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Book Information

BIRTHRITES Rituals & Celebrations for the Child-bearing Years

By Jackie Singer

Foreword by Glennie Kindred

Birthrites is an inclusive and sympathetic workbook for anyone wishing to create personal rituals and celebrations that mark the many different events surrounding all aspects of becoming a parent.

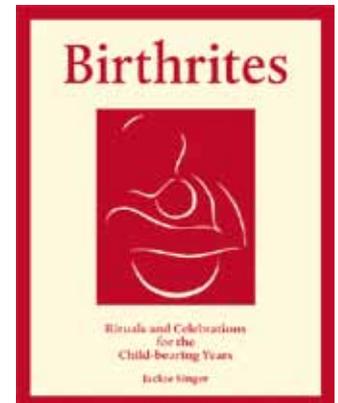
As well as the anticipated topics of pregnancy, birth and motherhood *Birthrites* also explores Becoming A Father; Adoption; and Miscarriage among other emotive subjects. Jackie Singer emphasises the importance of ritual and ceremony; marking life-changing events, and sharing this experience with others.

The suggested ceremonies are varied in nature and never dogmatic, ensuring wide-ranging appeal. Some simply involve quiet contemplation, whereas others can include a specific activity. Throughout the book, Jackie emphasises the individuality and adaptability of ceremony; nothing is set in stone. The author's personal experiences are interspersed with quotes and real-life accounts from a wide range of contributors.

Jackie provides reassurance and support in this relaxed, friendly guide, and achieves a considered balance between practicality and sensitivity. *Birthrites* identifies an ancient facet of human activity forgotten by some of us, and overlooked by many. Far too often in modern life, the importance of pausing for thought is disregarded.

“Much as the human experience of fertility and reproduction is medicalised in our current times, it still remains an area of profundity... Whether we have a need to express joy, seek guidance, or grieve our losses, working with ritual can give us the means to engage more fully with the mysteries of birth, death and transformation.”

As an increasing awareness of the value of these approaches has grown so has the desire for literature on the subjects. Jackie is an experienced and inspirational practitioner, her writing eloquent, wise and clear.



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Permanent Publications
The Sustainability Centre
East Meon, Hampshire GU32 1HR
Tel: 01730 823 311
Fax: 01730 823 322
Email: info@permaculture.co.uk
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Magazine: www.permaculture.co.uk

TRADE/DISTRIBUTION ENQUIRIES TO INFO@PERMACULTURE.CO.UK



What people are saying about BIRTHRITES

Jackie encourages us to be courageous, creative, inventive and experimental. She inspires us to find ways to make these ceremonies inclusive and heartfelt, to trust our instincts and to trust our friends and our community to support us, to celebrate or to grieve with us and to bear witness.

Glennie Kindred, from the Foreword

An inclusive and sympathetic workbook for anyone wishing to create occasions to mark the many different events surrounding parenting.

The Green Parent

With *Birthrites*, Jackie Singer has written an inspiring and profound book on why we need rituals and how to create them to mark the life changes around having children. I found it compelling reading.

Richard Dunkerley co-director of 'Alternatives' at St James's Church, Piccadilly, London

Jackie's writing on our need for ceremony is eloquent, wise and clear. Using a powerful collection of real life stories, we gain ideas and inspiration for ways of marking transition in our lives. There's plenty in here for men too, around fatherhood. She does not shy away from the difficult issues; those which society often prefers to ignore. Excellent resources and places to turn to for information and advice. *Sue Gill, author and celebrant*

In her delicately and lovingly crafted book, *Birthrites*, Jackie Singer raises our awareness of the importance, the usefulness and the wonder of rituals for marking special and significant moments. Here, in this first volume, she concentrates on birth. As well as its usefulness to anyone interested in the power of ritual, what makes this book really special is its amazing and thoughtful inclusiveness. Jackie has devised rituals for everything to do with birth. Infertility, IVF treatment, adoption, termination planned or unplanned, even the conscious decision to remain childless ... nothing is left out of this comprehensive guidebook.

Marian Van Eyk McCain, The Elderwoman Newsletter

It's great to have the opportunity to review a book that centres on the emotional and spiritual side of birth; all too often as midwives, we get taken up by the technical and scientific aspects of our work and can sometimes forget to think about the profound highs and lows that are an inherent part of what we do. The writing is clear and honest and offers suggestions from all sorts of different traditions as well as new ideas and possibilities that one could explore. It makes a really useful addition to resources for antenatal groups and for birth preparation classes, as well as a helpful book for midwives to read to remind themselves of the spiritual dimensions of the work that we do.

Radical Midwives Association magazine, Midwifery Matters

Birthrites encourages and facilitates us in creating our own rites of passage, enabling us to bring together people from many faiths or none. Jackie Singer aims to inspire us to find multisensory ways to express and explore the feelings, thoughts, and wisdom associated with our experiences.

Jill Harris, celebrant and birth doula, Permaculture magazine

A refreshing and inspiring approach to how we celebrate key moments as our children grow up. It is an

inclusive and easy to read book that can be used by a wide variety of families. In an inspiring way Jackie encourages new parents and parents-to-be to include rituals in their lives to mark the joyous or sad occasions that accompany the bringing up of children. A book to keep, treasure and visit to enrich family life.

Richard Barnett, Ethical Pulse

This book brings the spirit back to birth, where prospective parents can find ways to prepare their minds, souls and bodies to receive a child, where women support each other and together draw upon all the collective wisdom that has gone before. The writing is honest and accessible to anyone wanting to connect to the deeper, human relevance of the creation of a new person. A wonderful resource for parents and birth practitioners.

Julie Osbourne, doula and breastfeeding counsellor

A great gift, a useful reference. Recommended.

Pagan Dawn

This book is subtle, complex, and offers lots of support and specific ideas for readers planning ceremonies appropriate to their own families and communities.

Sarah Whedon, teacher at the Department of Theology and Religious History at Cherry Hill Seminary and the founding editor of Pagan Families



ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

Jackie Singer studied at Oxford University and at the Central School of Speech and Drama in London. Over the next fifteen years she led creative and therapeutic projects with a wide variety of community groups.

Jackie has always found ritual important for marking changes in her own life, and helpful for moving through difficult times. In 2001 she began offering her services as a celebrant to facilitate other people to experience the benefits of non-denominational ceremony. Jackie lives in Oxford with her young family. Her professional life is divided between writing, making ceremonies, music and storytelling.