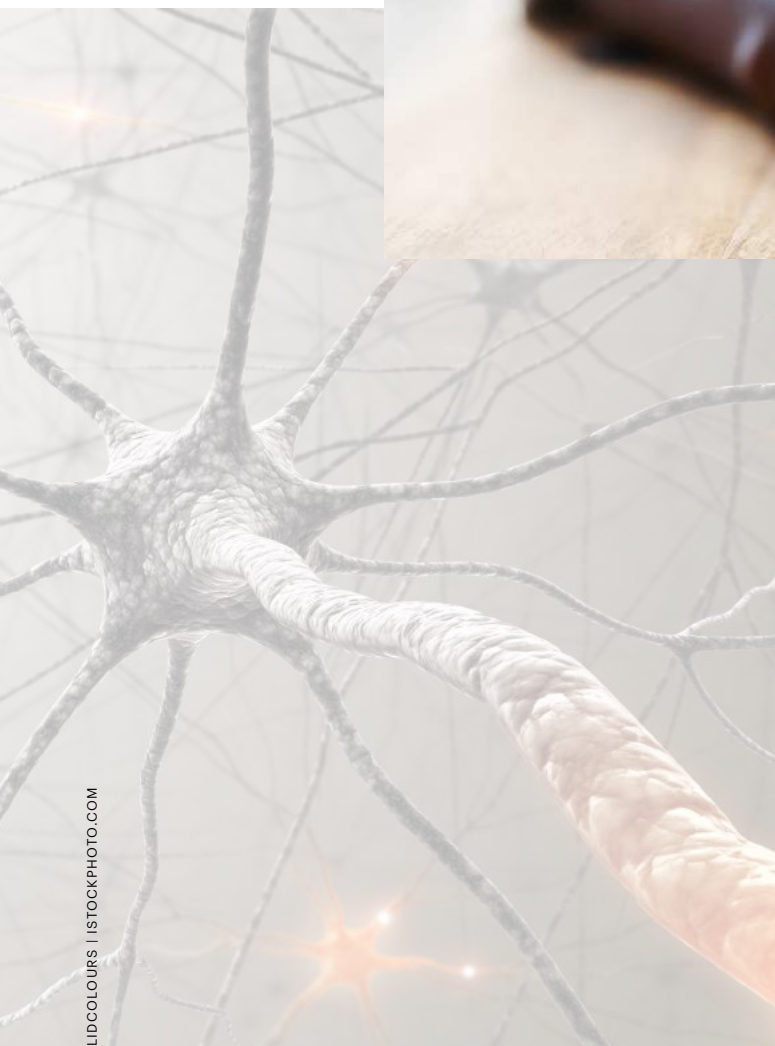
GNM was originally termed New Medicine by Dr. Hamer and then copyrighted by him as German New Medicine to differentiate his findings from other versions of the term “New Medicine.”

Dr. Hamer and German New Medicine attracted considerable commentary and reaction, which will be briefly summarized, however this book will focus mainly on clinical efficacy. Much more background information is available on Ilse Laker's website newmedicine.ca, for those who are interested. —*Katherine Willow, N.D.*

German New Medicine presents discoveries of the brain and nervous system that validate the mind-body connection to disease. Specifically, it shows how traumatic conflicts in life—identifiable on a brain CT scan as circular lesions—cause symptoms in corresponding organs of the body. These discoveries grant predictability in the phenomenon of disease.

GNM shows that the organ-brain connection behind disease symptoms is part of a larger adaptive intelligence proceeding in the body. Here we see how organisms respond

GERMAN NEW MEDICINE OFFERS A SET OF NEW PRINCIPLES FOR ALL OF MEDICINE, A NEW UNDERSTANDING OF HOW AND WHY WE BECOME ILL AND HOW WE HEAL—WHICH CAN BE APPLIED BY ANY PRACTITIONER FOR BETTER RESULTS WITH THEIR PATIENTS.



to traumatic, isolating conflicts with intelligent adaptations. These adaptations are called biological programs. Directed from the brain, they organize changes in a specific organ's function, giving the organism a boost in overcoming the unique conflict. These changes may often go unnoticed until the conflict is resolved, at which point the body begins to reverse the organ adaptation, resulting in inflammation and symptoms.

It is amazing to know that microbes operate in accordance with the nervous system. Microbes, when signaled, help bring adapted organs back to their pre-adaptation state of balance. This process is capable of "running its course" when properly supported. Intense fear can limit this process tremendously. However, awareness of the underlying emotional conflict that was responsible for the organ adaptation helps the mind and body to release and heal in profound ways. 🧠




John Ohm believes in the chiropractic philosophy that "life expresses intelligence" in all its manifestations. He believes that recent discoveries of the brain and nervous system confirm this philosophy, opening the world to a new science of life. He strives to advance chiropractic principles for a more beautiful world to come. View article resources and author information here: pathwaystofamilywellness.org/references.html.

Emotional Integration: A Chiropractor's Perspective

By Cameron Brownley, D.C.





IF THE ENERGY OF THE
EMOTIONAL EXPERIENCE CANNOT
BE PROCESSED IN THE NOW
MOMENT, THE NERVOUS SYSTEM
WILL FIND A WAY TO STORE
IT AS POTENTIAL ENERGY
SOMEWHERE ELSE.

We all know
that it is
important
to process

emotions, that every little tool and strategy available to an open mind will be beneficial for this amazing process we call life. But how often do we fully implement these tools? We can talk about solutions to stagnated emotions and recurrent patterns, but how often do we find ourselves actually making the shift we yearn for? Did you know that chiropractic is one of those tools?

Sure, everyone knows that chiropractic can help with your neck and back pain. Further, we know that a chiropractor can even help someone improve their digestion and overall physiological balance. When the nervous system operates better, everything in the physical body works better because the messages are getting through. Yet when it comes to the emotional processing, it can become a somewhat uncomfortable conversation. Why?

Emotional processing looks different for everyone. There are lots of unknowns that scare us from stepping into it. This is because we have this amazing reality called "biodiversity." Our physical body compositions vary based on the unique expression of our genetic coding. Our brain and nervous system vary in their nerve connections and overall distribution of neurologic tissue throughout the entire body. This leads to differences in how we

physically function. It also leads to differences in how each of us uniquely process the emotions of life.

Whether it's a devastating death in the family, an end of a relationship, a really challenging life transition, or some other trauma, the body does in fact keep score. If the energy of the emotional experience cannot be processed in the Now moment, the nervous system will find a way to store it as potential energy somewhere else. How this happens will vary, of course. We are each different in how we process energy and store trauma, although there are trends. However, why this occurs is all the more important!

We store the energy trauma so that we can process it at a later time. We get to process the energies of Life whenever our nervous system feels safe and adaptable enough to do so. The body holds on to the energy of that past experience or trauma, so that the wisdom of that experience does not simply slip away. Another way of saying that is: Our physical tissues hold on to potential energy (density) until we are able to "own our experience" (integrate it). This basic, foundational belief system was brought to me through Biogeometric Integration, a beautiful approach to chiropractic that I utilize in my office.

