

Q&A An interview with the author of *Preemie Parents*®, Tami C. Gaines

Tami Gaines is a single mother of four, including preemie twins, who has achieved national recognition as an advocate and spokesperson for parents of premature babies.



Q: Hi Tami, could you describe what your life was like at the time when you had your premature twins?

A: I was married for 12 years and already had two very active kids – they were 8 and 5 at the time. I was also running my own business. When I found out that I was pregnant with the twins, it was a very happy surprise for me.

Not so for my husband. He didn't want any more kids and gave me an ultimatum. I chose the twins. I was left to manage the pregnancy (as well as my other kids) by myself.

Q: How did you cope with the challenges of being a “preemie parent?”

A: Being a “preemie parent” is a complete change in lifestyle...that goes beyond the walls of the neonatal intensive care unit (NICU). I had to adopt new values and philosophies in order to deal with the emotional roller coaster, unpredictability, and sheer stress of it all. In *Preemie Parents*, I talk about the principles that I developed to manage the journey. The principles include, learning how to live in the moment and living from a place of gratitude. I was determined to *grow* through the experience, not just go through it.

Q: What makes *Preemie Parents* different from other books on the market that deal with the subject of having a premature baby?

A: *Preemie Parents* tells my story of having premature twins, with two kids at home, while going through a divorce. I am completely honest and transparent in the sharing of my experiences. Unlike other books, only *Preemie Parents* gives parents and caregivers of premature babies an A-Z guide to transform what could be one of their darkest moments, into an experience of extraordinary personal growth. There's a strategy for each letter of the alphabet and they include such steps as becoming an advocate, listening to your instincts, and putting your calendar away in a drawer.

Q: As a parent advocate, you're invited by hospitals to speak to groups of preemie parents. What one message from this book do you feel is most important for them to learn?

A: In the very beginning of the book, I wrote a letter “From One Preemie Parent to Another.” In it, I share my principles of P.E.A.C.E. – an acronym for the five core principles that guided me through my NICU journey. P stands for the Power of Intention; E reminds us that Everything is energy; A stands for All things will move into balance eventually; C is a critical reminder that Caring for yourself, precedes caring for anyone else, and the final E is Everything is exactly as the Universe intended it to be. They had such an influence over my experience that I still live by them today.