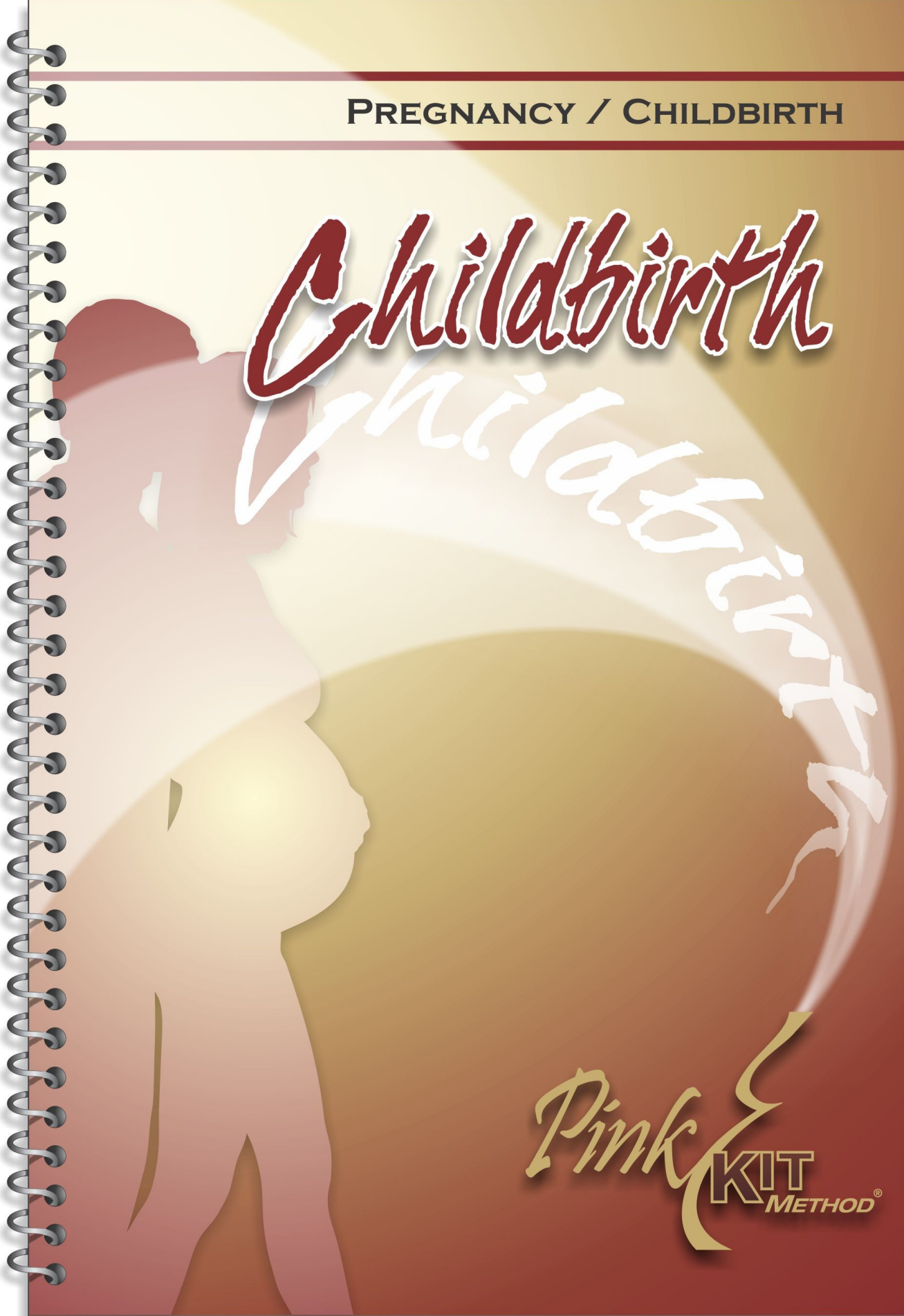


PREGNANCY / CHILDBIRTH

# Childbirth

Childbirth

Pink **KIT**  
METHOD®



## Childbirth

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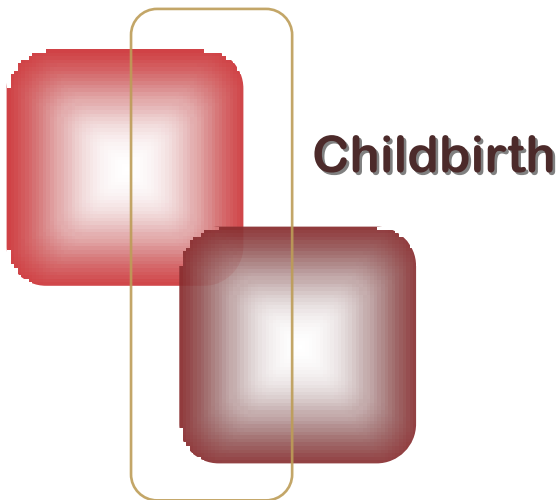
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Birthing Better with The Pink Kit Method®  
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The information in Birthing Better with The Pink Kit Method® is not intended to be used for the diagnosis, treatment, or prescription for any medical disorder. Please consult with your medical care provider before beginning this program.



## Table of Contents

<b>WHAT IS CHILDBIRTH? .....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>WHAT IT'S <i>NOT</i>.....</b>	<b>2</b>
HAVE: AN UNCLEAR TERM.....	3
DISAGREEMENTS.....	4
SHIRKED RESPONSIBILITY AND LACKADAISICS .....	6
<b>THE TRUTH ABOUT BIRTH.....</b>	<b>7</b>
IS CHILDBIRTH INTUITION/INSTINCT OR SKILLS? .....	9
ABOVE ALL ELSE, IT IS AN ACTIVITY .....	10
3 TYPES OF BIRTH, +1 .....	11
<b>WHY SKILLS ARE IMPORTANT.....</b>	<b>12</b>
PASSIVITY LEADS TO A DISCONNECT.....	14
THE CHILDBIRTH MIND IS INFLUENTIAL.....	14
CHILDBIRTH IS ALWAYS PHYSICAL .....	17
“HAVING” THE NECESSARY SKILLS .....	18
SKILLS PREPARE YOU FOR THE 3+1 TYPES OF BIRTH.....	19
<b>A WHOLE NEW APPROACH TO CHILDBIRTH .....</b>	<b>23</b>





## What Is Childbirth?

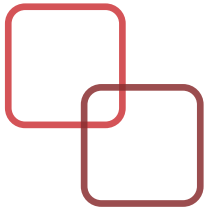
What exactly is childbirth? That might seem like a simple question, and prior to modern maternity healthcare, perhaps it had a simple answer. In other words, all women had a labor (contractions) and eventually gave birth vaginally to a baby. These days, all women still carry their baby inside their body for the pregnancy, and some women still birth the old-fashioned way.

