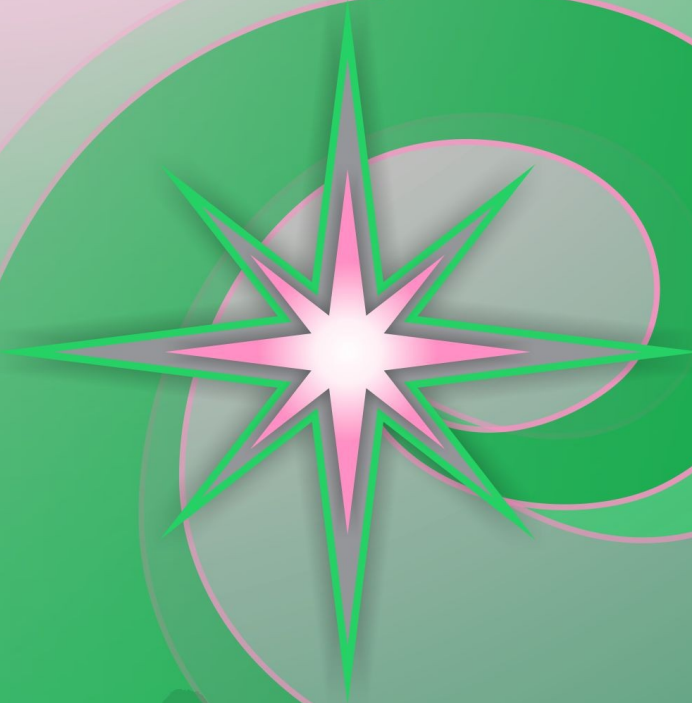


PREPARATION

# Teamwork

*In It Together*



*Pink* **KIT**  
METHOD®

## Teamwork: In It Together

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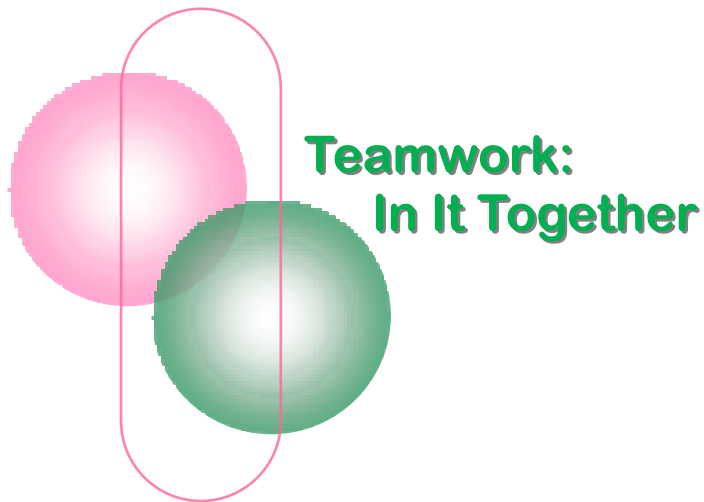
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## Teamwork

Childbirth requires the same teamwork skills as in other areas of your life, such as gardening, raising kids, building a house, working with your colleagues, planning a trip, or playing team sports. Teamwork is all around you. How well do you work in a team?

If you and your partner already work well as a team, you'll find that this resource will give you both great skills for the necessary teamwork needed for preparing for birth as well as during the birthing process.

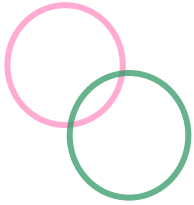
If you and your partner lack in the teamwork department, you'll find this resource an excellent way to learn appropriate skills that are both practical and non-threatening. Giving birth is a one-time activity, and even the most alienated couples can work well together. Many couples only lack the fundamental skills to develop great childbirth teamwork because no other childbirth system focuses on the essential specific/adaptable skills.

### Did you know?

Here are some reasons why you might be confused about childbirth teamwork:

- You're most likely going to go to a hospital for the birth, the domain of professionals and an environment in which you probably have no experience working as a team.
- Even in a planned home birth, fathers often step back when the midwife arrives. The laboring woman usually has close ties to her midwife, which leave both the man and woman thinking, "Our midwife is here now, she'll tell us what to do."

