

BIRTHING NATURALLY

How to Read Birth Stories

For most women, birth stories help to relieve the anxiety of the first labor experience. A good birth story lets you “see” a birth without having to be at a birth. It allows you to view a birth from the mother’s perspective, and learn about the normal process of labor. Birth stories can also help you be prepared for your own labor. Use this worksheet while you read a birth story to help you learn to read a birth story with a critical eye. In this way you will learn to identify the skills and techniques you can use to be successful at giving birth naturally.

Labor Speed

- Can you identify the stages of labor for this mother?
- What evidence do you have early in the labor that this labor would be fast; slow; normal speed?
- What things did this mother do that might have sped up or slowed down her labor?

Communication

- Can you identify ways this woman communicated her needs with her birth team?
- What evidence do you find that her communication was effective or ineffective?
- What other methods of communication could this mother have employed?

Birth Planning

- Can you identify this woman’s pre-labor birth plan?
- What evidence do you find that her birth plan was or was not followed?
- What factors had an effect on the following or not following of her birth plan?
- What other options were available to this woman that she did not choose?
- How might the other options have affected her labor?

Making Choices

- Can you identify the specific decisions this woman made while in labor?
- Where might you have made different decisions?
- What are the possible outcomes of the decisions you would make?
- What other options may be available to you that you would not choose?
- What are the possible outcomes of the other options?

Reflection

- In what ways would you be comfortable if this were your labor story?
- In what ways would you be uncomfortable if this were your labor story?

FINDING BIRTH STORIES

There are many birth stories available for you to review, if you know where to look.

BOOKS

Many books about childbirth contain birth stories. There are even books of birth stories available.

INTERNET

Many women have shared their birth stories on the internet. By typing birth stories into a search engine, you can find entire websites devoted to the sharing of birth stories.

BIRTH CIRCLES

Women in some communities get together to share birth stories. If there is no birth circle in your area, you might try attending a play group or a La Leche League meeting to hear birth stories.

BIRTH PROFESSIONALS

Childbirth Educators, midwives and doulas often collect birth stories to share with their clients.

FRIENDS AND FAMILY

You may be surprised how many women are willing to share their birth story when you take the tie to ask.