At a certain point, the person on the table gets to decide whether or not they want to jump into the mental-emotional aspect of the care. Many of us feel much more comfortable

healing the physical, because for whatever reason that feels more safe. Opening the door to emotions and past trauma can be much scarier. A lot of us have dissociated from these emotions and this vulnerability for so long, it may even feel impossible to consider the prospect of reconnecting.

Here, I would like to point out the magic of chiropractic care. Without it having to look a certain way, each person is able to move through the process of healing on the chiropractic table. The nervous system begins to balance and feel safe. The physical tissues of the body begin to heal and function better once there is increased nerve flow. The basic pressing needs of the body are taken care of, and things begin to feel much more stable and safe. Sooner or later,

THE HEALING JOURNEY LEADS
US BACK TO A WHOLENESS AND
WISDOM THAT SITS BENEATH ALL
THE EMOTIONS, REMEMBERING
OUR TRUE SELF ONCE MORE.

the body can access the core patterns and deep traumas. The person gets to decide whether they want to step into the healing, and the chiropractor is simply there to help guide each unique person through that experience.

So often I find myself getting my clients to this milestone on the healing journey and I simply let them know what is happening. “You may feel like your eyes want to water or some emotional release now, or later on this week. That is totally normal. Your nervous system is feeling safe enough to process this. Does this sound okay to you?” They usually nod, because by this point there has been a foundation of trust and clear communication. We begin to understand after consistent care that healing is a journey, and that the emotional integration aspect is a key part.

This journey is reflected by the changes that are made in the brain. Initially with chiropractic, the spinal cord has a release of tension, twisting, and other distortional forces. This leads to decreased nociception (pain signals) and a release of tension on the brainstem. The brain is no longer being bombarded by so many overwhelming inputs, and the brainstem is able to more properly balance and adjust the physiological parameters of the body. The basic physical needs (such as heart rate, breathing rate, pH balance, blood vessel dilation, digestive function, etc.) are taken care of.

Once this occurs, the nervous system is freed up to become more active in the higher processing centers (i.e., the cortex). Heidi Haavik, Ph.D., has done amazing work to show that spinal adjustments do in fact “light up” the frontal lobe of the brain. This most advanced aspect of our

neurology begins to fire more and more as it is consistently activated. Our mental decisions and adaptive abilities improve with this increase in function, as the frontal lobe is the “chief executive” of the brain. We gain an improved ability to process emotions at a higher level.

Research is beginning to show that the medial prefrontal cortex is linked into the emotional brain. It is hypothesized to be a higher processing zone in the brain that links into the lower zones that traditionally process the emotions.




What results is this: You are able to choose how you react to the emotion. Instead of falling back into that same emotional reaction pattern, you are able to select a more productive expression of that energy.

When we show up for consistent care and trust the process, we are able to integrate past traumas in a profound way. We can feel through the layers of our unique body and nervous system and know that there is always wisdom to be had in each life experience. We can make the active decision to love ourselves in this way, committing to the healing journey. The healing journey leads us back to a wholeness and wisdom that sits beneath all the emotions, and we remember our true selves once more. ☺



Cameron Brownley, D.C., is a family chiropractor and the vitalistic author of the True Self book series. In his first and most recent book, *Dr. Cameron* provides profound perspectives regarding presence, peace, and the ability to listen to a higher will at work in one's life. Whether it's through basic science, chiropractic philosophy, mind-body practices, metaphysical concepts, personal experiences, or even poetry, multiple aspects of the self are stimulated to articulate “The Clarity Strategy.” View article resources and author information here: pathwaystofamilywellness.org/references.html.



“Many patients imagine that they have tried everything. True, they have used many remedies, but they have never had the cause of their infirmity adjusted.”

– D.D. PALMER



NAVIGATING OUR EXPERIENCES

By Michael Brown

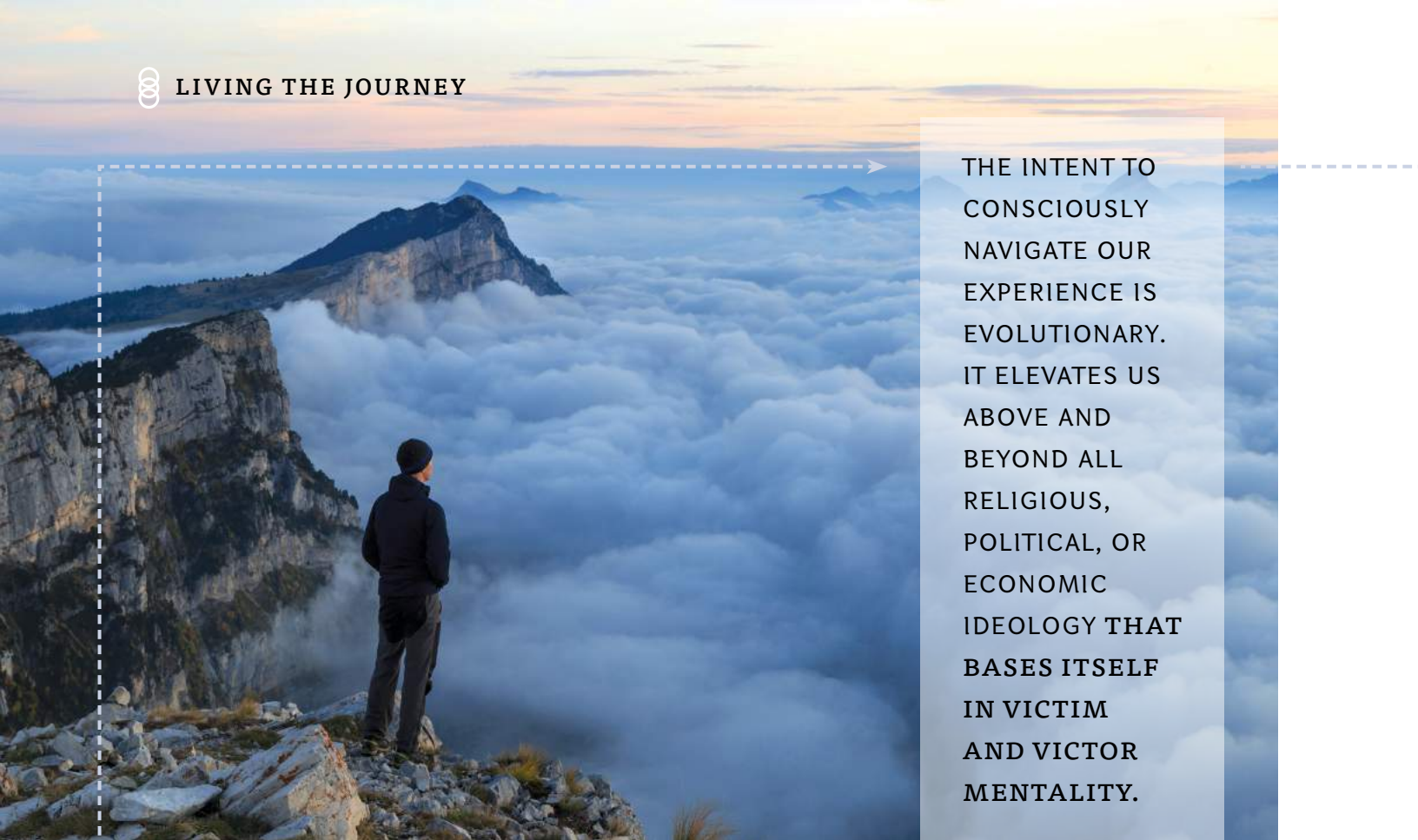
Is it possible to teach the CEO of a large corporation how to enter a fully co-creative relationship with the universe in every aspect of their business dealings?