But modern medicine has developed another way for a baby to be born: Caesareans. Some women have surgical births after laboring or without so much as one contraction. Other women who labor and have a vaginal birth do so with a great deal of medical assessments, monitoring, and procedures, even when the mother and child are healthy. Childbirth today can also include many medical “interventions,” such as induction of labor, augmentation of labor, medical pain relief, forceps, or vacuum delivery. Childbirth can take place in a hospital, a Birth Center, at home, in the back of a taxi, or even in a rice paddy, just to name a few places.

In other words, pregnancy is still universal, but childbirth now has more dimensions. Furthermore, this activity occurs infrequently in any family’s life, and each pregnancy and birth is different, even for the same woman, so it’s easy to make the assumption that birth is both unknowable and individualistic.

Yet we focus so much on our individual circumstances that we forget a more primal and basic reality: We are all part of the same human species. This is absolutely essential for you to fully understand, because seeing pregnancy and childbirth from our commonality may lead you to a bigger understanding about childbirth: It always comes after a successful conception. There is the possibility of a miscarriage, stillborn, or premature birth, but even these are births, so birth is 100% guaranteed.

There is no right or wrong, good or bad about childbirth. The birth of your baby is important to you. This means you will do your best to have a safe birth experience.



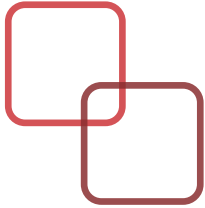
Our babies are **THAT** important. Inclusive of all factors, childbirth is the natural transformation out of the state of pregnancy that you, the pregnant woman, will take along with your partner, extended family, and friends. So you and your partner (at least) need to know the answers to these questions:

- What is childbirth, really?
- What is your task while giving birth?
- What are your roles for this task?
- How do you best prepare for your task?
- Do you have the rights skills for this task?
- When and how will you use these skills while doing this task?

### **What It's Not**

Inaccurate assumptions about birth are not your fault. You cannot be blamed if you have no idea how to work with your baby's efforts to come out of your body or how to help a woman give birth. But you need to be conscious of the misperceptions, because you can't truly embrace the importance of using your pregnancy to learn how to give birth until you are freed of the misperceptions. So here we go:

- Although it's accurate that only women give birth, there is an inaccurate assumption that women automatically, intuitively, or instinctively know how to give birth. Faced with a unique, unfamiliar experience, it is ridiculous to assume you will automatically know the right skills or be able to do a good job. In other words, how a woman gives birth, how she handles the experience, is not determined by the mere fact that she will give birth.
- Because of the prominence of the above assumption—that women automatically know how to birth because they give birth—another inaccurate assumption follows: If a woman moans, groans, cries, screams, or curses, it is natural for her to do so, because she is the knower of childbirth. **WRONG.** These behaviors clearly indicate that she does not know how to cope with the experience.



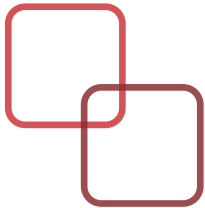
- Going deeper, if a woman is quiet during labor, there is an inaccurate assumption that she likes the experience or feels she is doing well. In fact, she might be hating every moment, feeling totally out of control, and showing that by shutting down. It is not true that how a woman behaves is the same as how she feels.
- A different kind of inaccurate assumption is that women either have to suffer in labor, or those women who don't suffer are "lucky" or somehow "trust birth."
- For women who have trouble coping with labor pain, there is an assumption that the best and only answer to her "suffering" is to either put her out of her misery with medicine or assume she is incapable of giving birth, both of which are inaccurate.
- Because an easy, lucky, or intuitive birth cannot be replicated by the same woman or other women, we are left with the false feeling that childbirth can't be taught.
- Finally, another inaccurate assumption is that there is no way for a man to really help. This is entirely false.

### **Have: An Unclear Term**

Why are we spending time deconstructing words and terms? Because words and terms in childbirth are as confusing and loaded as political terms. Because, once you re-organize your thinking, you'll feel much more settled about the coming birth.

Do you really know what childbirth means? The obvious answer is, "I'm having a baby." Yes, the "baby" is the object, and it's pretty clear you'll either have a boy or girl (probably not a squid, though they do feel that way some days). But what does the word "having" mean? Does this mean that you pick your baby from a cabbage patch or receive it from a stork? The Internet is pretty fancy these days, so can you just order a baby from iBaby?

To "have" indicates possession, yet when used in the sense of "having a baby," the meaning of this term is turned into something else. Understanding how we use words can entirely change how we approach a subject.



Looking at Encarta®, “have” is defined as:

“A verb indicating that somebody possesses something, either materially or as a characteristic or attribute; to receive or obtain something.” OR

- ...to experience or undergo something; to engage or participate in something (1)
- ...to arrange for somebody to do something for you or on your behalf (2)
- ...to tolerate or put up with something (usually used in negative statements) (3)
- ...to be the parent of a child, or conceive, carry, or give birth to a child (4)
- ...to be the victim of an unpleasant action or experience (5)

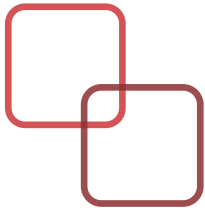
Wow, so many different definitions, each of which can stimulate a vastly different emotional response. And “having” a baby can include all of the above.

