

Preparation for a Conscious Conception, Pregnancy and Birth: A Holistic Approach

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Full Text: The field of Prenatal Conscious Parenting is rather unevolved in this culture. For some reason, most people, including childbirth educators, seem to be unaware that it is possible and important to prepare to conceive a child. I firmly believe in a Holistic Health approach that embraces the mental, physical, emotional, and spiritual aspects of the parents' attitudes and the child's development. I am also concerned that most of the literature on prenatal health care only refers to the importance of the mother's influence on pregnancy and child development. I would like to reveal and support the profound importance of the father's contribution to the child's overall development. There is very little written on the subject. I invite prospective fathers to go beyond tradition and make their presence known to their unborn children. Many of the insights and inspirations for this work originate from my personal therapeutic processes both as a client and as a therapist working on issues of self-love, sexuality, intimacy, and family relationships. I learned that so many of our adult personality disorders and struggles originate from early prenatal, birth, and childhood traumas and experiences. I have been gathering family histories that all reflect the dynamic human struggles between Unconditional Love and Conditional Love; Trust and Mistrust, Acceptance and Rejection, the feeling of being "Wanted" vs. Being Abandoned. It is through exploring these themes with myself and my clients, as well as through personal interviews with parents and children, that my ideal holistic model on "Prenatal Conscious Parenting" developed. I also drew upon scientific sources for my information, personal accounts of prenatal birth experiences, and spiritual doctrines and teachings. Through meditation and therapeutic techniques such as rebirthing, I have been able to consciously recall my own prenatal experiences. I invite all of those who believe in Spirit to allow themselves the possibility that they too can learn to remember and heal their early prenatal and birth experiences. To do this, one must trust in one's intuitive faculties, for this remembrance of prenatal consciousness cannot be proven by scientific evidence. Rather, the evidence is in the clear insights that one receives in relation to this recall of prenatal life. The important thing is that the person who re-experiences prenatal trauma learns to use the Insight to promote growth and understanding in present life situations. If the parents are genuinely concerned about creating ideal conditions for their child's prenatal development, they might want to consider preparing for conception as the first step. It is during the preparation phase that the consciousness of the parents, and thus the child, has the first opportunity to begin developing. Because this is relatively new work, some of what I am sharing is speculative. But most of what I am expressing is ancient wisdom reflected in some of the most traditional scriptures. The focus of my research and exploration has been on prenatal influences and traumas as they relate to the development of consciousness of the unborn child. As suggested earlier, I believe that this is where the consciousness of a being begins, "the seed of the seed." If this seed is planted consciously and lovingly at conception, the child will most likely fully flower. Obviously, the birth experience and post-natal development are also critical for the seed to grow with vitality and health. I also feel that it is in the best interest of the medical doctors and health care practitioners to consider learning and practicing the natural alternative birthing methods. In order to do this, they must first become aware of the psychological and physical effects of technological intervention. They need to be trained to help the parents PREPARE for childbirth so that the parents are more relaxed, and it is less likely that medical complications will occur. They must encourage the couples to resolve their prenatal birth traumas so that their unresolved experiences are not unconsciously projected into the prenatal care of their child. Some of the questions I use to help my clients to become aware of their prenatal experience and thus prepare for conception are: * Who was

