

**May is certainly full of celebrations. International day of Families and of the Midwife, and Mother's Day, all give cause for reflection and homage.**

**Bronwyn van Hooijdonk  
Company Director**

#### International day of Families 15 May 2008

Feelings of worth can flourish only in an atmosphere where individual differences are appreciated, mistakes are tolerated, communication is open, and rules are flexible - the kind of atmosphere that is found in a nurturing family.

Virginia Satir

#### Celebrate Midwives on 5<sup>th</sup> May - International Day of the Midwife

Take a moment to think about the impact Midwives have on health statistics, on the emotional health, self-worth and self-esteem of the women they serve, and the safety and well being they create for mothers and babies everywhere.

#### Craniosacral Therapy by local Therapist Nikki Anderson

Craniosacral Therapy (CST) is a gentle and non-invasive therapy ideal during pregnancy and for babies and infants. In fact the whole family can benefit. U.S Osteopath Dr William Garner Sutherland first recognized craniosacral motions and their relevance to health in the early 1900's. Since then many practitioners including John Upledger and Franklyn Sills have extended and refined craniosacral therapy into the subtle, deep and healing process which is available today.

Pregnancy and birth although a completely natural and resourceful time for women, is also a period of huge change, both physically and emotionally. A woman's body naturally provides a wealth of hormones for the major adaptation of growing a baby. The hormone relaxin that is produced during pregnancy affects the ligaments of the pelvis - making it a more mobile and pliable structure to give birth. Unfortunately relaxin also affects all ligaments throughout the body and this places the musculoskeletal system under strain making it more liable to injury.

This strain can cause backache. A sensitive craniosacral therapist can easily assess the pattern of experience within the tissues, relieving discomfort and pain.

Along with the wealth of hormonal changes that occur and major physical adaptations, women also face lifestyle and relationship changes both pre and postnatal. Many women feel like they are on an emotional roller coaster, perhaps tired and drained by trying to maintain a "normal" life. Regular CST treatments give them an opportunity to focus on themselves and to celebrate the changes that indicate the development of life within them.

Babies too respond quickly to treatment and it is beneficial to have your baby checked after the birth. Compressions and restrictions within the cranial system can happen even during a gentle birth and may lead to common infant problems such as colic, poor feeding, excessive crying and breathing difficulties.

"My three month old son, Thomas screamed all day long and nothing I tried seemed to help. I was at my wits end with sleep deprivation and stress, coping with a colicky baby. I was so grateful for my Craniosacral Therapists Support help and support. She listened to my concerns and when she cuddled him like one of her own, I saw him finally relax. Thomas' rough birth had created birth trauma injuring his neck and spine. Her gentle manipulation and nurturing care made a huge difference. After three treatments he was a different baby, peacefully sleeping and feeding without spilling. Since then she has also treated teething problems, again with great success, helping us through a very trying time. I only wish I'd heard of her earlier!"

Contributed by Nikki Anderson RCST (06) 875 0926 or mobile 021 048 1640



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8751170 or 027 575 1610  
or di.reefman@clear.net.nz



#### Mother's Day Poem Untitled

A halo that reflects a life of wisdom, kindness, and caring.  
Eyes that sparkle with pride and show how much she believes in you.  
Shoulders that have been slept on and wept on and carried a world or two.  
Arms that never run out of hugs.  
Hands that know just when to hold on and when to let go.  
A mind filled with amazing things, from fairy tales to family tales and long-ago stories of you.  
A smile that can jump right into your heart and warm you faster than hot chocolate.  
A heart of gold that holds more love than you can possibly imagine.

**Author Unknown**

## RECORDING BIRTH STORIES

Every person on the planet has a birth story. One of the greatest gifts you can give your children is to record their birth stories. This doesn't necessarily mean you have to put your labour and delivery on video though!

If you like to write, you can simply take pen to paper or sit at your computer. However, if you're daunted by the idea of putting words on paper, consider using a tape recorder to create an oral account.

