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## Selfish Women and Their Silly Birth Experiences

May 7, 2013 BY ImprovingBirth

*This is not a post about [natural birth](#). Just keep reading.*

When I was preparing to give birth, I saw it as a once-in-a-lifetime event and something I wanted, more than anything, to do “right.” By doing it “right,” I meant that I wanted the safest and most positive outcome possible; to me, it was perfectly obvious that safety and a good experience were inextricably linked. And, as the person playing the most active role in the event, I felt it was my responsibility to shape those things.

It was a little alarming to me that so many of my friends and acquaintances who had given birth did not particularly want to talk about it, and didn’t necessarily think it was a good idea that I learned as much as I could about it before doing it.

Before and after giving birth, I got the sense from some people that in seeking a “positive” experience, I was being high-maintenance and was somehow less concerned with my baby’s well-being than someone who didn’t ask questions or want to actively participate. I rolled my eyes at the speculation and barreled right through it, but, on reflection, it struck me as odd. How could it be “selfish” to do what I could to facilitate a less traumatic birth? [Didn’t less traumatic mean “safer”?](#) My body—a body I’d come to know and like for the last 30-some years—was being subjected to a major, life-altering process. Why did it suddenly have such reduced value? Why was I suddenly not supposed to have any say over what happened to it?

**And . . . why did people assume that my baby’s safety must be lower on my priority list, because I wanted his birth to be a positive experience?**

## That's a doozy of an assumption.

Prior to giving birth, my primary motivations for attempting a normal, unmedicated, physiologic birth were so that my baby wouldn't be born with drugs in his system; so that we could benefit from the dance of hormones science hasn't come close to replicating; and so we could avoid the dreaded "cascade of interventions" that ends in 1 in 3 American babies being born by surgery. All of these things meant healthier bodies, better bonding, and a higher chance of successful breastfeeding. That was selfish?

When I first began researching birth and options, I went in completely biased against unmedicated birth (why would anyone choose pain?), but what I found didn't support my bias. I found, to my complete surprise, that *it was possible to give birth with dignity and humanity, and that, on the whole, those births seemed to be the least medically risky*. Over and over again, I saw that the births where women were *supported* in the process rather than *managed* like children—where mom was treated by her skilled, attentive providers as the most important person in the room—the smoother the birth and the safer the baby. Bingo.

*Choices in birth are very personal. I do not believe that every woman should, must, or can have a physiologic birth. That fact does not change a word that I write here.*

It was only after I gave birth that I grasped the real value of what I instinctively wanted. I'm not sure I knew it then, but my tendency toward a physiologic birth was me protecting myself and my baby. But the bigger picture is that if birth were merely a day or two out of our lives, I wouldn't have gone on to devote my time to this cause. Birth carries a much bigger impact than a one-time mere medical event.

## Birth is valuable because it is the beginning of the mother-baby relationship.

Once you have been a mother, you will never not be a mother again. The minute you go into labor, you are on a rollercoaster that doesn't stop.

The way you meet your baby can very much set the tone for the postpartum period. It is a *tough* time. You're unsure of yourself, on no sleep, hoping you don't accidentally harm or starve this helpless, completely dependent little thing. The stress of a baby crying for no discernable reason is indescribable. I don't recall ever feeling so frustrated in my life. We all laugh about those moments of irrationality, when you have to place your baby in her crib and walk away in order to keep your sanity.

I have seen first-hand how the birth experience impacts this time. I came off my baby's birth strengthened and confident—in complete awe of what my body had done. And it was still the most difficult time I've ever had. I've seen what happens when women come off a traumatic birth, too, and I've seen the lack of spirit and the helplessness they sometimes exhibit. I've talked to the women who spent hours crying in the

basement or listless in bed, unable to get it together, or just dragging through the day with no joy. Even the women who rally and carry on are carrying wounds they must wrestle with at some point or another.

When I say “traumatic birth,” I’m not talking about medical complications. I’m talking largely about healthy women with realistic expectations who were treated disrespectfully or without compassion at that most vulnerable time: [women who weren’t treated like the most important person in the room, as they gave birth to the most important thing in the world.](#)

Feelings of desperation, low spirits, and worse plague a new mother and affect how she nurtures her baby. We’ve only begun to explore the connection between birth experiences and incidences of postpartum depression or post-traumatic stress disorder in new moms. Coming off birth strengthened and supported is invaluable to mom and baby.

Something we forget is that you are already a mother during birth. Birth and postpartum *are* your relationship with your baby as a new mom. The quality of that time is something you will remember all your life. Saying that what happens with you and your baby during and after birth doesn’t matter is the same as saying it doesn’t matter whether you bond with your toddler or that it doesn’t matter whether your teenager hates you. Birth is part of your life as a mother. *This is your life.*

## **Birth is valuable because women matter.**

It’s a dangerous assumption I alluded to above: that only a woman who doesn’t care about her baby would care about her body and her birth. It’s damaging and wrong to communicate to women that we must make a choice between ourselves and our babies, because we can’t *both* matter.

[Acting as if a baby’s safety is compromised by treating his mother well in birth is ludicrous](#), and I’d like to call for an end to that. If I could go back in time, I’d ask those people who questioned me to please explain how I was the most important factor in pregnancy and the least important in birth. How my value as a person deserving of positive experiences plummeted so dramatically when I crossed the threshold from pregnant woman to woman in labor. And how on earth treating my body well in pregnancy was intuitive, but treating my body well in birth was not.

I’d say to those people, “Explain to me again how it’s selfish to take my responsibility as a mother seriously?”

Simply by virtue of being human beings, women matter. [We deserve respect, compassion, and kindness in birth, because we are human beings.](#) But let’s not forget that greatest of responsibilities given to us as mothers: we are guardians of our babies. In pregnancy and birth, what happens to us happens to our babies. And because the ways in which our children come into the world are some of our first acts as mothers, *our babies deserve for us to be treated as if we matter.*

I encourage you to embrace that truth, and act as if you mean it.

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I knew a medical induction in a first-time mom doubles her chances of a c-section. Something wasn’t right, but I wasn’t sure what.

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1. *Laura* says:

[November 21, 2019 at 1:36 am](#)

I agree with the premise of this article – that the mother’s treatment and experience matters too – but it goes both ways. For example, on a mumsnet thread in which many British women complained about being denied pain relief during labor, many midwives and NUCB advocates were quite dismissive, acting as if those women were spoiled and princessy because they dared to complain about

excruciating pain when their babies were born healthy. In fact, some of the commenters used some of the very same language you use here derisively. For example, one pro-unmedicated-birth commenter said “When were epidurals invented? Woman had been giving birth for thousands of year before that. Im not surprised some of you were refused with your spoilt, foot stamping, hissy fits” and in a follow-up post actually said, verbatim, “grow up you silly women” to women who complained about being given the runaround when they requested epidurals (or in some cases, even gas and air).

I 100% agree with you that women “deserve respect, compassion, and kindness in birth, because we are human beings.” But I think that applies equally to women who want their choices to have an unmedicated birth respected as it does to those who desire medical pain relief. Do you not agree that denying pain relief to a woman who is screaming in agony is just as bad as forcing a woman to undergo interventions she may not want?

[Reply](#)

2. Pingback: [Call the Midwife! – AOK History](#)

3. *Curious Cat* says:

[November 3, 2016 at 6:16 pm](#)

Blogger, do you believe that there is always someone to blame in a ‘traumatic birth’? How should women feel if their births go wrong, and it is the fault of no one? Obviously, we all know that tragedies happen, and birth tragedies have been happening for all of human history. How do we address these women, especially if during these ‘poor outcomes’ women were treated with respect and kindness in the birth?

Also, what advice do you give women whose labors are going south and intervention is being recommended? Should they feel like they have to stick to their ‘birth plan’ that they have been hoping and dreaming for?

[Reply](#)

4. *Lindsay* says:

[March 21, 2016 at 7:47 am](#)

I agree with the sentiment wholeheartedly. Whether you deliver at home or in a hospital, vaginally or c-section, medicated or unmedicated, you deserve support and care as a laboring mother. You are at the center of the experience, and have instincts and feelings that should be considered in any medical decisions. If there is anything I could change about my birth story, it would be to have a knowledgeable and caring person there to support me. It was tough to stand up for myself during labor when it felt that everybody in the room had their own agenda unrelated to me, if I hadn’t done my homework or been so stubborn I would have had an unnecessary c-section. I’m blessed to have a very healthy baby, and I love my body better now than ever, but I’m definitely getting a doula next time. Women need education and support, it makes all of the difference!

[Reply](#)

5. *Jean* says:

[December 1, 2015 at 3:26 pm](#)

Every woman has the right to choose her method of labor and delivery. No female should allow a husband or parent or even the medical persons to tell you how to feel.

[Reply](#)

6. *Tera* says:

[October 15, 2015 at 12:29 am](#)

Wow! An epiphany! I just realized that my midwife was areally big part of a traumatic birth. This woman had her birthing center close the day I was due because she never got around to scheduling a compliance interview, for months! She told my husband and me, my body would know what to do and that was our birthing class because she didn’t want to set up a birthing class for just us. In a remote part of east Texas, home births being frowned upon and no support from her to just take a class at a hospital. Then as I labored at home for 32 hours she sat around with her friend, a midwife called in

from another state, and ate cookie dough while her assistant was the only one tending to me. I wanted to know she was there for me too and for 32 hours she only came to my side once, to pop my water. It was then I realized that she was not truly into me or this birth and was not helping. So I requested to be transferred to a hospital. She never explained the pain. Told the assistant to walk me. Then at the hospital she became a cheerleader suddenly for two hours. I was hooked to an IV, baby fine the whole time, never an emergency. I was pushing abd determined to carry out a natural birth and a sweet older nurse came and said you haven't slept in 36 hours. An OB I didn't know said c-section and we fought it. But I just wanted to meet my baby. I couldn't wait and threw in the towel. The c-section was a breeze, no fear, I was not medicated aside from the epidural. It all went great! No infection, I breastfed for three years! Scar healed up too well, it's not there and I wanted it to be because I didn't get a placenta tree. My body is better than pre-pregnancy in fact. None of the problems or issues I was afraid of. My midwife went on about how terrible my OB was. How traumatic he made my birth. When my baby girl was born the pediatrician said, too beautiful and special a baby to have at home and mumbled how silly that idea was. Months later I realized it was silly to attempt with someone so dangerously inexperienced. My husband confirmed so much of what I thought was me in my labor fog. As the months passed I started to realize how terrible she was. I never got angry that her birth center closed the day we were due. She had a week to come up with something and didn't. She forgot the birthing pool?! She told me, when I called that I was in labor, that she had been out late that night and needed sleep so call back later. Everyone I know has given birth naturally, many at home, as planned. Their stories are sweet. I fell in love with my own birth story. It took awhile. This little easy Texas hospital treated me so sweetly and the OB did a great job for someone he never met. So many people think traumatic births start with hospitals and c-sections and OB's. Mine started with a midwife. I was too high on love and pregnancy to realize how bad she was until it was too late.

[Reply](#)

7. Pingback: [The Marathon and the 5K | Birth Boot Camp](#)

8. *mona* says:

[May 14, 2015 at 5:07 pm](#)

i live with p.t.s.d. from birth trauma. i am 53. it won't go away, so i try to ignore it. that's all.

[Reply](#)

9. *Jean* says:

[April 24, 2014 at 5:58 pm](#)

Why do we even need to have this discussion. Why are we questioning women's birth choices? Why are there always websites that scold and lecture women and tell them to second guess their own choices?

I look forward to the day when a woman can decide how she will do something for herself and people will automatically respect her choice and make no discussion about it. .

And lastly, a woman can make a choice for herself WITHOUT worrying about her husband's feelings, her dad's feelings, or her mother in law's feelings. This is 2014. We should stop trying to boss and dominate women.

[Reply](#)

1. *Michelle D* says:

[October 4, 2017 at 6:01 am](#)

A husband has a right too! You sound angry!! I understand every one else but I love that my husband can make decisions for me and be a part of our birth. He was a part with creating our child....he should have say. But supportive and righteous say. Not belittling or offensive say...

Also these sites are good. They bring strength and empathy. Something you should have and do as a women to another women.

[Reply](#)

10. [baby gender](#) says:

[March 19, 2014 at 10:03 pm](#)

I blog quite often and I truly appreciate your content.

This great article has truly peaked my interest.

I will bookmark your site and keep checking for new details about once per week. I opted in for your RSS feed as well.

[Reply](#)

11. [Becca](#) says:

[March 16, 2014 at 3:44 pm](#)

I agree with many things about this article. I believe that women's bodies are at risk for not being treated with respect due to a time pressure in the hospital from some physicians. I do also believe, as a nurse, that there is a possibility to be overzealous in an attempt to control a situation driven by not having a clear understanding for the reason for two interventions in particular.

