

Calm Birth®

NEW POTENTIAL OF CHILDBIRTH

www.CalmBirth.org

Introducing Calm Birth: **Meditation Practices Guiding Us Back to Our Birth Wisdom**

What is Calm Birth?

The Calm Birth method is a set of three respected practices from meditation science. The practices work together to offer a new vision of a pregnant woman's body and potential. the Calm Birth method:

- helps heal the nervous systems of mother and womb child in preparation for birth;
- Builds women's ability to manage anxiety, fear, and pain during pregnancy and labor;
- Strengthens the immune systems of mother and child;
- Helps women discover their inherent healing nature;
- Raises the quality of the childbirth experience.

The “Calm” in Calm Birth does not mean silent or an expressive; many calm births involve moving, sounding, and trusting what emerges from within. Calm Birth does mean labor characterized by inner strength, deep presence, and connection with our sacred nature of being.

The three practices of Calm Birth are called *Practice of Opening*, *Womb Breathing*, and *Giving and Receiving*, centuries-old wisdom merged with current understandings of healing, the energy body, and quantum physics. The method is presented in the form of an audio guide CD so that women may listen daily and practice empowering childbirth meditation as they hear the words. Whether a woman has had previous meditation experience or not, she will do the practice with the audio guide and prepare for fearless childbirth. The method has been refined through 10 plus years of use with childbirth professionals and birthing women.

Practice of Opening is a 23 minute reclining Progressive Relaxation practice. Progressive Relaxation (PR) was initially developed by Edmund Jacobson M.D. at Harvard University Medical School and University of Chicago Medical School in the 1930s and 1940s, and has been used to successfully treat many disease conditions by healing their corresponding nervous system disturbances. In 1979, John Kabot-Zinn deepened the effectiveness of progressive relaxation by combining it with mindfulness meditation in creating the now-renowned Mindfulness Based

Stress Reduction (MBSR) program at the University of Massachusetts Medical Center(UMMC). PR Is one of the two pain management practices the UMMC program is founded upon. In applying this self-care technique to pregnancy, Calm Birth adds:

- The practice of releasing nervous system stresses in preparing for birth to optimize neural function in mother and child;
- An awareness of vital energy at the cellular level which builds Vitality in preparation for birth;
- Direct engagement with the womb child enhancing prenatal health and development.

Womb Breathing Is a 22 minute sitting meditation using energy breathing. It rings in full oxygenation and increased energy for greater function in childbirth. Daily practice of wound breathing helps women progressively recognize and release anxiety and fear in preparation for labor. With this practice women free themselves from fear of pain and fear of fear. Women learn to distinguish pain from suffering. They're able to breathe calm into labor, preventing themselves from suffering, entering new dimensions of life.

This practice gives the pregnant woman a new vision of her body and its potential. Based on a meditation method proven effective through centuries of use, it gives women the chance to prove their greatest inborn capability for childbirth. Women learn how to breathe into their energy body, consciously drawing breaths of vital energy from the air into a Life Vase, a feature of the energy body located at the navel center in the area of the womb. With this practice women's strengthen their immune systems and activate both their physical and energy body systems.

With *Womb Breathing* women benefit themselves, bring their children into greater function and ability, and most often want to maintain the practice for the rest of their lives. The more a pregnant woman does this practice, the more it arises spontaneously from within. It may be the most complete and profound method ever offered to women for childbirth.

Giving and Receiving, is a 12 minute sitting meditation practice in which the pregnant woman transforms any effects of shock and trauma which may still be present from her own birth. The practice is used to benefit the womb child's health and development. A pregnant woman learns to breathe in the energy of any pain, stress, illness or trauma within her Or her baby and breathe out calm, healing energy in its place.

This method brings a healing practice into preparation for childbirth. It applies a famous practice for meditation science that for centuries has been known to have

extraordinary healing potential. It encourages women to discover their natural genius for healing in preparation for birth.

Women who learn *Giving and Receiving* for childbirth most often make this practice of healing an ongoing part of their life, building an inner strength and confidence.

The Calm Birth program also has a set of **five postnatal care practices** presented on the **Calm Mother** audio guide CD. call Mother includes postnatal applications of the three calm birth meditations as well as an evolutionary breastfeeding practice and a practice for parents to do together. The *Breast-Breathing, Breath-Feeding* method teaches vase breathing while nursing. It is designed to assist relaxation and let down of milk and to infuse the milk with vital energy and immune-enhancement hormones stimulated by the meditation.

Why Calm Birth Meditation for Optimal Self-Care?