present at your birth? * Do you feel that it is possible to recall your prenatal experience? Your birth experience? * Do you remember anything about your prenatal experience? Your birth experience? Please describe any details even if you do not feel that they make any sense. * Do you feel that you were loved when you were born? If yes, by whom? If no, by whom? * Do you recall any conscious communication with your mother while in the womb? With your father? With a spirit? * Do you have any feelings about the doctor or midwife who helped birth you? * Do you love yourself? * Do you love your mother? * Do you love your father? * Do you believe in Spirit? * Do you believe that your soul chooses your parents? * Do you believe that as a fetus one can have conscious communication with one's parents while in the womb? If yes, how? * Do you believe that spiritual forces contributed to your fetal development while you were in the womb? * As a child, did you feel loved by both parents? Explain. * Do you feel you have any mental, physical, or spiritual struggles in your present life that are related to your prenatal or birth experience? If so, what are they? * When you think about your prenatal experience or birth, are there any visual images or auditory sounds that capture your recollection of your prenatal experience? Your birth? Please describe in detail. * What is the primary emotion that you feel when you allow yourself to reflect on your prenatal experience? Your birth? (joy, sadness, depression, fear, anger, numbness, etc.) Please describe. * Why are you here today? What do you need to feel safe to explore your feelings about your prenatal and birth experience? * Is there anything else you wish to share? In responding to these questions the couples often consciously clarify their past as well as become aware of their mates' prenatal experiences and beliefs. This exercise offers the couple a conscious foundation of principles and issues to address one another and the birthing team while preparing to conceive and give birth. In consideration of Prenatal Conscious Parenting, "BEING CONSCIOUS" begins with a conscious conception. This embraces four basic principles: 1. Conscious Loving-Loving oneself, one's mate, and the child who is to be conceived. 2. Conscious Parenting-Beginning with preparing one's whole being before one conceives. 3. Conscious Birthing-Beginning at the moment of conception so that the unborn child has a gentle, loving birth experience. 4. Conscious Bonding-Beginning with both the mother and father maintaining active communication with the unborn child through touching and talking. . . Then continuing this bonding at the birth and post-natally. The quality of this bonding experience will profoundly affect the foundation of the parents' relationships to one another and to the overall family unit of the unborn child throughout its life. It is each prospective parent's responsibility to create a positive birth experience for their child and themselves. They must be aware of what they need and want individually, together, and for the child. On the same level, many emotional conflicts grow out of fetal memories, whether the recollections are conscious ones, or as is most often the case, unconscious. As Dr. Thomas Verny states: A secure person is deeply self-confident. How can he not be when he has been told from the very edge of consciousness onward that he is wanted and loved. Such attributes as optimism, confidence, friendliness, and extroversion flow naturally from that sense.¹ I feel a child can be given these gifts easily by creating a secure, emotionally enriching environment in utero. There is a tremendous difference between "neurotic parenting" vs. "conscious parenting." Being a "conscious parent" means respecting the child's individuality and not instilling fear, doubt, or an overbearing concern that does not nurture the full expression of the child's true being. "Neurotic parenting" is the unconscious need to smother or restrict the child from expressing its true creative self. I would like to offer a few possibilities about bonding with the unborn child. I believe this bonding begins at conception and possibly even before that. The primary moment of bonding is when both parents consciously choose to establish, create, and nurture a mental, emotional, physical, and spiritual relationship with the being. It is at this moment that the bonding begins. Ideally, this bonding takes place before the pregnancy as well as throughout, during, and after birth. Some of the ancient doctrines, such as the Torah, claim that bonding can occur before conception. Many Eastern scriptures claim this as well. Much of these spiritual writings claim that "the Spirit is greater than the flesh." In other words, even though the body is not physically formed, the Spirit is fully present in utero for the parents to relate to. Bonding BEFORE BIRTH is immensely beneficial to mother, father and child. Verny claims that there are three different ways to