I really want to do 2 things. I want to put a saline locked IV in your arm. That means nothing is going in it. And nothing will without your consent. However, in an emergency, medicine and fluids will go in very quickly and often save a life, or prevent a more serious complication. I do NOT wanting to be attempting to find a vein and insert one (it takes a minute) if your baby or you are coding.

I also want to monitor your baby's heartbeat hourly. Again, I don't want a mom to go through labor with a baby in distress. If we know the baby is having decelerations, we can change positions or do other things that are not as invasive if it is caught early, but if the baby's cord has been compressed for a while, it is too late to do anything but get the baby out.

These are the things I talk to a mom about once she gets in the hospital. Once I clearly explain these to her, with patience and respect, she usually agrees. My advice, since having my own kids, is to get the RIGHT OB. Probably a woman. In the hospital, ask for a nurse who is "natural birth" friendly. Seriously, that can make all the difference. When you bring in a birth plan don't be condescending and defensive towards the nurses. Not only have we been trained to birth babies, but most of us are there because we WANT mom to have a special experience. Do these things, and I guarantee your birth will be better than if you didn't. Happy birthing. : )

[Reply](#)

1. [Ellan](#) says:

[April 11, 2016 at 8:52 pm](#)

I think articles like this pit pregnant women and mothers against medical professionals when a partnership should be the goal. In no circumstance should anyone be treated badly or disrespectfully, but just because it is your child and you are now a mother, doesn't mean that you are all knowing about the birth process. Your birth experience should not ever trump your babies health. Do your research, take care of yourself and your baby during pregnancy and make sure you have birthing partners, midwives, ObGyn's and nurses that respect you. But what happens during birth is not always under anyone's control. To describe births as traumatic just because they don't end up the way the mother planned sows distrust in the very people that may save you and your babies life.

And I am not a medical professional, I had a "physiological" birth but I won't ever discount the nurses and doctors that were there if I needed it.

[Reply](#)

2. [Becca](#) says:

[March 16, 2014 at 3:54 pm](#)

Sorry for the typos, phone typing! The first paragraph is meant to say moms not understanding the reasoning behind certain interventions. This is often the nurses fault as well for just saying

“you have to” without giving a reason. Hope that is more clear!

[Reply](#)

12. *birdbath* says:

[March 5, 2014 at 12:30 am](#)

Thank you for providing the words to my unarticulated feelings. I never could quite come to terms with that sense that I was somehow irresponsible or selfish for wanting a home birth. Who would risk their child’s life to get to be at home? Thank you for this eloquent defense.

[Reply](#)

13. *Grniewnie* says:

[January 21, 2014 at 2:39 pm](#)

I expected to be treated like a human being while giving birth and I wasn’t and I’m still angry about it. They keep screening me for PPD and I keep telling them I’m not depressed. I’m angry, and with good reason. I feel very strongly bonded with my son as I feel we experienced this cruelty and trauma together—he listened to me scream for five hours straight.

I wasn’t even afforded basic human dignity. I will never let anyone put me in that position again and that means my son will be an only child.

Hospitals need to own their role in driving so many women toward home births.

[Reply](#)

14. *Crystal* says:

[January 1, 2014 at 5:32 am](#)

This is exactly what I am feeling and I thank you so much for writing it so perfectly.

[Reply](#)

15. *Jo* says:

[November 25, 2013 at 8:39 pm](#)

14 months after the birth of my first child, i’m still traumatised by the lack of care and consideration shown to my by medical staff where i gave birth. I only had entenox gas as pain relief but my baby was taken away with 10 minutes of being born and I didn’t see her till 8 hours later by which time she’d already been formula fed by nurses.

I’m expecting my second child in 2014 and my husband already knows all the rules for when this child is born. The top one being is that the baby may not leave the room without my permission.

[Reply](#)

16. *Sarah* says:

[September 10, 2013 at 4:37 pm](#)

Nothing is more obnoxious than a woman asking not to be judged for her choices while judging others for theirs. Calling a natural, un-medicated birth “normal” as you do, implies that all other forms of birth are abnormal. That is rude, condescending, judgemental and offensive and could not be further from the truth. Maybe if you showed non-judgement and compassion for others whose choices differ from yours, they’d show the same towards you.

[Reply](#)

1. *Cristen* says:

[September 14, 2013 at 4:07 pm](#)

Sarah, that’s not my term. “Normal birth” is a widely used phrase in midwifery and medicine. There is some debate over the exact definition, but I use it to mean without medical intervention.

Birth is a “normal” bodily process, until it’s not. There’s no judgment implied with this term. (For example, here’s a WHO reference:

[http://www.who.int/maternal\\_child\\_adolescent/documents/who\\_frh msm\\_9624/en/](http://www.who.int/maternal_child_adolescent/documents/who_frh msm_9624/en/)

[Reply](#)

1. *Kelly* says:

[February 27, 2016 at 11:18 pm](#)

Regardless of your intent in using the word “normal” if it impacted Sarah negatively, you should respect her feelings and acknowledge that, regardless of your intent, the use of the word was hurtful. You are an intelligent woman— It’s not that hard to see how calling a birth “normal” implies that others are abnormal. You are not writing for a medical audience. This dismissive comment towards Sarah’s feelings is quite similar to what you are speaking out against in your blog post and I think it is just as harmful.

[Reply](#)

1. *jasmine* says:

[October 21, 2016 at 8:32 am](#)

I thought Cristen’s response was educated and polite, especially after she was just called obnoxious. This article does advocate for education, and apparently “normal birth” is a scholarly term. I do see how it could be offensive, just as the term “geriatric pregnancy” (pregnancy in a woman over 35) can be offensive. Some dated terms are out there, and Cristen isn’t the one that created them. Perhaps a more productive comment would be to POLITELY explain how this is hurtful and ask that she choose a different term.

[Reply](#)

2. *Cristen Pascucci* says:

[March 11, 2016 at 8:01 am](#)

Kelly, you’re right; I should have acknowledged Sarah’s feelings. My intent wasn’t to be dismissive, but factual about the context of that term. I didn’t want her to think that I invented that term to hurt her or anyone else.

[Reply](#)

17. *Sarah* says:

[September 10, 2013 at 9:21 am](#)

Thanks you so much for your strength and determination. I can barely read articles about birth after my trauma as it stirs up too many raw feelings however this article went straight to the heart and made me feel validated and supported 😊

[Reply](#)

18. *Meagan* says:

[September 10, 2013 at 2:14 am](#)

What a great post and amazing mission. In fact, the heart of your mission is quite similar to mine at <http://www.Unexpectant.com>. I related so much to your words and your story, and that is why I believe that if we can open up the dialog surrounding pregnancy, birth and babies, we can better educate moms-to-be and improve their birth experiences. Thankfully I had a midwife who believes that birth is a pivotal point in a woman’s life and that it should be what she wants it to be. She is there as a guide to make sure it is safe, but otherwise, the mother makes decisions based on her preferences. I hope through more openness and education more women will realize this should be the standard of practice and not the exception. Birth is motherhood and how much better will a woman’s entry into motherhood be if she starts it by feeling empowered?

[Reply](#)

19. [Kate](#) says:

[September 9, 2013 at 4:55 pm](#)

Powerful words. Thank you.

I'm one who did choose pain relief as part of my birth plans. With the first, we started off well, but the hospital staff started to slowly disrespect my wishes, until by the end I did not have medication and was thoroughly ignored by the medical staff.. I did give vaginal birth, but it ended up being traumatic because of their lack of respect, during labor and after.

It took me over a year to really bond with my elder daughter and I could continue to bring up the horror (and yes, it was horror) of her birth at any moment.

With my second, my birth team respected me as a person through the entire process. The memory of the pain I felt (because the drugs aren't there for the entire process) has already faded; the trauma of my eldest daughter's birth has actually started to fade, healing as a result of the beauty of my second labor; and bonding with my second daughter has been much more natural.

Regardless of our choices as mothers, having them honored, and our rights as human beings respected is powerful medicine.

[Reply](#)

1. [Kate](#) says:

[September 9, 2013 at 5:00 pm](#)

I should add that my eldest is 4 years old and the younger is just 12 weeks, today.

[Reply](#)

20. [Om Livin'](#) says:

[September 6, 2013 at 11:28 pm](#)

GREAT read!! Loved it & agreed with many if not all of your points!! 😊

[Reply](#)

21. [Alise G](#) says:

[August 21, 2013 at 9:56 pm](#)

I feel like you took the thoughts right out of my head and wrote them down here. When discussing my plans for a homebirth for my first daughter with a friend, she questioned whether I could truly have my baby's safety in mind as I labored and gave birth at home. I remember how insulted I felt over this questioning of my choice, as if I hadn't struggled with and considered deeply all the risks and benefits associated with birthing at home. Thank you for this article!!

[Reply](#)

22. [Heather C](#) says:

[August 9, 2013 at 8:03 am](#)

Hello ladies! I think after sitting here & reading this article from a friends Facebook page, that I might actually be the only woman that isn't actually a mother commenting! I'm an aunt to a 5 year old, a 3 year old & a 1 year old. My sister & I are EXTREMELY close & she ended up having c-sections with all 3. Her last pregnancy got extremely scary & dangerous to her & the baby & I can't imagine what she & my brother in law went through. I just want to say how absolutely inspiring & informing this article & so many of you were! I've been married for 4 years & were in no rush for children. I'm honestly petrified, not going to lie! A lot of what made me comment is how unbelievably HORRIBLE people-professionals, family, friends-have treated some of you! I sat with my jaw on the floor for some of your stories. The judgement, & the choices that were pushed/forced on you, & the way these doctors & nurses treated you is mind blowing to me! Now, as I said-I am not a mother yet & at this point I'm perfectly content being "Auntie", so I can't say I know much about any of this, really, I've never looked

into it or read much on it but from this article & all of your honest & eye opening, truthful comments, (I'm already a person in my own health issues absolutely requires to be listened to, that my choices & questions are important & be taken seriously.) I say THANK YOU for when I AM ready to have children, to know how/ways to prepare myself to be a well informed, strong, future mother. I think I've always sort of thought casually "There's no way I could do that without an epidural or this certain way/that certain way" when In fact so many of you have had great experiences in hospital births, home births, from c sections to natural vaginal births. I am not a mom & I am uneducated in this area unlike mostly all of you-which also led me to comment so i could say thank you to Cristen for this article & all of you for sharing your stories, & experiences- good & bad -to even this proud Aunt!

[Reply](#)

1. *Dawn* says:

[August 9, 2013 at 4:57 pm](#)

Heather, so glad you commented. You may find this link interesting. It's from a medical journal about abuse in childbirth. <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2776520/>. We need more women, especially those who haven't had children yet, to be appalled by the state of our maternity care. We can't continue this way. The health, not only physical but mental health depends on it.

[Reply](#)

23. *Judene* says:

[August 8, 2013 at 8:47 am](#)

Do you know of any articles for women birthing with an IUD?

[Reply](#)

24. *Danielle Coolbaugh* says:

[July 25, 2013 at 8:07 pm](#)

Cristen, we already talked about how I feel about this particular issue, and once again, I thank you for bringing this to light. This is something many women encounter and it needs to stop.

Mother's are important and wanting a positive birth experience does not mean sacrificing baby's safety.

Thank you.

[Reply](#)

25. *Tina Ziegenfusz* says:

[July 22, 2013 at 12:44 am](#)

This is such an important post. Thank you so much for writing it. Sharing it far and wide!

[Reply](#)

26. *Holly* says:

[July 20, 2013 at 4:19 pm](#)

I was going for a positive birth experience and really felt failure and disappointment when my home birth didn't go as planned. After a severe hemorrhage and having to be taken to the ER in an ambulance I didn't see my daughter for more than a few seconds before I was separated from her for 4 hours. Then I was in so much pain from the extensive tearing I had and so weak from all the blood loss it took me a very long time to recover. It definitely affected bonding and my post par-tum experience. Now for my second child I am choosing to deliver in a hospital with a midwife...especially because we now live 30 miles from a hospital. Now I find myself a little irritated with home birth people because of my experience. Which I know is no fault of their own just my own issues. I'm still glad I had a home birth but just wished it would have been a more positive experience.

