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Doulas' Guide to Birthing Your Way

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Hale Publishing, LP, 2010

192 pages, illustrated, shaded text boxes, bibliography, glossary, index, (US)\$19.95, softcover

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When the laboring mother loses her way and her partner tires, the doula is by her side. Doulas are ready to encourage, explain, offer pain management techniques and anything else to help the laboring mother carry out her birth vision. This refreshing book is written to help women plan for their birth by sharing "tips, tools and techniques" toward giving birth with confidence. It combines the knowledge and experience of both authors who are La Leche League Leaders and DONA certified doulas.

The authors describe five interwoven ways doulas offer support through spiritual, mediatorial, physical, emotional, and informational guidance. Mothers are encouraged to think in terms of having a birth vision rather than a birth plan. They suggest that while a woman cannot plan her birth, she can envision it. The "blessing way," a celebration of a woman's pregnancy with close family and friends, is discussed in details not typically included in other books about doulas.

The authors have met their goal in giving practical and easy-to-use tips by providing the reader with numerous supplementary materials. Included are visual exercises, quizzes, tables, and charts to help support the learning and make it easy to carry suggestions out. There is also a postpartum emergency information sheet, handout for postpartum helpers, postpartum depression checklist, several excellent birth vision examples, and great tips on how to survive the first few weeks postpartum. The 14 pages on basic breastfeeding offer accurate information overall.

Pregnant mothers, doulas, and lactation consultants alike will enjoy this well-written and well-priced book for all the practical advice and accurate information it offers to women in preparation for birth.

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