If so, this would be an accomplishment that is truly evolutionary. The answer is “yes.” This evolutionary approach to navigating our experience, which I have been sharing with people for many years, and which I have been using on a daily basis myself since the mid-’90s, is fully explained for you in the body of this letter. It is what I used to get *The Presence Process* published.

People are still astounded that I, an unpublished author from South Africa, secured a publishing deal in Canada with Namaste Publishing after only sending out one manuscript. How is this possible? It completely shatters all the assumptions of “how difficult is it to get published” that freeze many potential writers in their tracks before they even type one word. The answer is, “I consciously navigated that experience.” Now, I am traveling throughout the U.S. and Canada teaching and facilitating a procedure that is evolving our

approach to restoring emotional balance within our human condition. How did I accomplish this? Do I have a degree in psychology? Did I take public speaking classes? No. The answer remains the same: “I consciously navigate my experiences.”

Yet, it is deeper than this. I navigate my experiences in such a way that “I get out of the way” so that the entire force of the universe may be brought to bear upon the outcome of my intentions. Is this difficult? No, it is the easiest thing in the world. Navigating our experience is our human birthright. Today, I observe so many people struggling through their lives because they do not know this simple procedure. They then get seduced by spiritual fads that tell them “they can get anything they want as long as they think positively.” In response to this predicament, I freely offer up this knowledge, asking only that you share it just as freely, so that all may have the opportunity to drink of the well of an unlimited universe in a manner benefiting our whole human family.



THE INTENT TO CONSCIOUSLY NAVIGATE OUR EXPERIENCE IS EVOLUTIONARY. IT ELEVATES US ABOVE AND BEYOND ALL RELIGIOUS, POLITICAL, OR ECONOMIC IDEOLOGY THAT BASES ITSELF IN VICTIM AND VICTOR MENTALITY.

AN EVOLUTIONARY APPROACH


One of the most useful practices we may embrace is “the conscious navigation of our experiences.” Of course, being willing to enter such a practice requires accepting responsibility for the quality of every experience we enter—a great challenge in a world that thrives on victim and victor mentality. It is more convenient to become reactive and blame others for our circumstances than it is to take responsive action to transform them. Because the resonance of *reactive blame* is an addiction that is hard to quit, it is easier to throw our hands up in the air in dismay and spend our time moaning about the world. Victim and victor mentality is also the acceptable frequency upon which most of our media and entertainment industry thrive. It is how we are accustomed to behaving toward ourselves, our families, our loved ones, and anyone who reflects an aspect of our own heart that is yet unintegrated.

By behaving as if we can change our circumstances through imposing our will on the outside world, we constantly enter revolutionary behavior. The word *revolutionary* reveals the inevitable outcome: We wind up revolving into the same circumstances from which we are attempting to depart—and often worse. To continue to be “a revolutionary” in this day and age, in the face of the overwhelming evidence that it only leads to deepening segregation and chaos, is deeply ignorant—ignorance being “the ignoring of the obvious.” What is called for now is evolutionary behavior,

a behavior whose consequence does not lead us directly back into the pit of the experiential circumstances from which we seek liberation.

A revolutionary is a mentality that resorts to the same means to liberate itself as it perceives is being used to propagate its suppression. By resorting to this mentality, a revolutionary always becomes an oppressor. An evolutionary differs in that they transform their experience using a means completely different from whatever is perceived to be the method of oppression. In fact, to authentically become an evolutionary is “to realize oneself as the only oppressor to be dethroned.” By taking this approach, an evolutionary navigates into a completely new experience.

The intent to consciously navigate our experience is evolutionary. It elevates us above and beyond all religious, political, or economic ideology that bases itself in victim and victor mentality. It is an approach founded on integrating the mechanics of the foundational attributes that manufacture our human experience—not on involvement with policies, doctrines, ideologies, and cultural agendas. To successfully navigate our experience simply requires awareness of what, in *The Presence Process*, I call “The Pathway of Awareness and the Seven-Year Cycle.” Because an overview of these two perceptual tools is crucially important in creating a context for this practice, and because some of you reading this letter may not have read *The Presence Process*, we shall briefly review them.



DURING CHILDHOOD, IT IS ACCEPTED THAT WE ARE, FOR THE MOST PART, EMOTIONAL BEINGS; WE ARE LITERALLY “ENERGY SPONTANEOUSLY IN MOTION.”

THE PATHWAY OF AWARENESS

There is a deliberate pathway our awareness travels along to enter our experience of the world we now inhabit. We may call this, “The Pathway of Awareness.” The Pathway of Awareness is most clearly visible in the initial development of a newborn child.

First, the child is an emotional being: It can only emote. Then, it uses its emotions as a means to communicate: It enters mental awareness. Then, it becomes conscious enough to reach out and deliberately grab hold of and maintain physical contact with something or somebody. Even though the child’s emotional, mental, and physical attributes develop simultaneously, there is a systematic pathway its awareness deliberately travels along to enter a full encounter with this world: From *emotional* to *mental* to *physical*.

THE SEVEN-YEAR CYCLE

The Pathway of Awareness from emotional to mental to physical that we travel along as we enter our experience of this world, and continually travel along to enter and manifest our daily experiences, is also clearly recognizable in what we may call “the Seven-Year Cycle.” During the first seven years of our life, we are called “children.” During childhood, it is accepted that we are, for the most part, emotional beings. We are literally “energy spontaneously in motion.” Around the age of 7, we depart childhood and are then called “young boys and girls.” As young boys and girls we enter an educational institution intended to direct our awareness into the mental body. We are taught to read, write, count, and communicate efficiently through a set of prescribed letters and numbers. After another seven years, around the age of 14, we are no longer called boys and girls, we are called “teenagers.” As teenagers, we experience a physiological transformation within our material body which marks an entry into a more physically magnified experience. After another seven years, when we turn 21, we are no longer regarded as teenagers; we are now called “young adults.” We then hold a party to celebrate our entry into adulthood and the completion of this cyclic journey from childhood (emotional) to teenager (mental) to adult (physical).

There are many implications of the Pathway of Awareness and the Seven-Year Cycle on the nature of human behavior in this day and age. However, the only motivation for briefly discussing them here is this: To provide a context for the realization that the emotional body is the causal point of the quality of our experience.

Although, as “adults,” we are physically trance-fixed by our experiences, experiences that we interpret almost entirely through mental concepts that are devoid of any felt perception. The reality remains that our emotional body is the causal point of the quality of all our experiences. What does this mean in simple English? It means that *how we feel about something determines how we feel about something*, that

no matter what the physical circumstances, and no matter what we “think,” if something does not feel right, it does not feel right.