Reply

27. *NF* says:

July 9, 2013 at 6:55 pm

Yes! A thousand times, yes! At my very own baby shower, a neighbor showed up, sat down right in the middle of everything and (hoping to shame me) said, "So are you still SET on a home birth?" To which I said, "I absolutely am." I was then put on the spot with a series of questions from her; all of which she seemed to think should be answered in apology for my stupid selfishness. This is a woman who nearly died from a disgusting infection she had contracted just a few months earlier due to a cesarean and carelessness from her OB in the operating room. Maybe she was bitter; maybe even after nearly dying and weeks hooked up to IVs and medications to manage the infection she genuinely thought I was being stupid and selfish....but I couldn't be gentle with her (shame on me, I guess). The intention behind her words fueled a fire. I want women to be able to empower other women. To be able to recognize another's highly educated decision. Or, at the very least, to mind their own business and let others proceed on what is the least traumatic course for them and their baby without being backhanded about it. The world didn't get this populated because women weren't capable of intervention-free births for thousands of years. Why can we not recognize each other's strengths, natural abilities, and right to our own values and decisions?

Reply

28. *Wendy* says:

June 25, 2013 at 3:08 pm

I had a different birth experience – different as in I'm American but my husband is in the army and I gave birth in Jerusalem. Well that and I'm also usually just sort of the odd one in the crowd. I read about giving birth, the stages, etc. I looked at some of the relaxation techniques...the needle (which I had never seen) for the epidural terrified me. I had no birth plan. Well I planned to not have the baby at home or in the car and I preferred to not have a c-section which is major surgery after all. Otherwise I felt like planning such an unpredictable thing in a foreign country probably wasn't going to help...and honestly I had no idea on any of it. It was my first (is my first). The one and only time anything went near my vagina while I pregnant was the Strep B swab. There were no cervical checks, no interest in dilation or effacement. I did have an ultrasound every four weeks until the end when I had them almost every day (I was retaining around 80lbs of fluid and my blood pressure was flirty with the scary border). I'm all of 5'1" so 80lbs of anything is a lot! So I spent a lot of time being monitored at the end...because no one wanted to risk inadvertently introducing infection by doing anything vaginally, because by spending hours hooked up to monitors meant everything was o.k. and induction could be pushed back further (they do not induce in Israel unless medically necessary, it is not an option, unnecessary c-sections are not an option either). So in my case the constant fetal/maternal monitoring prevented hasty decisions. After 9 hours of labor (my contractions were 2 minutes apart when I woke up at 3 am and about 20 seconds apart at 8:30am at the hospital where they decided (via fetal monitoring) that I was indeed in active labor. I was immediately sent for another ultrasound to double check that the baby was where he was thought to be (he was in the correct position) THEN they checked me for dilation (all of 1 cm. That whole breaks between the contractions thing is crap). I was strongly encouraged to have the epidural (I was in enough pain at that point that I didn't care). I sat in a plastic chair in the hall and rocked back and forth from 9am-12:30pm. Then they finally had a room for me and I finally had my epidural. I didn't know they numbed the area first so the needle didn't matter! I will say that as miserable as I was in that plastic chair in the hall I've sat in the emergency room with urinary tract infections that have been way more painful. So I had the epidural at 5cm. It stalled the labor. They waited an hour and broke my water and waiting another hour. Nothing. So they added Pitocin. I went from 5cm to 10cm in an hour, I didn't feel any of it. I did have an IV of course as well. And so the pushing began. Because I was so swollen I couldn't bend my legs very much (which is why I was being monitored and induction considered before I couldn't possibly push at all). The epidural was turned off so that I could feel more of what I was doing. The maternal and fetal monitors stayed on. I wound up pushing for three hours during which the doctors and midwives spoke in Hebrew although a few English words stood out: forceps, vacuuming, and c-section. I knew he was stuck in the birth canal. You can feel when your child is stuck in your birth canal when your epidural is turned off. Those words though (forceps, vacuuming, and c-section) were incredibly motivating. And

my little boy was a champ. The continuous fetal monitoring enabled my care team to keep pushing back how long they were going to let me go for. In the end I heard the snip of scissors (no they didn't say anything or ask) and I felt tremendous relief because an episiotomy meant he was coming out vaginally. I didn't care that they hadn't asked, it only would have made me tense up to prepare for the pain (there wasn't any). And I didn't care. Why would I mind an episiotomy instead of forceps, vacuuming, and c-sections (and yes, they massaged the whole area for the three hours, it just wasn't happening). And so my boy was delivered vaginally. His head was a disaster. We are not talking cone head here but cone head that has been bashed on all sides with a baseball bat and then scabs over. Yeah. But he was and is (8 months now) totally fine. So you can look at what I had, continuous monitoring, no birth plan, and epidural, etc., and yet I didn't have a c-section. All of those things prevented a c-section. And the epidural enabled me to rest for the three hours of pushing and I started the three hours of pushing relaxed. Being sewn back up afterwards was the worst pain of my life. Worse than the UTIs. But within a week the pain was gone and everything is working normally so I have no complaints. There isn't anything I would change about my experience at all. I'm happy that we emerged as healthy as possible. There is a lot of debate on the epidural and the infant...and when I was younger I would have condemned anyone who took a tylenol while pregnant...but I wasn't young, I was 38 and had mellowed out quite a bit. And if anyone is ever planning a birth in Jerusalem they do not wipe the baby off before plopping it on your chest 😊

[Reply](#)

29. *Kat* says:

[June 4, 2013 at 2:34 am](#)

Well put. However, I would go farther. I think we should firmly kick the lawyers and insurance companies out of delivery rooms. Too many care providers make decisions based on whether or not they think they might get sued and lose their practices and/or licenses. A malpractice suit carries the highest payout average. Yes, doctors do make mistakes and should be held responsible for them, but sometimes things happen that are beyond anyone's ability to stop and unfortunately doctors often pay for that. During my latest delivery we were talking to my obgyn, who had to apologize for having to send and associate to check on me earlier. She'd spent a great part of the afternoon dealing with the appeals process for another patient who was 35 weeks and severely preeclamptic. Insurance was refusing to pay a cent for the induction because she wasn't 37 weeks. Doctors should not be having to fight for using their trained medical judgment to take care of their patients!!! It makes me furious that non-medical people are telling medical staff what they can and cannot do.

[Reply](#)

30. *JB* says:

[May 26, 2013 at 11:07 am](#)

What a great read! My kid is almost three and just this week I had a conversation with someone about my birth experience and realized that after nearly 3 years I am still pissed about how I was treated.

I was certainly vocal about my needs. Apparently, when you are vocal, they send the head nurse in to see what your problem is. My problem was I wanted a say in what happened in my birthing room. This head nurse asked me if I was "some kind of lawyer or something". Was this an implication that I am argumentative?

I was wide-eyed and uneducated about options. My doctor actually encouraged me to not take classes because they would just tell me what to do in the delivery room anyway and that "all the intimate" things happened at my check ups and not at the actual birth. (Excuse me?)

I hope to be blessed with another hilarious and bright kid but I will go about birthing him or her in another manner all together.

Thanks for the articulating the need for compassion in the biggest life event of all.

[Reply](#)

31. *Valarie* says:

[May 23, 2013 at 11:09 pm](#)

What an incredible story of strength!

Thank you for this inspiration, it is so important for women to acknowledge the wisdom within and for others to respect and honor that truth during that time and always.

These stories give validation and inspiration into the truth of our feminine souls.

[Reply](#)

32. *KD* says:

[May 13, 2013 at 5:26 pm](#)

THANK YOU for putting my feelings into articulate words. I'm fighting for a beautiful birth experience right now...and have found so much opposition, it's appalling.

[Reply](#)

33. *Suse* says:

[May 12, 2013 at 5:09 am](#)

Thank you for this article. I had a fairly traumatic experience with my first birth, but not for lack of education or support. Although a home birth would have been my first option, there were no homebirth midwives in my town, but our hospital had a midwife led birthing program and were very supportive of active, physiological births. My labour started fairly conventionally, I laboured at home for as long as possible, then went into hospital. Shortly after arriving, my contractions stalled. My midwife, who had been involved in my pre-natal care and whom I trusted and felt a bond with, said not to be concerned by this, it was not uncommon after a change of environment during labour. She suggested that my partner and I go for a walk, or just spend time relaxing in the room, she was unobtrusive and very understanding. There was no time pressure placed upon the labour, which I knew was a common reason for a cascade of interventions. I knew first labours often progressed slowly, and my babe was posterior, which also can result in a longer labour. We weren't concerned, or pressured. This babe would be born in his own time. To cut what ended up being a very long story short, it ended up being a long and difficult labour, which, after 30+ hours, culminated in over three hours of pushing.

Throughout this, I had a supportive team of midwives who were calm, competent and who instinctively knew when to be unobtrusive, and when to be involved, supportive and encouraging. I had a partner who was an ever-present and solid support. I had all of the ingredients for a trauma free birth. After three hours of pushing, my babe was not descending. The wonderful obstetrician who attended gave her honest and thoughtful opinion, that because he had not descended into the pelvis she didn't feel that an instrumental delivery could be done safely, and that a caesarean would be the best option under the circumstances. This opinion, like all of the options I'd been presented with throughout the labour, was given gently, respectfully and with balance. I was given time to decide, I was not pressured, I was not given a guilt-trip about compromising my baby's safety. I went into the decision with full knowledge. As it transpired, my pelvis had not expanded. At all. My babe was literally beating his head up against a brick wall. This is very uncommon, and it wasn't until several years later, when I was preparing for the birth of my second child, that I discovered that I have a slightly twisted sacrum.

Despite being treated with full respect, care and honesty throughout the entire labour, and making my own choices, it was still an incredibly traumatic experience. I've often wondered why. Was it because in spite of being given respect and choices, at the end of the day there *\*was\** no choice. Was it because no matter how caring the people performing an emergency surgery are, it is still a traumatic experience, I lost blood, I spent most of the surgery vomiting in reaction to the anaesthesia, my son, whilst well, required some time in the special care unit so I didn't see him until the next morning. I had an incredibly rough recovery, and had a newborn who was particularly challenging. I think one of the reasons I found the birth so traumatic is because I had not entertained the possibility of a surgical birth in any real sense – we were thoroughly unprepared both practically and emotionally. So whilst I had a positive birth in that I had a respectful, caring support team, it was also extremely traumatic just by its very definition.

I do understand the need in the natural birthing community to imbue women with positivity about their capacity to birth naturally – medicalised birth has left many women with a lack of confidence in their body's capabilities and strength. This encouragement is so important – positive thinking and support is a huge factor in successfully birthing naturally. Yet I wonder if it also leaves women unprepared in the event that their birth doesn't go to plan. It's a catch-22, and I don't know what the answer is. I didn't buy formula bottles because I knew that having them makes it much easier to choose to supplement feed when breastfeeding gets tough, and perhaps this is a good analogy with natural birthing. I know many women who have said that if they hadn't excluded the possibility of any other birth from their minds, their natural birth wouldn't have been possible. If they had been in a hospital where the option of drugs, or a caesarean was available, they might not have got through late stage labour and transition. Yet preparation for all eventualities might help women with similar experiences to myself cope better.

My second birth, which was a scheduled caesarean (I prefer not to use the term elective, because I wouldn't have chosen it had a vaginal birth been viable), was very much a healing experience. Interestingly, the surgery was actually more difficult, there were more complications, and it was a long surgery. But I had my daughter in my arms and feeding within an hour of birth, and whilst skin-skin wasn't an option during the surgery, she was in her father's arms and never out of my sight. The difference in my perception of my experience was profound even though the experience itself was not dissimilar, in both births I had respectful, caring supports, in both births I was able to make my own educated choices within the scope of what was physically possible, but this time, I was prepared for it.

[Reply](#)

34. [Linda](#) says:

[May 12, 2013 at 2:02 am](#)

I am so happy that you had a natural, wonderful birth of your baby. Far too many women are stripped of their rights when giving birth in the medical model and sadly, most of these women think that that is normal. We need to get the message out there that we can and should have a birth experience that WE WANT in order to feel a sense of accomplishment and satisfaction in the birth process of our children. And children deserve to come into this world with as little stress as possible—not being pumped up with drugs, have their home cut into and being forcibly removed in an unnatural way, in which ultimately, they don't even get skin to skin contact with their mother. So sad that so many women and children suffer through such unnatural births and think that that is normal.

[Reply](#)

35. [Beth](#) says:

[May 11, 2013 at 9:06 am](#)

I was expecting something different when I started read this. You see, Where I had my second daughter in OR, lots of people we pushing me the other way – towards a home-birth. They said it's more natural, women have been doing it this way for years. They told me it was safer, better for baby, and better for mom. But b/c of complications with my first daughter, I just didn't feel comfortable delivering at home. But these "friends" made me feel awful for going to the hospital and trusting modern medicine. In the end my daughter went breech with the umbilical cord pinched between her legs. I am convinced that she would not have lived through a home birth, b/c it was such a close call in the hospital. Thank God some how I felt I needed a hospital birth not a home birth. Also, during my time at my hospital I was treating like a queen, respected and listen to. I SOOO support this article, but I just want to say the pressure come from both directions. If someone wants to how their baby at home – How wonderful for the peaceful and calm delivery they will more than likely have. But if someone wants to have her baby in a hospital, that doesn't make her silly, weak or selfish either. She can have a baby in a hospital and still have a great birth experience. Is it so hard to understand different woman have different needs? Let's support one another, not expect everyone to do it the way we did.