These responses are some of the unintended negative consequences that we can experience around professionals, no matter how nice they are or what they do. We



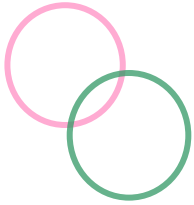
have a high expectation that the professional will take care of everything because they know what to do. Few people stand over the shoulder of their auto mechanic or plumber or work alongside them.

Curiously, hospital childbirth providers mostly want couples to work together, as long as you don't interfere with the assessments, monitoring, and procedures. They will come and go from your room, so there is a great deal of time to work together. When they do come in, you can still work together and ask them if what you are doing is bothering their own work.

In a home birth, you need to discuss with your midwife whether she is also acting as the labor "coach" or whether she expects you, as a father-to-be, to do so.

Here are some other reasons why couples don't understand how to develop or use their teamwork during birth:

- Since birth/coaching skills are not yet an essential part of birth preparation, the only teamwork encouraged is to make Birth Plans and then make decisions at the time of birth. Some classes do offer relaxation and breathing skills, both teamwork exercises. Take them seriously and perfect them.
- The primary focus during pregnancy and even in birth is usually oriented toward the woman and then the baby, rather than mothers-to-be and fathers-to-be together. The role of the father-to-be is quite undefined, vague, and secondary. Yet as a couple and a family, this is not how you live your lives, so the monumental activity of birth should be no different.
- In current childbirth trends, the most frequently used word to define a father's role is "birth support." Words have power. To "support" someone does not really imply the true capability of working as a "team." Fathers-to-be need to know how to help rather than just be a handmaiden. Men who don't know how to help are aware of this inadequacy, and so are their partners. Sure, if you don't have skills, "being there" is better than nothing, but knowing the specific skills that make up the role of "birth coach/helper" is what makes you a team.



- Without a set of shared and commonly understood set of skills, it's almost impossible to work as a team. This last reason is actually the most important. Even if you are attending a birth class built around teaching relaxation and breathing "techniques," these often fail to adapt to varied situations. Learning mutual skills means that you can always work together effectively, even when you are in a new or unplanned situation.

## The Different Roles in Your Team

To do any job well, all of us need to know what is required of us and that our efforts will be appreciated and valued. When we work as teammates, each member of the team needs his/her own set of skills and to feel competent that they can use all of the skills together. Each person present at a birth is important.

There are three distinct roles in a birthing team:

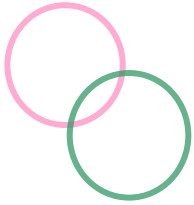
- The woman's role (to birth).
- The husband/partner, friend, or relative's role (to coach).

Together, you are the primary team, because you are the family having this baby!

- The birth professional's role (to safeguard the mother and baby and do medical assessments, monitoring, and procedures).

Your birth provider and other staff/professionals are your secondary team members. They are of vital importance. However, although all birth professionals play a significant role while they are with you and your baby, they will not be as deeply or intimately involved with your birth experience as you might expect them to be.

Given that birthing is an activity that you, as a pregnant woman, will do, no birth professional can take that task away from you unless you are unconscious. Incurring assessments, monitoring, and medical procedures does not take your task away from you; they are just things that are placed into the activity. With skills, you can work with and around any medical attention needed.



## **Planned Caesarean**

Unfortunately, surgical births typically wipe out all sense of teamwork from the birth. But it doesn't have to be like that: if you are planning a Caesarean, there will still be ample opportunities for the two of you to work together during the whole day of your baby's birth. Doing so will be much more of a choice in how you spend your time than of dealing with contractions that occur two minutes apart, but many Pink Kit families still love the intimacy they create for themselves in the midst of a Caesarean.

Remember, Birthing Better Pink Kit skills are primarily a vehicle for you to enjoy preparing for the birth of your baby. Teamwork is built in your pregnancy in the same manner as women and men who are going into labor: by taking time to prepare for the birth. Pink Kit families who are having non-laboring surgical births still see the birth of their baby as phenomenally important, and they choose to enrich their own experience as much as possible. They use the skills while preparing to go to the hospital, on the way there, while being prepped, and during the surgical birth.

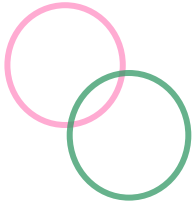
## **Woman's Role: To "Do" the Birthing**

Basically, you have three primary jobs within this role:

- To work with your baby's effort to be born.
- To work through each contraction and each rest period of labor and birth, one at a time, whether you like the sensations or not.
- To work with your birth coach to achieve the two points above.