communicate to the child in utero. The most obvious and measurable is the physiological, as even an emotionally rejective mother communicates with the child biologically. Secondly, there is behavioral communication where a mother's emotion elicits a kicking or behavioral response in the child. The third is what he calls the "sympathetic communication" where a child and mother are communicating on an intuitive and sensory level. I believe that is where "love consciousness" thrives. The giving and receiving of love cannot be measured by scientific evidence or research. The mother and father can develop this intuitive sensitivity as they learn to pay closer attention to the subtle messages they send the child and it sends them. This requires knowledge, understanding, and a willingness to listen to the child. This brings me to "Conscious Fathering." In all of my readings on prenatal and post-natal parenting, I was very surprised to discover that there is very little acknowledgement of the presence and importance of the father in the fetal development of the unborn child. It is definitely possible for the father to bond with the unborn child through touching the mother and talking to the child. The fetus is receptive to touch and voice from both parents. In this age of feminism and sexual liberation, I encourage men and prospective fathers to take responsibility for their positive influence and presence in the preparation for conception, prenatal care, and the birthing experience. The child is created by both the mother and the father, and fathers can choose to nurture their "half of the bond. "Conscious Fathering" is 'fathering consciously' from the moment of conception. Since the mother is the carrier of the body of the child, the father must find creative and less tangible ways to communicate while it is in the womb. Touching the woman's belly, singing, talking, meditating and praying are all creative ways a father can connect to the unborn child. A man's support and commitment to the relationship with his mate is absolutely essential to his wife's and child's well-being. Ideally, the father can prepare for conception in the same manner as his mate. If he feels insecure about his wife or has negative feelings about his childhood, these can be worked out before conception. Since the child is profoundly affected by the mother, few things are more dangerous to a child emotionally and physically than a father who abuses or neglects his pregnant wife. I encourage a man preparing for childbirth to get in touch with his feeling of inadequacy when his partner is experiencing fears, doubts, or birthing pain so he can be there to truly support her and the child. The husband can attend prenatal classes with his wife and learn to be her "emotional coach" during pregnancy and delivery. A loving relationship with a man offers the woman continual emotional support during the pregnancy and birth which is very important to a woman and her unborn child. The sooner a man involves himself with the child's life during the prenatal stages of development, the more the child will benefit. Although he is at a physiological disadvantage, he can psychologically bond with the child by talking to the child. As VERNY states: A child hears his father's voice in utero and there is solid evidence that hearing that voice makes a big emotional difference.² I am astounded by how many adults spend their whole lives resolving prenatal, birth and early childhood traumas of rejection and separation. Many people are scarred by destructive prenatal influences. Prenatal psychology is finally offering a way of preventing many of these tragedies from occurring. My solution to this chronic cultural and worldwide problem is to educate parents and childbirth educators so that they are aware that they can be communicating love and acceptance to the child before and especially from the moment of conception. Then the being does not have to spend physical, emotional, spiritual, and mental energy in doubt and fear, or in healing the trauma, but rather this energy is freed for self-actualization. So the concept is to minimize any trauma from the moment of conception onward. It is the latest research of Thomas VERNY and other clinical investigators that inspired me to explore PRACTICAL consciousness raising techniques for parents who are preparing to give birth. Surprisingly enough, there are not that many couples who are even aware that they can prepare to conceive. From this personal interest, I began to develop an ideal holistic model of "Prenatal Conscious Parenting," embracing the mental, emotional, physical, and spiritual health of both the parents and the child to be conceived. I invite people to consider this ideal as a possibility, and to make any personal modifications that embrace and reflect their own belief systems and life style. This ideal model offers the parent the opportunity to create a more sensitive, nurturing, humane kind of care in the womb and at birth. Although this is a holistic model, I will present the mental, spiritual,