Your Pink Kit skills are intended to help avoid (2), unless you have a surrogate mother, as well as avoid (3) and (5). Neither you nor your partner wants to remember “having” your child as unpleasant, something you just put up with, or a responsibility you foisted onto someone else.

You have, like all of us, had terrible situations where you’ve behaved horribly and other horrible situations when you’ve been proud of how you handled things. Although there may be many unpleasant aspects surrounding the birth of your child, your Pink Kit skills will enable you to conduct yourself well, even within the difficulties, and give you the ability to handle what “having” a baby means. Remember what the old proverb says: “If you can’t change the circumstances, change your attitude.” That couples with what Maya Angelou said: “You do what you know how to do, and when you know better, you do better.”

### **Disagreements**

Why are we spending time dredging up longstanding arguments? Because it’s important to know every viewpoint when dealing with a serious subject matter.



We don't even agree on what the word "childbirth" means. We agree that a child is born, but beyond that, everything just gets convoluted. Everyone has an opinion about where, with whom, and what should happen during childbirth. There are actually "camps" of women who very strongly believe that only "natural childbirth" is best, and camps of women who think such a notion is crazy and that only medical childbirths are best. Just this one disagreement has led to some interesting responses.

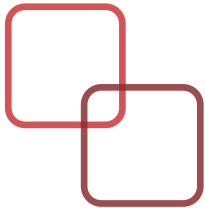
### **Not for me #1**

*"I was told about The Pink Kit by a friend who had had a homebirth. We thought that was nuts. We were going to the hospital for all the bells and whistles. I thought The Pink Kit would be about natural birth or some such alternatives. My husband, thankfully, didn't know enough about childbirth to have much of an opinion, so when my friend's husband told him to look through The Pink Kit, he did. He told me that the skills appeared to be practical and had no philosophy attached at all. I peeked, and boy was I glad I did. We still had our baby in hospital with some of the bells and whistles, but when push came to shove, I'm the one who had to do the work, and I sure did it better with these skills."*

### **Not for me #2**

*"Never would we have had our baby in hospital. Pregnancy isn't a sickness, and my wife felt terrific. She was healthy, and we had a great midwifery team to work with us. We heard about The Pink Kit, but it wasn't for us. Birth is natural. My wife will know what to do. Our midwife was the one who changed our mind. She had worked with several families who had used The Pink Kit, and she thought it wouldn't hurt for us to go over it. Thankfully, we did. So much of it made sense to us. We could see how preparing my wife's pregnant body to let out such a big object and then helping her work with potential pain as the process happened just made sense. So, we got sucked in and had a hoot of a time doing this. I learned so much about pregnancy and the plumbing of childbirth. We had a terrific birth at home. We felt absolutely certain that our Pink Kit skills enhanced my wife's trust of her body to birth, and the skills certainly helped me to help her maintain a good body alignment and inner relaxation. Besides, it developed us as a couple and family. That's what ultimately sold it to us: our closeness."*





The conflicts between medical/natural, home/hospital, or doctor/midwife should never have existed. They are the unintended negative consequences of some very valuable and positive changes in childbirth that occurred in the late 1960s: Birth Plans and choices based on informed consent. Before those changes occurred, birthing women had only the same options as those available to women in less modern countries. Then, for several generations around the 1960s, women in modern societies birthed exclusively within very sophisticated medical health systems.

The strict change has developed strained feelings among pregnant women today. They don't know which options are considered "right." But now, you don't have to sit in one camp or the other.

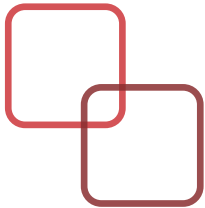
Your Pink Kit skills will help you clearly understand that there is no "right" birth. You will have the birth you will have on the day you give birth, either just as you imagined (not likely) or as it happens (100% true). And your Pink Kit skills will apply in whatever of the 3+1 types of childbirth you have.

This means every birth can be valued through our own accomplishment, and no one has to live with the shame, blame, and guilt so widespread at the present. Once pregnancy and childbirth are linked by a set of universally learned and used skills, all births will be considered equal, because the journey is admired, not just the outcome.

### **Shirked Responsibility and Lackadaisics**

We often treat childbirth as "'They' will do it for me" or "My Birth Plan is what I want" or "I don't know what my birth is going to be like, so why bother even trying to prepare for it?" These are inaccurate perceptions, and you need to understand why in order to be truly willing to become skilled during your pregnancy.

Neither a midwife nor a doula nor an obstetrician nor a nurse will do your birth for you. They're not the one with the kid in their belly; you are—it's just that simple.



And while making a Birth Plan is how people currently take responsibility for childbirth, it's not enough; you can never "choose" what birth you'll have. Birth Plans only represent the Big Picture. Your skills are the individual brush strokes that actually fill the canvas with your behaviors. And if the Big Picture/Birth Plans change and you have no skills to keep putting in the individual brush strokes, you're going to feel lost, which can leave unpleasant or unsatisfying memories.

AND, while it is true that you can't predict what your birth will be like, you *can* learn how to work through any and all kinds of birth. But we currently neglect our responsibility by procrastinating on learning how to birth, if we do learn at all. No one has skills when they become pregnant, but pregnancy gives you a reasonable amount of time, about 9 months, to prepare for a very intense but reasonably short experience (giving birth). The problem is that most women do not think about birth until they're 24 weeks or so along, which only leaves 16 weeks to learn skills.

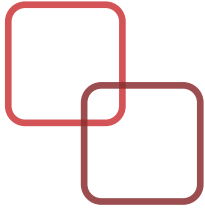
Too often, life interferes, because we do not put societal acceptance and expectation on learning childbirth and coaching skills. It's not high on anyone's list, despite how much it should be. A family is more likely to spend hours shopping for baby stuff or getting the room ready than learning how to birth and coach. No wonder there are so many negative Birth Stories out there!