Whether you love every moment of labor and birth or hate every single intense contraction, don't confuse these emotions with using good management (which is the above three jobs).

You know this already. There are heaps of activities in your life that you already don't like or even hate, and there will be many more in the years of parenting. There



are also tasks you like or love. However, all tasks still require you to use your skills and manage your way through the activity until completion.

If labor is something you DO NOT like, just remember that, often, our ability to meet great challenges is what makes us better people. This Gateway of giving birth provides you with the opportunity to mature into a parent who responds with dignity, determination, good manners, and good management behaviors in your role as a mother, even when you and your baby/child are going through rough patches. Use your birth and your Birthing Better Pink Kit birth skills to nurture these qualities in yourself as a woman.

While it is your job to DO the birth, with great teamwork, you are not alone.

### **Husband/Partner's Role: To Coach**

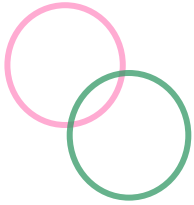
Do not underestimate your role during the birth process of your baby. Most birth professionals love to see couples work together. However, they do not care if you are there or not. This sounds like a contradiction, but just remember that fathers didn't participate at all in birth for most of modern maternity history. It's only been in the past 30 years or so that women were able to have their partners by their side during birth.

These days, you really are expected to "be there." So, what are you supposed to do? Whatever you think you're supposed to do or whatever your partner tells you she wants of you, you have to fill this role in a social environment that pretty much keeps you totally uninvolved.

You should be aware of the following:

- You might not go to the doctor's or midwife appointments every time; therefore, your relationship to your birth provider will be more formal than your wife's.
- Pregnancy books spend little time on you and your role. Most men comment on this and notice they are relegated to a few paragraphs.





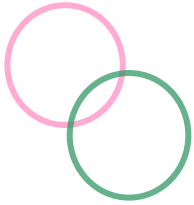
- Childbirth classes may involve you more and show you some skills, but not to the level you really need.
- Society is focused on her belly and not on you becoming a dad.
- Neither of your families may have a history of strong male involvement with birth. The extent is probably that your dad may have been the support person and rubbed your mom's back, not really knowing how to help. Your dad will envy the skills you have. Your mother will wish your father had possessed these skills.

Men and women are different when it comes to childbirth skills. Men want to know the skills that show them how to help, but women want to know these "how to" skills will be used. You already know this about such issues as cooking and cleaning. If you know how to cook and clean, your partner expects you to do it. In fact, it's inaccurate that most women want flowers from their partner. They would rather them vacuum or clean the toilet. Working together builds teamwork in all areas of your life. Teach your partner how to change a flat tire, too.

### **Diving deeper as dads: keep a perspective**

The below bullet points are things you absolutely need to know to keep things in perspective. Once you fully understand them, you will be far beyond most fathers-to-be in terms of birthing knowledge.

- Everyone is caught up in the excitement of having a baby rather than how to become a parent. This is the same as focusing on the wedding and forgetting about the marriage. People think about "the birth" but not the activity of "giving birth."
- Women can be very anxious about birth! This is true, under-discussed, and disguised in the reality that only women give birth. Remember, getting hungry is a natural physiological process, yet humans are not hardwired to intuitively or instinctively know which foods are poisonous and which are safe. Just because we as humans do something physiologically does not mean we are hardwired to have skills for doing these things properly. Simply having a sexual urge does not



make one a great lover! The assumption is that women automatically know how to birth because women have always birthed. Accordingly, an individual woman may think other women know how, but she probably isn't certain she herself knows how. The only thing women know for certain is that, once they are pregnant, they will give birth within one year.

- There is no correlation between how a woman feels about the upcoming birth and what actually happens. In other words, women who are terrified may have very easy births, while women who feel relaxed and prepared end up with very difficult ones. Birth Stories rarely mention how the woman felt before birth, whether she felt confident or had anxieties, and then compared it with what her experience was actually like!

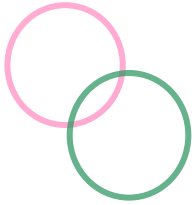
And consider this: How easy is it to admit how you feel? If your partner comes from a family where her sisters, mother, and aunts all had good births, she's less likely to talk about her anxieties. On the other hand, if her family has a history of bad births, she'll have trouble telling them she feels confident.