[Reply](#)

1. [jasmine](#) says:

[October 21, 2016 at 8:23 am](#)

Re: "Is it so hard to understand different women have different needs?"  
Did you read the blog? She says very clearly:

"Choices in birth are very personal. I do not believe that every woman should, must, or can have a physiologic birth."

This blog isn't about why you should have a natural birth. It is about why a woman's wishes about how her birth will go should be respected. Your wishes were to have your baby in a hospital, and I am so happy for you that they were respected. That is the point of this blog.

[Reply](#)

2. [Dion](#) says:

[May 13, 2013 at 11:52 am](#)

I wholeheartedly support women to give birth in the way they feel safest. I've attended women at home and in the hospital. One client of mine after laboring at home for many hours wanted to be transported to the hospital. She didn't have any complications other than failure to progress and just felt better in the hospital where she refused any interventions and went on to birth her baby.

I birthed all 4 of my babies at home with Midwives, taught prepared childbirth classes and studied Midwifery at a training clinic for 3 months.

When I was expecting my first baby in 1978 and told my family I was going to have a home birth, my own sister told me I should be arrested for child abuse! I was so sad to hear her reaction until my mom and older sister reminded me that between them 9 babies had been born without any complications and all could have been born at home... this gave me strength and courage to go forward with my plans for a home birth.

I think it all boils down to TRUST in our ability to birth without any 'experts' telling us how to 'do it'. There are some true bona-fide emergencies and reasons to be in the hospital attended by highly trained surgeons – OB's – yet this is rare and presents in only 2.5% of pregnancies. 98% are completely normal and natural – world wide.

I hope that all couples planning their birth keep this in mind and focus on trusting the mother's body to give birth spontaneously and in the safest environment possible. I also highly encourage having a Doula or Midwife when planning a hospital birth as they can be your advocate & support person for having a natural birth. Also educate yourself thoroughly about natural childbirth and only hire a doctor who supports your wishes.

[Reply](#)

36. [Jennifer Hall](#) says:

[May 11, 2013 at 3:09 am](#)

Wanted to say Thank You! My husband and I waited 13 years before having our first and in that time I did A LOT of research. I read books, watched "The Business of Being Born", googled, searched and read some more. I was scared to go to a hospital, but not ready to labor and birth at home. I am lucky I live in an area where we have freestanding "birth centers" that are owned and run by a midwife and her assistant or assistants. The day I found out I was pregnant, I made an appointment the next day with a midwife and told my husband what I wanted to do. He looked at me funny but overcame his issues and let me go ahead with my plan 😊 When people asked me what hospital we were going to, I replied "we're not" I have never felt so judged in my entire life. Responses ranged from "you can't go through that pain" to dismissive "hmmp"s. People told my husband to tell me that I HAD to go to the hospital to birth. I honestly thought a support group for people giving birth outside the hospital would help! They didn't make me question my choice, but did make me feel bad about myself. Then, after I gave birth and was home 4 hours later, NO ONE asked me about MY birth experience – I still don't know why. Was it because I was radiating joy, that I was super proud I went against the grain and birthed the way I wanted? It hurts that there is such prejudice against deciding to birth naturally. I became a Doula and truly love supporting other women through natural birth – I've done home and hospital births. They thank me, and say they couldn't have done it without me, but I know these women are strong and of course could do it even if I was never there. Funny thing is my husband is now a believer and would

not have had me do it any other way, and it feels good he is so proud of me. The makings of a close family bond 😊 So, my second was a water birth – I thought natural birth was tied to prejudice, but try and tell people your baby is being born in water! LOL! I am blessed my “advanced maternal age” body was healthy to give me my natural births, and two is enough for this old lady! Thanks again for bringing this subject to light!

[Reply](#)

37. *TC* says:

[May 11, 2013 at 12:10 am](#)

You sound a lot like me. I always said, “Who wouldn’t take the drugs?”. But after I read everything I could get my hands on (my favorite being “Gentle Birth Choices”), I opted for an non-medicated water birth for both my births and couldn’t have been happier. I hired a Doula, which I believe made a world of difference.

[Reply](#)

38. *Joanna Becker* says:

[May 10, 2013 at 7:05 am](#)

Your article gives voice to many women who only understand the power we have until after the birth. I’m working for the same cause – also a writer, currently compiling birth stories from women all around the world, inspired by my own post-natal journey.

I believe that every birth, no matter whether it is natural, Caesar, complicated, or drug-free, is a beautiful experience and teaches a woman about herself in ways unimaginable before the birthing. And sharing these stories can help build inner-strength to pregnant women... helping them to connect with their baby and feel more at ease with their upcoming birth.

I would love if your readers (and others passionate for this cause) wrote a short story (diary-style) on what happened for them on the day of their birthing. Details of the book we are publishing, which will include these stories, is at <http://parentingenergy.com.au> .

Please visit Parenting Energy on Facebook and join our community of women supporting each other in natural health, pregnancy, birthing and parenting with positive energy.

KR,  
Joanna

[Reply](#)

39. *wendy* says:

[May 9, 2013 at 8:49 pm](#)

totally agree!

except this line ... “We all laugh about those moments of irrationality, when you have to place your baby in her crib and walk away in order to keep your sanity.” ...this is exceptionally selfish. CIO is absolutely selfish.

[Reply](#)

1. *Cristen* says:

[May 9, 2013 at 9:01 pm](#)

Wasn’t talking about CIO, Wendy 😊 I was talking about that end-of-your-rope, can’t-take-it-anymore, going-to-lose-it feeling that every new mom has that is only relieved by having a moment alone to collect yourself. Nothing selfish about that! 😊

[Reply](#)

1. *Jennifer Hall* says:

[May 11, 2013 at 3:10 am](#)

What's CIO?

[Reply](#)

1. *ginger* says:

[July 15, 2013 at 12:38 am](#)

CIO is crying it out. Basically not always responding to your babies cries immediately. Some people refer to it as self soothe as well.

[Reply](#)

40. *Elaine* says:

[May 9, 2013 at 7:48 pm](#)

I forgot to add. Love the article, thanks for writing it! 😊

[Reply](#)

41. *Chantal* says:

[May 9, 2013 at 6:35 pm](#)

Thank you so much. I feel validated, and relieved. I posted a comment on the right of women to make choices in their birth process on fb, and wouldn't you know? A male acquaintance went right to calling women selfish for making choices outside of what he determined to be "safe". Thanks for connecting the relationship of mama – baby with mental health. Thanks for addressing this judgment around choice and selfishness, as well as this enormous assumption that mama's don't want and know what is best for their babies in birth!

[Reply](#)

42. *Elaine* says:

[May 9, 2013 at 6:33 pm](#)

I had an extremely traumatic birth of my first child. It was mainly traumatic for me because of no privacy and then unwanted and against-my-will touching and post-birth not numb stitches and vaginal manipulation.. and I am a sexual abuse survivor. The non-emergency unnecessary nature of the unwanted touching is a main reason I think why I ended up with PTSD.. playing the birth over and over in my mind and out loud to hubby, severe anxiety, etc.

If you think the way people speak to you -before- you have the baby with your natural birth plans is condescending.. it is about 10x worse if your plans fall through and then you have PTSD and can't stop talking about the experience. The way I was condescended to by my husband, the midwife, the OB, and my parents... My marriage was in DEEP trouble for a couple of years following the birth of our child mainly because of how I was treated in the first few weeks after. It's not right for someone untrained to have to deal with someone with a nasty case of PTSD, but he wouldn't call for a therapists appointment for me, called me names to shush me, and sided with the midwife/my parents on the topic. It took me 2 years to forgive him for treating me with such disregard and disrespect. He couldn't get it through his head that it wasn't his fault that I was victimized so my talking about it was not some type of attack and that that I couldn't just move on knowing that he did his best and both of us were eventually "healthy". Frankly, I wouldn't call a mother/baby dyad where one is floundering mentally/emotionally for more than a year afterward as a healthy one, at all!

And, people/him/family/midwife even blamed the plans I had for my experience.. saying I basically caused my own PTSD by planning a natural birth. I say, excuse my language, but, they can F-off with that. Seriously, the weight of what I have to convey to them deserves foul language! I had PTSD because the midwife couldn't keep her hands off of my vagina and I was literally begging her during pushing to get her hands out/off of me.. And then she stitched me up when I wasn't numb at all and checked the stitches and ordered I be cath'd. I still cringe and start to sweat when I think of the level 11 pain I felt when she shoved 2 fingers up my swollen, beaten, torn up vagina.. not numb with no warning/prep/consent.. to check to make sure she hadn't sewn me shut. And then the nurse who came and tried to give me a catheter couldn't even find my urethral opening but was pawing around with me

crying and trying to get away from her. She gave up and I literally leapt out of the bed to go to the bathroom so she wouldn't try to cath me again. And, the lack of privacy was a nightmare for me.. I was sexually abused as a child and I have such anxieties about strangers and bodily functions that I can barely pee in public restrooms (can't if it silent) and didn't poop for the 7 day hospital stay... but somehow they thought it was appropriate because it was shift change to have every nurse in the hall in the room while I was pushing and 5 or 6 different nurses hold my leg so I could push, no intros or explaining.. each one totally focused on chit-chatting with one another and my husband over me rather than focusing on the birth in the room... There were other issues and the 7 day NICU stay for my son was a breastfeeding sabotaging nightmare and I ended up needing to relactate. I try to imagine just about anyone with a history of abuse or maybe even not would've been traumatized by my experience. No amount of natural birth planning caused my trauma. It was being treated with callous disregard that did it.

I will add I had a homebirth with midwife 4 1/2 years after that experience that didn't traumatize me at all. It wasn't magical or anything and I was very weak after for the first few weeks.. but I didn't get PTSD this time, she was fine, I am fine, and bonding/breastfeeding went well.. Everyone is healthy and I was totally respected during that birth and after. She's 4 months old and my mental state vs how I was at 4 months with my son is so much different.. I am like a pane of glass whereas after him I was a mental tar pit. I won't say her birth healed me, no, but I will say it made me feel less animous towards health professionals; it seems that some are capable of being respectful, and I really truly appreciate not being afflicted with PTSD this time. Oh and when I was planning the homebirth I was condescended to a fair bit, but I have grown better it ignoring and after the success and me obviously doing so much better people have been pretty silent on it.

Sorry for the novella.

[Reply](#)

1. *Erin Shetler* says:  
[May 10, 2013 at 4:53 pm](#)

Elaine,

Thanks for not being afraid to talk about your PTSD. Providers cause medical, physical and financial harm when their actions cause PTSD. So many times it is hard to quantify the effects of poor treatment; with PTSD those effects are very clear. And inexcusable. You are not alone.

Erin

[Reply](#)

2. *Cristen* says:  
[May 9, 2013 at 9:45 pm](#)

Oh, Elaine, this is heartbreaking to read. Sexual abuse, as common as it is, is something providers would do well to be more aware of. They can be much more sensitive and accommodating in their medical treatment of you, and, of course, it can have very real effects on you in birth. And then birth can have very real effects on the postpartum period and your relationships with both your baby and your partner, as you described. Whether or not you were abused as a child, the treatment you received in birth was entirely unacceptable and I'm sure would be traumatizing for anyone. I'm very sorry that's what you went through.

A great resource is Postpartum Support International: <http://www.postpartum.net/Get-Help/Support-Resources-Map-Area-Coordinators.aspx>

[Reply](#)

3. *Elly Taylor* says:  
[May 9, 2013 at 9:33 pm](#)

Elaine, I am so sorry to hear what you have been through. When we have been violated by someone we think we can trust to care for us it's called 'second injury' – and adds another layer to the trauma.

Part of my work as a relationship counsellor is repairing the damage birth trauma causes to a couple's relationship. Unfortunately, it's common. Many mums feel like their partner has let them down, failed to protect them, not cared enough and this is not a good way to start a new family. Many of the dads I've spoken to were also traumatised, but often didn't disclose this. Many feel ashamed that they haven't protected their wives. Shame is an emotion that causes us to shut down and withdraw emotionally and also to blame others – which of course just makes things worse.

