

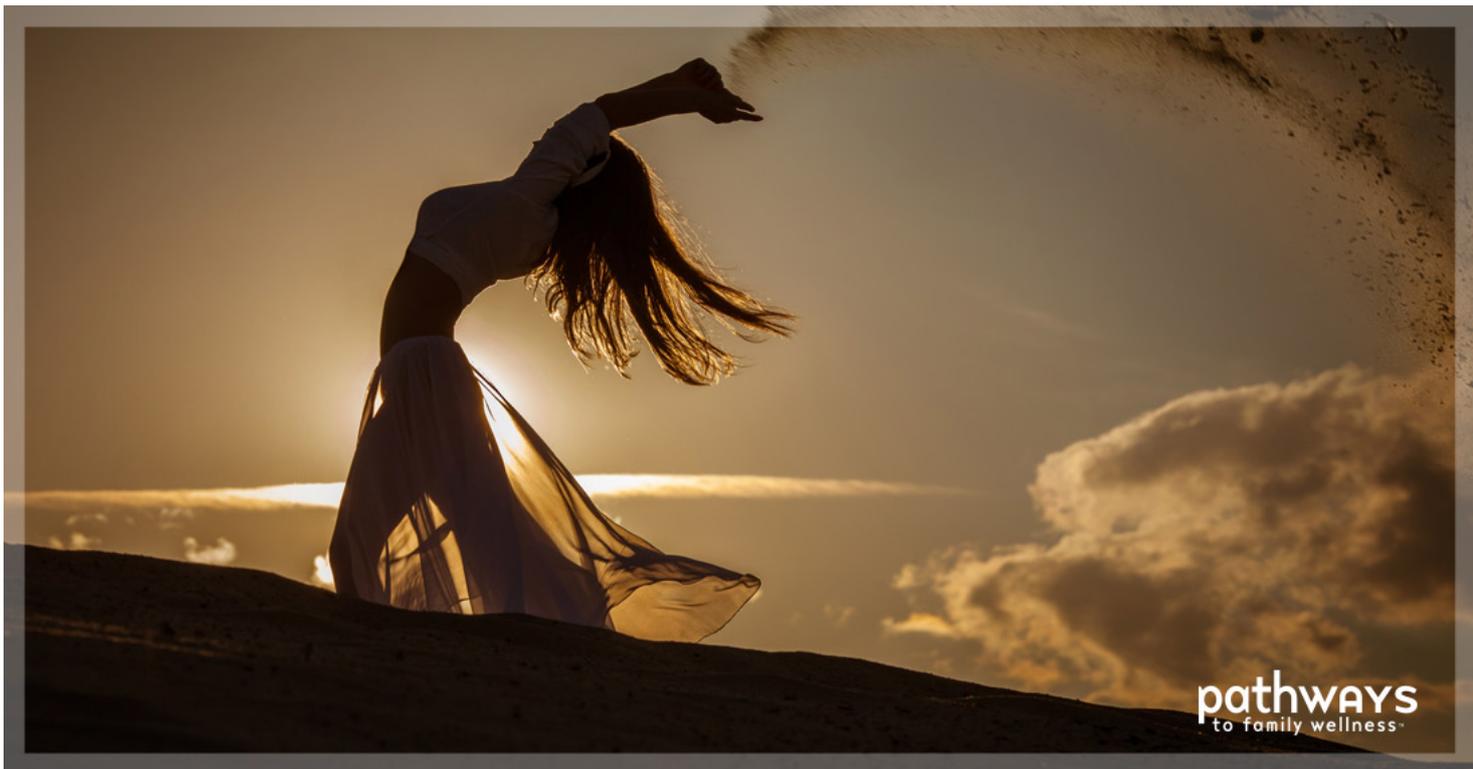
Unlearning What We've Learned

Written by Marianne Littlejohn

Friday, 01 March 2019 00:00 - Last Updated Sunday, 21 July 2019 12:21

To Give Birth, Women have to Let Go of Life's Bad Lessons

When pregnant women are induced routinely before 42 weeks of pregnancy, babies learn they have to dance to someone else's tune, rather than following their own music and time of arrival. Their own biological impulse to seek movement and direction is thwarted. The lesson learned early in life is that spontaneous movement is directed by another force.



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When newborn babies are conditioned to adapt to an adult's feeding pattern, such as scheduled feedings every four hours, they learn to suppress their needs for frequent feeding. They learn that their own rhythms are not acceptable. When babies are ignored or abandoned, even for a short time, they learn not to cry in order to survive. They learn their needs are superseded by an outside dominant entity who exerts force and power over their bodies. They learn that their

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rhythms don't matter.

These prohibitions continue throughout childhood, when the need to explore the environment is strong. "No, don't touch..."; "No, don't go there..."; "No, you can't do this or that." Children eventually learn to suppress their frustration.

So by the time a girl child becomes a woman, she has many layers of self-control that make it acceptable for her to be in society. Women are taught to acquiesce. And then, when we are pregnant, everything we have learned is strong in us. We dream of doing it better, perhaps, and of creating a life for our child in more love and more freedom. Yet we carry our trauma in every cell of our being. We may be afraid and want to "fit in" to the medical system, which, although it may appear to provide safety, is designed to deprive women of their autonomy and power in birth.

And here is the rub. We are locked into the patriarchal system. We are locked into our trauma and our pain. Perhaps we are not aware of how much we have learned to hold ourselves together, to behave, to be clean and tidy, to not mess, to not shout or challenge, to not take our clothes off, to not be physical. We have forgotten the rhythm of our bodies. We have forgotten how to follow our own direction. We have forgotten that we are strong and vital.

There is a way to unlock our grief, to rediscover our lost selves and rechart our paths.

When I was pregnant with my middle son, I broke down. I knew I was not okay. I cried daily as the trauma I had hidden from my childhood started surfacing and I had flashbacks of traumatic events. I sought help from a therapist friend. I cried, raged, wept, and rocked myself in fetal positions nonstop for three weeks. I was concerned that my crying would hurt my unborn baby. Afterward, I felt cleansed and connected and went on to give birth fiercely, unassisted and at home, to my baby son. My baby is now 34 years old and a wonderfully sane, funny, and compassionate person. I had to unlearn my prejudices and let go of the constraints I carried in my body to really connect with myself, my birth, and my baby.

Pregnancy, labor, and birth opens the portal to relive and release your grief and to reclaim your direction and life force as a woman.

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To give birth, a woman has to unlearn everything she has learned.



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