

The Big Picture — Being Cesarean Born

by Jane English, 2021

What is a person?

How and when is this sense of being a person formed?

In order to provide the necessary noun in a sentence, our language limits us to speaking of a person being conceived, of a person being born, with *person* somehow preexisting before either of these events. It is unconsciously assumed that the speaker and the listener have in common a basic understanding of what it means to be a person.

The act of speaking of a person generally carries with that word all the unconscious assumptions and presuppositions of a person being one who has journeyed down the birth canal, the mode of birth that until a bit over 100 years ago was universal.

Thus any unique aspects of a person born through the “different doorway” of cesarean birth, especially non-labor cesarean birth, come to be seen as deviant, as problems that need to be “fixed.” The cesarean born person’s birth learning is unconsciously seen as abnormal by the majority that is vaginally born.

Some of these differences may actually be skills and perspectives that can be of great value to our world.

What is this different birth learning, this different native culture, in the most literal sense of pertaining to birth?

In a nutshell, it is a different innate sense of space and of time, of boundaries and of process.

I will not repeat here what I have expressed over the past 50 years, in words and through art, about my own experience as a non-labor cesarean born, about other cesarean born people’s experiences, and about my thoughts on this different birth learning’s implications.

It is all available on my website cesareanvoices.com.

See there the list of most relevant items --

<https://www.cesareanvoices.com/cesarean-info.pdf>

See especially the page where I list research topics for further exploration of cesarean birth’s implications.

What is it that I have to say to cesarean born people?

Bottom line: “You are OK just as you are. Learn about and appreciate the differences you carry, the different birth learning. Let go of thinking that other people’s way is the only way and that your way is somehow defective. Be willing to teach others the gifts you have from your unique birth learning, and be open to learning from people who have birth learning different from yours.”

And what do I say to parents, siblings, therapists, etc. who live and work with cesarean born people?

Similarly: “You and cesarean born people are OK just as you and they are. Learn about and appreciate the differences, the different birth learning. Let go of thinking your way is the only way and that cesarean born people’s way is somehow defective. Be open to learning from people who have birth learning different from yours, and be willing to teach others the gifts you have from your own birth learning.”

Of course, every birth is unique, and thus everyone’s birth learning is different to some extent. What we learn by accepting and being present with the more obviously different birth learning of a non-labor cesarean born person also can enhance compassion for and acceptance of the ways of all our unique fellow/sister humans.

What led me to this understanding?

- My study of physics, leading to a PhD in 1970, especially quantum physics that defies conventional logic and ideas about the existence of “separate” objects
- Many years (1970 to present) of living and working with the Chinese classic *Tao Te Ching* — whose first chapter describes the paradoxical futility of giving a name to the ultimate reality from which apparently separate objects arise.
- Many years (1973-1987) of inner work, supported by a year living at Esalen Institute, and work with Richard Price, Stan Grof, Ralph Metzner and Angeles Arrien.
- Being active for many years (1977-1990’s) in the world of transpersonal psychology.
- Befriending and working with several indigenous people whose cultures value equally the visible seen world and the invisible unseen world. (1977 to present)
- Almost 50 years (1973 to present) of actively exploring the implications of having been born non-labor cesarean.

What is my intention moving forward?

To pass on to others the body of work on cesarean birth that I have accumulated in the almost 50 years since I first became aware that how I was born is a “difference that makes a difference.” I hope to leave some “footprints” that are of use to others, that can facilitate their moving beyond my own understandings into yet-uncharted territories.

In particular, I wish to pass the Cesarean Voices website to a new caretaker. I trust there is someone who will maintain what I have created and will build on that in ways I may not even imagine.