

Coaching Tips from many Dad's

The role of the coach is a very important one. It is a great responsibility which results in great rewards. The support and interest in pregnancy, birth, and life are things a mother needs and appreciates. Bradley® classes will help prepare the coach so he can execute this responsibility with confidence and knowledge. The keys to good coaching in pregnancy and birthing are; support, relaxation, nutrition, exercise and knowledge.

Support

Being there 24/7 makes a huge difference. Let her know that this is a team effort. This is the new generation conceived between the two of you. It is your lineage from generations before you. It may be one of the most remembered and enjoyed events in your life. Get ready!

Relaxation

She needs to know that when she is tense or stressed-out, you are there to help her. Remember that relaxation is the key to labor. It is a skill.

When relaxation is practiced on a daily basis for at least twelve weeks it can become a powerful pain management tool in labor and life.

Nutrition

What could be more important than nutrition for the growth and development of your baby and its mother getting ready for birth. Make it your responsibility to see to it that this mother not only has the food she needs, and your enthusiastic support.

Exercise

Training, in an athletic way, can make a big difference when it comes down to the stamina to labor and give birth. Birthing is like running a marathon or climbing a mountain. Help her and join her in the pregnancy exercises and stamina exercises she enjoys and needs.

Knowledge

This is where classes come in. Taking Bradley® twelve week classes helps to prepare you for this amazing event. We cover the entire birth process, and there should be no surprises even if something unique arises and you need to be flexible. Learn from class, books and other dads, so you know the course.

What Other People May Say

The stories of childbirth pain, suffering, and fear go on and on. Very few people have seen a trained couple give birth naturally - and experience the joy, excitement and pride in accomplishing what they started out to do.

Most women do not know how to give birth, and men do not know how to help them. The same goes for labor. Women have no idea how to deal with or handle contractions - and they fear the pain they have heard about. Unfortunately bad stories are repeated 7 to 1 over good stories, and perhaps more than that in reference to childbirth.

The truth about birthing is that every single person on the face of this earth has an amazing family history of generation after generation of successful, drug-free birthing, or you would not be here. Your mother may have taken drugs when you were born, she might even have been a cesarean and your grandmother may have taken drugs when your mother was born. But the chances are your great-grandmother gave birth naturally, and *her* mother gave birth naturally, and on and on. Each generation passed down the knowledge of how to birth until the 1900's when birth was moved from the home to the hospital and mothers were alone without family. It is still possible, in a home or hospital to have a great natural birth.

Currently, in The Bradley Method®, 87.7% of women having a vaginal birth do so by choice without drugs. Labor and birth is something that can be done by most couples, if they are trained in Bradley® classes.

Contractions can be very powerful hard work, perhaps the hardest work you have ever done. Women need to know how to get ready for labor and how to handle contractions. Without education and preparation, contractions can be overwhelming.

The Bradley Method® Classes

All Bradley Method® classes are twelve weeks long with a curriculum that has worked for hundreds of thousands of couples, and it comes with the current official *The Bradley Method® Student Workbook* along with an Official Coach Card.

We have found that we have the highest rate of unmedicated vaginal births after twelve weeks of preparation with training and education of mom and dad. We have found that the rate of medicated births and cesareans rises quickly with fewer than twelve weeks of classes. The human body needs time to prepare for this athletic event.

Attending class, one night a week for twelve weeks is a small amount of time to dedicate to this baby, your baby. There is so much to learn; exercises, relaxation, labor rehearsals, nutrition, how to birth, how to coach,

etc. The class environment adds to your own self-discipline and confidence. The class adds resources and the experiences of your teachers and fellow classmates.

When planning for your baby - take the best classes, twelve weeks is a prudent investment to be well prepared. Classes are cheaper than going to the movies each week, and can be much more rewarding. You will probably spend more money on a car seat than your class series.

Learning to work with Labor

Labor is a lot of hard work, and may be felt as pressure, power, or pain. There are several types of pain in birthing. The two most common types of pain in childbirth are good pain and unnecessary pain. Working with contractions makes labor effective. Fighting against contractions makes for unnecessary pain.

‘Good pain’ which comes from hard work or athletic effort. Climbing a mountain or running a race is considered good pain ... **HARD WORK!**

‘Unnecessary pain’ which comes from doing things wrong, hurting your body because of lack of knowledge and/or taking unnecessary chances. Fear of pain... can lead to chest breathing/hyperventilation (panicky breathing)... which then leads to tension... building its own pain and panic. This is an escalating cycle.

A third type of pain, rare in childbirth, is ‘injury pain’, which means something really is wrong, or broken. This may require medical attention.