Birth is less discussed than almost any other aspect of life. When did you last sit down with your friends and have a good talk about childbirth? Probably never.

Women have an elephant's memory about their birth experiences. While childbirth pushes a woman to become a mother, if you don't walk that path with her, pass through that Gateway together, and take on the role of being a capable and responsible father, she will begin to see you as another child to care for, a feeling that can lead to resentment and often deterioration of the marriage.

### **The Primary Team Is Both of YOU**

Your teamwork has to grow and converge during pregnancy, which is the time you learn and practice your Pink Kit skills. It will then reach its peak as you put your skills to use during the activity of giving birth.



Here are some things you need to know about teamwork:

- Your team will always be bigger than either of you alone. Good teamwork breeds inspiration, confidence, and positive intensity through mutual respect and encouragement. Think about these words. They are meaningful qualities that have actions attached to each one.
- Birth is not the time for poor communication. Put aside all other issues affecting your life. Instead, focus on the task at hand—there is always tomorrow to argue about money, kids, sex, or what to eat for dinner. During birth, everyone needs to work together and be on his or her best behavior.
- The true test of how well your team works will be in how you prevent or cope with a challenging situation. The more painful the contractions, the more effectively you have to work together. All of this requires good communication. There is no external factor in any birth that should undermine the closeness you create and experience.

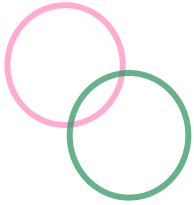
### **What can splinter your team?**

Good team dynamics go out the window when either of you withdraw, grow irritable, become frustrated, or permit judgment and/or criticism to prevail. These negative behaviors/emotions create a sense of separation, alienation, and isolation. When this occurs, everyone feels unappreciated, unaccepted, and misunderstood. The level of communication drops off, further increasing isolation. This can last well beyond the birth and have a huge impact on your relationship as partners being parents.

Trust and acceptance are the behaviors that sustain good teamwork.

### **Can there be more than one other person in your primary team?**

The answer is YES. Everyone who will be with you during the birth process to coach, support, or help is part of the primary team, and thus should learn the same set of



skills. Then you can all be interchangeable—when one person needs a break, another person can come in and continue to truly help the birthing woman.

The difficulty arises when people have different skills that seem to contradict. At the present, you often hear women say, “This person told me one thing, then another person told me something entirely different. I felt so confused.” Sharing a consistent set of skills works best so as not to confuse the woman.

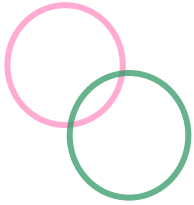
### **Mothers, sisters and female friends who will birth-coach**

You’ll love these skills because they allow you to help without losing yourself in empathy. Even if you’ve given birth yourself, it’s possible that you do not know these skills. You might not be certain how to “coach/support/help” any more than a man does. You might remember how you suffered and don’t want this woman you love to experience the same. Or you may have had a wonderful experience and not understand why your friend or relative is now struggling with her birth experience. Or, like a man, you might believe the doctor/midwife will take care of things.

Since we never know what labor will be like, you, too, need to be prepared with your coaching skills so that you can work through the process as it unfolds for the woman you love. Women who have previously given birth all immediately see the benefits of these skills and say they wish they’d known them for their own births.

As a birth coach, you must be there for the woman. What does that mean, exactly? It means you must give your undivided attention to the activity. Birthing women cannot tolerate people who do not give them 100% of their presence. Many a woman has said, “What are you sitting around for when I’m doing all the work?”

If you have to step out of the room for time alone, make certain someone else has the skills to step in. To help at a birth is the deepest, most personal thing you can do.