I'm relieved to hear you managed to work through it with your husband. I suggest anyone else who has had a traumatic birth seek the support of a relationship therapist to repair the damage. It is repairable, and sometimes, through the hard work of being vulnerable with each other, the relationship ends up being stronger than before.

[Reply](#)

43. *Rhondda Hartman* says:

[May 9, 2013 at 4:21 pm](#)

Your article is fabulous! Harsh reality that women need to read and understand, since it is the current state of obstetrics in our world. I was a pioneer in the Natural Childbirth Movement of the 60's and 70's. we thought we had made great strides in correcting the drugging of babies at birth only to be co-opted by the Medical Profession with Birth Rooms and Epidurals.

I taught classes for Dr. Robert Bradley in Denver, Colorado. I wrote a book in those years to get the word out and to accompany "Husband Coached Childbirth". Now I have done it again!

I feel that the message needs to be repeated and my grandchildren need to hear what I know and how to do it. "Natural Childbirth Exercises" came out on May 1, this year. You state the case far more strongly than I do in my book but my message is the same. Fight for the birth you want to have, remember that you are paying for the Doctor's service and you must be the decision maker. Take responsibility for your birth experience, even if it turns out differently from your expectations.

I would like to reference your website and this article on my website in my Resources and References tab. Of course, I would love to have an endorsement and a book review from you if you feel so inclined.(Especially if you like it!)

I am most impressed with your writing and the responses you have received. I hope we can communicate. I admire what you are doing. Thanks for your voice in the fight for our rights in Birth. Rhondda

[Reply](#)

44. *Erin* says:

[May 9, 2013 at 12:31 pm](#)

I agree with this article. I have been told numerous times that planning for an unmedicated birth is irresponsible and puts my baby at risk. Another response has been condescension. As a woman in my mid-30s preparing for my first birth, I have been shocked by other mothers' responses to my birth preparation. In a number of cases the mothers insist that my view of a natural and unmedicated birth is naive and unrealistic.

[Reply](#)

45. *Nina* says:

[May 9, 2013 at 9:47 am](#)

To begin with, I am worst mum ever. A selfish one I assumed according to one of the comment here, as I induced my baby early with no medical reason.

I have two children. With my firstborn, a girl, I had natural birth. .And it was a torture. I was double over with the pain. I had pethidine which worked wonders but wore off long before I was allowed the next dose. When I asked for epidural I was told it was too late.

I don't remember my girl's first cry, I don't remember feeling any sort of happiness when it was over. I only remember the pain.

My baby became a stranger to me, I was pleased to hear her crying and I didn't react. Of course I feed her, bath her, and changed her nappies and sometimes I even hold her in my arms but deep down I felt nothing but hatred. I hated her because I knew in some way she did it to me. I had to face the temptation of killing her and myself. I have never harmed her but, God, only I know how close it was sometimes. I took years to improve our relationship and build the bond between us from scratch.

With the next one, a boy, I was determined to have a c section. My request was declined a few times. I kept saying I did feel suicidal during my first birth and then on, and I said I'm very likely to panic when the pain comes, and might even try to harm myself – to no avail! I was even told having a bath and some paracetamol, (a drug available at any petrol station) can ease my pain! Eventually, thanks to my midwife, I met the head obstetrician. He offered me an induced labour, with epidural given BEFOREHAND so I would feel no pain at all. My aim was only to avoid the pain not vaginal delivery so I agreed. A few days before the labour I was told they could not do that. (My labour had to be established so they could give me epidural). I felt cheated, I felt scared to death and really consider suicide as the best option. I knew this time the pain will destroy me completely and I didn't want such life. I stopped short of doing that just because my girl was with me and I didn't want her to cry over my body until her dad comes home.

Luckily, this time pethidine worked long enough for the labour to establish and I was given epidural. There was no pain. I cuddled my boy skin to skin with my heart bursting with that pure love, that was not contaminated with pain or trauma. We have a strong bond, I breastfed him for over a year and I think the world of him. I do love my firstborn now, but I feel so sorry for her as she was robbed of the bond, the love and care that every child deserves. And she could see her brother was now getting it all.

So... I induced my boy with no medical reason ( who could consider tokophobia and feeling suicidal as a excuse? None!) but thanks to my choice my baby is happy, and so am I!

[Reply](#)

1. *Cristen* says:

[May 9, 2013 at 9:28 pm](#)

Dear Nina, I am messaging you privately. Please check your email.

[Reply](#)

46. *Ramona von Moritz* says:

[May 9, 2013 at 4:52 am](#)

I chose a home birth for our first child when it was quite illegal, in California, early 1979, and had my husband's and my Waldorf community's and two wonderful midwives' support...I read everything I could get my hands on about natural birth, and I also thought and felt that a natural birth was the healthiest, for myself and my baby. No one in the medical establishment where we lived wanted to support us...they were too scared...The first labor was tremendously long...days...but our midwives were calm, sweet, and knew what they were doing. There was no physician present. We eventually had two more home births, each with a doctor and a midwife...all of which, by the way, were just hard work, but very calm and peaceful and very beautiful...I had one hospital birth in an Anthroposophical hospital in Germany...the midwife cared for us beautifully, and the doctor didn't get there til just after the baby was born! He was so embarrassed! That one was in 1982, and they were so far advanced I couldn't believe it! It was almost as nice as being at home. Almost! They were already more advanced at that time, than birthing centers are here, at this time...I also had one home birth in Germany, and the doctor and midwife were so relaxed...as if we were all just having a tea party...with all four births, I experienced no tearing, and took no drugs, except for some drops of homeopathic belladonna at the very end of one labor, when I was losing strength, to help me completely relax between contractions... My husband was with me through each birth, every moment...that was the most comforting of all... and all our children were perfectly healthy...they've also not had vaccines (unless they chose to as adults...one did choose to be vaccinated for a couple of diseases, before traveling to China to study; and another got a measles vaccine to make getting into grad school quicker!) and they've all been terrifically healthy and strong throughout their lives. I was also in good health during and after the

pregnancies...I took very good care of myself!...got back to normal weight very quickly (within two to four weeks) never had any stretch marks, was able to nurse them all, and care for them all, and enjoyed their early years tremendously! I wouldn't recommend having them too close together, though. We had four children in five and a half years. That was tiring! (But they always played very well together, and have always been best of friends.) Comparing the hospital and home births, great as the German hospital was, there's nothing like being at home, to keep your mind at ease and to allow your soul and spirit to feel protected and nurtured...dim lights, or only candles, quiet space...no sound at all, or quiet music of your choice...fragrances that calm and relax you....your own bed and your own pillows and blankets...perhaps a special picture to focus on, to give you strength...a doctor and midwife or doula of your choosing, who understand your way of being in the world, and who respect and listen to you...a partner of your choosing, who loves and supports you no matter what...One has to work, of course, at making the home healthy and happy. One also has to cultivate the relationships that will support the birth. If your personal space is clean and warm, and if you have made a home that reflects your inner being, it will be the best place to give birth, for you and for your child, and for everyone present. It is, after all, a holy and blessed event, which deserves the best of what you as a woman and a mother can create. If you also have other women who can help you in creating and holding the space, all the better. I was at one home birth, with five other women, and we each had our roles...the father was there, as well as the doctor, who was male. One of the five women was the midwife. We took turns coaching, cooking, cleaning, caring for the other children, and doing laundry... I remember fluffing the mother's pillows and putting fresh flowers in every room...there was so much harmony between us all, and it was a beautiful birth! Thank you for the opportunity to share all this!

[Reply](#)

47. [Jacquie](#) says:  
[May 8, 2013 at 11:04 pm](#)

I love this! I recently wrote a blog post about the importance of making informed, well-thought out birth decisions and about respecting each woman for her different choices. I feel like my exact sentiments were echoed in this article and I'm so happy to have read it!! It pains me that women can be so nasty to each other and judgmental toward them for choosing a different birth path than they did. While I plan to do natural births with a midwife, I understand and respect that it may not be what is best for everyone, but because I did MY research, I can know it will be what is best for me. Thanks again!!

Below is the link to my blog post about birth:

<http://jacquiegirl.wordpress.com/2013/04/25/on-birth-part-i/>

– Jacquie

[Reply](#)

48. [Sarah](#) says:  
[May 8, 2013 at 7:31 pm](#)

Thank you for a well written article. I had a traumatic birth with my son, and I didn't feel like a failure, I felt like I was set up to fail. Birth (especially if issues come up) is hard enough without feeling ignored and bullied by the medical staff. I wasn't sure if I would have more kids because of my fear of ever being treated like that again. I still have nightmares about it 2.5 years later. I finally decided that I couldn't let a few bad people ruin my life. I am currently pregnant, and am trying my best to set up a support system to ensure that doesn't happen again.

[Reply](#)

1. [Erin Shetler](#) says:  
[May 9, 2013 at 12:27 am](#)

Congratulations on your pregnancy, Sarah, and on taking the power back where it belongs — to you! I had a traumatic birth six months ago, exactly as Cristen said, not because of complications but because I was treated as if I didn't exist by the doctor. I'm still not sure if I'll

ever trust a doctor again, and your story has given me hope. Improving Birth is doing incredible work to shine light on the problem of mistreatment of women during labor and delivery. No matter what a woman chooses for her birth, respect for her rights should never be optional.

[Reply](#)

49. *Jen* says:

[May 8, 2013 at 7:25 pm](#)

Bravo. If I could do first child's birth over again, I would have done a home birth like I did with my third. I was scared to death to tell our families about the home birth for our last child. I didn't tell more than one or two friends. My mother kept telling me that my bathroom and tub weren't clean enough, than that I should rethink things and go to the hospital! She wasn't willing to read the research either. Some things are so far out of the comfort zone of most of our society, they aren't even willing to consider that there is information out there they are not aware of.

[Reply](#)

50. *Rebecca* says:

[May 8, 2013 at 6:46 pm](#)

I love your definition of a traumatic birth. My second birth was not quite traumatic, but definitely difficult. It was a vaginal birth in which I received an epidural only at the very end, and pushing was super quick! Yet in the end I felt disrespected, ignored, disappointed, less connected with my child, and less excited about the birth. When I would try to talk to people about how I felt disappointed about my birth experience, it's as if they would just roll their eyes because I didn't have an emergency C-section or anything extreme like that. The way women are treated in birth and their level of involvement in the process is paramount! We need to take back our births and stop accepting the status quo for care. We deserve so much better.

[Reply](#)

51. *Ashley B.* says:

[May 8, 2013 at 6:15 pm](#)

I agreed with everything you said. This spoke to me in so many ways. I had planned and educated myself about natural childbirth. I was so ready. Had a midwife, a doula, and read any book I could find on natural childbirth. When I had my son (via emergency c-section) who was born at 31 weeks, I was so broken. I was so numb. My baby was in the NICU, all my planning and educating went out the door, I didn't get to see or witness his birth (I was put to sleep), or even hear his first cry. Before they rushed him 30 mins away to the nearest childrens hospital, all I got to see was his leg. I didn't even feel as if I had a baby...my baby. All people would say to me was at least he is healthy, that's all that matters. Everytime, I would agree with them, but in the inside I was screaming for someone to just see how broken I was. No one seen me. No one seen how broken I was. All they seen was my HEALTHY baby. Thank you so much for writing this. It means a lot to me and many other women.

[Reply](#)

52. *Elle* says:

[May 8, 2013 at 5:15 pm](#)

I've been there, too.

I was incredibly informed and had strong opinions on what I wanted for my birth. My doctor signed off on my birth plan, I had taken months of birthing classes, I thought we were as ready as we could be.

And then we went to the hospital.

I was ignored, marginalized, and the nurse stepped on my toes. I'm not using a metaphor, she literally stepped on my bare feet multiple times as I hunched over a birthing ball. She ignored me the rest of the time unless she was convincing me to let her "check my progress", which she did way too often.

Long story shorter, I ended up getting an epidural, needed Pitocin to start contractions back up, the doctor finally arrived, and I had a “healthy” vaginal birth. Except that I still have a lot of pent-up bitter feelings about the whole experience. Yes, I had a healthy baby, but I felt so alone and terrified during the birth process (even with a husband who was trying so hard to be supportive). I think it made an already difficult postpartum period that much worse. It fills my gut with dread any time I think of having to go through that again. It’s not the pain (and yes, I labored unmedicated for over 24 hours, so I had pain), but the relative helplessness and lack of ability to be my own (and baby’s) advocate that scare the crap out of me.

[Reply](#)

1. *Cristen* says:

[May 8, 2013 at 5:18 pm](#)

Elle, really, really hate to hear this. Very sorry you experienced that. Did you consider making a complaint about your treatment? Much love to you.

