

The Good News and the Bad News About Giving Birth

A one-page guide by Vicki Elson, MA, CCE, CD, www.birth-media.com. Feel free to copy this.
Thanks to Karen Brody and Angela Lauria, www.feartofreedombirth.com, for the inspiration!

1. The Bad News

Nobody is going to sprinkle fairy dust and make your labor effortless or pain-free. Giving birth will ultimately be your work, your responsibility. It's hard work, and it's a big responsibility. You'll have to soften your body and mind, breathe deep, move around, surrender to your own physical power, and work with your baby's efforts to get born.

Epidurals and drugs may be wonderful, but they might also have gaps or side effects that you and your baby don't like. You'll benefit from taking the time to learn natural methods and trying those first, no matter how you give birth. Cesareans may be occasionally be lifesaving, but they don't eliminate pain. They just postpone it till after the baby's born.

Your care providers are not God. They are smart people who bring their own skills, experiences, and opinions. You need to choose them carefully, and do your homework anyway, and be willing to stand up for what you want. You bring courage, curiosity, love, and relaxation skills.

2. The Good News

You are exquisitely well-equipped to give birth. Your ancestors have been doing it for ages, and it works just fine, or there wouldn't be seven billion of us running around on the planet.

Plus, labor is temporary, a tiny fragment of your lifetime. The pain comes in waves and is usually not constant. There's nothing to fix. And you get a prize at the end!

You have courage and strength and intelligence and love inside you that you might not know about yet. But you can find it when you need to. This skill will help you through any scenario, including cesarean. Good labor support reminds you how strong and brave you already are.

Somewhere in the middle of you there is a core, a fountain, a source, from which you can draw whatever you need when the going gets tough. As the work gets harder, your ability to cope with it gets bigger. You may think you're a wimp, but you are, in fact, awesome!

You can educate yourself and make responsible choices about nutrition, health care, exercise, birth plans, backup plans. You can learn to evaluate pro's and con's, risks and benefits. Good practice for parenthood! Nobody is going to do this for you, though they might help.

3. Is This A Metaphor For Life?

Why yes, it is. You won't get through life without pain. You will have to own your feelings. You will have to take responsibility for your choices, words, and actions.

No matter what other people or germs or situations or politicians do to you, it's your job to find your strength and do your best. It's your job to gather information and make the best choices you can. Only you can choose peace inside yourself.

"You have to accept whatever comes, and the only important thing is that you meet it with courage and with the best that you have to give." -- Eleanor Roosevelt