

The Pregnant Woman's Companion: Nine Strategies that Work to Keep Your Peace of Mind Through Pregnancy and Into Parenthood

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Attitude Press (Jun 15, 2004)

Unknown \$14.95 (256pp)

978-0-9716631-0-7

Feeling in control of a pregnancy can depend on the simplest and most unrelated tasks, such as cleaning and organizing the kitchen. This is one of the many practical strategies offered in this complete guide, which addresses every physical and mental aspect of pregnancy, from body image and maternity clothes to the possible shift in relationship and nightmares and daymares. Although vague at times, the information presented is largely tangible and un-esoteric.

The authors, experts in life transition and pregnancy, divide their book into nine strategies, which speak to the partner as well as to the woman as an essential part of the pregnancy. This is effective in creating a flow of work that makes up a "bigger picture" rather than a sum of chapters. Within each strategy are pertinent personal stories, which prevent the volume from becoming simply a textbook and bring the information down to earth.

The final strategy discusses the various forms of loss during pregnancy, including breakup or divorce. Although these in-depth topics are touched on only briefly, their importance is not understated: a variety of resources, including books and websites, are provided throughout. While the authors do not indulge gender-warfare or politics, they carefully mention that there are "options" regarding an unwanted pregnancy, a mention that seems to this reviewer to be out of place in a guide that details the stages of pregnancy.

The authors' description of their nine strategies for dealing with pregnancy and parenthood are the most effective aspect of this volume, because they offer ways to manage life during the pregnancy and beyond. This prevents the book from becoming yet another psychobabble text that provides little more than a commiserating experience for readers. It offers actual solutions and assigns personal responsibility for these solutions. It is a true hands-on tool for entering into the wonderful life change of parenthood.

MARY BETH ZELEZNIK (September / October 2002)

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