“Feeling” is the causal point of the quality of our experience because it is the causal point the Pathway of Awareness uses to enter our experience of this world. And, whether we are aware of it or not, we continue to use this pathway, from emotional to mental to physical, in every aspect of our manufactured experience. However, because we are devoid of emotional body awareness, we cannot yet perceive the role of the feelings in the manufacture of experience. If we could, we would not be so naïve as to assert that “thought creates.” If thought creates, then, by obvious reasoning, “God is a thought.”

To enable us to grasp this significance, and to clearly see the movement along the Pathway of Awareness that we use for every aspect of our manufactured experience, it is useful to give a tangible example. To accomplish this, let us examine one of our favorite pastimes: The way we buy “stuff.” We all like stuff! We work very hard to obtain lots of stuff and live in a world where one cannot possibly have enough stuff. “Our relationship with stuff” is therefore an appropriate experience to use as a means to demonstrate the energetic flow of the Pathway of Awareness in our daily lives, and the crucial role our emotional body plays within this.

Let’s say a woman sees a dress hanging in a store window that she wants to have. While she is physically trance-fixed by the world, she will tell herself that she wants this dress “because of its appearance” or “because it is beautifully designed” or “because the fabric is so exquisite.” If she is mentally trance-fixed by the world, she will tell herself that she wants it “because of the designer label,” which means she believes she is “guaranteed a product of high quality” and “the status that comes with adorning such a garment.” Yet, neither of these are “the causal reason” why she buys the dress. If her emotional body awareness was awakened, she would know that what initially attracts her to the dress is “the promise of a feeling.” She unconsciously believes that if she purchases this garment and wears it, she will “feel good, happy, sexy, admired, wealthy, and/or successful.”

The intended *feeling* is the causal point of her attraction to the garment, and the desire for this intended feeling is driven by the current condition of her emotional body. The emotional body is the causal point of the motivation to purchase, whether she is conscious of it or not.

Once she believes the dress can accomplish this intent (this desired emotional state), she then moves obediently along the Pathway of Awareness. She *mentally* visits the possibility of obtaining the item. She asks herself: “How much does it cost? Can I afford this? Do I pay cash or put it on my credit card? How long will it take me to pay it off? By purchasing this dress, what will I have to go without that I could have used the money on?” In other words, “Does the asking price of this dress *equal the feeling* I intend to receive

by wearing it?”

The mental body then becomes the corridor which delivers her from “desiring the intended feeling” toward “physically acquiring the stuff intended to make the felt experience possible.” Once the mental body has made all the necessary calculations, if the feeling is still desired and perceived to be worth the expenditure, the dress is physically purchased, taken home, and worn. The woman’s experience has obediently moved from emotional to mental to physical.

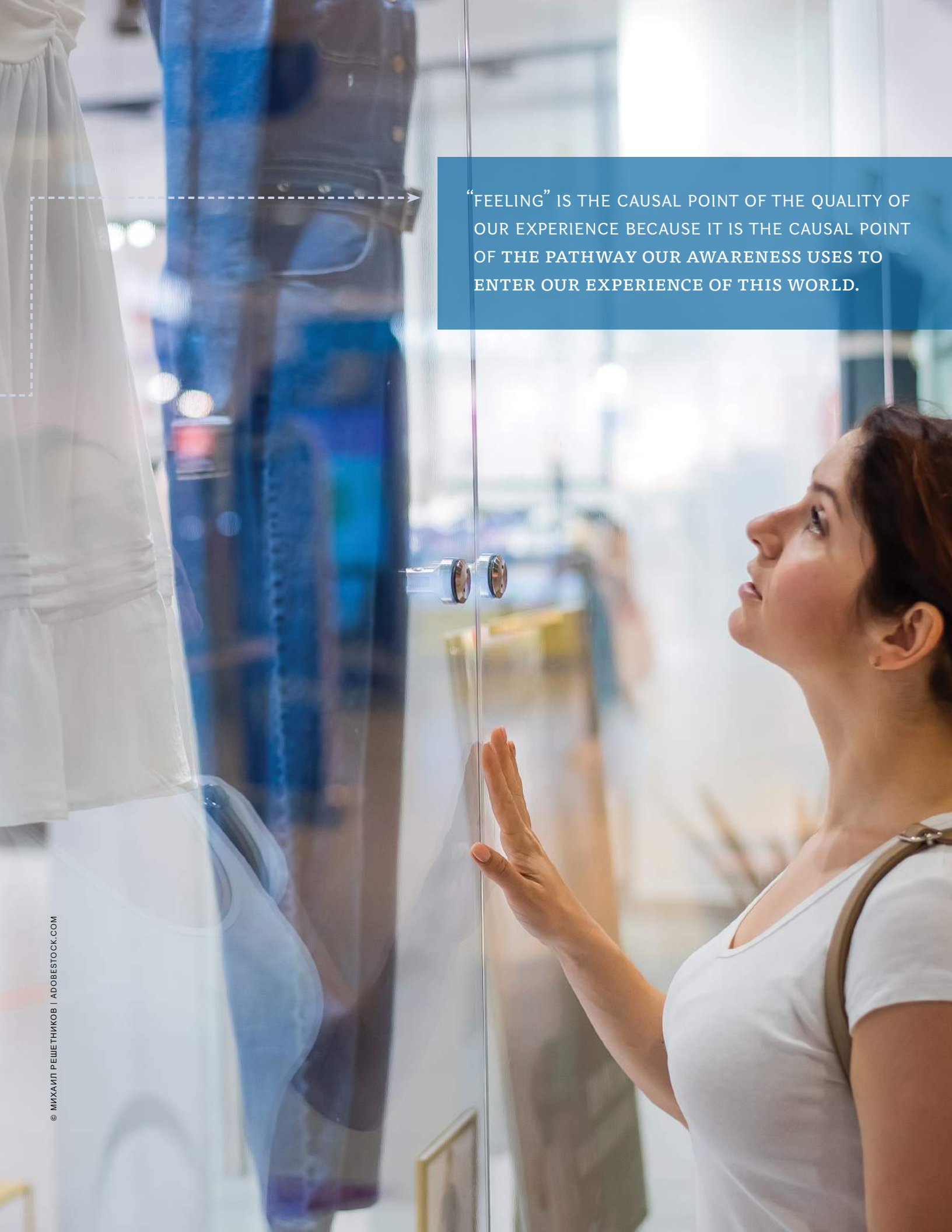
Once the transaction is complete and the woman is now wearing the garment, the emotional body remains the causal point of the intended experience. This is evident by the power and consequence of the feedback she receives when wearing it: If her friends give her *that look*, the that one says, “No honey, that dress does not look good on you at all,” or, if during the course of the evening anything happens that causes her to feel uncomfortable about wearing it, that’s it! It’s all over! She will never wear that dress again. No matter how much she paid for it, if she feels uncomfortable in it, or about it, that dress might as well be thrown into the trash. Why? Because *the feeling aspect of her experience is the causal point*. This also applies to men buying trucks, children buying toys, and everything we buy to “keep up with the neighbors.” And, for that matter, this includes any experience we enter. Whether we are aware of it or not, we judge the quality of every experience in our life through the lens of felt perception.

