

More advance praise for *Baby on Board*:

“Finally a book that brings to light all the challenges of the modern mom with practical and inspirational advice for dealing with the changes of becoming a mother. *Baby on Board* will be on our best picks list for 2007!”

—Shannon DiPadova, mother of two, founder and president, DueMaternity.com

“After 30 years of nurturing new mothers, we know the demands of new parenthood are unexpectedly overwhelming and we welcome this resource to help moms-to-be plan for their transition to motherhood. *Baby on Board* goes right to the heart of the matter and helps a woman trust her instincts.”

—Corky Harvey, RN, MS, CLC, and Wendy Haldeman, RN, MN, CLC, mothers, lactation consultants, and owners of The Pump Station, Santa Monica/Hollywood

“I certainly struggled, and I think so many mothers do, with becoming a mother and staying in contact with my creative, ‘adult’ self. It is so very important to give mothers the tools and permission you are given with this inspiring, practical book. Thank you!”

—Jennifer Loudon, mother of one, author of *The Life Organizer* and *The Pregnant Woman’s Comfort Book*

“Hooray for *Baby on Board*! Joelle and Amy understand that taking care of yourself is the first step in being a good mother.”

—Stacy Denney, mother of two, owner of Barefoot & Pregnant, author of *Spa Mama* and *Fit Mama*

“Thank you for writing this book! I’ve been having so many questions about what I would be like as a mother or if I have what it takes to be a mother. Your book addresses all of my fears squarely on the head!! It helped me move from my ‘mommy tailspins’ to real actions that will bring my best to motherhood.”

—Vanessa Birch, hoping-to-be a mother, owner of Communications Savvy

“*Baby on Board* addresses the missing piece for so many women in preparing for the births of their babies—looking carefully and consciously at what they truly need and want to be extraordinary mothers.”

—Karni Seymour-Brown, mother of two, midwife, and owner of Sunrise Birthing Center

“I felt like I had my own personal coach and support team as I read *Baby on Board*. Someone to challenge my thinking and push me to look at what I want and take action BEFORE the baby arrives!”

—Debra Gomes, mother of one and soon to be two,
owner of Note by Note Children’s Music Studio

“The *Baby on Board* process made a HUGE difference in preparing for our second child. It brought my husband and me closer to each other, created the foundation for a great start, and now keeps us focused on what we really want for our whole family.”

—Cynthia Salitsky, mother of two, Director R&D Communications, AstraZeneca

“Having become a mother myself just 10 months ago, my one piece of advice to new mothers I meet is to ‘stop reading all those books and just *be* a mother!’ This book is the exception. What we need most is to step into our own motherhood, learn to rely on our instincts, and become the parent we really want to be. *Baby on Board* is an amazing guide to doing just that . . . so grab a cup of tea and dive in.”

—Tina Forsyth, mother of one, author of *Money, Meaning, and Beyond*

“*Baby on Board*’s insights and exercises are invaluable to any woman trying to define who she is and, more importantly, who she would like to be. Amy and Joelle have gathered a wonderful collection of inspiring real-life stories from moms and moms-to-be. Even those wary of the self-help section will find plenty of down-to-earth tips and advice inside.”

—Katherine Tom, senior editor, Yahoo Travel

“You cannot possibly imagine or predict what kind of mother you are going to be until the day you welcome your little one into the world. The best possible preparation for happy, healthy parenting is to be a well-adjusted woman who knows herself and understands her values. Joelle and Amy have provided moms-to-be with a toolkit to guide them through this journey.”

—Evelyn So, mother of one, president, Evelyn So Consulting Services

“I wish that Joelle and Amy had written this book 12 years ago before I had the first of my 3 children. *Baby on Board* is an essential guide to any expectant mother. It is like having a loving, wise and experienced friend at your fingertips at all times.”

