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Empowered To Birth Naturally: One Woman's Journey To  
Homebirth

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**Empowered to Birth Naturally:**

**One Woman's Journey to Homebirth**

**By Patrice A. London**

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## Introduction

In our society, when starting new adventures people tend to pay close attention to detail. When considering buying a house, going to college, getting married, and even buying a television, people conduct extensive research. This same care and attention to detail is all but forgotten when it comes to the life-changing process of giving birth. This area is all too often left to the “experts.” This shouldn’t be the case. If more people would research the current medical model of care and the midwifery model of care, the results could be revolutionary. More women just might begin to trust that their bodies can, in fact, do what they were created to do — and do it well.

Of course, some don’t consider the *how* of giving birth to be important. They just want the end result — a healthy baby. We assume that the medical profession has our best interests at heart when various interventions are doled out “for the benefit of mother and baby.” There is no consideration of any long-

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term effects those interventions may have on mother and baby. It's all just accepted. Then, our society wonders why the cesarean rates are climbing. I believe the *how* of giving birth is of the utmost importance. I believe one can have the end result and a whole lot more. I've experienced firsthand how life-changing the process of birth can be. I've experienced it in a negative and positive light and would like to share those experiences with you.

It is not my intent to imply that homebirth is for everyone. My hope is, however, that every woman will seek to take birth back and make it her own. I would love to see women educated concerning the intricacies of pregnancy and childbirth and, therefore, making informed decisions concerning the way they govern themselves throughout pregnancy — even before pregnancy when possible — and especially in preparation for, and during, childbirth.

All too often, people are very close-minded about what they don't understand or know anything about. Of course, the lack of knowledge doesn't preclude one from making ridiculously callous, crude, and plain ignorant comments. I've heard far too many references to homebirth in particular that are utterly

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unfounded and just wrong. The fact is, the medical model that so many have bought into is the *newbie*, not homebirth. Ever since the medical model was introduced, the rates of cesareans and many other interventions have increased drastically and steadily. The old adage, “If it ain’t broke, don’t fix it,” certainly applies here. Even with all of the evidence, people remain as ignorant as ever concerning unmedicated birth. What’s even more incredulous is that the very people who declare it unsafe or unnecessary have *never* experienced or attended an unmedicated or homebirth.

I must preface the following pages by saying that although it is obvious that I have very strong feelings concerning those I’ve come in contact with in the medical model of childbirth, I do not undermine the necessity of the profession. Obstetricians and gynecologists are most definitely needed. I am especially grateful when I consider my cousin Tami’s experience in giving birth to her first child, Jordynn. Because of the care and expertise the doctor brought at the end of her pregnancy, Tami and Jordynn are alive and thriving today.

The problem arises, however, when that same care one receives out of necessity during an emergency, becomes routine. Normal

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labor and birth should not be seen as a problem to be fixed or a disease to be cured. The same care Tami received in her urgent situation becomes an intrusive, unnecessary, hindrance and is sometimes even harmful in a normal, low-risk birth. When Tami neared her expected due date with her second daughter, Kennedy, she was denied the right to even try for a vaginal birth simply because she had a cesarean with her first.

All too often it is difficult for a woman wishing to have an unmedicated birth in the hospital to achieve that goal. I would like to see that change. The pregnant women themselves should be educated and ultimately in charge of this process.

One either views birth as a medical event or a natural process. Unfortunately, mainstream thinking leads most to believe it is a medical event. It's no wonder with the images portrayed in the media. Birth is too often seen as an urgent, chaotic, and scary event that only doctors are able to handle. Television shows dramatize it by showing panic-ridden women and their loved ones in utter chaos. A woman is completely fine one moment; then, suddenly her water breaks and she's instantly experiencing the most crippling pain she's ever experienced in her life. Then you later see doctors scrambling into the hospital room



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screaming, “Push!” We are constantly bombarded with these scenes of tumultuous confusion that all too often end with sudden decisions to perform cesareans. It’s no wonder women are fearful and have trouble trusting the process.

Choosing to give birth at home had nothing to do with wanting to be old fashioned. The idea didn’t stem from any sort of feminist “I am woman hear me roar” views. I don’t like pain any more than the next rationally sane individual. Simply put, I view birth as a natural process that is to be respected, awed, and pretty much left alone. Choosing to give birth at home is more about the fact that I have complete faith in my body and its ability to bring forth my babies. Moreover, I have faith in the God who made my body. I know He has equipped me to be able to give birth and enjoy it. Birth can be a wonderfully empowering experience. I’ve been blessed to be able to experience birth this way twice. My first birth proved to be a catalyst for more education, better parenting practices, and subsequently, more enjoyable births in the future.

For me, a wonderful birthing experience does not happen in a hospital. It happens in the sanctity of my own home. Because of my second and third birth experiences, I am able to look back at

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my births with a contented smile and sigh. They were absolutely wonderful!

I am grateful that you have picked up my book. In the following pages, I will share my experiences, good and bad, and how I made the journey from a hospital to a birth center and, finally, a homebirth. It is my hope that something within these pages causes you to think differently concerning birth.

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