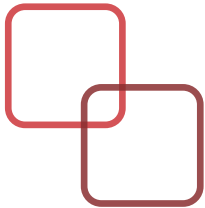




What It's Not

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.



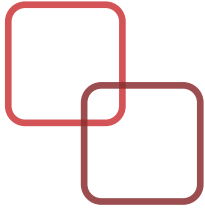
- Finally, another inaccurate assumption is that there is no way for a man to really help. This is entirely false.

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

Childbirth



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.