—Terry Curtin, mother of three, CEO/Creative Director, Intralink

Baby ON *Board*

*Becoming a Mother Without Losing Yourself—
A Guide for Moms-to-Be*

JOELLE JAY
AND
AMY KOVARICK

AMACOM

American Management Association
New York ♦ Atlanta ♦ Brussels ♦ Chicago ♦ Mexico City ♦ San Francisco
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FOREWORD

From the moment a woman knows she is pregnant, her routine ways of thinking, planning, eating, and sleeping are disrupted. Especially with the first child, a woman loses herself in daydreams about being a mother and what her baby will be like. She bounces between thinking how her life won't have to change *that* much to making baby-focused plans that completely disregard her present life and direction. While every mother loses parts of herself in the transition to motherhood, *Baby on Board! Becoming a Mother Without Losing Yourself* offers insight to help the reader stay connected and true to what is most important in her life.

In our present culture, more time is spent on preparing mothers for the day they are in labor than for the transition to motherhood that will follow. Many new mothers lament that they wish more time had been spent preparing for the longer and profoundly life-changing postpartum transition. Many childbirth educators argue that mothers aren't ready to hear about, or prepare for, the postpartum transition while they are pregnant. They will just have to wait and sort it out later. But later is too late.

Much of the literature available to new parents is focused on labor, birth, physical recovery after birth, and baby care. As someone who has worked with thousands of new mothers, I know first-hand how important it is to prepare for the changes of new motherhood. Being aware of, and planning for, normal postpartum changes can help mothers—and their families—adjust more readily. This is the first book I have encountered that brings a comprehensive approach to preparing psychologically and logistically for motherhood.

Baby on Board has a clear message: Every expectant mother is creating two lives—her new baby's and her own as a mother. Joelle and Amy believe that taking the time to go through this introspective planning process intentionally might bring mothers closer to their actual goal, which is to maintain their bearings even when chaos reigns.

This book is a thoughtful woman's companion to preparing for the practical and emotional changes in the first year of motherhood. The exercises outlined in this book will continue to be a reference and guide as a woman matures psychologically and socially as a new mother.

Pam England

Author, *Birthing From Within*

January 6, 2007

Albuquerque, New Mexico



A LETTER TO OUR READERS

When we started writing *Baby on Board*, the media was full of scary stories of new motherhood—stories of women desperately trying to juggle their lives, abandoning hard-won careers or missing out on their babies’ lives, and generally starting to buckle under the pressure.

We set out to rewrite the stories of motherhood for our generation.

What we found was that it is up to every woman to rewrite her own story.

It is our vision that as women we will figure out how to have it all—not by *doing* it all, but by understanding what our “all” is: our unique, personal, one-of-a-kind way of living that takes into account everything that matters to us—and allowing others to do the same. Enough of women arguing over how a mother should live her life. It’s time for women to come together and create a world where we honor each other, no matter how different our choices might be.

You, the women who are reading this book, are our inspiration. We know it takes courage to blaze a new trail. Every woman who steps out into a new life widens the path for the women who follow her. When you declare what you really want, you give another woman a voice.

We hope you will join us in our vision and use your transition into motherhood to live your full potential. It serves no one for you to hide your light under a barrel. If we had done that, we never would have written this book.

Please share your story with us. We want to know your experience of becoming a mother without losing yourself.

We look forward to hearing from you, and we wish you all the best.

Joelle and Amy

Write to us at stories@empoweredmotherhood.com.



INTRODUCTION: CREATING YOUR LIFE

“You can’t have relationships with other people until you give birth to yourself.”

Sonia Sanchez

When you found out you were pregnant, you knew you were creating a life. But did you actually think about *creating a life*? Not just your baby’s life, but *your* new life? You know things are going to change with a baby, but have you really stopped to consider what those changes mean for you?

Who do you want to be as a mother? What will make your first year as a mom ideal? What will you need to feel fulfilled in your new role, as well as in the rest of your life? Taking the time to contemplate these questions will enable you to take charge of your transition into motherhood—to define and create your new life on your terms.

There is plenty of advice for expecting moms—sometimes *too* much—on everything from stretch marks to strollers. Books, magazines, websites, your mother, your mother-in-law, your friends, and even strangers are eager to tell you what to do. They all think you should do things their way because it worked for them.

We think you should do things *your* way. We believe you have your own answers, or at least the ability to find them. Only you know what’s truly right for you. We’ve designed this book to help you release your innate knowledge, wisdom, and insight in creating your new life as a woman who is also a mother.