The idea of someone throwing you into ten feet of water at the end of nine months is beyond scary, and if you did not know how to swim you could drown. The same is true in childbirth. You can learn how to give birth, but you need to go to our classes, practice, gain confidence and be ready for this athletic event.

Tips on Coaching Contractions.

If you and your wife are pregnant, you already know lots of ways of handling stress and discomfort. Have you ever stubbed your toe? Have you ever had a headache? No one lives long enough to get pregnant without learning how to handle pain in many ways.

This list comes from couples who shared their favorites with us. Most of them are personal choices, and may or may not work for you. Try them out and add your own. Learn more in your Bradley® classes.

Coaches, many of these suggestions require the active support from you. Be ready and know what to do.

What you need to know is which of these techniques work for you in labor. Make a list of what you have tried before, and what you think would

work for you in labor. Be flexible, women often change their minds during labor.

Ways of Handling Pain

A complete list is in: *The Bradley Method® Student Workbook* that is part of your Bradley® class.

Sleep - A Coaching Responsibility!

Lack of sleep can make labor harder.

Abdominal Breathing - A Coaching Responsibility!

Abdominal breathing is normal for human beings. It is efficient and effective and conducive to relaxation.

Go to the Bathroom - A Coaching Responsibility!

During labor the body keeps working and the bladder fills with urine. When the mother goes to the bathroom she will be more comfortable

Walk it off - A Coaching Responsibility!

Walking in labor can be very pleasant and effective.

Not Lying on Your Back - A Coaching Responsibility!

Lying on your back can be a problem and can cause unnecessary pain.

Back Rub - A Coaching Responsibility!

This is personal choice and of course the dad is the best one suited for this.

Relax - A Coaching Responsibility!

Relaxation is the key to labor! When the mother relaxes she is able to let go of her muscles and let the uterus do what it needs to do.

Is This Real Labor ?

Is this really labor? First time mothers generally ignore or don't feel contractions until a few weeks before birth. Experienced mothers may feel contractions sooner. The question is often is "is this the real thing". Dr. Bradley said if you are not sure do five things. 1. Eat, 2. Drink, 3. Walk, 4. Bath or shower, 5. Nap. If this is the real thing then labor will continue.

Babies can trigger contractions

You may find it interesting to know that the baby has the ability to cause contractions, and may do so when it feels the need to get out of his environment because it is ready to be born, or perhaps it needs more nourishment because the mother has not had anything to eat or drink recently.

The baby is happy most of the time and has a good time in the uterus. All of his needs are met, and he just grows and floats around in amniotic fluid, playing, kicking, and resting when he wants.

One of the amazing parts of pregnancy is the role of the placenta. It is a flat organ that is attached to the uterus. The baby's side has treelike structures which channel into the cord that goes to the baby. These treelike structures, are covered with a membrane covering every branch, so there is a tremendous surface area.

The mother's blood is propelled into the placenta and bathes these structures. At this time the nutrients and oxygen in her blood cross this membrane, going through the umbilical vein to nourish the baby.

In the meantime waste products from the baby return by way of two umbilical arteries, taking the waste products to those treelike structures. The waste products pass through the membrane into the mother's blood-and they are taken away and metabolized by the mother. The blood in the baby is manufactured by the baby, and under normal circumstances there is no crossover of blood from mother to baby (or baby to mother).

The process continues with the mother's blood coming into and out of the placenta-dropping off what the baby needs, and transporting out what the

baby is getting rid of. The placenta is an amazing organ, and the only organ of the human body with its own birth, life, and death cycle.

This process continues until the baby is ready to be born, or it feels its needs are not being met. If the mother does not eat, the baby's system says "let's make a contraction." The uterus squeezes the placenta and the mother's blood is squished out, and when it relaxes new blood comes in. The baby wants to get nutrients, but if they are not there the baby triggers another contraction.

If the mother doesn't eat because she forgets, or is too busy to eat for the both of them, then the nourishment level drops, and the baby gets worried. Should he stay in-and hope mom eats soon, or should he trigger contractions? These contractions can cause a lot of worry.

When the mother eats, nutrients get into her blood stream very quickly and when the new blood swishes into the placenta, the baby gets these nutrients and relaxes. It is amazing how many premature labors stop or slow down with a glass of milk and a sandwich. If contractions continue, that is what doctors are for.

Coaches Check List for First Stage labor

1. Position

The coach is responsible for the mother's position and environment.

2. Relaxation

The coach is the expert in what relaxation techniques this mother likes.

3. Rub Back

The coach knows which types of rubbing to use.

4. Guide Breathing

If the mother is disrupted the coach know how to guide her breathing and get her back on track.

5. Time contractions

Some mothers appreciate knowing the pattern of labor.