Don't treat birth preparation like cramming for an exam—it's really quite doable if you do not procrastinate. Make it a priority, and praise yourself for doing so! Learn the variety of skills with conviction, so that during your short yet intense birth experience, you will use/apply your birth skills at every single moment of the activity. If you don't do it for yourself, do it for your baby. *That* is how you take responsibility for this monumental activity.

## The Truth about Birth

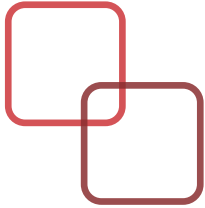
Let's reinterpret the myths we laid out above and put some realities into your mind.

- Most women don't have a clue how to give birth: True. If a woman has already given birth and learned skills, she will use those skills as best she can: True.



- If a woman behaves stressed-out or does not cope with the naturally occurring pain in childbirth, she feels out of control: True. This feeling of being out of control feels like “suffering”: True. She doesn’t like to feel that way: True. Primarily, she wants to know how to stay in control: True. She often lacks an appropriate and comprehensive set of skills to do so: True.
- If she doesn’t have the skills to stay in control, she wants help: True.
- Fathers are expected to be at the birth of their child in many modern societies: True. Your partner wants you to know how to help her stay in control: True.
- If a man doesn’t have the skills to help, he’ll “be there,” but both he and she will know he isn’t really able to help: True. A wife/partner does know when her man is not able to help her to the level she really needs and wants: True. This can create sadness, frustration, anger, and alienation between the two people: True. If he can’t help her, she will turn to others for help to deal with the pain and most likely use medical pain relief, even if she didn’t originally want to: True.
- When she learns her birth skills, she can cope better with the natural pain of labor and can work with her baby’s efforts to come down, through, and out of her body: True. Her skills will impress the birth providers and her partner: True. She will respect her own efforts: True. She will feel increased confidence to move into her role as a parent: True.
- When a birth partner learns coaching skills, he will know exactly how and when to help: True. He’ll be able to do this in any birth that unfolds during the delivery: True. He will feel really good about his ability: True. He will impress his birth professionals: True. He will feel more confident with his new baby: True. And most important, he will be more loved and appreciated by his wife/partner: True.
- In modern maternity systems, assessments, monitoring, and procedures will be done: True. Your Birthing Better Pink Kit skills work well alongside the healthcare you receive: True.

**Bottom line:** Birth skills lead to positive birth perceptions and experiences.



### **Is Childbirth Intuition/Instinct or Skills?**

In many childbirth preparation books, you will read about the benefits of

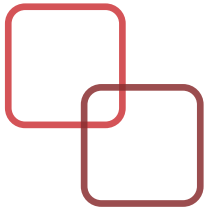
- natural birth (“No one told me how to birth; I just did it”),
- a woman’s ability to instinctively know how to give birth (“You’ll know what to do on the day”),
- letting the primal brain take over and not using your more complex brain (“Cats aren’t taught how to birth; we don’t need to be” or “You breathe all the time, so you’ll keep doing it during labor”), and
- not telling a woman what to do during childbirth (“Mother knows best”).

Rarely are childbirth skills mentioned or taught, much less regarded as essential. Somehow, the subjective qualities of intuition and instinct are supposed to rise up inside us and lead us to the iconic “orgasmic birth experience.”

All humans have a neo-cortical part of their brain. This is the more complex “thinking, perceiving, and choosing” aspect we humans have as a benefit over most animals. We share this part of the brain with whales, dolphins, and primates. We use this part of our brain to create life skills, as well as skills that relate to natural physiological bodily processes, i.e. hunger, sex, voiding.

In other words, do we intuitively know which plants are poisonous and which are safe just because we are starving? No, we have to be learn that. Do we intuitively know how to cook when we’re hungry? No, someone teaches us. We need to value knowing how to give birth and how to help with the birthing process as much as we value knowing how to cook a proper meal. In the same way, although sexuality is a complex social issue right now, we do still place unspoken value on both women and men “learning” how to be good lovers. We don’t assume we intuitively or instinctively know how to satisfy each other.

Yet the words “intuitively” and “instinctive” are often paraded in pregnancy/childbirth teachings. The truth about instinct is that, when any person experiences



pain, the natural reaction is to tense up. We don't just magically perceive that we ought to relax. Even "take a deep breath" is a learned skill. We don't "intuit" it. In childbirth, the instinctive response to pain is no different, and tensing up during labor contractions is definitely counterproductive to the baby's efforts to come out.

Learning to "let go" during labor pain is counter-instinctive and counter-intuitive. It takes willpower and mental determination to do so. It takes a choice to apply skills that reside in our neo-cortex. This is a learned skill, *not* an instinct, but it does affect instincts over time. You have skills in other areas of your life and probably know that the greater your level of skill, the more intuitive you become. In other words, you can refine your ability to do something. Skills enhance our intuition and instincts.

### **Skills lead to educated responses**

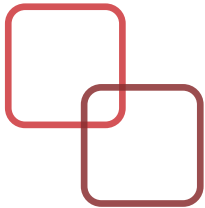
*On the Oprah show, there was a firefighter who went into a building with his crew. He suddenly demanded that his crew immediately evacuate. Since he was the captain, they followed orders and got out. The building exploded, but they were all safe because of their captain's order.*

*Oprah commented that he used his "instinct and intuition." He thought for a short time and said: "No, actually, afterwards I realized I had recognized very subtle signs but wasn't so consciously aware that was happening." In other words, he was able to make that quick decision because learned skills led his response.*

### **Above All Else, It Is An Activity**

Childbirth is an **event**: "an occurrence, especially one that is particularly significant, interesting, exciting, or unusual" (Encarta Dictionary®), without doubt one of life's biggest events.

And childbirth is an **experience**: "something that happens to somebody, or an event that somebody is involved in" (Encarta Dictionary®). %100 of pregnant women will give birth one way or another. It won't skip you.



Then childbirth is a **process**: “a series of natural occurrences that produce change or development” (Encarta Dictionary®). Childbirth has a beginning, middle, and end that take place over a finite period of time. This is the rhythm of childbirth.