Womb Breathing is optimal breathing in that it breathes energy and oxygen inseparably. It significantly enhances the immune system and directly builds the women's vitality. While profound and far-reaching in its benefits, the Calm Birth method is simple for women to access; a woman simply sits or reclines in a comfortable, well-propped position and follows the guided meditation. Meditation practice has been shown to increase natural production of hormones essential to our well-being such as serotonin, melatonin, DHEA, and oxytocin, as well as endorphins, peptides secreted by the brain that have an important pain relieving function. Meditation also reduces stress levels, restoring the body to a better balance and higher function.¹ The tone of the meditations is deeply peaceful and the language is beautiful and inspiring. The womb child receives the benefits of its mother's attention and care as well as the biological enrichment of nourishing hormones as they cross the placenta.

The calm birth method is complementary medicine. It offers women advanced natural childbirth and at the same time offers a healthy complement to those who choose or require medication during the hospital birth. Calm Birth practices help strengthen the nervous system and immune system to reduce the impact of side effects of drugs and anesthesia, and help women recover faster from surgery. These practices are for labor, for parenting and for life. They build capacity to be present and courageous during difficult moments. these practices prepare women and their Partners to birth and parent consciously with deep resources.

¹ See Chapter II in Newman, R. 2005, *Calm Birth: New Method for Conscious Childbirth*. Berkeley, CA: North Atlantic Books

Origins of Calm Birth

The converse program was founded by Robert Newman, an American, who apprenticed for 20 years with Tibetan meditation teachers and doctors. He currently teaches their methods. Newman closely followed the successes of the programs in medical uses of meditation at Harvard University and the University of Massachusetts. The rapidly growing body of compelling research on the health benefits of meditation and the shifts in the medical paradigm, inspired him to establish an organization called Medigrace. This organization promotes the research and development of medical applications of mind / body and meditation science. In 1998, with the help of many childbirth professionals, Calm Birth was founded in Ashland, Oregon. More than 100 hospital trainings in this method have been presented since then all accredited by the California Board of Nursing. More than 3,000 mothers have given birth using the Calm Birth method, and partners have played an active role in the majority of these births. The program has been presented three times at the Congress of the Association of Pre- and Perinatal Psychology and Health (APPPAH) ,at the University of Michigan Medical School and Bastyr University, in Seattle Washington. International interest continues to grow. childbirth professionals from other countries have been attending the teacher trainings.

What the Mothers are Saying

Many women find a resonance with the practices. "Once I heard Womb Breathing, it was like suddenly I knew how I wanted to give birth," shared one mother. "It really made the contractions work for me and not feel like suffering." Another mother reflected, "I had this thought that these contractions are manageable, so do-able that if I just do my vase breathing, which I did throughout. My baby was well. I was well. I was fully present. I was fully alive. I am grateful and in love. The breath and the vital energy work made all the difference for me." Even women who experience cesarean births explain how the calm birth practices helped them stay connected to a sense of the sacredness, power and majesty of the birth process. Many calm birth stories are documented in the calm birth book and on the website.

Learning, Sharing and Teaching Calm Birth

While it is preferable for a pregnant woman and her partner to receive instruction from a teacher in the calm birth method, the CD and book present the method to meet the needs of those unable to attend a class. birth professionals who would like to learn the practices can take a teacher training intensive with Teacher trainers around the country. the method can then be shared with clients by teaching formal

classes, referring clients to others who teach the classes, OR at a minimum by providing them with the CD in the book. It is important to note that the method can have a profound impact on women with little or no meditation experience. The best results are achieved when the method is practiced regularly.

Endorsements For Calm Birth

Major childbirth Educators have expressed recognition of Calm Birth's importance. Christiane Northrup, MD, author of *Mother-Daughter Wisdom*, *The Wisdom of Menopause* and *Women's Bodies, Women's Wisdom*, says, is a sublime gift to all of us. It contains the blueprint for reconnecting with birth wisdom on all levels.. during the practices will transform the birth process and imprint a peaceful beginning in both mother and child. The positive impact of this on society can't be overestimated." Thomas Verny, MD, Co-founder of APPPAH, sees Calm Birth as "an empowering alternative to the medicalization of birth", and feels that "the techniques liberate women to challenge their innate wisdom into welcoming their newborn child in a truly life-affirming way." David Chamberlain, PhD, co-founder of APPPAH, states "Calm Birth is arriving at the opportune time in the early years of the 21st century. Calm Birth works in both physical anatomy, energy body anatomy and meditation science to access energies that are invisible but very much present. The prospect of reducing complications while increasing maternal feelings of dignity and triumph should warm the hearts of all birth attendants." Perhaps the greatest honor is offered in the words of beloved Jeannine Parvati-Baker author of *Prenatal Yoga and Natural Childbirth* and *Conscious Conception*, "Calm Birth is the childbirth method that society and I have waited for.. it heals the Earth by healing birth."