

## Chicken Soup for the New Mom's Soul: Touching Stories about the Miracles of Motherhood (Chicken Soup for the Soul)

*By Jack Canfield, Mark Victor Hansen, Patty Aubery*

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
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### Editorial Review

#### About the Author

Jack Canfield is co-creator of the Chicken Soup for the Soul® series, which includes forty *New York Times* bestsellers, and coauthor of *The Success Principles: How to Get from Where You Are to Where You Want to Be*. He is a leader in the field of personal transformation and peak performance and is currently CEO of the Canfield Training Group and Founder and Chairman of the Board of The Foundation for Self-Esteem. An internationally renowned corporate trainer and keynote speaker, he lives in Santa Barbara, California.

**Mark Victor Hansen** is a co-founder of Chicken Soup for the Soul.

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### The Right Stuff

I just had to have a girl as my first child, because I had created her name when I was just a girl myself. My parents named me Dahlynn, pronounced 'Da-Lin' with the accent on the second syllable. In my family, the girls are named after others in the family—male or female—never using the same name, but a combination of those names. The first part of my name comes from my grandmother DeEtta, and the second half from my uncle's middle name, Lynn. The boys in our family had an easier time, as they were given common names and not expected to keep the tradition going, even if they had daughters.

Having this family tradition handed down to me was a big cross to bear. I started creating names for my future daughter in fourth grade, working on word and name combinations from past generations. Every time I created a new name, I added it to the growing stack of names hidden in my small jewelry box. Finally I had the perfect name—Lahre, which rhymed with 'Marie.' The 'Lah' came from the 'Dah' in my name, and the 're' from the end of my mother's name, Scharre. I was only in seventh grade when I placed that name in my box.

Fortunately, I waited until I graduated from college and married before I became pregnant at the age of twenty-eight. In all that time I never thought of a name for a boy, only for a girl.

Needless to say, I was excited about the pregnancy, even with the constant nausea and everything that came with it. We decided to go the old-fashioned route—no, not a natural delivery—we decided to not find out the sex of the baby. We wanted to be surprised, and I was so sure it was a girl that there was no reason to find out.

Once I started to really show, it became obvious that I was carrying the baby to the front. 'That's a sign it's a boy,' is all I heard from friends and family, even strangers. No, it can't be a boy! I screamed in my head, while on the outside I smiled and quietly nodded when told I was having a boy.

The nine months went by slowly and they were mostly wonderful, after I got past the nausea. Each and every day I would talk to my little girl, sharing with her my dreams for her, even placing headphones on my stomach and playing all kinds of music. But again, since I was carrying the baby to the front, people tried to

tell me I was having a boy. Slowly I started to believe them, and when the time came to go to the hospital, I was torn. We picked out a name for a boy—Christopher—after General H. Norman Schwarzkopf's son. My husband had heard Schwarzkopf's son mentioned in an interview; the year was 1992 and Schwarzkopf was leading our troops in Desert Storm.

The delivery was anything but ordinary. I was two weeks overdue, and after sixteen very hard hours of back labor, with my husband and my amazing seventy-year-old grandmother DeEtta (my namesake) by my side, the doctor decided to do a C-section.

Once prepped in the operating room and with a sheet placed in front of my face so I couldn't watch, the doctors began the procedure. My grandmother was extremely curious as to what the doctors were doing, asking about this and that. My husband was watching, too, and when they pulled my stomach out and set it on top of my chest, he about fainted. The nurse had him sit back down in the chair, which was placed next to my head. I looked up and saw he was white as a ghost.

Finally, the doctor said, 'Here's the baby!' The doctor placed the crying baby up over the sheet so we both could see it, and my husband said, 'Oh, look at the little guy.' A boy? We have a boy? I said to myself. But then the doctor said, 'It's not a boy . . . it's a girl!' My husband had mistaken the large umbilical cord for a 'manly attribute'!

Our amazing son, Shawn, would show up five years later, and again we didn't find out the sex until he was born. I didn't listen when I was told I was going to have a girl the second time; I knew I was having a boy because I grew lots of facial hair! But my daughter Lahre is my special joy, even as she is now facing her teenage years. And guess what? She keeps her stash of names for her future daughter in a little jewelry box.

Dahlynn McKowen

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