emotional and physical components separately. A. Physical 1. Nutritional Awareness I suggest prospective parents eat a simple vegetarian diet, making sure they are receiving all vitamins, minerals, and proteins for themselves as well as the necessary nutrients for the healthy development of the fetus. I suggest that they do not smoke or eat any toxic or artificial substances, for this is the very food that will contribute to the physical development of their child. What they are eating, the child is eating. I advise them to consult a holistic nutritional counselor. 2. Touch-as a way of communicating with the fetus. a. The couples should feel free to gently massage the womb area of the mother's body as often as the spirit moves them to do it. The man can massage her belly as a way of directly communicating his love to both the baby and the mother. The "laying on of hands" is felt by the unborn child and as it relaxes the mother, it relaxes the child. b. Couples might want to consider massaging each other as a way of communicating their love to each other. The child will feel this love too as it radiates between the parents. 3. Conscious Breathing Techniques a. It is very important to learn how to consciously breath so that both the parents and the child recive the optimal amount of oxygen for fetal development. Also, there are very specific breathing techniques developed to facilitate the birth experience for both mother and child. The mother and her mate may want to consider learning and practicing these breathing techniques, for the father can be a support for her throughout the birth by being a "breathing coach" when she goes into heavy labor. The couples can learn these techniques by attending any homebirth or prenatal classes. b. Couples may want to try lying close to one another and breathing together as a silent meditation and relaxation for themselves and the child. This is a way the father can communicate to the unborn child daily. 4. A Balanced Exercise Program Integrating the Developmental Stages of the Fetus To tone the body, the woman might want to consider doing prenatal yoga exercises daily to strengthen her body which is a continually active transformation throughout her pregnancy. The more relaxed and toned her body, the easier will be her pregnancy and birth experience. I suggest that the women seek a yoga teacher or guide who has an understanding of the practice of yoga specifically for pregnant women. This is very important. The yoga exercises should be attuned to the developmental stage of the fetus as well as the ability of the woman. B. Mental 1. Influence of Positive Thought Patterns It is important that prospective parents become aware of all their ideals that they want to live for themselves, with their mate, and for their child so that the ideals becomes a part of their daily life. These may want to be considered before conception so it is possible to actualize them from the beginning. 2. Effects of Negative Thought Patterns It is equally important to become aware of all those conscious and unconscious negative beliefs that are not supporting one in being and expressing one's True Self. I suggest that people release themselves from old self images and relationships that negate their ability to be loving, conscious, and creative. The couples may want to consider doing individual rebirthing sessions to work through their own prenatal birth traumas. They can also learn to rebirth one another. This will contribute greatly to their own personal healing as well as to a conscious birth of their child. 3. Preparation of Parents Attitudes About Parenting Before Conception This means becoming aware of all positive and negative beliefs, thoughts, and feelings that prevent the parents from creating their own ideal birth. This may mean working on oneself or healing one's relationships with family, friends and/or lover. I suggest couples explore issues of what it means to be a parent-their fears, ideals, past traumas, future visions and present needs. With their mate they may wish to create a mutual image of their ideal birth and share it with their birthing team so that it can actually happen. C. Emotional 1. The Child Feels Loved and Wanted by The Parents While In Utero If parents have conceived and are not prepared for parenthood, I suggest that they immediately seek guidance from someone they trust. They must explore all their fears, doubts, needs, ideals. If they choose to have a child, they can communicate love to it from the moment of conception through their thoughts, feelings, and prayers. The unborn child knows if it is loved or not. It is their choice about how willing they are to express their feelings to themselves, their mate, and the unborn child. They must know that whatever they are feeling, it is likely that the unborn child is feeling it too. 2. The Unloved Child's Development The child will most likely feel unloved post-natally as well, unless the parents consciously transform their feelings. This feeling of being unloved will have

detrimental effects on the child's personality. I suggest that these parents seek guidance to learn how to be more loving.

D. Spiritual 1. Every Conception, Pregnancy, and Childbirth Is A Spiritual Experience This has been forgotten by many people, especially in countries with high levels of technology. I suggest couples learn how to pray and meditate to create a Divine Union between themselves, the unborn child, and Spirit. Spirit is available for guidance before, during, and after birth if they ask for it. Spirit will help one communicate with the being before and after it is conceived, as well as prepare prospective parents for conception and pregnancy. I advise prospective parents to seek spiritual guidance if they have not developed their own spiritual discipline.

