

Very Early Parenting: An African Model A Child's Song

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There is a tribe in Africa where the birth date of a child is counted not from when they've been born, nor from when they are conceived but from the day that the child was a thought in its mother's mind.

And when a woman decides that she will have a child, she goes off and sits under a tree, by herself, and she listens until she can hear the song of the child that wants to come. And after she's heard the song of this child, she comes back to the man who will be the child's father, and teaches it to him. And then, when they make love to physically conceive the child, some of that time they sing the song of the child, as a way to invite it.

And then, when the mother is pregnant, the mother teaches that child's song to the midwives and the old women of the village, so that when the child is born, the old women and the people around her sing the child's song to welcome it. And then, as the child grows up, the other villagers are taught the child's song. If the child falls, or hurts its knee, someone picks it up and sings its song to it. Or perhaps the child does something wonderful, or goes through the rites of puberty, then as a way of honoring this person, the people of the village sing his or her song.

And it goes this way through their life. In marriage, the songs are sung, together. And finally, when this child is lying in bed, ready to die, all the villagers know his or her song, and they sing--for the last time--the song to that person.

References:

Excerpt from: Welcoming Spirit Home: Ancient African Teachings to Celebrate Children and Community New World Library

<http://birthpsychology.com/free-article/very-early-parenting-african-model-childs-song>