



# The Birth Partner: A Complete Guide to Childbirth for Dads, Doulas, and Other Labor Companions

*Penny Simkin*

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Since the original publication of *The Birth Partner*, new mothers' partners, friends, and relatives and doulas (professional birth assistants) have relied on Penny Simkin's guidance in caring for the new mother from the last few weeks of pregnancy through the early postpartum period. Fully revised in its fourth edition, *The Birth Partner* remains the definitive guide for preparing to help a woman through childbirth and the essential manual to have at hand during the event.

This completely updated edition includes thorough information on: Preparing for labor and knowing when it has begun; Normal labor and how to help the woman every step of the way; Epidurals and other medications for labor; Non-drug techniques for easing labor pain; Cesarean birth and complications that may require it; Breastfeeding and newborn care; And much more. For the partner who wishes to be truly helpful in the birthing room, this book is indispensable.

## **The Birth Partner: A Complete Guide to Childbirth for Dads, Doulas, and Other Labor Companions Details**

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## **From Reader Review The Birth Partner: A Complete Guide to Childbirth for Dads, Doulas, and Other Labor Companions for online ebook**

### **Joseph says**

I can't say strongly enough how indispensable this book is to both partners and mothers. After and with Ina May Gaskin's Guide to Childbirth, for me this is the book to read if you're going to be involved in a birth. It has played about the same role for me that the Boy Scout Handbook did when I started camping. Life is easier if you know the taut line hitch; same with the techniques and info in this book.

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### **Matteo says**

I read the 4th edition of The Birth Partner. Well-written book with many quick, easily digestible summaries for a lay-person (like me) to understand the many aspects of pregnancy, birth, and newborn care that an individual and partner may experience. Needless to say, I have bookmarked many pages for quick reference as my wife and I enter the final stages of pregnancy and prepare for life as first-time parents.

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### **Sarah Jane says**

Though the majority of people that I know who own this book are doulas, this book is made for anyone who is going to support someone through pregnancy and labor. It is really basic and very detail oriented. I usually use this book as a reference guide while working with women in labor doing doula work, and its amazing for that! Theres really no other book like it.

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### **Alexa says**

What an amazing book to kick off my doula journey! I just wish Simkin's editors would help her move into the 21st century a little more gracefully; it is glaringly obvious that additions were made to include same-sex couples and not only husbands.

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### **lov2laf says**

This is a really fantastic resource for any person in a supportive role to a pregnant woman.

The book goes into explicit but easily digestible detail of pregnancy, different types of labor, the types of support one can offer in labor, what you'll encounter in a home birth vs a hospital birth, basic baby care after the birth, and caring for the mother throughout the entire process.

It also covers the different styles of birth from home births to hospitals and natural labor to different medications that can be used. The tone of the book is really open and doesn't push any agenda of which way is better over another. Instead, pros and cons are laid out for each, and the book is really educational so that the mother and partner can make informed decisions. It's very pro-mother and its theme is that the mother's choices are the right choices for her.

As a co-mother, I found the book to be inclusive of different support partners, as well.

The book also offers a ton of resources with a number of links to videos, references to websites and other books.

It's really a must-have read.

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### **Shira and Ari Evergreen says**

This book is an extremely detailed guide for anyone who wants to be able to help a woman in labor, which seems like a useful skill, given that half of us humans can and do bear children! It's very empowering to learn how a woman can bring a baby into the world, given the right kind of support. To gain this knowledge is to feel more in tune with other human beings and our origins and capabilities, and to feel less powerless in the face of what seems like suffering (it does involve pain) but is in fact a natural and normal process.

Penny Simkin is a midwife with extensive experience. She advocates a woman-centered approach and provides information for those giving birth at birth centers and hospitals, as well as at home. There are sections on creating a birth plan and other ways to prepare, diagrams showing supportive positions, lists of necessities to collect before a baby arrives and to have on hand at the birth, and a lot of factual information about what happens at each stage of labor, what the woman is feeling, what a birth partner might feel, and how the birth partner can best help the woman giving birth.

My favorite part is when she talks about the repetitive self-comforting sounds and motions women make, and how doulas and partners can help the woman to deal with contractions / rushes by mimicking / singing along. What a freeing and beautiful approach to childbirth!

All men and all women should read this and take to heart its lessons about respect for the abilities and needs of women. The world would improve overnight. No joke.

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### **Megan says**

Great book on childbirth. She is pro-natural childbirth and I think it shows, but she gives a fairly unbiased view of medical interventions and their pros and cons. Would recommend this to anyone having a baby, borrowed it from the library but I think this is going to be one to own! George will definitely be reading.