More than anything else, childbirth is an **ACTIVITY**: “something that somebody takes part in or does; energetic physical movement or exercise; work, movement, or whatever somebody is doing” (Encarta Dictionary®). Although we often view labor/delivery as “different” than a Caesarean, if we take a broader perspective, we can see birth as always being the “activity” of working with your baby’s efforts to be born. This is SO important to fully grasp.

Let’s break this down a bit further, clarifying childbirth as an activity that manifests in three types of birth, plus one.

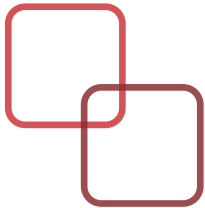
### **3 Types of Birth, +1**

While there is only one way to be pregnant, there are three types of birth you might have:

1. Labor and then a vaginal delivery.
2. Labor and then an emergency Caesarean.
3. A non-laboring, planned Caesarean.

The plus one, number 4-ish type of birth is a vaginal delivery after a previous Caesarean.

No matter what you might say or think otherwise, you will have one of these types of birth (unless you’ve learned how to lay eggs). You probably think they are very different from each other, but they aren’t so much: in each one, your baby is being born. This is where Birthing Better with The Pink Kit Method® takes a place in pregnancy and childbirth that is unique. The resource is for all pregnancies and every type of birth, because you can always help your baby’s efforts to be born.



Your Pink Kit resources are designed so that you can spend time during your pregnancy to prepare your body to make childbirth as safe and easy as possible for both you and your baby. This means that you will have skills to use in order to:

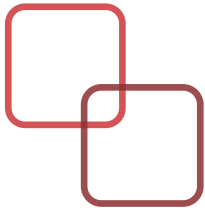
- Facilitate a #1-style birth.
- If necessary, move from labor into a #2-style, surgical birth, still using your skills.
- Enjoy a #3-style birth by preparing for it in the same way as other women and being able to use skills on your way to the hospital, while being prepped, and during surgery and recovery.
- Increase your chances of accomplishing a #4-style VBAC, yet know that you will still be able to remain engaged via your skills if you have another Caesarean.

Your Pink Kit resources are also designed for your partner, so that he/she can be the absolute best help during this transformative experience.

## Why Skills Are Important

Your Pink Kit Package goes well beyond teaching you “casual” skills. What’s a “casual skill”? Given the car/driving analogy, casual skills are like knowing how to check the oil and tire pressure, things you should do as part of being a car owner. Deeper, comprehensive skills are things like knowing how to change a tire, fill up the oil, or even do a tune-up or change the brakes. You can leave these jobs to the mechanic, just as you can leave medical procedures to the doctors—but you can’t pass off your vital, essential, universal driving skills! Only you can drive safely once you’re behind the wheel, and that takes more than knowing where the oil dipstick is.

You might find yourself saying, “Why bother, aren’t there people to do this for me?” Nope, it doesn’t work that way. **You** have to do the birth because **you** are pregnant. You can keep trying be barely involved or have others do it for you, but, at the end of the day, that’ll only cause the disconnected feeling too many women experience and are bewildered by. Childbirth is meant to be experienced and performed by only you!



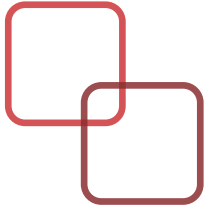
Here's an analogy. Let's say you don't know how to drive a certain car (we'll make it a stick shift), but you have to take it on a long journey. For you to drive yourself on this journey, it will take you about 16 weeks to learn to drive a car with a manual transmission, practicing about an hour a day. That's a lot of work for one really long journey. Or you could just take the bus. Right now, more women take the childbirth bus. They can't be bothered to learn.

The point here is not to judge whether this is right or wrong, good or bad. The point is to alert you that you *have* to make the choice for yourself. Either you choose to believe that this long journey of giving birth is important in a way that requires you to learn how to navigate it, or you choose to believe that it's a journey and you're the passenger. If you choose the former, your Birthing Better skills are your skills-based driving manual. Will you get more satisfaction having taken the time to become competent? Sure—taking the bus focuses on arriving at your destination. But learning to drive, then being in control every moment, focuses on the journey. You know what they say: getting there is half the fun!

Furthermore, think about that false assumption that the best way to birth is just to “trust” birth. To simply “trust” what might be a very painful experience can be very difficult. But equipped with the appropriate skills, a person really is capable of “trusting” an experience (particularly one they KNOW can be painful), because they're actually trusting themselves to **respond** rather than **react**. We *can* use our wonderful human mind to consciously work with our body so that our body can help our baby come out. This is the origin and basis for feeling empowered in childbirth.

Also think about how a skilled birth can affect you and your partner's relationship. In modern cultures, birth is a family experience, because fathers are expected to be there. If we handle this expectation properly, birthing can be an exercise in teamwork. With the Birthing Better Pink Kit skills that both of you share, you'll actually know that you are working together with your baby's efforts to be born. This knowledge will draw you closer together as a couple.





### **Passivity Leads to a Disconnect**

Right now, you probably don't know that you need to know. It doesn't seem that you need to know how to "drive" your birth as well as you drive your car. Birth will happen even if you don't have any skills, so it's very easy to be passive and just let it happen to you. Why bother? Even unintentionally, it's too easy to disconnect from your baby during pregnancy and from your baby during its birth.

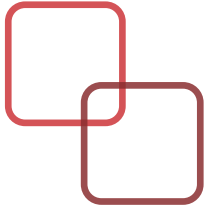
For families who will have a surgical birth, the relationship between pregnancy and "birth" is even more disconnected. How many families planning a non-laboring Caesarean, whether they want it or not, actually go to childbirth classes? Very few. Once a family knows they will have a Caesarean, they believe there is nothing they need or can do for the birth. This focus on **childbirth** rather than on the **relationship** between pregnancy and giving birth ultimately injures the relationship you have with your baby.

Don't treat birth like a dental appointment, and don't treat pregnancy like cramming for an exam—birth is really quite doable if you do not procrastinate. Make the connection between pregnancy and birth a priority, and praise yourself for doing so! Learn the variety of skills with conviction, so that during your short yet intense birth experience, you will use/apply your birth skills at every single moment of the activity. If you don't do it for yourself, do it for your baby. *That* is how you take responsibility for the whole of this monumental activity.

