

much enthusiasm, and some of my friends who had children remained highly skeptical, particularly those who knew I could stand little pain.

Of course, I discussed the subject with my physician, Dr. Frances Holmes. I wanted her to promise that she would not give me any anesthetic at delivery, even if I demanded it.

While Dr. Holmes seemed delighted with my wishes for a natural childbirth, she warned: "If you insist that you don't want any anesthetic, my hands are tied. That's a mistake. It's not childbirth without anesthetic that you want, but childbirth without fear."

I didn't understand. Wouldn't the exercises I'd do for months preceding the delivery prevent the customary pain at childbirth by training the muscles to contract as necessary?

"There can be unexpected emergencies," Dr. Holmes cautioned. "What if you needed a Caesarian section?"

She had a point. I agreed to take anesthetic if it was needed.

One reason I became so enthusiastic about natural childbirth was that I felt it would bring Stuart and me closer together by letting us share an experience which drives some couples apart. I have watched husbands being shoved aside at the maternity ward as if they had no part in what was happening. I have seen women, once devoted to their husbands, turn all their affection and attention to their children.

Birth Is a Husband-Wife Experience

I wanted Stuart with me during the hours of labor. I wanted him to witness the birth of our baby—just as I would. I even wanted him to participate in my pregnancy, if that was possible. And he did—to the point where when any of our friends asked: "When are you going to have your baby, Terry?" I would answer: "Stuart and I will have our baby at such-and-such a date."

Stuart and I even learned how to deliver the baby ourselves in case we should not be able to reach the hospital in time.

Stuart read "Childbirth Without Fear" as thoroughly as I did. Every morning and night, he saw to it that I did my exercises. Often he got on the floor with me to make sure I was breathing properly. He watched closely as I lifted my legs up and down to strengthen the muscles of the abdomen and thighs, did knee bends to loosen the knees and hip joints, and helped me do all the other exercises designed to condition areas vital in delivery.

Dr. Holmes had urged me to continue my customary activities, except horseback riding and tennis. I continued to take ballet lessons until the seventh month of my pregnancy.

In my eighth month I still swam 20 laps in our pool every day.

One weekend Stuart and I sailed to Toyon Bay on Catalina Island, although I didn't dare tell Dr. Holmes about it because I was sure she wouldn't permit it. In fact, our friends tried to talk us out of it because the baby was due within a month. But I wasn't worried. I knew what to expect and that, if necessary, Stuart and I could deliver the baby. That's how much confidence Dr. Dick-Read's ideas inspired in me.

In the meantime I continued on the strict diet Dr. Holmes had ordered. After she measured me during my second month, she told me the baby would weigh approximately seven pounds. Dr. Holmes said I could gain no more than 15 pounds

total if I were to regain my proper weight after the delivery.

Stuart made sure that I followed the diet, just as he closely supervised my exercises.

When the day finally arrived, it was a busy one for me. I started by going shopping, taking a steam bath, and doing my exercises. We saw a play that night and attended a party given by Ginny Simms. We got to bed at 1 a.m.

About an hour and a half later, I felt the first contractions. Sooo the pains came faster; by 3:30 I decided I'd better be prepared in case this was it. I went to the closet to pack some night clothes and toilet articles.

A few moments later, Stuart, who had awakened as I moved about the room, found me on the closet floor, doubled up with pain.

This is ridiculous, I was telling myself, as he rushed to my side. You knew exactly what to expect. There's nothing to be afraid of.

Stuart called Dr. Holmes, who insisted he take me to the Good Samaritan Hospital right away.



Terry Moore and husband Stuart Cramer admire little Stuart. Both parents watched birth of child.

I was well into labor when we arrived, yet I could walk up the hospital steps without help, and could have gone on to the labor room if hospital rules hadn't required me to be pushed there in a wheel chair. By now it was 4 a.m.

Once in the labor room with Stuart, everything I had learned about relaxing automatically came to my mind. I went through the muscle exercises prescribed in the book. To everybody's surprise, including Dr. Holmes, I could giggle happily and tease Stuart about what was happening in between contractions.

Because I knew exactly what to expect, I was far less tense than women less prepared and had an easier time relaxing. That meant less pain. I knew, too, that every contraction would bring

Stuart Cramer IV a little closer, so instead of fearing the contractions, I looked forward to them.

About two hours after I arrived, Dr. Holmes wanted to give me a sedative to help me sleep for a while.

"I don't want to go to sleep," I protested.

"It'll help relieve the pain."

"It isn't bad," I assured her.

She looked me in the eye: "Is there anything you're worried about?"

"I'm afraid if I fall asleep you might send Stuart away."

She promised she wouldn't, so I let her give me a dose. I dozed off for a short time.

At eight o'clock I was wheeled into the hospital's delivery room, but another hour passed before the actual birth.

The contractions and waiting went on. Stuart continued to hold my hand, but I experienced remarkably little pain throughout that hour.

When the baby came at last, it was the most thrilling, the most beautiful experience of my life. By the way the contractions increased, I knew almost the exact moment when little Stuart would be born.

A mirror was held above me so I could watch the infant come into the world. When I first saw little Stuart appear, I felt an ecstasy that I am unable to describe. It's a spiritual elation, a closeness to God, a complete union between mother and child. And because Stuart was with me, it included my husband as well.

"We" Have a Baby

It was Stuart who proudly exclaimed: "We just had a baby!" Subconsciously, he felt that he had had as much to do with it as I did—and he had.

In a way, there was a personal, yet impersonal, feeling attached to the birth, if such a thing is possible. Personal because it was my baby, and I saw him born. Impersonal because through the mirror I watched it like a motion picture, without pain, without really feeling that it came from me.

But when the baby was put into my arms, it was not as if I had been asleep and somebody suddenly was handing me a child and saying: "This is your baby."

I already knew this son with great intimacy.

Our baby weighed 6 pounds, 13½ ounces at birth. I thought then he looked like his father, and I still do despite some modest scoffing by Stuart.

When I got back to my room after the delivery, I felt wonderful. Part of Dr. Dick-Read's theory is that natural childbirth reduces the usual fatigue and postnatal "blues." With me, it eliminated them. I fixed my hair that morning and put on some make-up so I'd look presentable when Stuart came by to see us.

Next, I got on the telephone and started calling all my friends, especially the skeptics. I talked and talked about the wonders of my delivery and the wonders of my baby. When Dr. Holmes dropped by that afternoon, I was still chattering, but by then my voice had gone hoarse.

"No more telephoning," Dr. Holmes said. "I'm not worried about anything resulting from the birth—just your talkativeness."

I spent six days in the hospital although I was up and around most of the time. It was more of a vacation than a recuperation.

As far as Stuart and I are concerned, natural childbirth is the only way to have children.

And we can't wait to have our next one in the very same way.