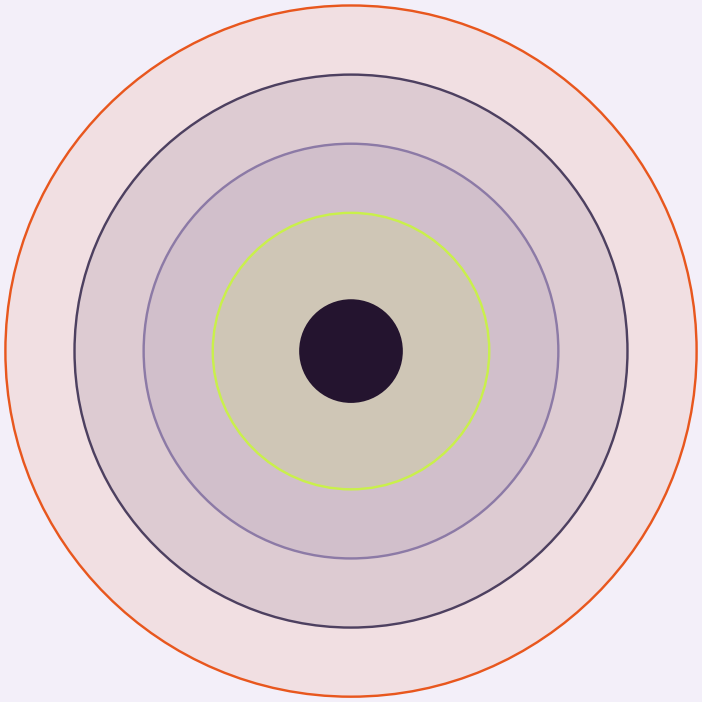
NOVEMBER 11, 2026



Birth Vibes: Stories and Strategies for an Empowered Birth

A reading of the book by Jen Hamilton (2026)

1. ACTION BOOK

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ABOUT THIS EDITION

This is HourLife's reading of Birth Vibes: Stories and Strategies for an Empowered Birth, in our own words. It is not a substitute for the book.

BEFORE YOU START 01

The book in a minute

Jen Hamilton is a labor and delivery nurse with a background in emergency nursing, known for her short videos about birth and nursing on social media. Birth Vibes argues that a rigid birth plan can leave parents disappointed or hurt when labor goes another way, and that a better place to start is the feeling they want on the day. She calls that feeling their birth vibes, a blend of their values and their vision for the birth. The first part of the book is mostly stories from her years on hospital labor floors, told with humor and with details changed to protect patients. The later part turns practical, with worksheets for a Birth Vibes Profile, scripts and questions for talking with providers, plain explanations of common procedures and pain relief, and a chapter on pregnancy loss. It is written mainly for parents planning a hospital birth and the people who support them.

Below are the 9 ideas HourLife readers vote up most, each in our words with a note on what it asks of you, and then the steps that put them to work.

WHAT READERS KEEP

The takeaways

1

HOURLIFE TAKEAWAY

A birth can tick every box on the plan and still feel awful, and it can go off plan and still feel good.

This is the problem the book is built around. Hamilton has watched parents measure a birth by whether each item on a checklist happened. Her point is that what stays with people is how they were treated and whether they felt part of what happened.

2

HOURLIFE TAKEAWAY

Start with the feeling you want, then plan around it.

Your birth vibes are a blend of what you value and what you picture for the day. Calm, informed, private or surrounded by people: naming the feeling first gives every later choice something to aim at.

3

HOURLIFE TAKEAWAY

Labor changes course often, so a plan that cannot bend tends to break.

Hamilton does not tell readers to stop planning. She asks them to hold the plan loosely, so a change of route does not feel like failure. A vibe can survive a change that a checklist cannot.

4

HOURLIFE TAKEAWAY

How you are spoken to is part of your care.

Feeling heard, respected and included in decisions runs through the whole book. The stories show how a few words from a nurse or doctor, or their absence, can change how a whole birth is remembered.

5

HOURLIFE TAKEAWAY

Choose the people in the room for what you need, not out of obligation.

The book gives real attention to support people, including what happens when a partner or relative makes the room harder rather than easier. Who you invite, and what you ask of them, shapes the vibe as much as the lighting does.

6

HOURLIFE TAKEAWAY

When the plan changes, ask about benefits, risks and alternatives, and you stay part of the decision.

Hamilton keeps coming back to this set of questions in the chapters on adapting. It does not mean refusing advice. It means understanding it well enough that the choice still feels like yours.

7 HOURLIFE TAKEAWAY

Have the words ready before you need them.

Speaking up is hard when you are tired, in pain or surrounded by experts. The practical half of the book includes scripts and questions for talking with providers, so you are not inventing them in the moment.

8 HOURLIFE TAKEAWAY

Knowing what really happens on a labor floor takes some of the fear out of it.