Of course, it is not necessary for us to accept that the emotional body is the causal point of the quality of our experience for us to be able to successfully wield the practice in this letter; it is just useful. The intent of sharing all this information before presenting the practice is merely to invite the possibility of the following “opening”: *That all we require to successfully navigate the quality of an experience is to be able to predetermine how we are going to feel about it once we have passed through it.*

In other words, if we exit any experience feeling wonderful about it, surely this would mean that the content of the completed experience was of a quality that is entirely acceptable to us? Contemplate this for a moment. Read it again and let the realization it invites sink in as deeply as possible.

Surely, if we feel satisfied about an experience at the outcome, we have successfully navigated the experience as a whole. As obvious as this is, to be able to accomplish this is evolutionary. Is it really possible for us to have this level of impact on every aspect of our life experience? Yes, if we choose to navigate our experiences consciously. How? Well, sharing the know-how is exactly what this letter is moving toward.

Now that we have covered some essential groundwork, now that we have a context to draw from, we can enter the nuts and bolts of this simple practice. As my mother and father used to say: “The proof is in the pudding.” In South

A woman with dark hair, wearing a white tank top and a brown strap over her shoulder, is looking up at a glass display case. Her hand is pressed against the glass. Inside the case, a pair of blue jeans and a white garment are visible. A dashed white line with an arrow points from the text box to the jeans. The background is a blurred clothing store interior.

“FEELING” IS THE CAUSAL POINT OF THE QUALITY OF
OUR EXPERIENCE BECAUSE IT IS THE CAUSAL POINT
OF THE PATHWAY OUR AWARENESS USES TO
ENTER OUR EXPERIENCE OF THIS WORLD.

Africa, *pudding* is our word for dessert, and dessert is only served at the end of the meal. This applies to the navigation our experiences as well: The proof of the efficiency of this practice is in the outcome of wielding it, not in the debating or analyzing of its parameters.

Like all powerful practices, this procedure is a “not-doing.” In other words, we are not going to add increased activity to our experience, we are only going to bring awareness into the fabric of our current activities. An evolutionary differentiates themselves from a revolutionary in their knowing that only awareness has the power to initiate authentic transformation of our current human experience. A “not-doing” does not mean “no action.” It means “conscious action.” A revolutionary always behaves reactively, and reactive behavior is always unconscious. Even pacifists, who are simply depressed revolutionaries, are being reactionary by “doing nothing,” and are therefore also behaving unconsciously.

“Navigating our human experience” requires raising ourselves above these unconscious reactive frequencies. To accomplish this, we simply bring to bear the insight contained within the Pathway of Awareness, the realization that the inherent movement of energy is from emotional to mental to physical in the manifestation of all experience. The best way to unwrap this, to demonstrate how this procedure arises out of this insight, is by citing a dramatized example of how I have successfully shared this practice with another. We may think of it as “a case study in experience navigation.”

CASE STUDY: BENNY THE CEO

Because some of you may assume that what is being offered here is something purely spiritual, or that it may only be useful to and digestible by those interested in spiritual matters, we shall illustrate this procedure using a case study that draws on anything but what spiritual people assume to be spiritual—the navigating of a business meeting by a CEO of a larger corporation. If an individual in the heart of the corporate paradigm can successfully use this practice to enhance a crucial and very intense aspect of their daily experience, this procedure is definitely accessible to those of us who consider ourselves ordinary people dealing with the trials of daily life. The reality is that this practice is accessible to everyone. All it requires is conscious wielding of our intention and attention.

Benny came to me for one-on-one facilitation through the Presence Process a few years ago. When I suggested to him that “planning is dysfunctional behavior,” and that by the time he was finished with his 10-week journey through the Presence Process, he would no longer use a rigid plan to run another business meeting, he was incensed. In fact, it is clear to say he was insulted by these comments. You see, Benny was at that time a CEO of one of the largest communication companies in South Africa. He was also so physically, mentally, and emotionally stressed that he was visibly cracking at the seams.

As I sat and spoke with him, it was clear that aside from going through the Presence Process, he required something to provide immediate relief, or else he was going to literally blow a fuse. I therefore suggested that

even though he did not yet have the foundational insight to support the practice, he immediately began “navigating his experience.” I knew that if he immediately installed this procedure into his life, he would feel a tangible sense of relief. This would then give him the breathing space necessary to gradually attend to his underlying emotional body condition.

To find a point of entry, I asked him what area of his daily working schedule he considered most stressful.

“The meetings with my staff,” he blurted. “I feel like I am drowning in these. I cannot seem to find a way to run them that doesn’t cause animosity among my staff. I feel sick to my stomach every time I have to enter the boardroom, knowing that I am going to walk out as ‘the enemy.’”

“Great,” I replied. “This is easy. Just do as I ask, and in time, as we go through the Presence Process together, it will become clearer to you why we are taking this approach. By then you will have tasted the consequences. This will give you the confidence to apply this navigational technique to every aspect of your life experience.”

Of course, Benny looked at me with disbelief, especially when I told him that this was the last day he would ever be required to “run the meetings,” or to plan and control their moment-by-moment agendas. In his mind, this sounded ludicrous, and if he had anywhere else to turn, I am sure Benny would have gotten up and left. Fortunately, he was desperate; fate had him trapped between a rock and a hard place.

“When is your next big meeting?” I asked.

“I have a very important one in three days,” he replied.

“And, we have to walk out of there having made a decision about a matter that none of my board members can agree on. It’s a mess,” he declared with frustration.

“Fantastic,” I replied. “This is exactly the litmus test we require to move you into a new way of being a CEO.” Poor Benny shook his head. I could see he was assuming he now had to “do more stuff” over and above the workload that already clogged his mental body. “Don’t worry,” I smiled. “There is nothing for you to do other than to *bring awareness to what is already right in front of you*. In fact,” I added, “we will complete the most important aspect of this navigation with the next few minutes.”

At this point, I asked Benny the most important question we can ask ourselves when navigating any experience: “If you had a choice, how would you like to feel in the moment in which the meeting has just completed and you are leaving the boardroom?”

Benny’s face drew a blank, because like most of us, he had never considered this question. Having become a habitually reactive adult, all his attention had been used in the cut-and-paste mode. He only saw the outcome of the scheduled meeting according to his most recent experience of “meetings,” which was itself a cut and paste of the many unpleasant meeting experiences that came before that.

“What do you mean?” he asked with a frown. So, as is necessary whenever I explain this navigational procedure to someone for the first time, I repeated the question, slowly:

“If you had a choice, how would you like to feel in the moment in which the meeting has just completed and you are leaving the boardroom?”

“Uh, um, well I would like to feel good about it...” he said grasping on the surface of things.

“What exactly does ‘good’ mean?” I persevered.

“Well,” he continued, “I would like to feel as if we had come to some successful agreement that suited everyone.”

“Give me some descriptive words that describe how that would make you feel?” I asked.

“Well,” he replied, “maybe a feeling of satisfaction, and of relief, and also of accomplishment.”

“Good,” I said. “Now *this* is the most important part of this procedure, Benny: I want you to bring those feelings into your awareness *right now*. Can you do that? Can you allow yourself to feel a mixture of satisfaction, relief, and accomplishment *right now*?”

He closed his eyes and sat quietly for a moment. “Yes, I can feel it,” he replied.