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### **William says**

One of the better books I've read for dads. It focuses on concrete information instead making inane jokes and

treating men as beer-guzzling lug heads.

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### **sylas says**

This book seems super helpful. I like that it lays out really detailed, specific and accessible information about what to expect during birth. But that it also includes a lot of information about how the birthing person and the support/companion person might \*feel\* in response to particular scenarios. I feel better prepared for our birth as a result of this book.

Cons: really gendered language around the gestational parent. Could be more inclusive of families other than the heteronormative.

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### **Kirstin says**

THE best labour and childbirth book I've read to date. While this one is very much for the support person, not the labouring mother, I think mothers, father, doulas, grandmothers-planning-on-being-at-the birth, and labour and delivery nurses would all benefit from reading.

I particularly appreciated the very balanced perspective Simpkin takes on "natural" birth versus medicated birth versus planned induction or c-section. I think she comes as close as anyone could to presenting an unbiased perspective.

The only bias that she clearly presents is arguing fully in favour of a labouring mother having the assistance of a doula. She argues that labours are easier, shorter, more manageable and both mother and father feel more empowered with the assistance of a doula.

And having been both the recipient and giver of doula-like assistance (though not DONA-trained) I can concur that there certainly is a place for doulas in the delivery room (or home, in the case of a homebirth).

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### **Eric says**

This is my sixth childbirth that I am preparing to attend, so I guess I could say I am somewhat of an expert at being a birth partner!

If you are looking forward to a child birth and are wondering how to support the mother during the process, this is the book to get! It quickly tell you pretty much everything you need to know.

I especially liked this book because Penny Simkin covers the wide range of birth choices without coming off as judgemental. The only time she is critical is when she points out medical practices that are no longer supported by science (such as not allowing women to eat solid foods during labor) or the harsh judgements from adherents to particular birth practices. In Penny's view, it is all about choices and making informed decisions. She encourages this by talking about the pros and cons of every major birth decision and presents the facts honestly.

Having been to many births, I felt that Ms. Simkin covers all the bases- from what things to gather beforehand, to what can happen during labor, and even to what could go wrong and how to prepare for that. She even has chapters at the end about breast feeding and postpartum issues. She writes all of this advice in very plain, easy to understand english. The book is also specially marked so that certain important sections are easy to find in a hurry.

I recommend this book for anyone preparing for a child birth, regardless of your birth preferences. In fact, I think it would make a great gift.

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### **Terry says**

Very anti-intervention in a way that is not necessarily helpful (they have a lot of advice on how to convince your doctor not to make you have an IV drip, for example), but still chock full of genuinely useful information. As with most research, you won't use 90% of it, but you won't know which 10% is useful until you need it. In our case, a situation came up that I would have thought was very risky had I not read the book, but since I did, I knew everyone was still safe.

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### **Alec Longstreth says**

Well, I read this (excellent) book cover to cover. With its knowledge firmly in place, I guess I'm about as ready as I'll ever be for the forthcoming birth of my daughter!

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### **Teressa says**

Jim is reading this to prepare for #minimin and to know how best to support me during natural childbirth. I got bored when I ran out of reading material on the long car ride home to my parents house for baby shower... and picked it up .

I know the pregnant momma is not the intended audience, but this book provided so much insight. It reinforced much of what we covered in our childbirth education classes, so it wasn't a ton of new info for me.

But what I loved was how it gave me clearer idea of what to expect emotionally and psychologically during each phase off labor. It's hard not to stress out about labor because it is down thing you can't control and it is something that you don't really know about until you experience it yourself. There are so many unknown variables that can lead to self doubt. I read Chapter 3 twice because I felt it had so much invaluable information. It tells you not just about the phases of labor-- which I already knew-- but about what the medical staff and doula will be doing, how your spouse will be feeling, and how you might be feeling depending on the scenario. Chapter 4 is also a must read with a concise recap of different comfort measures and labor positions.

I would recommend this pregnant couples. This is great for moms, too. I know I got a lot out of it, and it is well organized and a quick read. Add it to your purchase list before baby arrives.

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**Torey says**

This is the first book I've read that is specifically geared towards the labor support person. I found the author very pro-birth, pro-momma, and extremely helpful in advice giving for natural deliveries. She gives straight forward advice, as well as risks/benefits of medical interventions.

I have worked as labor and delivery nurse for 5 yrs and a Childbirth Educator for 3. I think this book would be an excellent addition to the labor and delivery nurse orientation at hospitals. Basic descriptions of laboring positions and reasoning behind them. I found this book a fantastic resource and look forward to implementing some of the material into my Childbirth Classes!

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