[Reply](#)

53. *Jenny* says:

[May 8, 2013 at 5:01 pm](#)

Fantastic post. Thank you so much for articulating so well the reasons natural birth is such a high calling. We will keep marching forward as doulas and educators to help bring more pregnant moms to this understanding. It’s not so much about interventions being evil (though they can be), it’s about doing what we can to keep mother and baby in tune and together, so avoiding interference whenever we can.

[Reply](#)

54. *Kathy Morelli, LPC* says:

[May 8, 2013 at 4:30 pm](#)

Hi – Well said. Well said.

[Reply](#)

55. *CJA* says:

[May 8, 2013 at 3:34 pm](#)

This is so right on. I do believe so many women believe that they must follow exactly what their physicians tell them and ask no questions because it is all about safety, right? You want your baby to live don’t you? The guilt that is put on women for thinking about choosing “out of the box” birth options is ridiculous. It upsets me that so many interventions are done with the rationale and guilt “you don’t want a dead baby mom”. I know there are many times babies and moms are saved from harm with necessary interventions. But it seems many times the Dr. forgets this is a WOMAN and not a lawsuit waiting to happen. They forget that the birth is not simply one event it is a life changing event that can lead the way to the future, feelings, regrets and pain. The not so necessary interventions this moment can lead to affecting future unborn children and the physical and mental health of this women. With my first son I wanted and planned a natural drug free birth in a hospital. I also worked in that hospital and I was appalled at how unsupportive some of my fellow nurses were. “Why would you even try, get the epidural and you know all you want is a healthy baby.” I ended up birthing a healthy 8 pound 3 ounce son natural, spontaneous labor with no complications. My second pregnancy we found out at 19 weeks was twins and then everyone around me assumed I would be having a cesarean. I had no contraindications to a vaginal birth for my twins and ended up going through a few Dr’s to find a Dr/Midwife practice that supported my wishes for a natural drug free twin delivery and I did it and I knew my body could and I am glad someone listened to me. It upsets me to this day to recall all the comments that people said to me while I was looking for a practitioner to deliver my twins. “You know cesarean is the safest for babies.” I am blessed because many women don’t know they have options and many are guilt ed into decisions and procedures. Let’s respect our women and their informed choices.

[Reply](#)

56. *Ceil Kessler* says:

[May 8, 2013 at 1:34 pm](#)

I did a ton of research on different birthing methods a few months before I was due, and I'm glad I did. I heard so many horror stories about women who were bullied in the delivery room.

I was fortunate in that I could afford a doula, in addition to working with a midwife who had a backup OB. My birth "team" knew exactly what I was hoping for – a natural childbirth. When the time came, I had been in labor for 19 hours with no movement. When my midwife and doula came to tell me that "it was time" for a C-Section and I had done all I could, I knew that they were on my side in the decision, and I trusted their counsel.

Before I went with the midwife, I had been seeing a different OB. We had a disagreement about when an episiotomy would be necessary, and four days after the disagreement, she dropped me as a patient! I was at 30 weeks! Needless to say, it was a blessing in disguise. There's no way that this ego-driven OB would have been appropriate in a delivery room. In fact, a friend of mine went to her, and due to her horrible experience during birth, she decided against having any more kids. It's sad what these doctors can do.

The important things are, regardless of what birth method a mother chooses, a birthing mother (or any patient, or person who is in a vulnerable situation) should feel respected and taken care of, and her wishes should be honored. I had a team to make sure that was the case. I worry about the women who have to fight their doctors, their nurses, hospital costs and schedules during what should be one of the most amazing, empowering and yet vulnerable moments of their lives.

Bravo for your article! Respect for the mother-in-labor should be a ubiquitous message! There should be an article like this every month, in every parenting magazine.

[Reply](#)

1. *Amy T* says:

[January 5, 2017 at 5:47 pm](#)

I tried for a home birth, asked to go to hospital because I felt the baby was not descending even though I was fully dilated with strong contractions. My birth team told me I was being negative. Turned out I had to be transferred to have a c section after 20 hrs of active labor. Still feel angry over how my doula and midwife treated me.

[Reply](#)

57. *Helen Davis* says:

[May 8, 2013 at 12:44 pm](#)

That same attitude — get educated, know the risks, understand the choices and issues — led me to a fairly trauma-free csection with my twins. It's much easier to deal with emergencies and issues that arrive when you know what is going on.

However, I do take exception with the statement that the "cascade of interventions leads to one in three women having a csection." First off, many, if not most, sections are performed for reasons other than failure to progress. Extreme prematurity, acute fetal distress, malposition, certain birth defects such as spina Bifida, these are just a few cases where surgical delivery is safer for the child. Secondly, interventions are usually attempts to prevent a csection. When a doesn't work we go to b, then c, then d. It might actually be less traumatic to go straight to a csection, and certainly less bother, but doctors generally try to help a mother in trouble continue with the natural process. Again, learning more about these interventions may help a mother use them, not be traumatized by them.

[Reply](#)

1. *Rebecca* says:

[May 8, 2013 at 7:13 pm](#)

I also know women who educated themselves, hired respectful care, and because of it had a positive birth experience despite an unplanned C-section or operative vaginal delivery. That is great.

Regarding the cascade of interventions. There is evidence that has found that inductions increase the risk of C-section markedly in first-time moms

<http://www.womenshealth.gov/news/headlines/640328.cfm>

And anyone who works around laboring moms can attest to the fact that epidural use causes fetal heart decels. There is also recent research that has come out finding that Pitocin may result in higher rates of NICU admission which can result in all kinds of testing, monitoring, and other interventions for the baby. [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/05/07/pitocin-risks\\_n\\_3224811.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/05/07/pitocin-risks_n_3224811.html). Cascading definitely exists as recorded by research and has contributed to the C-section rate.

[Reply](#)

58. *Amanda* says:

[May 8, 2013 at 12:09 pm](#)

Great post and I totally agree with what you are saying. However one perspective to add is that the birth experience is a very non-linear one and we can't really guess how it effects us mentally. I had an almost certainly unnecessary cesarean with my first. I so badly wanted the birth to go a different way and I was gutted I had failed him, failed me, never gave birth etc. But rather than the depression spiral I became a tiger mom immediately. I kept him with me in hospital and fought fiercely to make up for it so to speak. We bonded intensely from the first moment I got him into my arms! Breastfeeding him was a breeze and he was the most chill easy baby!

When I had my second son only 17 months later I fought for a VBAC and succeeded! It was amazing. Actually it was 29 hours of labour with at least 5 hours excruciatingly hellish but worth it! We are also superbonded but I had a big weep at some point about the labour even though it went "right"! And he was a less settled baby, harder to feed etc etc. If he were my first I am not sure I would think I'm a good mom.

It is only having gone through both totally different births and babyhoods that I can see I am a rockstar mom and yes that VBAC was amazing and worth it and remarkably has changed the way I view myself in every other aspect of my life. I take on things now that before I might have thought I will fail at and shied away from.

I'm leaning in. Women all deserve the support of those around them to birth the way they truly believe is right!

[Reply](#)

59. *Lorraine berry* says:

[May 8, 2013 at 9:48 am](#)

I am one of those women who was badly treated during one of my labours and births. Thank you so much for writing this and putting so eloquently what I find so hard to place into words xx

[Reply](#)

60. *LoraL* says:

[May 8, 2013 at 6:58 am](#)

I worked for many years with new moms. So many of them "wanted" this "centered" experience. They would fill out lists of expectations etc.

I am not sure that the assessment of the women talking to you is that they are "traumatized" etc. is accurate. I found so many women would feel a "failure" because the music didn't soothe or the husband forgot the candle or...

I found that creating a "whatever your experience is, it is perfect" attitude was much healthier and saw that "failure" attitude drop off dramatically. Not every women can make it through for a multitude of reasons without intervention. They come away with amazing children... and have not failed.

Reply

1. Cristen says:

[May 8, 2013 at 12:44 pm](#)

Lora, I'm talking about trauma, for sure. Boy, I wish all these women had to deal with was a problem with music and candles! I'm talking about women whose bodies and decisions were not respected; women who were misinformed, coerced, and/or bullied in birth; women whose rights were violated and who were not allowed informed consent. A few recent conversations that come to mind are the woman whose doctor cut an episiotomy and did a vacuum extraction without telling the mother about either procedure—she only found out after the fact, the woman whose doctor manually tore her as her baby was coming out and she and her husband were screaming at him to remove his hands from her vagina, or the woman who was separated from her healthy baby as a matter of routine and was forced to walk back and forth to the nursery with 30 stitches in her vagina, while begging to hold her baby—who lay in a warmer, unattended. More common is the case of misinformation: when a woman finds out after her painful induction or her surgery that either procedure was performed for no medical indication, or that the risks of the procedure were never discussed with her. Especially heart-breaking are the women who consented to c-sections “just in case,” only to find out that they must deliver by surgery for every subsequent baby, and their future births are now limited because of the danger of repeat surgeries.

All that said, yes, the attitude of being a “failure” is harmful and unnecessary. We do the best we can, given the information we have and our circumstances. It is just sad to me that so many women feel they have failed, when it is the system that has failed them and their babies so badly.

Reply

1. Erin Shetler says:

[May 9, 2013 at 1:26 pm](#)

Thanks, Cristen. So many people think this is an issue of “women not getting the experience they want.” More often than not, it’s instead an issue of providers mistreating or not respecting the rights of mothers. Yes, there are great providers out there. But the bottom line is that too many of them are not doing their jobs in a way that respects the rights of their patients. (By the way, I am the woman Cristen spoke about whose doctor cut her and vacuumed her baby out of her body without her knowledge. I have PTSD from this violation of my body and consent rights. I would love to tell you I was not really traumatized, but weeks of nightmares, thousands of dollars in therapy and hundreds of hours of lost bonding time with my baby are evidence to the opposite. I did not want candles or music, but I did expect my provider to follow basic standards of care and medical ethics. He did not, and later he seemed puzzled as to why I was upset at all, making me realize I was not the first or last woman he violated in this way.) Bravo to all women who have decided we are not going to take this kind of treatment anymore. Empowered birth — from c-section to natural birth to everything in between — makes a difference in the health of a mom and her baby. There is NOTHING selfish about that.

Reply

61. Regina says:

[May 8, 2013 at 5:43 am](#)

You are absolutely correct. I had a hospital birth that I was very unsatisfied with not to mention the literally took my baby from me and told me she HAD to be taken to the nursery and bathed. I instructed them to bring her to me to nurse and they never did – she was away from me the entire first night against my wishes. I was very frustrated with the whole experience (pitocen and epidural because I “wasn’t progressing”). I’m lucky they didn’t force me into a c-section.

My second I had a birth center birth and it was MUCH better, there were only a few bumps in the experience BUT I still hope that I get to have a third so I can have a home birth. I really would love to

have the Home Birth experience and just birth at home!

[Reply](#)

62. *dina* says:

[May 8, 2013 at 5:13 am](#)

thank you for this. With our first not only I felt the same about any of my questions/concerns, but sadly gave in and shut up since ‘they’ know better. And yes, it was majority of folks around, professionals, men, women, family whatever, who all seemed to imply that if I want to look into something different then I’m just being difficult. Now I’m working to get over my tendency to accept that view (in birth or anything women related, I do feel birth is just a particularly good example, but this attitude is all around) so I don’t pass on the same unquestioning compliance to our daughter. Saving this for younger sister and daughter (and friends) for when they might be pregnant. Thank you!!

[Reply](#)

63. *Terrie Teare of Palouse* says:

[May 8, 2013 at 5:03 am](#)

This was beautifully written. Thank you for sharing. I occurs to me that birth experiences are coming full circle. The way women supported and taught daughters and other women about childbirth hundreds of years ago is what we are “discovering” is the best way for mamas and babies. Good for you!

[Reply](#)

64. *Kristine* says:

[May 8, 2013 at 5:01 am](#)

I loved this post, and forwarded it to my partner. I am working on my birthplan as we speak so this really helped. Thank you.

[Reply](#)

65. *Corrine Dawson* says:

[May 8, 2013 at 4:31 am](#)

Fantastic! Thanks:)

[Reply](#)

66. *Larah* says:

[May 8, 2013 at 3:04 am](#)

Love this article, and all the comments, I think it is so good for women to talk about their experiences and choices. I didn’t get to have my son naturally, my water broke at 24 weeks, and he was born at 26 via c-section. That was the last thing I wanted, and I was terrified, not only to be having my little one so early, but also having a c-section. I wish I had studied all aspects of birth, and that there are few times women get to have birth the way they plan it out. So often we focus on the different circumstances of every birth and that tends to lead to all these battles, instead of what comes out of it, strength and courage in such a vulnerable time, love and bonding if you get to hold your precious little one the next moment or the next week. I didn’t get to choose how I brought my son into this world, but I did get to choose to be strong and to have courage facing a vulnerable time, I didn’t even get to see my little one for hours after he was born, but I chose to bond. And yes bonding with him was a choice. So many women looking at a little one so vulnerable through a glass where you can’t even touch them yet, choose not to bond, because they think their little one will not live, so I chose too, immediately. And I chose to feel joy, because I truly believe your little one picks up on the emotions you as a mother are feeling, and I wanted him to feel happy and welcomed. We should not let the circumstances make who we are as moms, we should make the choice of what kind of a mother we want to be, and choose to be her.