“Good job. Now, while holding those feelings within your awareness, I want you to project yourself into the moment where you are leaving the boardroom after this intended meeting. Can you project your attention into that place and visually see yourself leaving the boardroom after that meeting?”

“Yes,” he replied.

“Can you see yourself leaving that meeting feeling satisfied, relieved, and accomplished?”

“NAVIGATING OUR HUMAN EXPERIENCE”
REQUIRES RAISING OURSELVES
ABOVE THESE UNCONSCIOUS
REACTIVE FREQUENCIES.

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“Yes,” he replied.

“Good, now open your eyes and let it go. This is all you have to do to initiate the navigation of that experience. You do not have to sit and concentrate on it for minutes. You just have to see yourself at the outcome of the experience and overlay it with the feeling you require *by feeling that feeling now*. Then let go.”

Effortlessness comes through effortlessness.

I then asked Benny to again place his attention on the scheduled meeting and tell me how it felt. He reported that a large amount of the anxiety around it, what I call the “emotional charge,” had dissipated.

“This is because you have authentically started taking responsibility for it at the causal point of the quality of that experience,” I explained. “Consequently, a portion of the anxiety related to its unfolding is already neutralized. However,” I smiled, “we must follow through with our navigational practice.”

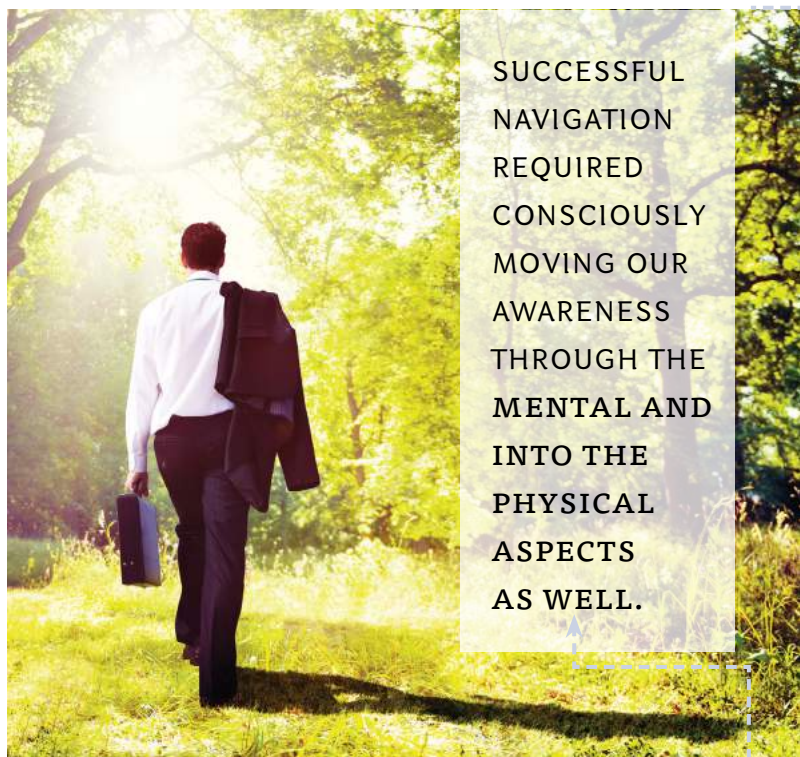
I explained to Benny that meetings, in general, held core memories for him, memories that were obviously uncomfortable. These memories were definitely tainted by his past history of uncomfortable business meetings, but that they came from a deeper causal point—from imprinted occurrences during the first seven years of his childhood. Benny revealed that his dad had also been a businessman, and he recounted how his father used to talk about the trials and tribulations of his work experiences with his mother over dinner. I told Benny there was a distinct possibility that the energy around these discussions, which he recalled as being very tense at times, was imprinted into his own emotional body. I also explained to him that it didn’t matter where or when the negative imprinting around meetings originated. The only matter worth acknowledging was that he kept on “cutting and pasting” these uncomfortable memories into all his future relationships with his experience of “meetings.”

“Even though we have commenced navigating this particular scheduled meeting,” I explained, “you still have to face the negative emotional charge related to meetings in general that is imprinted within your emotional body. This means that between now and this up-and-coming meeting, you are going to experience states of anxiety whenever your mental body wanders unconsciously toward thoughts about the event. So, this is what I ask you to do: Whenever you feel any anxiety around the scheduled meeting, do not push these uncomfortable feelings away, or try to sedate and control them by distracting yourself. Instead, stop whatever you are doing, and for about a minute or two, give these uncomfortable feelings your full attention—not to change them in any way, but purely to acknowledge their presence within your field of awareness. Then, for about 30 seconds after that, briefly reenter the navigational practice again. See yourself at the outcome of the scheduled meeting and overlay it with the required feeling of relief, satisfaction, and accomplishment *by feeling it in that moment*. Is this clear?”

“Yes,” he said.

“It is important you understand,” I reiterated, “that memories of these past emotional discomforts associated with meetings will arise, and that they do so to be integrated, and that you are to consciously integrate them by allowing them to be, but that after feeling them, you must also respond by overlaying them with your navigated intent. You must respond in this way each time the anxiety surfaces. You can do this wherever you are, no matter what situation you are in, because it is a ‘not-doing’—it is action unfolding internally—so no one even has to know you are doing it.”

“Got it,” he said.



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I then briefly explained the Pathway of Awareness to Benny so that he understood the natural movement of energy from emotional to mental to physical when we are manifesting an experience. I then pointed out that what we had just completed was “the navigating of his intent,” the causal point. However, successful navigation required consciously moving our awareness through the mental and into the physical aspects as well. To accomplish this, I told him that after completing the emotional body navigations, we then had to initiate mental body clarity.

“To accomplish mental body clarity is simple,” I explained. “There is certain information you must be acquainted with before entering that meeting, and only you know what that is, right?”

“Right,” he replied.

“This information is important, and the word reveals why. Information empowers us to collectively move

in formation with each other. If you have not mentally visited all the required information before entering that meeting, then there are places within your meeting experience that you will not be able to move in synch with the others in the boardroom. So, once you have navigated the feeling of the outcome, you must take care of mental body clarity by making sure you are up to date on all the information you require. Once you are up to date, you substantially cut down on the anxiety arising from lack of mental clarity, the feelings that may arise out of not being mentally prepared."

"I can do that," he said.

"Right," I continued. "Then the final step in navigating your experience of this scheduled meeting is accomplishing *physical body presence*. This, too, is simple: There are certain physical necessities you must take care of to enter that meeting as one who feels physically prepared. For example, from a physical body point of view, have you had enough sleep, exercise, and eaten a nutritious meal? Or, are you overtired, feeling like a slug, and compensating with too much coffee? Because these factors affect your level of presence while you are in the meeting. Also, just as importantly, do you physically have everything you require to facilitate this meeting? Do you have all the documents, files, figures, and contacts at an arm's reach that you may require to support the meeting's overall intent? Being physically prepared assists you to feel physically present within the proceedings. Not consciously taking care of this detail causes physical distraction. So, making sure you navigate your experience of physical presence is also crucial."

