

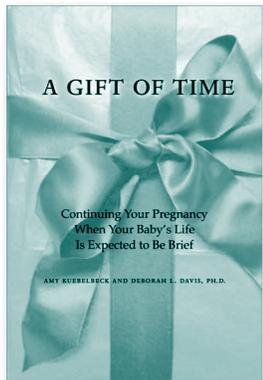
A Gift of Time: Continuing Your Pregnancy When Your Baby's Life is Expected to Be Brief

by Amy Kuebelbeck and Deborah L. Davis, PhD

reviewed by Jeanine M. Estrada, MBA

Amy Kuebelbeck and Dr. Deborah L. Davis have bravely published a wonderful book that offers support and resources for families who have made or are making the decision to continue a pregnancy when the child's life is expected to be brief. *A Gift of Time* takes the reader through the emotional journey of receiving the baby's diagnosis, to making decisions about continuing the pregnancy, through to welcoming and saying goodbye to the baby.

A Gift of Time is written for and speaks to pregnant families who have received a prenatal diagnosis indicating that their baby will die before or shortly after birth, or for couples that have already lost a baby during or shortly after birth. While the book is not intended to tell the reader how to feel and what to decide, it does aim at convincing parents to choose life for their baby. Concepts of perinatal hospice and palliative care are introduced. Knowledge of these new, gentle ways of supporting parents and their babies can be helpful for educators and caregivers.



Perhaps the best feature of this book is its well-organized chapters that allow someone to pick up and start reading from the pages that most closely reflect the current mindset and stage of the reader. Ten chapters focus on receiving the baby's diagnosis, making decisions about continuing a pregnancy, grieving and adjusting to a new path, settling in for the rest of

the pregnancy, choosing care for the baby, preparing for the baby's birth, life and death, welcoming baby, saying goodbye, life after the baby's death, and reflecting on the journey.

Parents who have chosen to continue their pregnancy are quoted throughout the book, sharing their emotional

journey and building a foundation of support and hope in a time of loss, confusion, and grief. The reader follows these couples as they tell their stories

from diagnosis to saying goodbye and is the foundation of the book. In addition to these quotes, the authors reflect on realistic expectations for the families. They provide resources for more information and advise parents on how to find support in other places. For childbirth educators, *A Gift of Time* includes a particularly helpful appendix with a sample birth plan that can be valuable when working with parents who will face a loss. It addresses points of consideration that you would not normally include in a birth plan, which can serve as a guide when working with a couple expecting the loss of a baby after birth.

While I would not recommend this book to parents who have already terminated a pregnancy that would have ended in a very short life for the baby, it is a great asset for couples who have not yet made a decision or who have already decided on a path forward. For childbirth educators, this is an important read that will introduce you to new options of perinatal hospice and palliative care, and help you serve as another source of support for families that face this type of birth and loss.

Jeanine is an ICEA Member who is currently enrolled in the Childbirth Educator Certificate Program. She also serves on the ICEA Board of Directors as Chair of the Communications Committee and is an advocate for natural, gentle childbirth. Jeanine's email is jeanine@icea.org.

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