[Reply](#)

1. [Sarah B.](#) says:

[May 8, 2013 at 12:25 pm](#)

Wow. Beautifully said Larah. You are spot on. My sister also went into labor at 26 weeks and gave birth to her son. Despite the curveball thrown at her, she did skin to skin (as did her husband) as much as possible and they both have an amazing, bond with their now almost 1 year old son. It's definitely a choice. I just wish more women (and men) realized that they have choices even when it may not seem like it.

[Reply](#)

67. [Denise Hynd](#) says:

[May 8, 2013 at 1:48 am](#)

Very few in any culture understand what is physiological birth, how to protect let alone why it is important to not only the mother and baby but to our planet and to human civilisation. To learn about it I recommend you read the works of Dr Sarah Buckley (<http://www.sarahbuckley.com/>) or Michel Odent particularly the Functions of the Orgasms ([www.bookdepository.com/Functions-Orgasms-Michel-Odent/9781905177189](http://www.bookdepository.com/Functions-Orgasms-Michel-Odent/9781905177189)) or his new book <http://www.bookdepository.com/Childbirth-Future-Homo-Sapiens-Michel-Odent/9781780660950>

[Reply](#)

1. [Deborah](#) says:

[May 8, 2013 at 3:33 am](#)

Very good resources!

[Reply](#)

68. [Melissa from Birthtalk.org](#) says:

[May 8, 2013 at 1:16 am](#)

Cristen – absolutely fantastic article! A friend and colleague sent your article to us, saying it reminded her a lot of the work we do with women, so I was looking forward to reading it...and yup, we totally agree with what you are saying here. SO important that this concept is talked about and shared. Thank you for writing this so eloquently.

We have a blog called ‘Birth Trauma Truths, and I wanted to share with you an article where we take that concept, and apply it to preparing for an empowering birth. An excerpt from our article, titled “The Pitfalls of Going With the Flow In Birth” :

“As Debby Gould from Birthtalk says, “The goal of emerging from birth with body and baby intact is a bit of a no-brainer, really. Of course we all want that. But what many health providers fail to recognise is that it is completely possible to support a woman to birth a child so she feels mentally healthy afterwards, without compromising safety in any way.”.

<http://birthtraumatruths.wordpress.com/2012/03/26/the-pitfalls-of-going-with-the-flow-in-birth/>

Thanks again, and keep spreading your message 😊

[Reply](#)

1. [Cristen](#) says:

[May 8, 2013 at 3:34 am](#)

Melissa, I read that statement by Debby Gould a long, long time ago when I first started getting into birth advocacy (like, six whole months ago...) and it really resonated with me. And now that I see the name of your article, I recognize it. It was actually an eye-opener for me when I was just beginning to explore all of these issues. Thank you!

[Reply](#)

1. [Melissa from Birthtalk.org](#) says:  
[May 8, 2013 at 4:18 am](#)

Oh! You are most welcome, Cristen, and thanks for your lovely reply 😊

[Reply](#)

69. *Sarah* says:

[May 8, 2013 at 1:08 am](#)

So well said! When I had my first naturally in the hospital, EVERY nurse told me way to go as I went down the hall, they were shocked I actually managed it, like it was a miracle. 2 more natural births with a midwife, and in days my 4th at home, I can say knowing “I did it”, has gotten me through some tough times as a mother. If I can push a baby out without any interventions ( even when #3 was stuck on a lip of my cervix, and my midwife had to push against it while I pushed), I can do anything!

[Reply](#)

70. *Linda J* says:

[May 8, 2013 at 12:56 am](#)

Spot on. If people felt empowered in applying brain, and making fully informed decisions, it would be a much better situation for birth in the U.S. Not that natural or home birth is the best choice for everyone, it's surely not. But making a decision from an informed POV is always preferable to just placing blind trust in medical professionals.

[Reply](#)

1. *Deborah* says:

[May 8, 2013 at 3:28 am](#)

This is exactly the point I have been trying to make for over 40 years. If women have all the information they will make the right decisions for themselves and their babies. One problem I keep having is that opposing groups will give conflicting information, much of it absolutely untrue. Hospital staff will insist that a baby whose mom is not hooked up to a fetal monitor for half of every hour of labor will run the risk of dying while not being monitored. Home birth advocates who have not acquired enough information may try to dissuade a pregnant women from having a hospital birth while ignoring symptoms that could indicate an emergency developing. Evidence based decisions are the only ones worth making. Not all evidence is cut and dried. Mothers deserve to be respected enough to be trusted to handle all the information they need to make the decisions that are right for them.

Great article and much needed. Women need to be more informed before giving birth than any other time in their lives. This is important work and we should all be involved in it.

[Reply](#)

71. *PondStreet* says:

[May 8, 2013 at 12:32 am](#)

I could not agree more with much of what you have said. I went into my first pregnancy and birth with the same appetite for educating myself and passion for “doing it right” (meaning a safe and natural birth).

I thought some may find it interesting that unfortunately I had to have a C-Section due to many complications that were completely out of my control (serious hemolytic anemia, leaking amniotic fluid before water broke and the list goes on), BUT, I still had my dream birth...I was able to hold my baby seconds after he was born, he crawled up my breast and latched on almost immediately and he and I were both as drug free, healthy, vibrant and connected as was humanely possible given the fact that I just had a major surgery.

My point is — being educated makes all the difference. You don’t know what curveballs you’ll be thrown during your pregnancy but if you know what you want and are educated enough to be able to

think a few steps ahead when the moment of truth comes I do believe you can have a healthy and happy birth no matter what obstacles you encounter.

I was on a high for months after he was born (and still am for the most part nearly 2 years later). I would do it exactly the same if I was in the same situation again and I have also learned to not be so judgmental of C-Sections or the mothers that have to endure them. It truly has made me a richer, wiser, more open-minded women to not have the birth I imagined in my head, but instead a equally glorious one with a different path.

[Reply](#)

1. *Cristen* says:

[May 8, 2013 at 7:49 pm](#)

Agreed 😊 So glad that you had such a great experience with your cesarean. It makes all the difference to be prepared!

[Reply](#)

2. *Melissa* says:

[May 8, 2013 at 3:05 pm](#)

I also had a medically-necessary scheduled C-section and it was a truly amazing, beautiful experience. Natural as could be — like yours; I immediately held my baby, we were together the whole time (save for the last 5 min of surgery) and I had done my reading and research on what things to request of my doctor in order to have a “natural cesarean” and watched a video of a cesarean and you know what? It was beautiful. I have lots of friends who think I’m crazy not to “want” to try vaginally (I’m pregnant again now, 2.5 yrs later) but honestly, I have no desire to try and shouldn’t be judged for that. I had a GREAT birth experience and my daughter’s safety trumped all else. With this new baby, it’s a matter of convenience. And I admit that. But I shouldn’t (or any mom shouldn’t) be judged for that. As the author says, we should all have a say in our experience ... bottom line.

[Reply](#)

3. *Marcie* says:

[May 8, 2013 at 5:24 am](#)

I think your story is FABULOUS! This is what birth should be, women respected and their choices listened to AND a healthy baby. It is obvious from your birth story that you had medical providers who cared about your experience and that you were listened to, regardless of the way the baby was born. It is possible for care providers to listen and respect the mother, to make sure she has the best possible experience AND that the baby is safe. It should go hand in hand.

[Reply](#)

72. *Sandy Jones* says:

[May 7, 2013 at 11:02 pm](#)

Bravo for this article! I wish more moms would speak out. I’ve led “recovering from the Trauma of Birth” groups, and the emotional pain moms feel afterwards resonates for years. We need to share what happened and serve as living bridges to the women who come after us!

Sandy Jones, author of Great Expectations Pregnancy & Childbirth

[Reply](#)

73. *Erika* says:

[May 7, 2013 at 10:38 pm](#)

I can’t tell you how much I love this and agree with it.

[Reply](#)

74. *Laura* says:

[May 7, 2013 at 10:38 pm](#)

EXACTLY.

[Reply](#)

75. *Stephanie* says:

[May 7, 2013 at 9:57 pm](#)

I can't stand it when people say, "All that matters is a healthy baby!" to shush you from talking about your birth, whether medicated or natural. The birth matters too, and is an important experience for every mom. That is why I also did so much research before I had my babies. I knew nothing about birth but I knew I wanted to be in charge and respected.

[Reply](#)

1. *Michelle E* says:

[May 14, 2013 at 4:55 am](#)

Agreed- if I had not been able to anticipate my daughter's natural birth, I would have worried myself sick over my fears.. it would have absolutely changed my positive outlook to negative. Instead, I was supported by my birth team, and had a great outcome. Once I was in that birth tub, and my water broke, I had no fear... I just got down to the task at hand. In a hospital, for me, I would have been anxious, and certainly would not have gone full term.

My original obgyn called me high risk the minute I walked into her office, due to weight and age... told me I was a definite section before she even looked at me. She was not my baby doc for long. I had no issues, had a great water birth and my baby was almost 12 pounds.

I can't wait to go back for my pap and let her know how wrong she was. A little respect would have gone so far. A little caring, patience and listening to me...

[Reply](#)

76. *Alisson* says:

[May 7, 2013 at 9:09 pm](#)

I have three children and I had natural birth with my eldest child for the same reasons as you have mentioned. With my second child, however, I was induced after not progressing and I was 2 weeks overdue. The third time around, I hoped to get a natural birth. My water bag broke and went into natural labor 3 days before my due date and I was excited about that...up until I was ready to push 13 hours later when the baby would not come out. My son was not in the occiput anterior position but in the occiput LATERAL position. I pushed from 3am until 6:30am until the baby was already in distress and so was I. I had to go through an emergency c-section because of that.

I know you mean well with your blog, but I honestly find it judgemental. I have friends who successfully go through natural birth and when they start to talk about how great natural birth is, it does not bother me that I did not completely have it. However, when they start to judge those who DO NOT DO IT, that's when it starts to bother me. Natural birth is not for everyone, period. You cannot compare your experience to other moms who did not have it, whether they tried or not. I honestly find it self-indulgent to try to go out there and tell everybody that you're a wonderful mom for choosing natural birth. It's almost like you're insinuating that those who choose not to do it are selfish mothers.

[Reply](#)

1. *Becca* says:

[March 16, 2014 at 3:50 pm](#)

Babies being in a difficult position other than with the face toward your back are one of the main reasons for a difficult or complicated birth. A good nurse will know this and try different

positions to get him to turn before calling the doc as long as the baby is doing well. I'm lucky I learned this in nursing school because with my first, no one told me this at all!

[Reply](#)

2. Amy says:

[May 8, 2013 at 2:09 pm](#)

I think that Alisson has experienced birth trauma (as I have) and is seeing your post through that filter. After my first (traumatic, non-natural, intervention-riddled) birth, I couldn't stand for anyone to mention natural birth. In some way, I was jealous that they had had a better experience (meaning they didn't burst into tears like I did- not that they had more pain than I did.) Alisson, it doesn't look to me at all that your CHOSE to have interventions. Please re-read the post and try to see beyond your pain and you will see that this is a very respectful post- she's saying that women have the right to MATTER during birth. She's saying that we should be treated with respect regardless of what our wishes are. I have a friend who was so afraid of vaginal birth that she requested a C-Section and it was granted. Should she be treated with less respect than someone who wants a natural birth? NO. We all want the best possible entry into this world for our babies, and we are a part of that, too. Not some dissection frog who should stay silent. I see absolutely NO insinuation that those who choose another route are selfish. I actually find it more selfish to do whatever doctors say without any regard for the research and the facts (if doctors were right, wouldn't their C-section rates be as low as Midwives'?) Alisson, your interventions were medically necessary. I have personally chosen interventions selfishly (I induced my first at 39 weeks for no medical reason.) THAT was selfish. I didn't have the research- I just didn't want to be pregnant anymore. And that was my traumatic birth experience. I say, as long as you do your own research and be your own (and your baby's) best advocate, then you're not selfish. Even if you're not pregnant, when you go to the doctor, you should do the same. I have seen many selfish women regarding birth- some natural, some not. I don't think it's only the domain of the natural birthers to make everyone else feel bad. Having been on both sides of the fence (one medical, one natural birth) I know how ugly women can be. And THAT's the point of this post- that we all need to do our research so we know what's best for OUR babies, and we need to support others to do the same. The negativity that you read just isn't there.