We then briefly went through the procedure again. I stressed that the efficiency of this navigational procedure was not determined so much by its parts, as by the sequence in which the navigation preparation unfolded: From emotional, to mental, to physical. I explained that because as adults, we are physically trance-fixed by our world, and that we therefore relate to our physical circumstances almost exclusively from a mental standpoint, we normally prepare for any experience by first making physical adjustments (by trying to move the world around) and then by mentally thinking the experience to death. We do not even consider the emotional component of our intended experience! Also, as we go through this back-to-front approach we call preparation, we unconsciously cut and paste the failures of our past into the potential outcomes of our future. We then wonder why it turns out the "same as it ever was," to quote David Byrne of Talking Heads.

Once Benny was clear on the navigational procedure, and on the means to reinforce his emotional body intent whenever anxiety about the meeting crept into the moment, it was time for the final act: How was he to enter and consciously navigate himself through the experience of the actual meeting?

"In the last few hours before, as the actual moment of

the meeting draws near," I began, "you may feel what you may assume is anxiety. This uncomfortable feeling will be as acute as you allow yourself to be distracted." I explained to Benny that this feeling of anxiety happens to us all as we approach significant events in our life and is purely an indicator of our lack of presence within our emotional body. "This feeling does not mean something is wrong. It means we are being invited to 'feel as deeply as possible'. This feeling is there as your emotional body's attempt to pull you into emotional body awareness." I explained to Benny that the more we consciously anchor ourselves into our heart center before any important event, the less this feeling of anxiety arises within our experience.

"Because you have already prepared everything mentally and physically for the meeting," I continued, "your only task now is to remain at the causal point of the experience, in the feeling of it—no matter what. Once you enter the boardroom, your only task is to surrender to the energetic flow of the unfolding moment by paying attention to whatever feelings are unfolding within it, without attempting to sedate and control them."

I explained to Benny that because he had consciously navigated the scheduled meeting, the universe would now conspire to manifest the requested felt outcome to the experience he was entering. However, that unless he understood the following point very clearly, he would inadvertently conspire against the universe's intent to assist him. The feeling (outcome) he sought to manifest was not going to come out of a situation or circumstance that appeared familiar to him. It would arise from events and circumstances that felt unfamiliar, and therefore uncomfortable.

If he entered the meeting with a set mental picture of how it was to unfold, and a precise physical agenda on how to institute this mental assumption, he would invariably sedate and control the meeting to such a point that he would sabotage the possibility of manifesting the felt outcome he had intended. For this reason, he had to enter the meeting and immediately surrender to it. *Surrender*, in this context, does not mean "to give up." Its meaning is as the phonetics of the word reveals: *To end being sure = sure + ender = surrender*. I therefore instructed Benny that once he had officially opened the meeting, he was not to "run it" like he had always done in the past, but instead, he was to get out of the way of its flow. To accomplish this, he had to embrace a brand-new perceptual possibility: That the people sitting around the boardroom table are the universal attributes ready to bring about his intended outcome of satisfaction, relief, and accomplishment.

In other words, he must get out of their way so that this outcome is allowed to surface into reality without interference—without Benny entering fear about what was unfolding. If Benny, as he had already admitted to me, did not know the answer to the quest of the intended meeting, then what was the point of adding more participation on his behalf than was absolutely necessary? He didn't have



WE ARE ALWAYS NAVIGATING
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THAT WE MOSTLY DO IT
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to speak up just because he was the CEO. The best stance he could therefore take was to “facilitate the universe (the board members) by getting out of its way.”

I also carefully brought to Benny’s attention that, as the universe conspires to achieve a resolution, its means of accomplishing this would appear sometimes as moments of apparent tension, confusion, chaos, and emotional discomfort.

“When you feel things getting tense—especially if this is happening, for example, because of a heated discussion between two or three people in the meeting—you must not jump in and try to make everything alright, or to stop what is unfolding, or to suggest another way of doing this,” I instructed. “This tension is the unknown factor breaking through in a manner that is unforeseen.” I explained that new order always births out of chaos. To accomplish this, I used the illustration of a woman giving birth. If a stranger, not knowing what was happening, came upon the scene of a woman giving birth, instead of realizing that a child was being born, they may mistakenly assume the woman was dying.

“Therefore,” I advised, “when you experience this birthing process within the meeting, you must allow it, and honor it, as a neutral observer and facilitator allowing a process to unfold, not as a referee taking sides by breaking up a perceived fight. Your task is to be there, and this is the biggest secret, to remain with your attention on the feeling of whatever is unfolding in each moment, no matter how unfamiliar or uncomfortable the feeling is.” I explained carefully to Benny that the feeling of the meeting, no matter how he perceived it to be, is what will carry them all into the felt outcome he has intended. “Stay with the feeling no matter what, without interfering with it,” I advised him, “and it will deliver you into the miracle.”

Three evenings later, I received a phone call from Benny. There was a strange tone of disbelief, yet awe, in his voice.

“It was a success,” he told me. “I did exactly as you instructed. It wasn’t at all easy to do, that I can tell you. I let the board members play it out among themselves. At times it got very tense, but I remembered what you said about staying with the feeling and not interfering. I remained a witness, no matter how much I wanted to impose my authority or add my opinion. I realized I personally had no solution to offer going into the meeting, and so my job was purely to listen for and identify one, rather than to impose one.” Then he became quieter. “The biggest thing wasn’t that we had a successful meeting, and that we reached a resolution agreeable to us all,” he said in an emotional tone, “it was that afterward I received phone calls and emails from some of the board members thanking me for allowing them to fully participate in the proceedings. They said I ran a very successful meeting, and yet it was the first time I went into the boardroom and did nothing!”

“Thank you,” he said. “I am still amazed at how this works. Does this navigating work for everything?”

“Yes, everything. That’s the funny thing,” I said. “We are always navigating our experiences. It’s just that we mostly do it unconsciously. When we navigate unconsciously, we always get the fruits of our fears, not what we really seek. This is because we are always using the emotional body as the causal point. We are just using it unconsciously and fearfully.”

“Well,” he said, “I now know a different way.”

NAVIGATION CHECKLIST

The following is a useful checklist when choosing to consciously navigate our experiences. It can be used for long

distance travel, for conflict resolution, for writing a book, anything! And, as my parents used to say, “The proof is in the pudding.”

By way of reinforcing the procedure, the writing following each point illustrates how I use this to navigate an experience like a flight from New York to South Africa. Long flights may be challenging, especially if we do not take the time to navigate our experience of them. This is how I apply this technique as a means to arrive in South Africa feeling refreshed, relaxed, and having enjoyed the experience.

We determine exactly how would we like to feel at the outcome of the experience we are navigating. We must be able to feel this feeling now. In navigating my flight from New York to South Africa, I consciously choose to feel refreshed, relaxed, and grateful for an enjoyable experience. To assist me to bring these feelings into “the now,” I remember the last time I experienced these feelings, and consciously bring a recollection of them into this moment.

We then place our attention upon that envisaged moment by clearly seeing ourselves at the point of the outcome. We overlay this image with this feeling by feeling it now, as we see ourselves within this outcome. I see myself stepping off the plane and walking into Oliver Tambo International Airport feeling refreshed, relaxed, and grateful for having had an enjoyable experience. I feel these feelings now as I picture myself within this image.

