

The American Fertility Society, a group of specialists in reproductive biology, also recently came out with new guidelines that called for increased study of the psychological effects of the surrogate process on parents and the child.

These developments may eventually lead to a legal consensus and conclusion. But until then, surrogate motherhood will remain legitimate in the eyes of some and an unethical practice in the eyes of others.

The moral grounds seem as

sticky as the legal.

"The desire for children is strong and wholesome," George F. Will observed in a recent column, "But life offers no guarantees and good things can have prohibitive costs."

To prevent such costs, Will continues, as in the New Jersey Case, the contract should be treated as an unenforceable statement of mutual intentions that no longer apply. "The mother must not be deprived of her baby, to which she is now bonded in the natural way," he writes.

Others insist that when a surrogate mother signs a contract, she waives her right to change her mind or challenge the assumption that giving birth to a baby leads automatically to bonding with it. Unlike Mary Beth Whitehead, most surrogate mothers do not legally contest the contracts they sign; nor do they state that they have regrets about their decision.

Reactions

Couples turn to surrogates for many reasons. "Most have tried

infertility drugs," Keane said. "Some settle for adoption, but that can be a four- to seven-year wait, and there are no white infants available in this country."

Judy Martin, who contacted Keane with her husband Ron, had unsuccessfully tried to have children for eight years. "We tried infertility drugs and went through part of the adoption process, but the system and the red tape is incredible. We weren't getting any younger," she said.

Martin was surprised at the mixed reaction she got from

friends and relatives when they learned of her surrogate agreement. "One friend of mine just kept saying, 'I couldn't do it... I just couldn't do it.' She thought it would be so hard to look at the woman, to know the woman who had had my baby."

"There were others though, who understood, who were delighted and celebrated with me as though I was pregnant," Martin said.

"I really wanted to help them have a child of their own," surrogate mother Jenny Cassem said about the couple she bore a child for in a recent magazine interview. "Liking them helped me not to fall for the baby."

"I made it clear that I would want to get to know the couple who would go through the experience with me," said Micki Griffen, another surrogate mother in the same article. "We became the best of friends. I adore these people."

Sherry King became a surrogate parent for her sister. "I'll always treasure this admittedly unusual experience," said King in a recent Redbook article. "Today, when people ask how I could give up my own child, the answer is simple: Kristen isn't mine; I just loaned my sister my body for her baby to grow in. I was merely babysitting for nine months. People express love in different ways; this was how I expressed my love for Carole."

Cassem, Griffen and King all maintained close ties with the couples who contracted them to be surrogates and even shared the experience of delivery with them.

"We were all together in the delivery room, and I kept in mind that the child was hers," Cassem said. "I felt her baby being born. It's a case of mind-over-matter. The baby was placed on my stomach, then taken to be cleaned up. When they brought him back, they gave him to Penny and Howard. When I saw their faces as they looked at their son, I was choked with happiness."

"In late November, I went into a very hard labor that lasted 10 hours," Griffen said. "They were with me every minute. The child was theirs, heart and soul by the time I woke. There was love all around me. My daughter was there. We both held the baby. I wanted to see all of her, to count her fingers

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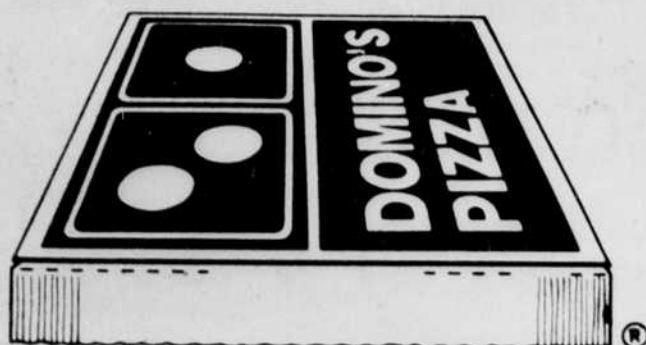
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