### **My daughter's birth experience was so different from mine**

*"I gave The Pink Kit to my daughter when she was pregnant with her second child. Her first birth had been terrible, even worse than the three birth experiences I'd had! At my first child's birth, I was left alone in a room, and my husband waited in the waiting room for fathers. Our son wasn't born for another 36 hours after he dropped me off! My second birth (our daughter) took 15 hours, but I was still alone. With my last son, the labor was just over 10 hours, but once again I was left alone. Each birth was better for me, but I can't say I knew what I was doing. And my husband was totally left out.*

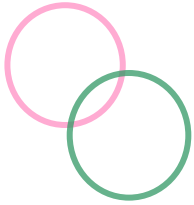
*"A friend of mine had given her son The Pink Kit when his wife was pregnant, and they spoke so highly of it. Before I sent it to my daughter, I watched the video, read the book, and listened to the audio. My husband passed away a few years ago, so he wasn't there to share it with me. I cried through a lot of it. How I wished I'd known this information. It made such common sense. I know my husband would at least have been able to help me prepare during our three pregnancies, and he would have been great as a birth coach.*

*"Our daughter also loved the information, and she became inspired to change the history of birth in our family. I didn't expect to be invited to the birth of my first grandchild, but they did invite me because they felt that I could help them with The Pink Kit. That made me laugh, but of course I went and did help.*

*"What amazed me was how connected my daughter was to the process and how well she and my son-in-law worked together. It was such a joy, and their daughter will be told a different story than I was able to tell our children."*

### **THINGS FOR ALL PRIMARY TEAM MEMBERS TO REMEMBER**

- Praise each other for things you do correctly. Tell your woman she's breathing so well, and compliment your coach for keeping you so calm.
- Remind each other how thankful you are that they know the skills they do. Let your partner know you appreciate their help with the birth.
- Generally, be supportive throughout the experience. Negativity will only breed negativity, but positive attitudes will ease stress and relax tension.



## **Birth Professionals' Role: To Safeguard the Health and Wellbeing of the Mother and Baby**

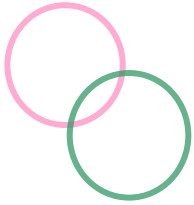
Unless you plan to have a completely unassisted birth at home , there will be professionals present, and with them comes assessments, monitoring, and procedures. Here is a brief look at those terms:

- assessments: periodically checking such things as blood pressure and the baby's heartbeat
- monitoring: continuous checking, such as a fetal monitor
- procedures: rupturing the membranes, administering pain relief, assisting the delivery, etc.

The birth professional will not “do” the labor, although, if you have a surgical birth, they will technically perform the birth for you. (But if you're awake, you're still the one doing the birth and can use your Pink Kit skills.) And an obstetrician will not be your birth coach. If you have a midwife and/or doula, you might want them to be your birth coach, but it's best for them to encourage you as a family to work together, because YOU will be this child's family, not them.

Here are some things you should be aware of:

- Professionals see you as a woman who either copes well or does not. They see men really help or not help at all. They don't believe it's their business to teach either of you to birth or coach (and it's not). They do their job and leave you to do yours, whether you know how or not.
- Because they don't always believe there is anything you can do to prepare for such an unknowable experience, they won't expect you to have any skills, much less specific and accurate ones.
- Because there is no societal expectation that expectant parents become skilled, birth professionals don't see skilled teams very often. So they do compliment any woman who copes exceptionally well and any father who knows how to help.
- Any woman who copes well elicits a sense of relaxation in her birth providers, even when medical concerns are part of the experience.



- Any family who works well together will also work well with their birth provider, even when conventional Birth Plans change.

It's up to you to decide how much you want to inform your birth provider about the Pink Kit or how much you want them involved. You can always feel confident your Pink Kit skills will work alongside all medical care. But never lose sight of the fact that the birth of your child is YOUR experience, first and foremost.

Now that we're finished with the three roles in childbirth, we have to move on to what factors influence your primary team.

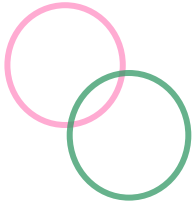
### **The Three Most Important Influences**

#### **Time**

- You have a precious few months to prepare for birth, plus the actual labor, and birth will be over in a relatively short period of time.
- Make learning and practicing your birth skills a major priority. Don't put off your practice. In this busy world, it is essential you MAKE time if the activity of giving birth to your child is important to you.
- Create consistent, short sessions.
- Practice snippets of the skills throughout the day, even if it's just in your head.
- You are more likely to develop a stable and mutually supportive team if you practice your Pink Kit skills together very regularly.

