



## **Philosophical Assumptions & Guiding Principles**

- ♥ Childbirth is a profound rite of passage, not a medical event (even when medical care is part of the birth).
- ♥ The essence of childbirth preparation is self-discovery, not assimilating obstetric information.
- ♥ The teacher (mentor) is "midwife" to the parents' discovery process, not the expert from whom wisdom flows.
  - ♥ Childbirth preparation is a continually evolving process (for parents and teachers), not a static structure of techniques and knowledge.
- ♥ Parents' individual needs and differences determine class content.
- ♥ Active, creative self-expression is critical to childbirth preparation.
- ♥ The purpose of childbirth preparation is to prepare mothers to give birth-in-awareness, not to achieve a specific birth outcome.
  - ♥ Pregnancy and birth outcome are influenced by a variety of factors, but can't be controlled by planning.
- ♥ In order to help parents mobilize their coping resources, it is critical for childbirth classes to acknowledge that unexpected, unwelcome events may happen during labor.
- ♥ Parents deserve support for any birth option which might be right for them (whether it be drugs, cesarean, home birth, or bottle-feeding).
- ♥ Pain is an inevitable part of childbirth, yet much can be done to ease suffering.
- ♥ Pain-coping practices work best when integrated into daily life, rather than "dusted off" for labor.
- ♥ Fathers and birth partners help best as birth guardians or loving partners, not as coaches; they also need support.
  - ♥ For parents, pregnancy, birth, and postpartum is a time of continuous learning and adjustment; holistic support and education should be available throughout that period.
- ♥ Childbirth preparation is also parent preparation.

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