2. Each Child's Birthright Is To Be Literally Divine This embraces the belief that we are all children of God. To me, God is Love, so I suggest to parents to give their child all the Divine Love within them. Parents need to remember that it is their birthright to Be Divine, too. It is important to state that this ideal model is not to create guilt or blame for those parents who have not used these themes in their parenting experience. As each artist has his/her own unique style of creating art, each parent is responsible for developing his/her own form in the "Art of Parenting." This model simply offers one perspective based on my own personal process and professional experience. I encourage parents to consider creating their own ideal model before they conceive a child. Thus, they will more likely be able to consciously actualize their mutual ideal during the conception, pregnancy and birth experiences. I am not going to talk extensively about the birth experience in detail or birth related psychological or physical hazards, because such detailed information is another book of its own. Rather in the context of Prenatal Conscious Parenting," I see the birth experience as something that both parents need to prepare for during the prenatal phases of development so as to avoid a harsh birth experience for the child. This preparation would allow for the possible creation of a peaceful transition for the child from the womb to the world. In their preparation and creation of the birth, the parents and birthing team can be conscious of giving the child a feeling that breathing is safe, the world is warm, and the child is loved. Since the child is very impressionable during these first moments, this allows the parents to have a very positive influence on the development of the child's primary belief systems about itself and the world. I encourage parents to affirm to the child the following feelings and thoughts. These thoughts can be reflected in the actions of the parents as well. It is important to remember that I am talking about the IDEAL thought patterns and belief systems that parents may want to be conscious of creating for their child. Some of the ideal beliefs a newborn child might feel are: * "I am lovable exactly the way I am." * "It is safe to be on this earth." * "The external environment is nurturing and supportive for me." * "I will be taken care of if I am awake or asleep." * "When I am awake and alert, people will love me, respond to me, touch me, feed me, talk to me," * "It is okay to express my needs because there is someone who is there to give to me." * "The more love and support I experience, the less I fear being alone or independent, because I don't have to doubt who I am or whether I am loved." * "I am a wanted child." * "My physical body is okay because I am touched with love and care." * "People's warm, gentle voices make me feel loved and welcomed." (Some of these beliefs were inspired by Sondra Ray, founder of Loving Relationships Training.) In reliving my own prenatal birth experience, I sense it was very peaceful and loving. Yet, once I got into the outside world, that moment my head emerged, I did not receive the touch and contact that I needed. My senses were shocked in the transition and I have been spending my life healing and recovering ever since to restore myself to my natural senses. A lot of birth trauma can be avoided if the parents and birth attendants are conscious of the newborn's needs. Often, hospitals treat pregnant women and newborns like they are sick. But a pregnant woman is well, and can have a very positive birth if she and her mate take responsibility to create it from the beginning of conception. If the man and woman are relaxed and feeling positive about the birth, there is a greater likelihood that the delivery will be simple and trouble free. If the mother is in conflict about becoming a mother, the risk of complications increases. Thus, it is critical that she become conscious of her fears, doubts, and strengths before birth so that she is clear to give the child the opportunity for a peaceful birth. There are practical exercises for healing one's own childhood traumas. Through therapeutic techniques such as visualization, rebirthing, and hypnosis, one can consciously release the tensions of one's unfelt pains and

trauma in being born and being mothered. Unless a woman works through these issues, there is a great likelihood that they will act as obstacles to feeling the joyful, natural rhythm of becoming a parent and creating a family. Yet, the most important gift one can give their child is to love oneself and one's mate before conception. Parents need to be conscious of not using the birth of their child to keep their relationship together. It is not fair to the child. I encourage a man and woman who are preparing to conceive to heal themselves and their relationship first. Then they have the opportunity to conceive a child with love and in peace. My personal belief is based on the premise that if a child is conceived and born consciously in love, then it will most likely realize its full creative potential in a given lifetime. On the other hand, if the parents are reluctant to love the child or unable to express love to the child, it will most likely struggle throughout its life trying to heal the feelings of being unloved or unwanted. References References 1. The Secret Life of the Unborn Child, pp. 29-30. 2. The Secret Life of the Unborn Child, p. 31.

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