6. Talk to her.

Talking can be relaxing for some women.

What to do when problems or questions arise

First, get more information.

Questions to ask before giving 'Informed Consent'

1. Is the mother okay?
2. Is the baby okay?
3. What is the problem?

4. What are we afraid might happen?
5. If we choose this procedure or drug(s), what other things will be necessary?
6. How much time do we have?
7. Could this be normal?
8. What other choices do we have?

These are a few of the tips that are covered in depth in your Bradley® class.

The Cesarean Epidemic

Most women start labor with a plan of having a natural unmedicated birth. Often complications, interventions, lack of preparation and confidence make it necessary to change their plans. Some women choose to have a cesarean even though it introduces the risks of major surgery for mother and baby! Medical intervention and cesarean surgery may be appropriate in rare instances to save lives.

Cesarean sections are on the rise today. In the United States we have a 31.1% C-section rate, and has been climbing every year! Over one million cesareans will be preformed this year. The C-section rate remains more than

twice what experts advise. This means that over 500,000 unnecessary cesareans are being done each year. This is an epidemic!

Six leading Causes of Cesareans

- Inability to relax
- CPD (cephalo-pelvic-disproportion ... too small a pelvic opening)
- Failure to progress (dilate) rapidly
- Fetal distress
- Prolonged labor
- Pain, fear, fatigue

Women can prepare and help themselves!

The following simple exercises address what many experts feel are the six leading causes of cesarean surgery. Many pregnant women feel, that by preparing ahead of time, they were ready for labor.

Benefits of Pregnancy Exercises

Is it possible a few simple exercises could help women avoid cesarean sections?

The following simple exercises address what many experts feel are the six leading causes of cesarean surgery. Many pregnant women have told us that by preparing ahead of time they were ready for labor. These exercises

and relaxation practices are most effective if practiced on a daily basis for at least 3 months before birth. Check with your doctor before starting any exercise program. Your Bradley® instructor will teach you how in class.

Pelvic Rock

This is a wonderful exercise that gently tones and conditions the mother's abdominal muscles in a way that encourages the baby into a good position, possibly reducing the chances of a cesarean section. This exercise also helps deal with back pain, and encourages a posterior baby to turn naturally for an easier birth.

Kegel

Having done this exercise will help keep the baby's chin on its chest, as it begins its journey through the pelvis. This makes a big difference in the size of the presenting part.

Walking

Walking opens the inlet of the pelvis, which encourages the baby to come down. It speeds labor on an average of 28%. It reduces the amount of pain mothers experience in labor and reduces the likelihood that a mother will need an epidural (which itself may lead to a cesarean).

Side Lying Position

Gives mothers a comfortable alternative to the traditional flat-on-the back position, which is known to cause fetal distress. Lying on the back can also cause an incredible amount of totally unnecessary pain, prolonged labor, and failure to progress.

Squatting

Squatting during pregnancy helps to prepare the pelvis for birth, reducing CPD. During second stage (expulsion) this position increases the outlet of the pelvis by more than 10%. Just imagine how many cesareans this exercise alone could prevent!

Things to Remember...

This is the birth of your baby, no matter how it is born. There are special things you should remember, write in the baby's book, and tell your Bradley® teacher about.

1. What did the baby look like the first time you saw him/her?
2. What was the baby's color ... pink from the start? blue-ish? How soon did your baby pink up?
3. What did the baby's eyes look like... alert, sleepy? Did you look into your baby's eyes at birth?
4. What did the baby feel like, the first time you touched him/her? Wet, dry, smooth?

5. What did the baby smell like? There is a newborn human smell!

6. Did the baby have hair? What color? Wet or dry? Short or long?

7. How soon did the baby respond to your touch or voice?

Take pictures and write your observations and thoughts down. Ask the mother the same things. This is what you want to remember: the baby, and the joy of seeing your baby come into the world... no matter how it is born.

Final Thoughts

Natural Childbirth is an athletic learned experience. Families can learn how to give birth naturally and bond the family unit even closer than before.

Other mammals learn about birth from each other in their environment.

Humans can learn from experienced teachers in a class environment.

The Bradley Method® classes meet for 12 weeks to give you time to become skilled at pregnancy, exercises, and labor rehearsals.

Many couples take The Bradley Method® childbirth classes because they want to learn how to give birth naturally, avoiding unnecessary drugs and cesareans.

Classes cover a series of topics; some simple exercises, lots of in-class relaxation, weekly nutrition logs, many labor rehearsals, and more.

Dr. Bradley was fond of saying, **“A husband should be man enough to finish what he starts!”** thank you for caring enough to be there for such a wonderful, life altering experience!

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