

A moment



Just recently, I faced one of the hugest challenges in my life. I was home alone and had to live with my pregnant aunt whom I love so much. Despite the fact that she was pregnant, she had just found a new job with McGraw Hills, and had moved to California. In addition to this, this was her first pregnancy. My mother had been away for more than two weeks in India for an ayurvedic treatment to Kerala. I, therefore, had to watch over my aunt as she slowly adapted to the changes in her life. This would be until a week later when I would join my dad so as to continue working on my summer project of ‘Share Your Book’.

Faced with the challenge of taking care of my pregnant auntie, my family thought I was too young to be of any help to my aunt. They laughed it out only until they heard from me, “It is perfectly natural to cry, and to worry, and to be invested in one’s children’s lives, but at some point, one has to let them screw up and learn their own lessons without stepping in to save the day. I am going to California at least for a month and would join papa after that.”

Probably my aunt was also worried in having to take care of yet another responsibility coming her way. I chose to ignore that. Maybe my momentary ego and overwhelming belief in myself helped me respond well to criticism.

She felt nauseous and vomited for almost 6 months of pregnancy. She is a vegetarian so it was quite difficult to fix her meals every day. She hardly slept at night, and would wake up early in the morning to rush for job. I was home alone with all advices of emergency numbers to contact including 911, alternative keys to the apartment, and all important phone numbers.

I chalked out few vegetarian recipes from the internet, would dispose the garbage and vacuum the room everyday, and make her bed so she feels welcome after the day's hard work; also read about pregnancy related facts from WebMD, the site prescribed to her by her OB. I cleaned the bathroom every two days and kept it disinfected with Lysol and Clorox. I talked to my uncle and went out shopping with him. To his surprise, I suggested that we go to Whole Foods where we found a whole lot of organic food; thought to be good for pregnant women. We managed to buy Green taboulli, