

## BIRTH MESSAGES

By Judith Fraser MFT

I remember being born. I know some people might think that isn't possible, but I know first hand that it is.

"Push," the doctor said. "Push hard." Mom, at 18 years old and one of the last children of 12 did as she was told. "Push," he said again. Momma screamed in pain.

"The baby's too slow," the doctor said. "Let me get some forceps around its head." I felt the cold metal clamp around my temples and pull. "Not so fast," I muttered. "I don't want to be rushed." Nobody heard me. The doctor continued to pull until I was inched into this world on someone else's schedule. My first major obstacle was to overcome what the doctor thought of as something helpful. To this day I hate to be rushed. I struggle to take my time and do things in ways that seem right to me.

Yesterday my husband asked me to drop him off in front of the bank so he could run in and make a deposit. I drove past the red line that marked the curb in front of the bank. "Where are you going?" he asked in a sharp tone. I knew he always stopped on the red line when he was driving. It was closer to the versa-teller.

My back stiffened, but I was determined to do what felt right to me. "I'm going to the parking lot on the side," I answered.

"I'm only running in, then running out," he replied.

"I know," I gritted my teeth as I continued to slowly head toward the parking lot.

His birth messages are different than mine. I don't stop on red lines. The last time I did, it cost me a \$95.00 ticket. That was enough for me not to do it again. I took my time entering the parking lot and finding a place to park -- away from the rush of the red curb -- and away from feeling like a newborn again; helpless.

I wonder how much of my thinking reverts back to the beginning of my life. How many of my beliefs were given to me as a child and remain programmed in hidden corners of my mind? Right now I'm waiting in the pre-birth period to find out if an editor wants to work with me on my self help book. The gestation period for the book has been much longer than nine months; it is more like nine years of writing, refining, throwing out and rewriting again.

Every time I sit down to work on the book I feel like I have to pass through a dark, narrow passageway like the birth canal. It feels dangerous; just looking into the darkness makes my heart race. I have to wait a few minutes while the tension in my head releases. I know I'm not being rushed by anyone. There's no doctor standing by to force me to write on his schedule. But, taking my time is still an ongoing obstacle that lives deep inside the cells of my body.

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When all is quiet I make the plunge into the abyss, sit down at my desk and allow words to come out of the typewriter keys. Words, births of another kind, make their way through a mysterious creative part of me and onto the page of my computer on their own time. I'm not sure why writing is so important to me, but I do know that facing the fear, and walking through it so to speak, is empowering.

I was late leaving the house for an appointment today. I had to drive from the Hollywood Hills to Santa Monica for a commercial interview. Gone are the days when I could make it there and back within an hour. Now it takes 30 minutes just to get down Laurel Canyon. As I said before, I hate to be rushed -- I like to take my time. The obstacles along the road started right away.

A giant SUV tried to hitch a ride onto the back of my Honda Civic Hybrid. No doubt he wanted to save gas. I took a deep breath, turned on the radio and sang as I moved along, winding my way down the canyon. As soon as that narrow street turned into two lanes, he let go of my bumper and zipped around me so that he could make it to the next red light before I did.

"This isn't the birth canal," I said to myself. "You don't have to let anyone force you to go faster than you want to. It's your life and your car. You're in charge now."

As I ease my stress, I make up stories about the SUV guy. I imagine him having forceps in his pocket and a stethoscope around his neck. I figure he's hurrying down the road to pull somebody's unborn baby into the world on his (the doctor's) predetermined schedule.

Each bump in the road can be denied or accepted, cursed or embraced. As we become courageous enough to uncover what was and become mindful of what is, we live a more meaningful life. One that is rich with new choices and not filled with stressful bad feelings. We become partners in creating the world we want to live in.