Becoming a Mother Without Losing Yourself

With this book, you give birth to your life as a mother. You think beyond the baby shower and the birthing room and design your new life to reflect what you value, what you believe, and who you intend to be. We refer to this book and our

step-by-step process as *Becoming a Mother*. Your journey through this book starts with exploration and ends with celebration!

- You **explore** and **imagine** your ideal first year as a woman and mother, creating a personal vision for you and your family.
- You **reflect** on what is most important to you. You **clarify** what you believe about motherhood, developing a foundation that will serve as a guide for your new life.
- You **declare** what you want for your first year, capturing it all in a concrete prioritized list.
- You **plan** changes for your time, money, and space while working through the challenges that arise.
- You **commit** and **take action**, putting your new life into place before your baby arrives.
- You **celebrate**, acknowledging how extraordinary you are.

Each chapter encourages a combination of thinking and doing with examples, exercises, and anecdotes to help you design your life ahead. The process is flexible—you can work by yourself, with your husband or partner, or with other moms-to-be. You choose how little or how much to do and with whom to do it. The tools in this book are available for you now as you enter motherhood, as well as for the rest of your life.

"In my process, I wrote down what I value—independence, growth, self-awareness, and passion. These are the qualities I want to hold onto as I become a mother. I designed my ideal first year as a giant learning opportunity—with a plan to dive into child development books and classes, have some time every week to be by myself and reflect, get a new digital camera, somehow find a part-time job based on my photography, and go away for a weekend with Ron to celebrate our five-year anniversary. It is so cool to write down what I want!" —FRANNIE, 7 MONTHS PREGNANT

Throughout the book, you will meet other women who have generously contributed their thoughts and experiences of becoming a mother. They represent different walks of life, career paths, family arrangements, financial circumstances, cultural backgrounds, and opinions. We have changed their names and specific details out of respect for their privacy. Their ideas, plans, and actions range from the lofty to the practical. You will read about an expecting mother vowing to honor her integrity,

another letting go of her fear, and others who are taking a promotion, leaving a ten-year career, finishing home repairs, adding a home office, and preparing for life with a baby in dozens of other ways. We hope you embrace your process with the same enthusiasm and commitment.

WELCOME!

Different women will read this book at different times in their lives. For the sake of clarity, we wrote for the expecting mom, but we also invite new moms, experienced moms, and even sometime-in-the-future moms to enjoy the process of designing their lives.

All women are welcome! Whether you're part of a traditional marriage, a same-sex partnership, a single mother-to-be, a new stepmother, an adoptive mom, or a mother in any other circumstance, you share in the joys and dilemmas that all mothers face. For the sake of practicality, we used traditional language throughout the book (by referring to fathers and husbands, for instance), but hope that you will feel included in the ideas even if the limitations of language and space inhibit us from using the exact terms that fit your situation.

All babies are welcome! You may be giving birth to twins, triplets, or multiples; you may be adopting; your babies may have conditions we don't address; or you may have other children already in your family. We chose language reflecting common circumstances and invite you to apply the information to suit your life and your family.

Husbands and partners are welcome, too! Throughout the book we talk directly to you and walk you through the process as if you are going through it alone, because *you* are the one becoming a mother! However, we encourage you to collaborate with your husband or partner whenever possible.

Being Your Best

As a mother-to-be, you are starting a lifelong adventure. So much potential lies ahead—so much hope and possibility! When you are expecting a baby and getting ready for the changes that will bring, you are truly at a new beginning.

As you embark on this journey, you will be embracing a new way of life. You will be bringing a precious soul into your family and expanding your relationships. Seeing through your baby's eyes, you will experience the world around you as if for the first time.

It's true that motherhood can change you. Your heart will grow. Your relationships will deepen. You will see people differently, as your husband or partner be-

comes a father, your parents become grandparents, and your friends and relatives become role models for your baby. Perhaps most significant of all, you will redefine yourself. You will forever identify as a mother—the central, unifying figure for a little person who depends on you. So yes, your life is going to change.

