#### Early Praise for *The Baby Decision*

"Bombardieri is magic. In this book, she takes you by the hand into the depths of the scary and sometimes overwhelming baby decision and step by step, she helps you find clarity. *The Baby Decision* is a must read for everyone of child-bearing age."

—Mara Altman, Author of *Thanks for Coming*, *Baby Steps*, and *Bearded Lady* 

"The intelligence and generosity of Bombardieri's perspectives are a gift to all women and men; she deeply honors individuality while reminding us of the compassion that is all of our potential."

—Bina Venkataraman, writer and climate policy expert

"I am so excited about *The Baby Decision*. Being thirty-one, my peers are beginning to struggle with this question in a big way. When I read about the distinction between 'growth' and 'safety' needs, a light bulb went off over my head. You broke that down so clearly and so quickly. This is such an important book!"

—Katie O'Reilly, Journalist, memoirist, contributor to atlantic.com, BuzzFeed, and Bitch

"The Baby Decision is an indispensable guide to greater awareness and freedom for anyone wrestling with one of life's most important decisions. Bombardieri provides a lens that illuminates the architecture of healthy decision-making. Brimming with humanity and respect, informed by research and infused with clinical wisdom, this book is a gem."

—Stephanie Morgan, MSW, Psy.D. Psychologist, Private Practice. Co-author, *Mindfulness and Psychotherapy*, and *Compassion and Wisdom in Psychotherapy*.

"A perfect guidebook for any person making the life changing decision to have a child, or be childfree. Merle Bombardieri offers cogent, insightful, practical, and always deeply kind suggestions to help her readers make their own best decision with clarity, courage, and peace."

—Deborah Rozelle, Psy.D., clinical psychologist, trauma and adoption expert; co-editor and author of Mindfulness-Oriented Interventions for Trauma: Integrating Contemplative Practices

"This book is an invaluable tool for anyone making this enormous life decision . . . In clear and compassionate prose, *The Baby Decision* guides productive thought and discussion. Most important, it makes two things clear: first, it's OK to feel uncertain and conflicted. And second, you CAN come to a decision and move forward."

—Jenna Russell, *Boston Globe* reporter, co-author *New York Times* Bestseller, *Last Lion*, and *Long Mile Home* 

"Intelligent, sensitive, and exceptionally useful support to all in the process of the conscious decision making about transition to parenthood or childfree living. A tremendous contribution!"

> —Janet Surrey, Ph.D., Clinical Psychologist and Meditation Teacher specializing in Diversity, Mothering, Adoption, and Substance Abuse. Her latest book is *The Buddha's Wife: The Path of Awakening Together*

"Bombardieri is a master at teasing apart the details of the decision-making process. Her thoughtful and thorough exploration of each facet of the decision-making process—among the array of parenting options, is an invaluable resource for those contemplating parenthood, and professionals who help them work through the process."

—Carol Sheingold, MSW, LICSW—adoption professional and bio-adoptive parent.

"This book offers an accessible, doable, and empathic approach for any person struggling with the *baby decision*."

—Phyllis B. Fitzpatrick, LICSW, Private Practice, Former Adoption Social Worker

"This is the essential guide for any person or couple considering parenthood."

—Kayla Sheets, Genetic Counselor, Founder of Vibrant Gene

Praise for the first edition of The Baby Decision

"I think the millions of young women turning the decision over in their heads could profit by reading it. . . . Full of sentences you'll chew over and savor. Best book on the subject."

-Ann Ulmschneider, Childfree Advocate

"Imaginative and sensitive . . . Millions could profit from reading this book."  $\,$ 

—Caroline Bird, pioneering feminist economist and author of *The Two-Paycheck Marriage* and *Born Female* 

# THE BABY DECISION

How to Make
The Most Important Choice
of Your Life

SECOND EDITION, REVISED AND UPDATED





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## + APPENDIX 1 + BIBLIOGRAPHY

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Books with an asterisk \* are sensitive to and relevant for those choosing to be childfree after infertility and others who are childfree by chance, not by first choice. Listings with two asterisks \*\* were written specifically about choosing childfree after infertility.

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## \* APPENDIX 2 \* RESOURCES

#### **Organizations & Websites**

For more resources, please see the resources sections of the books in the bibliography as well as the websites listed here.

#### Childfree

#### Laura Carroll

https://www.lauracarroll.com

Author of Families of Two and The Baby Matrix offers support and information.

#### **Childfree Meetup**

http://www.meetup.com/topics/childfree

Meet locally with other childfree people.

#### Childfree.Net

http://www.childfree.net

This website connects you to many childfree websites and resources.

#### No Kidding!

http://www.nokidding.net

An international social club for childfree couples and singles.