### **The Childbirth Mind Is Influential**

As much as people like to believe women don't think during labor, particularly during the most intense parts of labor, that's inaccurate:

- The mind in labor is very active ("I was thinking what I wanted to say, but I couldn't get my thoughts out of my mouth").
- Senses are sharpened ("I could hear the pen scratch on the paper when our midwife took notes").



- Awareness is heightened (“I was so aware that I could actually ease my baby out of my body”).

Your Negative and Management Voices get louder, too.

The Negative Voice can say things inside your head like:

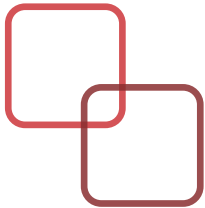
- *“I can’t, it’s too painful!”*
- *“OOW! Oh no, another contraction!”*
- *“I can’t bear this!”*
- *“Don’t touch me!”*
- *“I don’t like that person [staff].”*
- *“I’m going to die...”*

Then there’s the Management Voice, which says things like:

- *“I have to relax as I exhale.”*
- *“I have to soften inside my sacrum.”*
- *“Open, open, open...”*
- *“I can do this!”*
- *“After this contraction’s over, I’ve got to relax more.”*
- *“I don’t like this, but I know I’m handling it well.”*

Your Management Voice leads you to positive birthing behaviors. Your Negative Voice can lead to many stressful or negative behaviors. All of us are familiar with these two voices and their effects.

Choose *not* to let your Negative Voice and stressful behaviors predominate, and you won’t get sucked into the very outdated perception of childbirth: pure suffering. As defined by Encarta®, **suffer** means “to feel pain or great discomfort in body or mind; to experience or undergo something unpleasant or undesirable; to endure or put up with something painful or unpleasant OR to be adversely affected by something.”



Your skills will help you reduce any concept or perception that you must or will suffer in childbirth. They free you from the being rules by belief that, if you fear the pain, the pain will be worse. Whether you fear the naturally occurring pain or not, whether it is worse or not, you will always have the skills to manage it.

Also, when you think of the word “suffer,” it’s important that you do not perceive the discomfort or pain you are likely to have, no matter how great, as a “problem.” If the naturally occurring pain of giving birth were a “problem” that threatens the mother or baby, childbirth would be much more dangerous. If childbirth pain were always connected to a “problem,” women would have crossed their legs long ago and said “Nope.” But that’s not the case, obviously — childbirth has existed for our species for as long as we’ve existed.

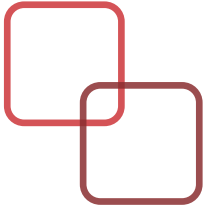
Yes, your birth skills may prevent some “problems” that come from overreacting to the pain of childbirth, but more importantly, your skills are there to help you really cope, handle, and manage the natural occurring pain that comes from letting a big object out of your body without “suffering.”

The reality is that neither you nor your baby has to suffer. Skills can lead you to use your Management Voice even though your Negative Voice is competing for mental space. They can empower you to rise above negative thoughts and actions, and thereby overcome the perception of “suffering.” Choose to follow the influence of your positive thoughts, not as a “wish list,” but rather, through the actions you take throughout this incredible experience.

In turn, coupling your awareness with your skills enhances those skills. Awareness enables you to truly own skills, be they for birthing, cooking, carpentry, computer software programs, or driving a car. If you do not combine skills with your awareness, the skills devolve down to mere techniques. Techniques are fine for their given arenas, but they don’t adapt when you need them to. Skills do.

### **The breathing techniques failed**

*“My husband and I practiced breathing techniques taught in our childbirth classes. We were rigorous in practicing, but at the birth, I had to be induced. The pains were so intense so*



*quickly. The breathing just went out the window. After the birth, I called the childbirth teacher and told her about my experience. She answered: 'Oh, the breathing doesn't work so well during inductions.' I was SO angry. She should have informed us."*

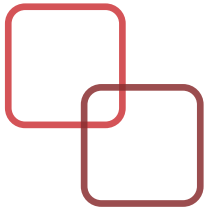
### **Childbirth Is Always Physical**

Childbirth is a physical activity, even if you never move from the chair and have your eyes closed the whole time. Your baby is opening up your body so it can get out, because he/she wants to be born just as you wanted to be born when you were in your mommy's tummy. If you have a labor and have a vaginal birth, your baby will physically open your pelvis and birth canal. If you have a non-laboring surgical birth, your lower belly will be cut open.

At the present time, we accept having a non-skilled birthing population going into something that is the physical equivalent of climbing Mt. Everest or participating in a triathlon. And we're given a strong message that "There's no way to know what birth will be like; therefore, there is no way to prepare."

Well, we don't know what the next moment in any of our lives will be like, but that doesn't stop us from learning skills over the years so that we're prepared to handle whatever happens as best we can. And we do know *one* thing about every childbirth: it's going to be physical. This set of Birthing Better skills applies to every birth because they all have physicality in common.

The physical action of birth does not need to just happen to you. Pink Kit families say this: "*We worked for this birth*". This means they spent the time learning the skills and used them as they helped their baby be born. The work you put in will always pay off. And when you have your experience of birthing better, no longer will you be left with the feeling that you were "just lucky." Women and men who feel they participate in this unique activity always feel much better about the "experience" than people who feel out of control or just go along for the ride, without a clue what is happening.



## “Having” the Necessary Skills

As impractical as it might seem, in the present there is a huge disconnect between pregnancy and childbirth in two fundamental ways:

1. Pregnancy is not associated with learning birthing and coaching skills to any level of proficiency for birth #1.
2. Pregnancy is definitely not associated with learning birthing/coaching skills if you have an emergency Caesarean or are planning an elective Caesarean for births #2 and #3.

Think about something for a moment:

- If you are planning birth method #1, do you have the level of skills to work with your baby’s efforts to be born in the same way you have skills to drive a car?

