

Jean Powles

Born Happy

There are so many sad stories of lonely or frightening experiences of birth that I would like to share the very positive memories I have of the birth of my daughter, twenty years ago.

...The memory of the cheerful and friendly classes in Natural Childbirth organised by the Hospital ante-natal clinic, where I learned to breathe properly and relax.

...Of being greeted when I went into hospital by a warm and reassuring hug from the sister-in-charge.

...Of sitting on a veranda during the early stages of labour, overlooking the beechwoods that stretched down to the river, and watching the squirrels in the trees.

...Of the constant attention of the physiotherapist who helped me to establish the correct breathing at each stage, and who sat with me helping me to relax.

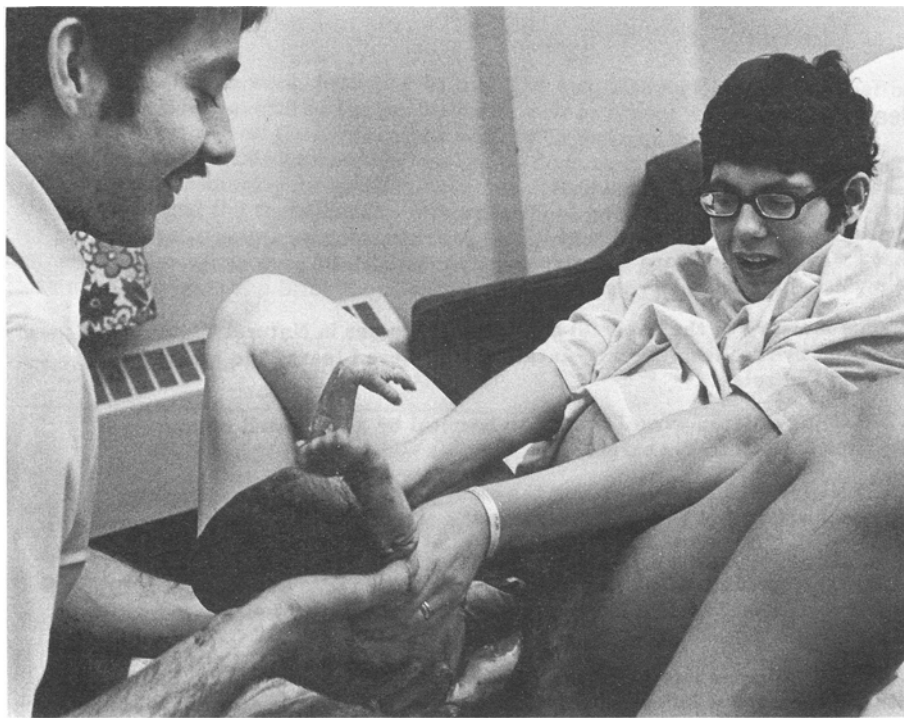
...Of my delight when the sister asked if I would like my husband to stay with me throughout labour. He was the first husband to be allowed to stay right through at that hospital, and the experiment was so successful that he was the first of many.

He was a great help both emotionally and physically, helping me to turn over when necessary, and even wheeling me into the labour ward for the final stages. He held my hand, told me the baby was a girl when she arrived, and gave her to me to hold after the cord was cut. She was wide awake, as I had not needed any drugs during her very rapid delivery, and she lay calmly in my arms, gazing straight through me with large dark eyes.

I felt in the first minutes that I held her that I was being re-united with an old friend, not meeting a stranger. As I am a lifelong believer in reincarnation I had felt all through my pregnancy that I was carrying a person closely attuned to my feelings.

The hospital staff were delighted with her as she showed no signs of shock or exhaustion, and she tried to feed only four hours after she was born. She established feeding in record time, and never lost her birthweight, surely showing that children who have a quick and easy birth don't suffer from shock, and that wide-awake mothers produce wide-awake babies.

I realise how fortunate I was in living in the area covered by a hospital that was pioneering in the Natural Childbirth movement, and which tempered its organisation with so much humanity and imagination. It is a loss to many mothers and babies that in the twenty years since then so few hospitals have followed their example.



THE CONTINUUM CONCEPT

Jenny Glover and I are both expecting babies in the Autumn. We would like to start a self-help group for those who are pregnant and with small babies (both men and women) who would like to explore possibilities of putting the Continuum concept into practice. Anyone who is interested in exploring their own continuum rather than applying it to child-rearing is also welcome.

The continuum is a concept explored by Jean Leadloff in her book 'The Continuum Concept' published by Futura Publications Limited. The book is not really about how to rear children but shows how the people of a South American Indian tribe are enough in touch with themselves to

bring up their children naturally and unselfconsciously. Jean Leadloff discusses how we, in 'civilized' society, may learn from them.

Jenny and I hope to start a leaderless group which does not form a new orthodoxy but, in a supportive and warm atmosphere, provides a setting in which we can help each other to be true to our own continuums in spite of internal and societal pressures.

If any of your readers are interested to join us could they ring me at 969 3051 or Jenny Glover at 580 2020 ext 2020 (daytime) or 602 6264 (evening).

Judy Ryde