#### Birth and Postpartum

#### American College of Nurse-Midwives

8403 Colesville Rd. Suite 1550, Silver Spring, MD 20910 240.234.8068.

www.midwife.org

### American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG) www.acog.org

## Birthing from Within www.birthingfromwithin.com

#### Boston Women's Health Book Collective

#### www.ourbodiesourselves.com

This website offers more resources than can be included in their wonderful *Our Bodies, Ourselves* books, plus a blog.

#### Childbirth and Postpartum Professionals Association

PO Box 491448, Lawrenceville, GA 30049 888.692.2772

www.cappa.net

#### **Conceivable Future**

#### http://conceivablefuture.org

A woman-led network bringing awareness to the threat of climate change to reproductive health and justice.

#### **Doulas of North America**

PO Box 626, Jaspar, IN 47547 888.788.3662 www.dona.org

#### Genetic Alliance, Inc.

http://www.geneticalliance.org
Genetic education.

#### March of Dimes

http://www.marchofdimes.com

Prevention of premature birth.

### Mindfulness-Based Childbirth and Parenting Education Program www.mindfulbirth.org

#### **Postpartum Support International**

6706 SW 54th Avenue, Portland, OR 97219 Support Helpline 800.894.9452

#### www.postpartum.net

Nationwide telephone support referral to local help

#### Vibrant Gene

#### http://www.vibrantgene.com

Kayla Sheets is a genetic consultant and genetic counselor who can help with planning and preconception care. Her website is full of information, including access to her talk shows. See my interview with her, Appendix 3.

#### Infertility and Pregnancy Loss

#### American Society of Reproductive Medicine (ASRM)

1209 Montgomery Highway, Birmingham, AL 35216 205.978.5000

e-mail asrm@asrm.com

patient/consumer website

#### www.fertilityfacts.org

Professional organization of reproductive endocrinologists and allied professionals. The patient consumer website above is useful. Referrals provided.

#### **Kristen Darcy**

#### http://www.kristendarcy.com

Life coaching blog often focused on infertility.

#### **Domar Center**

#### http://www.domarcenter.com

781-434-6578

Stress management services including mind/body workshops

#### **Endometriosis Association**

8585 N. 7th Place, Milwaukee, WI 53223 414.355.2200

http://www.endometriosisassociation.org

Support and information

#### **Health Journeys**

#### http://www.healthjourneys.com

Relaxation and visualization downloads for stress management, healthy pregnancy, other relaxation and health needs.

#### Hope After Loss (formerly Hygeia Foundation, Inc.)

PO Box 3943, 264 Amity Rd, Woodbridge, CT 06525 800.893.9198

#### www.hygeiafoundation.org.

Bereavement Support.

#### **RESOLVE**

7918 Jones Branch Rd. Ste. 300, McLean, VA 22102 703.556.7172

#### www.resolve.org

A national organization for consumer advocacy, education on medical and emotional aspects of infertility and pregnancy loss. Local chapters have support groups, meetings and conferences. (I used to be their Clinical Director.)

#### Organization of Parents Through Surrogacy

P.O. Box 611, Gurnee, IL 60031 847.782.0224

e-mail bzager@msn.com

#### www.opts.com

Non-profit educational, networking, and referral organization serving prospective parents, surrogate mothers, and professionals.

#### SHARE Pregnancy Loss Support/St. Joseph's Health Center

402 Jackson St. St. Charles, MO 63301 800.821.6819

#### www.nationalshare.org

National support information, telephone support, chapters nationwide.

#### **Stirrup Queens**

#### http://stirrup-queens.com

Melissa Ford, author of *Navigating the Land of If*, offers insight and humor in her blog and gives you links to other infertility blogs.

#### Adoption

#### Adoption.Net

23161 Lake Center Drive, Ste. 209, Lake Forest, CA 92630

#### info@Adoption.NET

#### www.adoption.net

A goldmine of support of everyone involved in the adoption process including birthmothers and pregnant women. In addition to community sharing, social worker Kathy Brodsky contributes articles.

#### **American Academy of Adoption Attorneys**

PO Box 33053, Washington, DC 20053

202.832.2222

#### http://www.adoptionattorneys.org/aaaa-page/home

National organization of attorneys who specialize in adoption. In addition to referrals, the academy works on adoption reform.

#### Adoptive Families Magazine and Website.

#### http://www.adoptivefamilies.com/faq.php

In addition to the magazine, the website offers referrals to agencies, attorneys and parent groups, online community, blogs.

#### **Building Your Family**

New Hope Media LLC 39 West 37th St. 15th Fl., New York, NY 10018 646.366.0842

#### www.buildingyour family.com.

Online information and a guidebook for adopting or pregnancy.

#### **Creating a Family**

#### www.creatingafamily.com

Offers online adoption courses, information and referral for adoption and infertility and a radio show. Principal contributor is Dawn Davenport, author of *The Complete Book of International Adoption* (see bibliography section, Appendix A).