#### **Changes in time**

- Labors inevitably progress. The sensations change. Contractions get longer, stronger, and more frequent.
- Frequent or rapid changes during birth can unsettle the team unless you adapt your skills to what is happening in the moment.
- Your team will adapt more easily to any and all changes if you have focused on developing your teamwork prior to the event.



## Personalities

- If your individual personalities have difficulty working together, your birth team won't be as effective as it can be when you work around your differences.
- Your teamwork will suffer if one personality dominates or if the other feels hurt, confused, or misunderstood. It is vitally important in this one experience that you put on your very best manners.

## Responsibilities

Both within your primary team and between that team and birth professionals, there are individual and shared responsibilities. While you are pregnant (right now), your job is to practice and internalize these responsibilities. Plan how to treat the birth of your baby as a very special event even before birth, then put that attitude into your practice. Birth takes place only a few times in life.

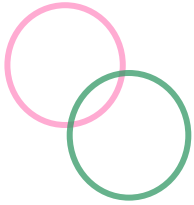
### A Woman's Responsibilities to Her Teammate

- No one can read your mind. You must make your needs clear to your teammate, whether verbally or non-verbally. The better he understands you, the better you'll work together.
- Don't shut out your partner! If you become irritable, withdrawn, or whine for a length of time, it will be much harder for your teammate to help you.
- Commit to work with your teammate throughout the birth, no matter what is happening to you or around you.

### Don't touch!

*"I didn't want my husband to touch me at the peak of the contraction. The first time, I pushed his hand away, I could see him withdraw. Once the peak passed, I took his hand and placed it where I wanted his touch. He quickly understood and didn't touch me during the peaks until contractions changed. I needed him to touch me throughout the contractions, but not in between. We figured it out because we practiced our Pink Kit skills for weeks before our birth."*





## **A Coach's Responsibilities to His Teammate**

- Observe, listen to, and respond to the needs of your woman throughout the birth.

### **It all got very clear in labor**

*"I didn't really understand the Directed Breathing or the Pelvic Clock when we watched the DVD. But in labor, it all got very clear, very fast. Wow." (From a very young father)*

- Model what you know she needs to remember. Breathe with her, she'll follow; touch where she shows her tension, she'll relax.

### **A conversation without words**

*"I demonstrated the breathing: 'Breathe in through your nose, relax with your exhale. Breathe in through your nose, relax with your exhale.' That was the extent of our 'conversation' through each contraction for six hours, except I never said one word—I just did it, and she followed."*

- If your woman becomes irritable, forgive her again and again. Irritability means she feels overwhelmed and has not succeeded at working out how to respond to the sensations. Or perhaps you've interrupted her when she needed to focus.

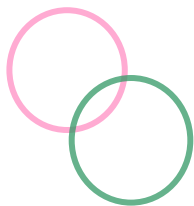
### **Permission to be cranky**

*"This one was easy to understand. My girlfriend gets irritable when she's under stress or if she's tired. I looked her in the eye and told her she had my permission, this one time, to nag and bitch all she wanted. She laughed. It lightened the mood."*

- Communicate positively. Use specific statements to get positive change.

### **Relax HERE**

*"If I told her to relax, she'd glare at me. Then I told her where to relax—she did it."*



- Compliment the birthing woman with simple and specific statements.

### **I'm so proud of you**

*"My daughter loved it when I told her how proud I was of her relaxed manner of breathing."*

- Don't hesitate to ask questions. When in doubt, try to find out.

### **What do you want?**

*"My sister got to that place she used to get when we were kids—whiney. So I said, "WHAT DO YOU WANT?" She burst into tears while I held her. That lasted for three contractions, and then she told me exactly how I could help. She was amazing, and I felt so proud of her. That was a changing day in her life."*

## **Your Mutual Responsibilities to Each Other**

- Sort out miscommunication in your relationship. You need to either clean it up before the birth, agree to put it aside, or have someone else act as the primary teammate. Miscommunication between partners during birth can have a lasting negative impact on a relationship.