Here are some ideas of things that you may want to include when you record your children's birth stories:

Think about where your story begins before you actually begin. You might want to consider the following possibilities:

- begin with conception;
- begin before conception-especially if conceiving was difficult or if that part of your story is particularly interesting or unique;
- begin with a pregnancy test-at home, in a doctor's or mid-wife's clinic;
- begin with the first telling of the news of your pregnancy to a husband; partner, friend, or parent.
- begin at the onset of labor.

The important idea here is to begin with a specific time and place. Every story needs a clear beginning.

After you decide the "where" and "when" of your beginning, find a time-ideally about an hour and a half-and schedule some private, alone-time (very important!) to write or record.

When you're ready to begin, pick a comfortable place and do some deep breathing or relaxation exercises. Close your eyes and travel back to the day when your story begins. Still, with your eyes closed, remember yourself as you were. Re-imagine yourself in detail. Re-imagine the time, the place, and others who might have been with you.

Visualise that moment in complete physical detail. For instance, you might recall: what you or others were wearing, the time of year and the weather, the day of the week, some unusual thought or idea that crossed your mind, some smell, sound, or other sensation.

The better you're able to remember the physical setting and detail, the better able you'll be to create a "picture" that will allow you to relive and communicate the complex reality of your birthing experience.

If you're recording, try to complete the telling of your story in a single session, even if you have to stop the tape recorder for a moment. If you're writing, it's best to draft in a single session - you can edit later. It's difficult, or sometimes impossible, to re-enter the same emotional space if you have to leave your story and then return at another time.

When you get up to the moment of the actual delivery, take a deep breath and try to refocus for a second wind - much like you might have had to do during the moment you turned from labor to delivery mode during birth!

You might want to think about where your story ends, or you might want to surprise yourself and come upon the ending naturally. Here, near the end, the same advice applies:

- remember physical details, sensations, actual thoughts you had, or words people said to you or to each other;
- be as present in the past as you can be;
- tell the truth-regardless of how you might think it sounds.

Remember, just as there's no wrong or right way to give birth, there's no wrong or right way to write or record your birthing experience. Any document or recorded effort you've completed is a testament to your own unique blend of personal strengths, weaknesses, and capabilities. Like the children we give birth to, these stories are part of who we are.

[www.canadianparents.com](http://www.canadianparents.com) and [www.med-help.net](http://www.med-help.net)

### Tips for New Dads written by Mark Akins

It's easy to assume that because your partner is breastfeeding your baby, there's little or no role for you in the area of feeding. However, there are lots of ways in which you can support your partner and help develop both the breastfeeding process and your own relationship with your baby.

Remember that the only thing you can't do is the breastfeeding - you can change nappies, comfort a crying baby, and play with your baby, or help out with housework and errands. Or take a walk with the baby and suggest that your partner spends some time relaxing, catching up on sleep, or taking a soothing bath.

When possible, get up to comfort the baby in the night or bring your baby to your partner for night feeds so that you're both helping through the night. When your partner has finished feeding the baby, offer to wind him, rock him back to sleep or play with him for a while.

When your friends and relatives suddenly become experts on breastfeeding and other aspects of parenting, guard your partner against their well-meant but sometimes hurtful words of 'advice'.

Keep an eye out for the first signs of postnatal depression, many women experience some degree of PND and the earlier it's caught, the better. If your partner is restless or irritable, depressed or crying a lot, suffering chest pains or palpitations or hyperventilation then talk to her and together seek the advice of a health professional. Reassure your partner that PND is very common and easily treatable.

If this baby isn't your first, then the other children may experience totally natural feelings of jealousy, resentment or simply unease. If your partner is breastfeeding then there will be spells during the day when she is unable to give much attention to the older children. Make sure that if you're taking paternity leave, you spend some time with your older children and also that you take time to look after the baby in between feeds, leaving your partner time to devote to the older children.

Make sure that you spend time on your new relationship with your baby, but also spend time on your relationship with your partner. The birth of a new baby can be a bit overwhelming even if it's not your first, and it's important that you and your partner are working as a team, especially during the first months.

Give yourself a break when you need it and always keep the line of communication open with your partner. New fathers soon learn the many ways other than breastfeeding in which they can bond with their new baby and partner.

[www.treehuggermums.co.uk](http://www.treehuggermums.co.uk)

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