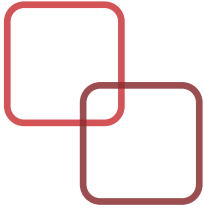
For most women, the answer is a big “NOPE.”

Said another way, if you went into labor tonight or got stuck in a bad storm while driving, which experience would you actually feel more skilled to handle?

Although you might not like driving in a storm, chances are you’d feel more competent and confident to do that **alone** than you would to cope and manage your way through labor contractions and the birth of your child, even with the help of your partner.

Any activity is done better when you “have” the right skills. We all like to feel skilled. We take pride in our own ability, and we enjoy being praised by others. We hate to feel incompetent or to embarrass ourselves by performing poorly.

All skills are first learned, then practiced repeatedly until they become easy to use. At first, we might feel a bit foolish and awkward while learning. But once we “have” learned skills for any task, we actually know our own capability. We feel less



consciously or even unconsciously anxious about the task at hand. It's the same with birthing skills: you'll recognize and acknowledge that you have a nice level of expertise for what will eventually happen—The Birth—even if this is your first birth, if you've had a traumatic previous birth, or if you just want to improve on a previous good birth.

We constantly improve any kind of skill by doing it for real. We self-evaluate and improve all the time, ever so slightly. Childbirth is an activity that lasts for a finite period of time, but it's never over in a blink of the eye. You'll have plenty of opportunities to use and improve your skills throughout. Don't denigrate yourself if you aren't "perfect."

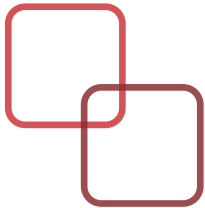
### **Skills Prepare You for the 3+1 Types of Birth**

#### **Type #1 birth: labor and vaginal delivery**

Every woman who has this type of birth will have a series of contractions, followed by a rest period, followed by another contraction. No woman's head opens and out pops a baby. No woman puts her fingers into the soil and out sprouts a baby. Therefore, the activity of labor is always composed of contractions and, believe it or not, rest periods in between. For some women, contractions are painless (yup, that's true for the very, very few). For others the pain is "manageable." For others still, it is the worst thing to ever happen.

#### **Adapting when the Birth Plan failed**

*"If you had told me that my 5-page Birth Plan would have headed right out the window, I wouldn't have believed you. Sure, I was a bit disappointed, but my partner and I made a huge decision once we knew more medical care was needed. This decision changed everything about our birth. We decided to work with the medical care and use our skills. We determined that we would birth our baby even with all the tubes and machines attached. I would have believed this was not possible, but it was, without a doubt. We had the most natural birth. In fact, more so because we worked together the whole time. [Without the Pink Kit skills] we would have been lazier, and I don't think I would have coped as well."*



If you have a Type #1 birth,

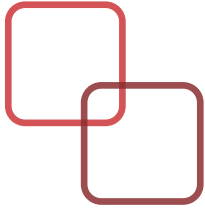
- You must do everything you can to reduce, prevent, and/or eliminate potential risks to yourself and your baby. You should also strive to reduce potential medical interventions.
- You absolutely must be able to behave in a manner during painful contractions that will not cause others to think that you are suffering.
- You must be able to work with and around all the standards of care common in today's maternity system. By using your skills, you'll focus more on what you are doing and on your relationship to your baby than on what is happening to you. By continually using skills, you tell your baby that you are always working with him/her, even when things are happening to or around you.

### **Type #2 birth: labor and emergency Caesarean**

You will have contractions and rest periods like above, but sometime during this process/activity, a surgical delivery will be deemed essential. When this happens, women and men often move from being active within the process to passive. Instead of driving, they hop on the bus and disconnect. But you can still use your Birthing Better Pink Kit skills while you're waiting to be prepped, during surgery (if you're awake), and in the recovery that might otherwise be uncomfortable.

### **Creating the best birth we could**

*"When our doctor told us that we needed an emergency Caesarean because our baby was not responding well to labor, we were frightened, disappointed, and relieved, all at once. When we had worked through our Pink Kit package, we threw away all the information about Caesareans. That wasn't going to happen to us. We talked as they were waiting to get the operating theater ready and decided that we would still use the Directed Breathing, Pelvic Clock, and Touch Relaxation. It worked a dream. We continued to use the skills during the post-operative pain. Maybe we didn't get the birth we wanted, but we created the best birth we could."*



If you end up with an emergency Caesarean,

- It's essential that you continue to stay connected during the surgery by continuing to use your skills. Using skills will reduce your sense of alienation and may prevent you from feeling traumatized.
- Using skills while being prepped for surgery and during surgery is also your gift to your baby. This is your commitment as parents that, no matter what, you will always do your best to stay engaged and connected.

### **Type #3 birth: non-laboring Caesarean**

In the last 30 years, there has been an inaccurate implication that women who have elective Caesareans are somehow not really giving birth. This is a type of emotional bullying. Any birth, under any circumstance, will always be important to the family welcoming their child. Working with your baby's efforts to be born is one of the great highs in life. Don't let anybody make you feel like you're taking the bus, and by all means don't take it of your own accord.

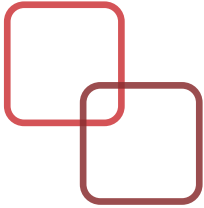
### **Being involved satisfied both of us**

*"My wife has a lot of medical problems, and we decided to have an elective c/s. We discussed whether we wanted to go to childbirth classes...no. Most of the birth books gave us the nuts and bolts of what would happen, but our Pink Kit gave us 'what to do.' The skills work like a dream. I'm one of those men who wants to be pregnant and give birth, so being involved in the way that is unique to the Pink Kit satisfied all my 'female' urges. My wife certainly felt more involved."*

If you're planning an elective Caesarean,

- You must give yourself permission to enjoy preparing for this type of birth. Women do not get pregnant to "have" a Caesarean or even a vaginal birth; they get pregnant to "have" a baby. Enjoy being pregnant, and enjoy preparing for the birth.





