Healing the Birth Story
A trauma-informed guided imagery protocol

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Healing the Birth Story: Overview
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At the moment of our birth, we see the coalescence of multiple overlapping factors that serve to shape our experience, expectations, resources and readiness to live life on earth.

Such factors include:

- Our prenatal environment: the physical and emotional wellbeing of our birth mom, and crucially, her level attunement to our physical and emotional wellbeing.
- The epigenetic environment: the cells that became us were present in the prenatal bodies of our parents when our grandmothers were pregnant with them. Three generations shared one body.
- Cultural, societal and familial context: all that was going on in the family and the world informs us about what we can expect as we emerge.
- (If our worldview allows): soul agreements, life purpose and past-life trauma may impact the willingness (or not) of our soul to become embodied and grounded.

While we don't have cognitive awareness of this information, we continue to be informed and influenced by it throughout life, as it remains stored in our “implicit” memory through emotions, sensations, sounds, images, impressions or just an inner “knowing”.

*Healing the Birth Story* is an opportunity to go back to the moment of our birth and bring forth – into our cognitive awareness - the information that came with us into life. Clients are reminded that even though their cognitive brain was not online at the time of their birth, they were still present and able to absorb information and knowing through all of their other senses.
The process

*Healing the Birth Story* is a guided imagery process that can be enhanced as necessary with modalities including tapping and EMDR.

The process invites our current selves to travel back in time and space to observe the event of our birth, learning who was present, what they were feeling and what was going on in the family, before checking in with the body and soul of the prenate self on their readiness (or not) to arrive into the world.

The current self then offers resourcing and assistance to the prenate and to everyone in the room – especially to the birth mom – including inviting in supportive ancestors where appropriate.

All those present are directed to focus on providing a warm and supportive welcoming committee to receive the newborn. The process ends with a blessing offered by the current self to the newborn self and assurance that future assistance can be called upon at any time.

Further information and booking a session

Healing the Birth Story is available as a private, individual healing session, or as part of a group session. Jane also offers an in-depth two part online training program for therapists and coaches. For more information, sign up to receive updates at www.therapyjane.com
Healing the Birth Story: Questionnaire
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How it works

Most of us know much more than we think we do about the circumstances surrounding our conception, mom’s pregnancy with us and our birth story.

Information is held in the stories we’ve been told, the photos we’ve seen, the details we know of our family history and the observations we’ve made about how our parents operate today (perhaps as we’ve watched them with our own children). Even without such details (for example, if we were adopted), we can usually piece together some contextual information, such as the approximate ages of our birth parents at the time we were born, where they were living, whether they were working, and whether we have older siblings.

In addition to the information that we “know” or can cognitively deduce, it’s important to remember that we also lived through the prenatal and birth experience. Although our cognitive brain wasn’t online to form a narrative memory (the memories we can describe from when we’re a little older), we still have implicit memory, stored in the form of sensations, emotions, images, sounds, images and impressions. Because these implicit memories speak to what we experienced, they may unconsciously be informing how we show up in the world today, in the form of beliefs about our worth, safety and lovability, and in our expectations of how others will treat us.

When we create the right holding-space, we can invite our nervous systems to bring forth the information from our prenatal experience into our cognitive awareness. As we file the information into the overall timeline of our existence, we may find it no longer needs to influence our way of being now. And, by putting it into the greater context of what was going on in the family system, we may find ourselves able to offer compassion and understanding to ourselves, to our parents, and to those in our ancestral lineage.
Questionnaire

For each question, please give the full details of what you know or what you have been told. Note that because the questions are designed to elicit information about your prenatal and birth story, they still apply even if you were adopted. If you don’t have the details, you can always answer “not known”. Note that specific questions surrounding fostering, adoption or other separations from the birth mom occur further down the list.

1. Off the top of your head, what do you know about the circumstances surrounding your conception and your birth mom’s pregnancy with you?
   
   Prompt: for example, sometimes there are stories held in family lore about births, such as the baby who came out “smiling and full of adventure”, the baby who decided to come in the middle of a snowstorm even though it wasn’t their due-date, or how mom’s water broke when she was on the bus.

2. How old were your birth parents when they conceived you?

3. Were your birth parents in a committed relationship when they conceived you?

4. What were your birth parents doing in life at the time that they conceived you?
   
   Prompt: for example, were they in school or college, working, travelling the world in a VW Bus?