At the same time, you can also protect the amazing qualities that make you who you are. Your strengths and talents. Your sense of humor. Your style. The life lessons you've learned, the contributions you've made, your accomplishments, your principles, and your sense of self. You can choose a life in which you maintain and enhance the best of yourself, for you *and* your baby. By becoming a mother without losing yourself, you will welcome your baby in a way that honors all of who you are.

"I am reminded how powerful I can be not only as a mother, but a wife, friend, and professional. When I choose to do the things that will benefit me, they will ultimately benefit my family. It takes a lot of courage to start making decisions that you want, and it is amazing how people come to respect you for doing that."

—LENA, 6 MONTHS PREGNANT

Our Stories

As personal coaches, we work with women across the country to help each one create the life she wants. We've learned that every new mother has her own hopes and dreams, challenges to overcome, and distinctive ways of designing her life. As do we. We too used this process to become mothers without losing ourselves. Here are our stories.

Joelle. As a busy consultant, I found myself working evenings and weekends, feeling generally rushed and stressed out about life. Before I was even ready to be a mother, I could see this was no life for a baby. I wanted to be attentive, fun-loving, and relaxed as a mother—not harried and absent. I could see something seriously needed to change.

I started asking myself questions, re-envisioning my life, getting clear on my priorities, and making decisions that would make that kind of motherhood possible without compromising the career I was working so hard to achieve. Little by little, I started making room for a baby.

At work, I remodeled my business so that I could work a little less and make a little more. I kept the projects I loved and gave away the rest. I cut out the "extras" in my life—volunteering for a girls' club, being the recorder for my professional as-

sociation, and doing small projects for an old client. At home, Tim and I sat down and sketched out our new lives. We figured out a way to take care of a baby while still making time for the things we loved to do on our own, like golfing, skiing, and reading. We found the daycare. We bought the SUV. It may sound crazy, but I literally had a color-coded calendar system that proved we could make it all work. When my maternity leave started—two weeks before Jackson was born—I was ready.

Having my first baby still wasn't easy. There were tears and late nights. There was stress and confusion. But I felt better able to handle it. I remember one night holding Jackson as he cried and cried. I felt tired, fat, and messy. And yet, I felt strangely . . . okay. I might have been clueless, but I wasn't out of control. Instead of falling apart as I'd once feared I might, I remember reassuring my son, "Don't worry. We'll figure this out." And somehow that's what we did.

Amy. When I became pregnant, I was nervous and excited. I knew that as a life coach who helps clients create balanced and fulfilled lives as mothers, I had better practice what I preach!

As I started down the path to motherhood, I thought about how much self-growth work I had done over the years. Despite all that effort, pregnancy was already challenging me in new ways. Many of my old, familiar issues started popping back up, like defining my worth by how much I get done and needing to do everything well.

At the same time, I was really excited about the baby! Married at 38, pregnant at 39, with a bonus gift of three stepdaughters and a career that I loved, I had almost everything I always dreamed about. I felt like I was holding my breath—afraid that I couldn't have it all, that I would be forced to give something up. "Can I really have all of this?" I kept wondering. "Is there going to be some catch?"

I dedicated myself to preserving the parts of my life I wanted to keep, planning for the baby I was so grateful to be having, and deciding what I didn't mind letting go. I carved out the four-month maternity leave I craved, put my convertible up for sale, and bought the crib we really wanted. I told my stepdaughters that I hoped they would see the baby as their brother not as their stepmother's child. I asked Mike for extra "Daddy duty" so I could pursue publishing this book and told friends I didn't want stuffed animals or blankets but did want prepared meals and chocolate chip cookies.

I posted the commitments I made to myself—my values, my beliefs, and my intention—on the wall next to my rocking chair. Months later, with Matt in my arms, I would read the words as I rocked him to sleep. Those words are still an anchor for me, keeping me tethered to my commitment to bring all of who I am to my son.

What You Might Experience

We can't tell you exactly what your life will look like, but we can tell you what you might experience when you take the steps to design your new life as a mother.