We ensure we are acquainted with all the information required for achieving mental clarity. I make sure I have all the flight details in hand—the departure time, check-in time, what terminal I must arrive at in New York—and am clear on how I am going to get there. I also make sure my transport will get me to the airport early so that I have plenty of time to check in, go through security, relax, and have a meal before boarding.

We ensure we are physically prepared and have all the physical circumstances in place required by the experience we are entering. I make sure I am packed and that my luggage is within the allotted weight. I ensure I have my ticket, passport, and enough money to have a good meal before boarding. I also make sure I have my homeopathic jet-lag tabs, a good book, and a carry-on cushion to enable a comfortable nap.

As we approach the experience, we may feel moments of anxiety arise triggered by past memories. We allow ourselves to feel this anxiety for a few moments, then we repeat step 2. If at any time I feel nervous or anxious about my flight, I allow myself to sit with these feelings, I acknowledge their presence within my field. I then gently overlay this experience with the picture of myself stepping off the plane in South Africa feeling relaxed, refreshed, and having enjoyed my flight experience.

As we approach the moment of entry into the navigated experience, we place our full attention upon what we are feeling—especially if it is uncomfortable. This

pre-experience feeling is designed to ground us into the heart of the experience. As I am preparing to board the plane, I check in with myself and pay attention to how I am feeling. I literally place my attention within the physical body location of my heart center and hold it there as I board and situate myself within the flight cabin. No matter what feelings arise, I allow them.

We surrender to the experience knowing that what unfolds to carry us successfully to our intended felt outcome will come from “what we do not know.” If, while still in the airport, I hear that the flight has been delayed, I surrender to this. I accept this as the universe’s way of rearranging circumstances to manifest my requested felt outcome. I do not have to understand why events are unfolding as they are to know that they are always unfolding in my favor. This is because I have navigated the causal point. Even if I find myself seated next to someone I would normally not appreciate being next to for 18 hours, I do not fight it. No matter what discomfort arises, I sit consciously within it, trusting that this is the universe’s method of facilitating my intent.

When circumstances become unfamiliar, even tense, we do not attempt to sedate and control them, or to steer them any other way. I was once on a flight that I had navigated in which a baby struggled with earache because of cabin pressure. I could not see how a screaming baby could be part of my intention. However, I gave the universe the benefit of the doubt. Instead of emotionally and audibly repelling the experience, I put down my reading and set aside my desire for quiet and rest, and allowed myself to fully embrace the experience. I gently connected my breathing and put my full attention on the child’s voice. For the next few hours I was transported through a primal cleansing experience that enabled me to revisit aspects of my own childhood I had no idea were calling for attention. I went through a liberating experience that saw me bouncing off the plane on the other side like I had let go of years of emotional baggage. What a gift! However, I also noted how people around me fought the experience, and as we landed, I saw how tormented they were by their experience of the flight. They had obviously not navigated anything.

Throughout the duration of the experience, we place our attention on the felt content of the experience. This is the energetic current that carries us to our intended felt outcome. Throughout the flight, I consistently ask myself, “How I am feeling?” not as a means to feel a certain way, but purely as a means to consciously acknowledge what is unfolding in my heart in any given moment.

This procedure may be used for navigating any and all experiences. The more we apply it, the more confident we become in our ability to facilitate a favorable felt outcome. Remember, we can ask for any feeling we want, and we can have this, as long as we enter a co-creative relationship with the universe—as long as we surrender to the experience once we enter it.

This technique is not about “asking for stuff” or the manifesting of specific mental details. We will be bedeviled when we use details as a means to dictate the exact parameters of our experiences, and asking for stuff only soothes our insatiable need and wants. This procedure has nothing to do with “creating what is not happening as a means to sedate and control the reality of what is.” This procedure is about acknowledging the following realization:

When we authentically feel at peace about the outcome of any experience, the details of how that experience unfolded to deliver us to that point of authentic peace are irrelevant.

It is how we feel about an experience that determines how we feel about an experience. This is an obvious truth that gets lost amid our “desperate thinking” and “endless physical doings.” By consciously navigating our felt perception in this manner, not only do we arrive at a favorable outcome, but we also arrive there by inviting the universe to become a co-creative participant in our every experience. This procedure empowers us to open ourselves to the portal of unlimited probabilities and possibilities. Then, when people ask us, “How did you do that?” we can honestly reply: “God is how.” What a relief!

AFTERWARD...

Months after finishing his sessions with me, Benny phoned for a chat. He said he was no longer CEO of that company.



He had now started his own business and was focusing on quality instead of quantity.

“Don’t get me wrong,” he said, “I am still making lots of money; I’m just going about it differently. It’s not stressful now, it’s enjoyable.”

He then told me how he had installed the navigational procedure into the way he manages his overall business intent. “At the beginning of each month, I have a general staff meeting,” he explained. “I actually call it our ‘monthly navigation meeting.’ What I do is first ask my staff to tell me how they want to *feel* about their working experience at the end of the month we are entering.”


“At first,” he chuckled, “when I asked them this question, they looked at me with blank faces. No one had ever asked them that in a boardroom before. Once they come up with their answers, I ask them to feel that way in the moment, and if they cannot, to bring a memory of feeling that way from their past and into the present. The first few times I did this, I said to them, ‘I know it sounds strange, but just humor me.’”

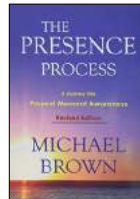
“I then ask them what information we individually require to accomplish another successful month together. Once everyone has submitted their input, I then ask them what physical action we are required to take to move in that direction. “I always make sure we move through our meetings in this order—from feeling, to information, to practical, physical tasks. Then, throughout the month, we meet every Monday morning, and before commencing with the week’s agenda, we take a moment to briefly read over the minutes of this navigational meeting as a way of reinforcing our collective intent. At one point,” he chuckled again, “someone asked me if I was studying some sort of motivational business course. I said, ‘No, I am just taking responsibility for the quality of our working environment.’”

As a consequence of this approach, my staff now always makes a point of focusing on what we seek to feel at the outcome of any project we enter. I don’t think they even know why we do this—they just enjoy their jobs, the office environment, and the success we are all experiencing as a team, and so they accept my methods in accomplishing this.”

“This is wonderful, Benny,” I said. “Thank you for sharing this feedback with me.”

“Michael,” he asked. “Have you ever considered sharing this procedure with more people in the corporate environment?”

“Yes,” I replied. “I have.” 



Michael Brown is the author of *The Presence Process*, *Alchemy of the Heart*, and *Cat Tales for Mariette*, all published by Namaste Publishing. They make up a trinity of his exploration into techniques for emotional integration and growth. Michael lives in the Eastern Cape, South Africa. View article resources and author information here: pathwaystofamilywellness.org/references.html.

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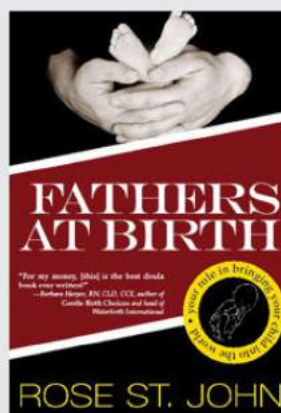
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