5. What were your birth parents’ living arrangements at the time that they conceived you?

6. Were your parents experiencing any financial, job, health or family stressors at the time that they conceived you?

7. Do you have any older siblings? How old would they have been when you were born?

8. Were there any lost pregnancies (miscarriage, stillbirth, termination) prior to your birth mom’s pregnancy with you?

9. Was your birth mom unwell at any point during her pregnancy with you?
   
   Prompt: Possibilities could include severe sickness, unexpected needs for surgery such as appendicitis or discovery of a tumor, gestational diabetes, pre-eclampsia, accidents, injuries or traumatic events.

10. Did anyone significant die (eg: one of mom’s parents, siblings, or another child) while your birth mom was pregnant with you, or shortly after your birth?

11. Were you born in a hospital, in a birthing center, at home, in a car on the way to the hospital, somewhere else?
12. Were you born vaginally or by C-section? Were there any complications?  
   Prompt: Possibilities could include breech birth, having the cord around your neck, being stuck in the birth canal, requiring forceps, episiotomy etc.

13. Were you born prematurely, requiring a stay in an incubator?

14. Were you fostered, adopted, or otherwise separated from your birth mother either temporarily or permanently? What were the circumstances? How long did you stay with your birth mother before you were passed to the person who next took care of you? What do you know about your first days, weeks or months before your adoptive parents took over their care of you?
Healing the Birth Story
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Certified EMDR Therapist (since 2010); Certified Professional Coactive Coach (since 2019)
Therapist & Coach in private practice specializing in the treatment of trauma and PTSD
Faculty Associate in the Marriage & Family Therapy program at Bethel Seminary, St Paul, MN (2010-19)
Served on the EMDRIA board (2012-17)
Consultant and trainer for coaches and medical professionals becoming trauma informed
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Katie O'Shea’s
When there are no words
Robin Shapiro’s EMDR Solutions II Chapter 18
Review, Release, Repair

Pia Mellody’s
Post Induction Therapy
The Meadows, Wickenburg AZ
A Gestalt Method – going back in time as your adult self

Mark Wolynn’s
Inherited Family Trauma
www.markwolynn.com
It didn’t start with you
- The opportunity to acknowledge and heal the stories of those who came before you

Ivan Boszormenyi Nagy’s
Contextual Family Therapy
Invisible Loyalties
Everyone comes by their issues honestly
Healing the birth story

A trauma-informed guided imagery protocol that takes us back in time and place to offer healing to our pre-nate selves, our birth mom, and all those present – in body or spirit – at the time that we were born.

Can be completed in one session, in person or online; works with lightbar or tapping
Reviews and combines client's implicit/experiential memory and explicit stories or understandings of the circumstances of their birth
Allows the current self to return and resource the pre-nate self
De-personalizes the impact of any systemic issues on the client self (everyone comes by their issues honestly)
Offers compassion understanding to all the family members present at the birth
Offers resourcing back up the generations, especially to the birth mom
Allows for spiritual intervention (when consistent with the client's worldview) of soul healing or past-life healing

The pre-natal environment

Research studies by Bruce H. Lipton

“The mother's emotions, such as fear, anger, love, hope among others, can biochemically alter the genetic expression of her offspring.”


“Our grandmothers' trauma and inherited levels of cortisol

Research studies by Rachel Yehuda
professor of psychiatry and neuroscience at
Mount Sinai School of Medicine, New York
Cortisol: the stress hormone that helps our body return to normal after something traumatic happens

Descendants of trauma survivors (holocaust, veterans, 9/11) have lower cortisol levels (less ability to return to normal after a stressful event), predisposing them to re-live the PTSD symptoms of the previous generation

We are 3 times more likely to suffer from PTSD ourselves if one parent suffered from PTSD

Our contextual trauma developing empathy and understanding and de-personalizing our story

Most of us know much more than we think we do ...

The Process
Healing the Birth Story Process

1. Information gathering (creating a container in the brain)
2. Returning to the time and place of birth (as the current self)
3. Assessment
4. Acknowledgement and Resourcing
5. Birth and Blessing
6. Returning to the present

Step 1: Information gathering

Creating a holding container in the brain from information that is known or can be reasonably deduced through a genogram (for ongoing clients) through interview questions (for one-time clients) through a pre-sent questionnaire (for group clients)

Steps 2 - 6: Guided imagery protocol

Using lightbar, butterfly hugs or knee taps Instructing client on where to focus Inviting client to allow implicit memory to come forward in the form of body sensations, emotions, impressions or “inner knowing” Offering prompts or reframes where appropriate Returning client fully to the present

Two important client reminders

Even though you don’t have narrative memory of the event, you were still there; you still lived through it; and you still have memory of that lived experience in your nervous system. All we’re doing is bringing that bodily memory forward into your cognitive awareness.

Please do not birth yourself until I instruct you to!

Questions, comments, discussion
References


References contd.


References contd.


References contd.