

The Gentle Greeting: An Obstetrician's Guide to Planning a Loving Pregnancy and Birth Experience

Ronald L. Cole

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Not so long ago, anyone perusing the shelves of a bookstore would have noted a philosophical split in available information on pregnancy and childbirth. Few, if any, books offered by traditional medicine practitioners mentioned both the medical and spiritual sides of pregnancy and childbirth let alone a practical plan for creating a birth experience melding these two important aspects of bearing a child. The Gentle Greeting attempts a bridge between traditional medicine and a more holistic approach to childbirth. Of particular note is the advice on interviewing a prospective obstetrician and specific questions to consider about the birth experience to enable a loving and safe outcome. Also helpful is the author's explanation of various birthing options often viewed negatively from a natural childbirth perspective: the use of forceps, pain medication, episiotomy and cesarean delivery. While not routinely accepting the use of these options, Cole explains when and how they might be used to allow for the safest birth without creating a negative experience. Although Cole touches on physical growth and change of the baby and mother, nutrition, and the stages of labor, this book is not an in-depth resource regarding this information. While appreciating the message and spirit of The Gentle Greeting, readers might find themselves somewhat annoyed by an "enlightened" father-like tone to the book with little acknowledgment for the many midwives who have honored both the spiritual and physical aspects of pregnancy and childbirth for centuries.

LYNN BRACH (July / August 1998)

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