### **We out aside our differences for a while**

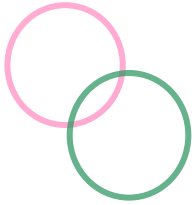
*"My wife and I had a terrible argument a few days before the birth. Tension was still in the air when she went into labor. At first, we were further apart than the moon to the sun. But how can you withhold your help from a woman in labor? It's impossible."*

*"We put aside our differences and worked together. It's paid off in how we parent as well."*

- Don't boss each other around. You can be right, or you can work together

### **I stopped trying to organize everything outside me**

*"Boy, it was tempting to boss my husband around, but I thought twice about it because I wanted us to work together, and he was doing a good job. So I surrendered. I got into the labor more and stopped trying to organize everything outside me. My advice—let it all go."*



- Take full responsibility for yourself. Make sure that both of you go into the birth already prepared. Learn your skills so you feel confident and ready, even if you're in the middle of busy work schedules and other commitments. Go into labor rested.

### **The Pink Kit revisited**

*“For my first birth, I had access to The Pink Kit, but I didn’t use it. I looked at it, but I figured birth would just happen. It did. I was horrified by the experience.*

*“Second time, we committed to doing the work. Boy, did it pay off! People tell me second births are easier anyway. We didn’t just have an easier birth; we had an absolutely wonderful birth...together.”*

- Look after yourself. Take care of yourself and express your needs clearly. **Coach:** if you need to eat or sleep during the labor, do it and get someone else to help out. **Birthing woman:** if you need to be left alone for a while, let people know.

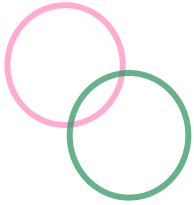
### **Dealing with fatigue creatively**

*“My wife had a long, drawn-out labor. I was so tired I felt like I was going to throw up. She was nodding off between contractions, so I did too. But then I slept through some contractions. Big mistake. Boy, did she bawl me out!*

*“After that, we figured out a way that we could both sleep—this time, we slept so our bodies were touching. That took some work to figure out on those narrow beds in the hospital, but we sorted it. As soon as she got restless, I knew that another contraction was coming on. I jumped to the alert phase and was right there for her.*

*“After the birth, she told everyone she couldn’t have done it without me. That made me feel really proud.”*

- Don’t forget to have fun. Birth is intense, but it doesn’t have to have “heavy energy.” Even a small humorous moment can change everything. Take the funny points in this resource with you, find your own mirth, and have a laugh.



### **Role model?**

*“Our young daughter came into our bedroom after I’d just had one of those whoppers. She had a pillow stuck in her pajamas, and she waddled in using her best breathing patterns. It was so precious, we just laughed. It calmed me, and before the next contraction came on, I realized that I was her role model for her labor in the future. I got much more focused after that.”*

- Remember your inner self-control. Self-control is necessary in order to remain calm, have clarity, and maintain your balance. Birth is a good experience to exercise these qualities, and they will grow in the rest of your life.

### **Women throughout time have done this**

*“I had the most amazing insight in the middle of a contraction when I heard myself sounding quite stressed. I remembered all the women throughout time who had made this incredible effort for their children. It was as if a bolt of light descended into my heart. I stopped struggling. From then on, I knew I was safe, that the pain was normal, and that I could go through this.”*

- The bottom line: Go out of your way to help each other.

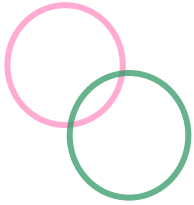
### **You can DO IT**

*A New Zealand ex-All Black rugby player and his wife, who was a world aerobics champion, used The Pink Kit to prepare for the birth of their first child. They planned a hospital birth and wanted it to be natural, without pain relief, unless it was necessary because of a “medical” problem.*

*In spite of all their preparation, she found the very last part of labor very challenging (as many women do) and asked for an epidural. He got in her face and told her that she could do it—she had done the work, the same way she’d worked hard to be top in her sport.*

*He worked with her in between contractions to help her relax, and during the contractions to help her stay focused on her breathing. They did it one contraction at a time.*

*A few hours later, she gave birth to their daughter, totally empowered by their experience. Her only regret was that she hadn’t done more Internal Work.*



### **We're in this together**

*Another athletic couple used the Pink Kit information. He was an extreme team athlete, and she was a kite surfer. As in the previous story, although she was athletic, she found the last few hours of labor very challenging. When she was about seven centimeters dilated, she just didn't believe she could go on.*

*After the birth, she told her friends that she couldn't have done it without her partner. He told her to "Suck it up," yet also made certain that he worked with her at every moment as her support, just as a good team would work together in sport.*

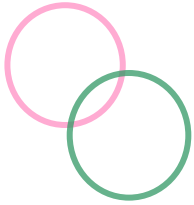
### **Just a quick note on humor**

Don't forget that dose of a sense of humor. Childbirth is invigorating! Even when assessments, monitoring, and procedures are done, this does not put birth into an emergency or illness situation. It's part of the management package.