Much of the book is stories from Hamilton's own shifts, told with humor. They set realistic expectations about the room, the staff and the waiting, which is often more reassuring than an idealised picture.

9 HOURLIFE TAKEAWAY

Not every pregnancy ends with a baby to take home, and those families belong in the story too.

Hamilton includes a chapter on pregnancy loss, built around one family's account shared with their consent, and marks it so readers can choose when to read it. It is a reminder that a birth book can make room for grief.

PUT IT TO WORK

Your action book

Do the setup steps once, then keep the habits going. The setup changes your week; the habits keep it changed after the first good one.

The download puts this whole reading and a printable action book in one PDF: the setup checklist, then a page of real calendar days for each habit, starting on the day you choose.

SET UP ONCE

- [ ] Name your vibe in three words
- [ ] Draft a one-page profile
- [ ] Bring your questions to a prenatal visit
- [ ] Give each support person a job
- [ ] Pack a few things that set the mood

KEEP UP DAILY

- ◯ Say your scripts out loud
- ◯ Ask about benefits, risks and alternatives
- ◯ Keep a running question list

30 days · Nov 11 - Dec 10, 2026

Part two, after the reading, prints each of these as a page to fill in by hand.

THE LAST WORD

Before you go

Pick one step from the action book and do it today. An idea from a book starts to count once it changes what one ordinary day looks like.

PART TWO

The action book

Change the setup once, then keep it up. 5 setup actions to do once, and 3 habits to mark each day for 30 days.

Nov 11 - Dec 10, 2026

Print it, or write on it in any PDF app.

SET UP ONCE

The setup checklist

Each of these is done once. Do one a day, and check it off when it is done.

- [ ] SETUP 1

Name your vibe in three words

Write down three words for how you want to feel during the birth, such as calm, informed and supported.

Put them at the top of anything you share with your care team.

MY VERSION

DONE ON

- [ ] SETUP 2

Draft a one-page profile

Turn the three words into one page: how you want to be spoken to, who you want with you, and what would make the room feel like yours.

Keep it short enough to read in a minute.

MY VERSION

DONE ON

- [ ] SETUP 3

Bring your questions to a prenatal visit

At your next appointment, ask what your hospital or birth center usually does and what pain relief it offers.

Write the answers down and ask where your preferences fit.

MY VERSION

DONE ON

- [ ] SETUP 4

Give each support person a job

Decide who you want in the room and tell each person their role, for example speaking up for you, guarding the door or keeping you fed and watered.

Tell them the three words too.

MY VERSION

DONE ON

- [ ] SETUP 5

Pack a few things that set the mood

Add two or three small items that make a hospital room feel more like yours: a pillowcase, a playlist, a photo.

Check your hospital's rules before packing anything with a flame or a plug.

MY VERSION

DONE ON

DAILY HABIT 1 OF 3

Say your scripts out loud

Once a week, practise one or two sentences with your support person, such as asking for a moment to decide or asking someone to explain before an exam.

Nov 11 - Dec 10, 2026 · 30 days · circle each day you do it

SMALLEST VERSION

CUE

WHERE

November 2026

MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11 ○	12 ○	13 ○	14 ○	15 ○
16 ○	17 ○	18 ○	19 ○	20 ○	21 ○	22 ○
23 ○	24 ○	25 ○	26 ○	27 ○	28 ○	29 ○
30 ○						

December 2026

MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN
	1 ○	2 ○	3 ○	4 ○	5 ○	6 ○
7 ○	8 ○	9 ○	10 ○	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

EACH FRIDAY

WHAT HELPED

WHAT GOT IN THE WAY

ONE CHANGE TO THE SETUP

DAILY HABIT 2 OF 3

Ask about benefits, risks and alternatives

Each time a test, procedure or change of plan comes up at an appointment, ask what it is for, what the risks are and what the other options are.

Nov 11 - Dec 10, 2026 · 30 days · circle each day you do it

SMALLEST VERSION

CUE

WHERE

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EACH FRIDAY

WHAT HELPED

WHAT GOT IN THE WAY

ONE CHANGE TO THE SETUP

DAILY HABIT 3 OF 3

Keep a running question list

Keep a note on your phone and add questions as they come to you between appointments.

Nov 11 - Dec 10, 2026 · 30 days · circle each day you do it

SMALLEST VERSION

CUE

WHERE

November 2026

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December 2026

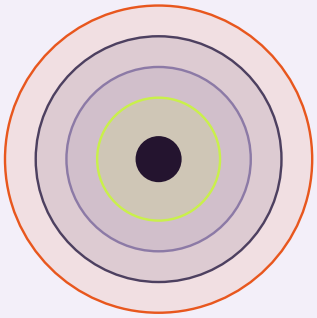
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EACH FRIDAY

WHAT HELPED

WHAT GOT IN THE WAY

ONE CHANGE TO THE SETUP



Decide how you want to feel, say it out loud, and stay part of every decision, even when the plan changes.

HOURLIFE NOTE AFTER JEN HAMILTON