1. **You will feel ready to handle the big challenges of the first year.** When your baby arrives, you are better able to relax and enjoy the experience, having prepared emotionally *and* logistically.
2. **You will feel more confident and less guilty, tense, and overwhelmed as a new mother.** With the barrage of conflicting dos and don'ts for everything from feeding to sleeping to whether to go back to work, having a baby can seem overwhelming. Having a stronger sense of self helps you make the decisions that are right for *you*.
3. **You will be able to maintain a balance between your career, your baby, your partner and you.** When the challenges of new motherhood surface, you can minimize frustration and confusion by connecting back to everything you learned about who you are and what you believe.
4. **You will find solutions to help a new baby fit into your already busy life.** When there's too much to do and too little time to do it—a common complaint of new mothers—you can ask yourself what will best fit your intention for your family and do *that*. Everything else can wait.
5. **You will gain certainty that you are preparing to be the best mother you can be.**

In addition, your children will learn the importance you place on building a life of fulfillment and you will learn ways to ensure that you will be the kind of mother you most want to be.

A Life of Fulfillment

As a time of great excitement and change, the transition into new motherhood is the perfect opportunity to design your life. Take advantage! Embrace it!

By going through this process, you prepare for motherhood in a powerful way. This is not about creating your baby's life, it's about creating a life into which you want to bring a baby. Being your best, most complete, fulfilled self will support you, your baby, and your family.

When the time comes, you will give birth to your baby and also your new life. You will thrive—not just survive—the first year of motherhood. The transition into motherhood only happens once. Make it amazing.

OUR PHILOSOPHY

In helping you clarify what is important to you, it only seems fair that we share what's important to us. We based this process on our own core values and beliefs. Some of these ideas may resonate with you immediately. Some may challenge you, and others may expand your thinking. We invite you to weigh our beliefs against your own as a way to begin the process of becoming more fully *you* in preparation for motherhood.

- ✓ *Life is going to change. How you respond is up to you.* If you're pregnant now, you've probably already been warned that life is going to change—sometimes in less-than-encouraging ways. “You just wait,” your friends smirk, implying that you will never again have a relaxing bath, a pedicure, or a romantic evening. “You’d better enjoy it now,” they caution as you head off for a vacation, as if you’ll never leave your house again once the baby arrives. They are your friends, you love them, and you know they mean well. “Your life is going to be different,” they tell you, and you probably already know this to be true. We want you to see that you have some choice in *how* your life will be different, and a lot of choice in how you’ll respond. This book is about choosing who you want to be as a mother and how much easier and enjoyable new motherhood is when you take charge.
- ✓ *You can have it all, as long as you know what your “all” is.* This book is about creating your ideal life. We want you to know that this isn’t an empty promise to “have it all.” In fact, you may have to make some sacrifices to get what you want. It is a promise to help you figure out what’s most important to you, based on your values and priorities. When a new baby comes into your life, the way you express those values and priorities may change, but what’s important to you will fundamentally be the same. When you prioritize based on what’s important to you, you may not “have it all” in the sense of having money, fame, a great figure, the gorgeous husband, and every possible luxury. However, you *feel* like you have it all because you have everything that’s important to you.
- ✓ *You can be fulfilled both inside and outside your role as a mother.* When you become a mother, you do not cease being you. Becoming a mother enriches your identity; it doesn’t replace it. Until now, you have found fulfillment in a variety of relationships, endeavors, and experiences *all without having a baby*. Now, you will also find fulfillment in motherhood. You do not have to choose between yourself and your baby. You can be who you are already while adding new dimensions. What an abundant gift!

- ✓ *We live in an abundant world.* We believe in open minds, creativity, and positive thinking. Some people dwell in the impossible. They refuse to consider options, and they get stuck believing that what they want can't happen. We find this kind of thinking limiting. We see enormous power in believing that there *is* a way to your goals, through your obstacles, and into the life you want to create.
- ✓ *When you take care of yourself, you are a better mother.* Babies thrive in environments that are secure, stable, and loving. You will be best able to provide that when *you* feel secure, stable, and loving. We believe you will be less frustrated, more patient, more present, and a better role model for your children when you feel fulfilled. Fulfillment that comes from living a life that reflects who you really are. Taking the time to create that life is as important as painting the room, folding tiny clothes, and learning to sing nursery rhymes. We believe it's even more so.