#### **Families for Private Adoption**

202.722.0338

http://ffpa.org

Mission is to serve prospective parents who are interested in adoption outside of traditional agencies. Volunteers are adoptive parents.

#### **National Adoption Center**

1500 Walnut Street, Philadelphia, PA 19192 215.735.9988

800.TO-ADOPT

e-mail: nac@adopt.org

www.adopt.org

Mission is to find homes for children in foster care, providing information and referral to prospective parents.

#### **Treehouse**

#### http://www.resca.net

This is a community of foster families living together along with elderly people. An exciting new model in which the children enjoy emotional and academic success. New communities are opening in a number of cities.

#### **Parenting**

Brain, Child: The Magazine for Thinking Mothers

888.304.6667

www.brainchildmag.com

#### The Fatherhood Project

 ${\bf http://www.fatherhood project.org}$ 

Research, education, and support, empowerment.

Literary Mama www.literarymama.com

#### Mamazine

www.mamazine.com

Feminist mothering.

#### Mocha Moms, Inc

#### http://mochamoms.org

Local and online support for women of color in any stage of motherhood.

#### Lauren Sandler

#### http://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/one-and-only

Blogs about the one child family.

#### **Single Mothers by Choice**

#### http://www.singlemothersbychoice.com

National organization with local meetings for those considering or trying to be single mothers or already mothers.

#### Sister Song Women of Color Reproductive Health Collective

#### http://www.sistersong.net

A network of many organizations.

#### **Well Family**

#### http://well,blogs.nytimes.com/

This is the new name for the popular The Motherlode parenting blog. columns by *New York Times* journalists and lively comments from readers.

#### **Breastfeeding**

#### KellyMom

#### www.kellymom.com

A nurse/mother offers insights on nursing, parenting, and baby sleep patterns.

#### La Leche League International

957 N. Plum Grove Rd., Schaumburg, IL 60173 800.525.3243

www.llli.org

#### Step-Families

## National Stepfamilies Resource Center www.stepfamilies.info

Clearinghouse of information and support for stepfamilies and professionals.

#### StepMom Magazine

http://www.stepmommag.com

Online information and blog, as well as a monthly online paid subscription.

#### Gay Resources

#### **Family Pride Coalition**

http://www.familypride.org.

Advocacy for gay families.

#### **GLAD**

http://www.glad.org

Legal defenders and advocates.

#### **Proud Parenting**

 ${\bf http://proudparenting.com}$ 

Advocacy.

#### **Our Family Coalition**

http://www.ourfamily.org

Advocacy, support groups, education and parenting resources.

#### ◆ ABOUT THE AUTHOR ◆



Merle (Malkoff) Bombardieri, is a clinical social worker/ psychotherapist who specializes in parenthood decision-making, infertility, adoption, and making the most of a childfree life. Although she is the mother of two grown children, she has also been an advocate for childfree people since 1979. She has been in private practice for thirty-plus years in Lexington, MA. In 1981, she published the first edition of *The Baby Decision* based on interviews and reviews of scholarly

research. Then, in 1982 she became Clinical Director of RESOLVE, the national infertility association. There she wrote guidelines for infertility patients making decisions on new techniques such as in vitro fertilization and donor egg, as well as adoption and surrogacy. This revised second edition of *The Baby Decision*, is based on thirty-five more years of work guiding decision-makers in educational workshops, long-distance coaching for people around the world and psychotherapy. Merle brings a sense of humor and compassion to her work. She helps clients and readers get curious about themselves and uncover new discoveries that make life more fun.

Merle's writing has appeared in *Our Bodies, Ourselves, Brides, Glamour, Self,* the *Boston Globe Magazine, Boston Magazine* and psychology blogs. She has lectured at Harvard Medical School, M.I.T., Wellesley College, and the Cambridge Center for Adult Education. She has appeared on national radio and television news shows, talk shows and documentaries, including the *Leeza Show.* Merle has been quoted in *The New York Times, Time, Newsweek,* the *Boston Globe* and the *Huffington Post.* She has also written medical journal articles and a chapter in a medical textbook.

Merle is married and the mother of two grown daughter and the grandmother of a two-year-old boy. She enjoys creative writing, yoga, hiking, and travel.

She is working on a novel, *Don't Ask*, about two sisters and a surrogate pregnancy. Sign up on her contact page to hear more about it and to receive her newsletter.

#### ◆ CONTACT INFORMATION ◆

Please go to **www.thebabydecision.com** to sign up to receive further information on the baby decision, Merle's newsletter, information on online courses, and news about her upcoming novel, *Don't Ask*.

Feel free to contact Merle via **www.thebabydecision.com** to inquire about baby decision coaching. Technology allows her to coach people remotely.

Follow Merle on Twitter @thebabydecision and like us on Facebook: www.facebook.com/thebabydecision.