[Reply](#)

1. [Luschka](#) says:

[May 8, 2013 at 2:58 pm](#)

well said Amy

[Reply](#)

1. [Joanne](#) says:

[May 8, 2013 at 6:23 pm](#)

well said Allison

[Reply](#)

3. [Cristen](#) says:

[May 7, 2013 at 9:26 pm](#)

Hi, Alisson—I mean it when I say this post isn't about natural birth! 😊 I wanted to explain the reasoning behind MY choice, but only as it related to me as a mother stepping in to take charge of my birth experience. That I had a right to do that. That, for me, turned out to be a natural birth, and I had every right to make that decision for me and my baby, without feeling judged—which it sounds like you are echoing. Like I said, “Choices in birth are very personal. I do not believe that every woman should, must, or can have a physiologic birth.”

My point was that we should not feel selfish for making choices about our own births. It is our right to make those choices—whatever those choices are—and we should be treated with compassion, kindness, and respect regardless.

We also probably come from different places, where we get different feedback. In your case, you felt judged for having anything other than a natural birth; and I experienced the opposite. Neither of us should be judged.

[Reply](#)

77. *drew* says:

[May 7, 2013 at 9:05 pm](#)

I agree with much of what you say but I think the bullying comes from all directions and that the message needs to be that each woman has the right to chose what she wants to get from her birth experience weather its a midwife, doctor, medication, home birth, bath birth or any other method they think will be best for themselves and their baby.

I had to be induced because my pregnancy became dangerous for both me and my baby. I had been hoping to give birth more naturally and was scared of the risks an induction carried with it. It did not help that many of my friends who had “natural births” were trying to convince me that my doctor was pushing me into something I probably didnt really need because as they put it “women have been giving birth since the beginning of time and inducing people is the new things doctors do to make their lives easier” It wasnt until I fainted on a flight of stairs and ended up with a concussion that my husband convinced me I was doing the right thing by having an induction.

Pregnancy labor and postpartum are exciting scary and overwhelming times for every women and everyone has an opinion about the best way to tackle each step. As women I think we all need to agree to support one another and not judge someone because they chose a different path from the one we are on.

[Reply](#)

1. *Cristen* says:

[May 7, 2013 at 9:28 pm](#)

Drew, I agree!

[Reply](#)

78. *Kelli Haywood* says:

[May 7, 2013 at 9:00 pm](#)

Wonderfully written. Thank you for that definition of traumatic birth.

[Reply](#)

79. *Maureen* says:

[May 7, 2013 at 8:11 pm](#)

YES! To every word in this post. Very important stuff right here.

[Reply](#)

80. *Denee Metzger* says:

[May 7, 2013 at 8:06 pm](#)

Thank you!

I found myself agreeing with so much of what you said, and it would be hard to pick my favorite paragraph since so much of it is SO true.

[Reply](#)

81. *Justyna* says:

[May 7, 2013 at 8:02 pm](#)

Wonderful writing, and so very true. I meet women directly after they have give birth (I photograph newborns) and its shocking and maddening the slew of misinformation and bullying that goes on in the delivery rooms. Sadly most people feel that a positive birth is not a cause worth fighting for, perhaps they have never felt violated and abused as so many new moms do after their birth experiences. I only

hope that expecting moms read your article and educate themselves – and not blindly place their trust in a very broken system.

[Reply](#)

82. *Dion* says:

[May 7, 2013 at 7:12 pm](#)

As a therapist and Midwife I can tell you that those attitudes you encountered were from women wounded at, during and after birth. They are full of pain & disappointment because most likely, they wanted the same thing you did in preparation for birth and for maybe a multitude of reasons, they came away from birth deeply disappointed.

In a sub-conscious way these moms might be trying to save you from deluding yourself, might be jealous and resentful that you might get what you wanted when they couldn't.

I would suggest having compassion for these other moms and forgiving them (in your heart) for their communication/education limitations. I honestly believe they meant you no real harm and the path to healing around birth is through Love, Compassion/Empathy and Forgiveness.

In the future, you can always ask about their births and express sadness they didn't get what they desired. In other words, let them 'own' their feelings and this will also 'shield' you from absorbing their energy. This works with anyone saying/doing anything you feel uncomfortable about.

[Reply](#)

1. *Kim* says:

[July 13, 2015 at 7:43 am](#)

"It's a dangerous assumption I alluded to above: that only a woman who doesn't care about her baby would care about her body and her birth. It's damaging and wrong to communicate to women that we must make a choice between ourselves and our babies, because we can't both matter."

I'm not sure that I agree that it /initially/ comes from wounded women.

I think it has been internalized by women, wounded or not.

I think firstly it comes from care providers who are trying to manipulate women into doing what they want, first and foremost.

Secondly, I believe it may come from well-meaning people trying to help women who have been traumatized. They feel they are trying to focus on the positive and can't see how it devalues the mother's lived experience and emotions stemming from that.

Finally, I think it comes from the wounded themselves who feel disempowered, who then see judgment where none exists and cling to the idea that it must be one or the other because their experience left them feeling things that are hard to feel. Mother, baby and experience all matter! They are all interconnected.

A woman who feels comfortable in her decisions, whether medically indicated or not, does not feel defensive about her decisions. She knows they are right for her, her baby and her particular circumstance and that no one stands in her place of truth, with her perceptions, education, experiences.

"No one can make you feel inferior without your consent." – Eleanor Roosevelt

[Reply](#)

2. *Jessica* says:

[November 24, 2014 at 8:37 pm](#)

What a bunch of crap!! I, for one, do not need you to feel sorry for me, or anyone else for that matter. How completely condescending to even assume that I (or anyone else) wants what the

blogger has...I can not believe you women!

[Reply](#)

1. *Tara* says:

[April 11, 2016 at 8:43 am](#)

Yup. Being called selfish because I chose pain management is exactly why we have these “mommy wars”.

I’m glad you got to have the birth of your dreams, but guess what? So did I, I was treated wonderfully by all of the doctors and nurses at my hospital. They listened to me and I had a say in every part of my care during both of my births. I had Pitocin both times, 2 epidurals and 2 completely healthy, thriving babies. That’s what matters in the end. Stop being so damn sanctimonious. You gave birth med free, here’s your medal ♀.

[Reply](#)

1. *Birth is not a medical emergency* says:

[June 18, 2017 at 12:03 pm](#)

Women that think like you that think pitocin and epidurals are okay and safe for babies and are an appropriate birth experience are a big part of the problem. Pitocin is not safe for you or your baby. Allowing doctors to dictate when and how your baby comes out rather than just be there to guide you and on standby if there is an emergency is wrong.

This mentality only further enables our horrible maternity system in this country and further pushes back midwives and non medicated, non intervened births.

[Reply](#)

2. *Jean* says:

[August 3, 2016 at 12:45 pm](#)

I don’t think she is trying to judge others. She is saying that women –all women — should have the experience they want without judgment, as long as it doesn’t jeopardize her health or her baby’s health.

The point I took away from the article is that women should be treated with respect and have a positive experience — no matter what they desire. It’s not about whether or not you have a natural birth, or using or not using pain meds. I don’t think she was saying that everyone needs to go natural.

Women in labor matter. Their feelings and desires matter. That is what I got out of it. And I agree. I hate mommy wars.

[Reply](#)

3. *Cristen* says:

[May 7, 2013 at 8:14 pm](#)

Dion, two things I might have clarified: one, I didn’t realize at the time WHY other women acted like that, just that they did. Then, I was just confused and annoyed by it. Now, I very much understand it, and you are absolutely, 100% right. My approach now is one (I hope) of empathy and compassion. And, two, it was by no means just other women who sent me that message. It was care providers, colleagues, and acquaintances, as well—including men!

[Reply](#)

1. *Rebecca* says:

[May 10, 2013 at 9:22 pm](#)

I agree with Dion... And I would go further to say it reads as an exercise in self-congratulation.

I (like many others) sought a “physiological birth” as I fundamentally trust (and trusted) my body: I went to hypnobirthing classes to help with psychological management of the pain, and I went to the NCT classes too to help me understand the natural birth process and to allow me to understand my birth choices. Both of classes are all about natural births that of course everyone hopes for....

Actually what happened was that my unborn baby wasn't very well and I had a planned caesarian at 37+5 weeks. I had a ridiculous birth plan even for my caesarian all about oral Vitamin K (there is no evidence that it is better), allowing a natural placenta delivery (why bother), and the cord ceasing pulsating (which wasn't actioned obviously because my baby wasn't well).

Overall I was really happy with my caesarian – and I have chosen one for my next “birth”. And actually, in hindsight, I felt pretty indoctrinated by the NCT about Vitamin K, and avoiding painkillers at all costs. It sets up a high bar for that only some reach, and more importantly does not present a real evidence base for the risks and benefits of what it preaches.

I am glad you had a natural birth – well done. I am also glad that I was in safe medical hands on the day I and my daughter are absolutely here and well. On balance, does your natural birth require a massive self-congratulatory article? I'm not so sure.

[Reply](#)

1. [Peggie](#) says:  
[June 25, 2016 at 3:56 pm](#)

And why can't women be self-congratulatory? If you feel accomplished in something why is not okay to celebrate it in writing? Birth in general is something to feel accomplished in, and if you truly are at peace with your own birthing experience, I hope you recognize your self-worth and give yourself a little congratulating. Peace with oneself will lead to general peace with the universe, and maybe we can erase the wall the divides mothers based on how we choose to have our babies.

[Reply](#)

2. [Kim](#) says:  
[January 16, 2014 at 11:15 am](#)

Sorry to be the one to point out the obvious but...Looks like somebody is bitter inside. Whether you realize it or not, the sentiment behind your comment reveals the resentment in your heart towards not having a natural birth, in spite of your words. I pray that you see the true meaning behind the article and that you let go of any bad feelings. I do wish that you would reconsider an elective C-section. That right there tells me that you have given up the will to own your path, your birth, your body. If there is some medical reason that it would be impossible or highly risky, then excuse my last statement. But, oh well, in the end it's “what's best for the situation at hand” that I advise. You're the one who has to live with your decision.

[Reply](#)

3. [Jaime](#) says:  
[May 12, 2013 at 7:01 am](#)

I don't think she was being self-congratulatory at all. What I heard in this article was wanting to make sure that you look at all the options, and trust what your body tells you to do. If your LO wasn't well and needed the c-section to meet you, that's the way it needed to be done, and bravo for having the strength to willingly walk into a major surgery.

I believe what she's saying is that mothers judge others too harshly. She wanted a natural birth, one without medication, one without a multitude of interventions, one

where she was treated with respect as an intelligent person who knew that her body could birth a child. Yet people treated her as if she would either not have any of those things, or shouldn't worry about those things. Women are so concerned with what they eat, wear, how they sleep, where they go, what supplements to take, checkups, ect during pregnancy, all these things to keep momma healthy and baby growing, yet once she's in labor everyone focuses on baby, and forgets that momma is the one doing all the work. For example, I have heard time and time and time again of women wanting a natural birth, going into the hospital, and then being scared and threatened into different interventions, which all lead to an unnecessary and dangerous c-section.

She wasn't giving herself a pat on the back, she was telling mothers to stand up for each other, support each other, and learn what your body, and what your strength can do in pregnancy/labor/and birth.

[Reply](#)

1. *Cristen* says:

[May 13, 2013 at 8:43 pm](#)

Jaime, that's exactly what i was trying to say 😊

4. *Lyra* says:

[May 12, 2013 at 4:19 am](#)

Rebecca,

It sounds like you had a satisfying, empowering birth experience. It suggests an attitude of respect that your care providers listening to any intuitions you had that your baby wasn't well, and then you got the care you needed. That is what every woman would want.

The line that resonated most with me in this article is about “births where women were supported in the process rather than managed like children—where mom was treated by her skilled, attentive providers as the most important person in the room.” It sounds like your care team gave you that respect, and that is success.

[Reply](#)

83. *Nina* says:

[May 7, 2013 at 7:09 pm](#)

You hit the nail on the head. It's like you wrote about me.

[Reply](#)

84. *Hannah Lablans* says:

[May 7, 2013 at 6:58 pm](#)

Thank you for this, it's so true and so important.

[Reply](#)

85. *Jennifer* says:

[May 7, 2013 at 5:26 pm](#)

Thank you for giving voice to what so many of just know and feel.

[Reply](#)

## Leave a Reply