USING THIS BOOK

When to Read It

Each woman has her own approach to reading *Becoming a Mother*. Some women jump in and read the book in their first trimester, eager to contemplate their new life with a baby. Others wait until the last minute, busy with preparation for labor and delivery or activities in their current life. Any time you choose to read this book is the right time, even if you are *not* expecting a baby. The ideas are just as valuable if you are thinking about becoming a mother or wanting to make life changes after your baby has arrived.

What's Inside

Each chapter guides you through a step-by-step process with an explanation of the topic, what you will be doing, why it is important, and what other women have experienced and learned. There is also a section called **Finding Your Own Way** in each chapter with something simple and concrete to do or think about right away. Additional exercises, examples, and blank worksheets are available at the end of each chapter in a section called **A Closer Look**.

Throughout the book, we offer a series of techniques to help you make the most of your process. These **Lessons in Becoming a Mother** include topics like “Wondering, Not Worrying” and “Asking for What You Want.” Each lesson will serve you now, after the baby arrives, and throughout your life.

At the back of the book, we include an area called **Keepsakes** with blank worksheets to record your most memorable ideas. Use the worksheets as a guide, but capture what is important to *you*. We encourage you to create notes that you can keep in a journal, place in a binder, or put up on a wall—enabling you to refer back to your learning often throughout your first year as a mother.

Don't miss the sections called **Mother's Helper** and our **Top Ten Tips** at the end of the book where we share secrets on how to make the first year easier from our work with other empowered mothers. Finally, **We're Here to Help You!** describes the wealth of electronic worksheets, tools, and stories on our website to support you in *Becoming a Mother*. You can find these at www.empoweredmotherhood.com.

What to Do

There are many ways to move through the process. You are welcome to just read the book and skip the exercises, skimming through and taking what you need. You can try doing the exercises in your head, using the examples and anecdotes to spark ideas

for your life. Or take your time, journaling your thoughts and diligently working with every exercise and extra resource offered. Different women spend as little as a few days or several months in the book. You're in a busy time with much to think about and do; you can come in and out of your process as necessary. Find your own way of learning and doing this process.

What You Will Need

You will need a sincere effort, the willingness to make honest decisions, a belief that you can create what you want, and a commitment to yourself, your baby, and your family. Other than that, you will need a pen or pencil and some paper. Many women choose to buy a special journal to use with the book while others scribble notes in the margins and worksheets.

What to Remember

The ideas contained in this book are intended to help you explore your thoughts, clarify what's important to you, and go after what you want for your new life. Of course, the way you want life to be isn't always the way it is. Life might turn the plans you make in this book upside down. Your body may heal more quickly than you imagined, your husband or partner might change jobs, or your baby might have its own agenda! You also may choose to change your own plans. Perhaps you decide to stay on maternity leave a little longer—maybe a month, maybe a year, maybe forever. Or you might decide to go racing back to work sooner than expected. You may not even *want* to plan your whole life. The surprises babies bring are half the fun! We encourage you to plan as much or as little as you like. Either way, when you're clear about who you are and what's important to you, you're better equipped to handle everything life throws your way.



LESSONS IN *BECOMING A MOTHER*

At the end of every chapter is a special lesson to help you make the most of your process of *Becoming a Mother*. Here is a sneak preview!

Lesson 1: Wondering, not Worrying

Turn your concerns into curiosity and possibilities.

Lesson 2: Mother's Intuition

Listen to your truth.

Lesson 3: Values-Centered Living

Use your values to guide your daily actions and decisions.

Lesson 4: Handling Judgment

Stand confident in the face of judgment.

Lesson 5: Remembering What's Most Important

Honor your true priorities.

Lesson 6: Saying No

Say no gracefully with certainty and confidence.

Lesson 7: Fighting Fear

Handle the fears that can accompany new motherhood.

Lesson 8: The Gift of Gratitude

Find joy in any circumstance.

Lesson 9: Asking for What You Want

Boldly make requests and get what you need.

Lesson 10: Savoring Every Moment

Be present and relish every moment.