Use humor to lighten up the atmosphere. This is not about telling a joke and certainly not about making fun of the woman giving birth. It's about both of your abilities to laugh over the weirdest things that often happen in birth.

Here are some examples.

- A woman arrived in the hospital in full-blown active labor. It took every bit of her concentration to keep focused on not losing it from the intense pain. As soon as she and her husband settled into their room, the fire alarm went off! They both laughed and had to evacuate the hospital! Labor continued. She gave birth in an ambulance. Everyone was in high spirits, and it was a great story to pass along.
- Three years after a terrible first birth, a couple had just stepped outside in the middle of a hundred-year storm to head to the hospital—too late! The father was able to pull the shower curtain down and put it under his wife before the baby arrived in their front hallway. She said she laughed to see him haul the tattered shower curtain down the hall even as she was pushing.
- Another woman, terrified of birth, found herself saying as the baby's head was crowning (coming out), "Is that all there is to it?" Everyone laughed, because they



had all spent the past seven months listening to this woman panic about the upcoming birth.

There are many moments during labor and birth where humor is just the medicine. Birth is delightful, even when as powerful as a thunderstorm.

## **Your Responsibilities to Your Birth Provider**

Make a conventional Birth Plan. Just keep in mind that hope is not a plan, and Birth Plans should not be used as a wish list, like items on a menu, or as a way to tell your birth provider what you expect them to deliver to you. Most birth providers see lots of Birth Plans based on ideological beliefs fail to eventuate. The lesson here is that birthing better is *not* simply expecting a better birth.

**You have to work for the birth you want, even if the birth you have is not what you wanted.** Thus, in addition to your conventional Birth Plan, make a second Birth Plan that explains to your birth provider how you are preparing for birth and what skills they will see you use. Your second Birth Plan balances what you “want” with what you’ll be “doing.”

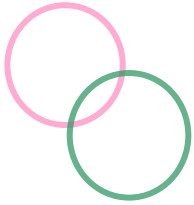
You can still have a mostly positive birth experience even if nothing you wanted and everything you didn’t want happened, just so long as you use your skills thoroughly and deeply. Increased medical care (even if not in your Birth Plan) will never prevent you from using your skills. And no Pink Kit family, in the 35 years of this childbirth system’s evolution, has been stopped by a birth professional from using their skills.

So what else can you do as a primary team in the midst of a host of professionals?

- Be your own problem-solvers first. Take care of your own energy. Work out your own solutions.

### **Screw it**

*“I felt the baby stuck in my hip. Everyone was trying to get me to do this or that. ‘Screw it,’ I said to myself, and figured out how I needed to move. Twenty minutes later, I was pushing.”*



## Connecting as a Team with Your Baby

Birth is one of those experiences that gather a woman into their embrace and demand her total attention. For many women, particularly those with no skills, Birth Stories are full of feeling lost and out of control, not knowing what is happening, and just “getting through.” This all-encompassing experience does not have to be overwhelming, though.

When a woman feels she is listening well to the messages her baby sends through her body as it navigates out her body, it is sublime. A connection is made and sustained between herself and her baby. In other words, if you are able to read the 5 Phases of each contraction and adapt your skills as needed, you know you are in tune with your child’s efforts to be born, and you will have a deeper sense of having understood the birth.

Via teamwork, your entire primary team can connect with your baby. Needless to say, this connectedness may drop off and get out of sync for moments throughout the process. But, overall, connectedness occurs more frequently with families who practice their Pink Kit skills during pregnancy and then use them in a progressive, consistent manner in early labor and throughout the rest of the birth. And this connectedness increases through any subsequent birth, because the skills and awareness become more refined.

With Pink Kit skills, your ability to achieve this very special relationship continues as your baby grows. Families who birth without skills will still go on to develop parenting skills that bring them into a sense of connectedness with their children. But one goal of your Pink Kit Package is to begin that relationship in pregnancy, then carry it through the birthing process (no matter what is happening to you or around you) and on into your parenting.