



Labyrinth of Birth: Creating a Map, Meditations and Rituals for Your Childbearing Year

Pam England

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Designed to transform the experience of childbirth, this manual calls upon the use of the timeless and powerful symbol of the labyrinth in 12 simple meditations and ceremonies. Ideal as a tool for centering the self and calming the body and mind, this guide ushers readers through the inner journey of the childbearing year—from pregnancy and labor through the postpartum stage. A variety of labyrinths—including four childbirth-related labyrinths from the Hopi and Papago cultures in the American Southwest and two others from India—are presented in this handbook and cover topics that include helping mothers focus on their emotional and spiritual state preparation for birth, aid in calming the mind and steadying breathing during birth, and allowing parents to fully process their experiences. Instructions for drawing a classic labyrinth, ideas for personalizing the design, and labyrinth "seeds"—start-up patterns for six variations of labyrinth—are also included.

The timeless and powerful symbol of the labyrinth forms the core of this collection of 12 simple meditations and ceremonies designed to transform the experience of childbirth. The inner journey through the childbearing year—from pregnancy through labor and postpartum stages—is enhanced through the use of labyrinths as a tool for meditation and centering. Studies show that walking or finger-tracing a labyrinth slows down and balances brain waves, calms the body and mind, and helps access intuitive knowing. During pregnancy, labyrinth meditations help the mother focus on her emotional and spiritual preparation for birth and mothering. In labor, the labyrinth helps to calm the mind, steady the breath, and ease pain. Postpartum, the Birth Story Labyrinth helps parents process and integrate their experience in labor. A variety of labyrinths—including four childbirth-related labyrinths from the Hopi and Papago cultures in the American Southwest and two others from India—are presented in this handbook. Instructions for drawing a classic labyrinth, ideas for personalizing the design, and labyrinth "seeds"—start-up patterns for six variations of labyrinth—are also included. The labyrinth meditations and rituals may be practiced privately or may be used to enrich mother blessing ceremonies and baby showers.

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