



Chiropractic Newsletter

Well-Being

The Humanization of Birth

Childbirth is one of the most transformative experiences in life, yet for much of modern history, the process has been fragmented into roles that separate families from the essence of the birth journey. In the early 20th century, medicalized birth reached its peak with practices that reduced mothers to passive participants. It was common for women to be made unconscious during labor while doctors “did the rest.” This model diminished the agency of families and centered the conversation entirely on external control.

Today, we are witnessing the emergence of a different paradigm—one that restores balance by recognizing the unique roles and skills that families bring to the process of birth. At its heart, this paradigm is about the humanization of birth. It’s about seeing everyone involved— whether obstetrician, midwife, chiropractor, or parent— as skilled participants collaborating in one of life’s most profound journeys.

The Skills of Practitioners

Families hire obstetricians and midwives to ensure the safety of labor and delivery. Obstetricians bring expertise in managing high-risk complications. Midwives—rooted in the traditions of natural birth—create environments that honor the body’s physiology while offering skillful guidance and trust.

Chiropractors, particularly those trained in the Webster Technique, add a complementary skillset. Their work focuses on preparing the body’s alignment and neuro-biomechanical functioning, optimizing the physical capacity for birth and delivery. By addressing neuro-biomechanical imbalances, chiropractors help create ideal conditions for the body to engage fully with the activity of birth.

While each of these practitioners brings their unique skills to the table, the final and most essential piece lies in the



hands of families themselves.

The Role of Families

Families, particularly mothers and their birth partners, are called to step into a new role as active participants in the birthing process. This is not about replacing the expertise of a birth practitioner but complementing it with their own skills and resourcefulness.

Birth is fundamentally an activity—a physiological and emotional process that requires conscious navigation. Too often, families are encouraged to focus solely on making external choices, such as where to birth or which interventions to include or avoid. While these decisions are important, they can create an illusion that birth will simply “happen” according to the plan. Often the hope is on practitioners “delivering” an outcome.

The truth is, regardless of choices or who is involved, every birth is an activity that the mother must navigate from within her own body. Learning and practicing birth skills shifts the focus inward, equipping families to respond to the challenges of labor with confidence and adaptability.

Birth skills are not solely about achieving a natural birth outcome; they are about empowering families to engage fully with the activity, no matter the circumstances.

Whether at home, in a hospital, or amid an unexpected intervention, these skills enable families to adapt and

remain focused on their experience.

Salutogenesis and the Birth of Health

At the heart of this paradigm is the concept of salutogenesis—“the genesis of health.” Salutogenesis teaches us that health is generated through positive, empowering experiences, whereas dis-ease is the result of negative experiences that overwhelm our inner and outer resources.

In Salutogenesis, resources include things like community support, internal physiological readiness, and self-learned skills that help us meet life’s challenges. In birth, a “salutogenic” experience isn’t defined by a specific outcome, such as an intervention-free, natural birth. It is measured by the family’s ability to navigate their journey in a state of alignment called “coherence,” harnessing their inner adaptability and resilience. Birth skills are a cornerstone of building this coherence.

By learning and practicing skills, parents gain the tools and inner resources to transform any birth into a salutogenic experience—one that builds health and strength within the family. They give families the tools to actively engage with the birth process, fostering a sense of confidence and control. This transcends the specifics of any birth setting or circumstance, making empowered experiences possible for all families.

The Union of Chiropractic, Midwifery, and Family Skills

This issue of Pathways celebrates the collaboration of chiropractic, midwifery, and family-centered skills as the foundation of a new birth paradigm. Midwives bring the wisdom of tradition to guide the birth with respect for its complex physiology. Chiropractors offer advanced techniques to prepare the body for birth, enhancing both biomechanics and nervous system function. Families,

through skills-based preparation, bring the most essential element: their own resourcefulness and ability to meet the activity of birth with intention.

When these three elements come together—trust, preparation, and adaptable skills—birth becomes a truly humanized experience. Practitioners are no longer seen as authority figures responsible for “delivering” outcomes. Rather they are human beings with specific skills in service to the family’s journey. Parents are no longer seen as passive recipients of care who either succeed or fail in getting their desired outcome. Rather they are active participants, equipped to embrace the transformative power of every birth.

A Call to Action

As we grow ourselves into a skilled birthing generation, we redefine what it means to prepare for birth. This paradigm shift goes beyond choices about risk management, focusing on building a foundation of resourcefulness and adaptability that leads to universal empowerment.

Together, we can create a future where every birth is salutogenic—an experience that generates health, confidence, and connection. Let’s celebrate this transformative approach and honor the incredible potential within every birthing family.

—John Ohm

Pathways to Family

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