- Using your skills will keep you engaged, connected, and an active participant in what can be an alienating procedure in spite of everyone else's best efforts to make the preparation and surgery humane.
- Your skills will help you deal with recovery discomforts.

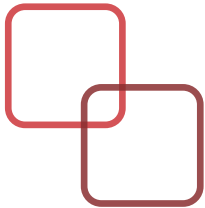
### **Type +1 birth: VBAC**

For you, these skills are absolutely essential. You must not go into this birth activity without having prepared your body to let your baby out. Whether your previous Caesarean was due to a lack of skills or absolutely essential in spite of skills, your body has been through something of a trauma. Therefore, you must deeply and thoroughly prepare for this birth.

Do not let ideology rule. Use your skills throughout whatever birth you have, and you'll birth better in any circumstance. A large part of the desire for a vaginal birth is not actually to have your baby come out of your vagina, but to feel connected, a connection that is frequently lost when you have a surgical birth, because you didn't have the skills to stay connected or even know you could. This no longer has to happen. Even if you have medical interventions or yet another Caesarean, treat the activity as something you have a role in rather than like a dental appointment. If you use your Birthing Better Pink Kit skills, you will always stay connected and never, ever feel out of control.

### **Internal Work made all the difference**

*"My husband thought I was nuts. I had tried three times to have a vaginal birth and had a c/s each time. I was desperate, and he thought I was crazy. While cruising the Internet, I discovered The Pink Kit and purchased it. Wow! I was surprised. I had at least 100 childbirth books, but nothing like this existed. I learned so much about my body. It took a long time for me to convince my husband that I was learning what could make a difference. Finally, he got on board and really helped. Since I had gotten fully [dilated] each time but none of my babies had come into the pelvis, I knew I could labor but just not deliver. What made the difference? Fixing my rigid sacrum and my tight birth canal. We worked on both. At 2<sup>nd</sup> Stage, I still*



*struggled until I remembered to do Kate's Cat. Suddenly, I realized how tight I had let my sacrum become. As soon as I relaxed and mobilized my sacrum, my baby shot down and flew out...boy, the internal massage made all the difference."*

If your goal is to achieve a VBAC,

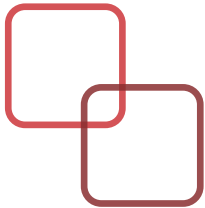
- You must work toward what you want, and then work with what happens in a manner that does not leave you traumatized.
- You must acknowledge your efforts even if the outcome is different than the one you would have liked.
- You must do everything you can to heal any sense of trauma so that you, your child, and your partner do not suffer for years because you cannot heal.

Regardless of which type of birth you end up with, do not identify your baby by the birth he/she had. Too often, we hear mothers say: "My baby was a Caesarean" or "My baby was a home birth." No, your baby is your baby, and how he/she came into the world should not be his/her mark. Once you focus on the journey and your skills therein instead of the outcome, you will stop identifying your baby by the type of birth, which is only fair.

## **A Whole New Approach to Childbirth**

Unfortunately, we too often hear of suffering in many Birth Stories today:

- "The labor was horrible, terrible."
- "The worst experience in my life."
- "I thought I was going to die."
- "It was so intense."
- "I'll never let my husband near me again."
- "I'll never have another child."
- "NO ONE TOLD ME!"



Once again, you need to develop a clear awareness of the subtle distinction between “feeling intense pain/discomfort” and “being adversely affected.” When women feel they “suffer” in childbirth, they imply the latter but most often experience only the former. Instead of accepting the natural pain of labor, they shun it.

This is where your Pink Kit skills can make all the difference in the world. We invite you to change your attitude, because now you have a resource that will show you exactly how to prepare your pregnant body to become a birthing body and the skills to work with the pain as your baby makes his/her birthing journey.

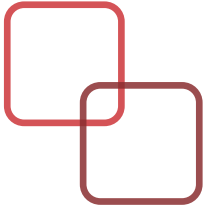
When women work hard with their baby’s efforts to be born, even if they feel a lot of pain or discomfort, they don’t feel out of control. They actually feel very empowered after they have given birth. Empowerment *is* achievable for you. This is not just a veneer of rhetoric. Women who treat labor this way realize they have triumphed over a monumental task, done by gazillions of women since the beginning of time. It *is* an incredibly potent awareness to feel connected to all women. It fulfills your essential nature in a way no other experience can.

The time has come to stop saying that childbirth is suffering, that childbirth is one thing or another. We absolutely must stop implying that one type of birth is better than another, since this is mean-spirited and does not honor the true reality of this magnificent rite of passage for you, your partner, and your baby. The bottom line is that it’s not up to your obstetrician or your midwife or other parents to argue about how you should handle your birth. *You* are the one doing this activity, and the power to do it in a new, better way lies in *your* hands.

### **None of their business**

*There’s a professional who lived for many years with a very traditional tribe in Brazil. He discovered something unique about this tribe’s language. It didn’t fit a pattern found in most languages that has been considered a “definite aspect of human language.” When he wrote about his find, he caused a stir in his field. During an interview about the uproar and forceful discussions that ensued, he made a very wise comment that echoes itself within childbirth.*

*He stated that the hot debate about this issue amongst members of the linguist community was not relevant to people outside this field.*



### **There's so much more to giving birth**

Childbirth is full of the unexpected, and it makes sense for you to plan for the worst—but don't stop hoping for the best! You can find many Birth Stories that are glorious and groups who promote the pleasure of giving birth. You may surprise yourself and find childbirth to be one of the most fulfilling experiences ever. There are many women who have felt this way, but not enough. The Pink Kit aims at exponentially increasing the number of women who feel wonderful about their birth experience, by linking the “activity” of giving birth to good, honest, hard work, not “suffering.”

There are also too many stories about fathers/others who were useless during the birth. In fact, birth professionals are now debating whether fathers should even be present for the birth. Of course they should—they just need skills! Birthing Better with The Pink Kit Method® aims to exponentially increase the number of fathers/others who are wonderful birth coaches/supports/helpers/assistants.

These goals are the big time pay-off what make birth more than what it is now. They make birth about not about what happened, but about what women and men *do*.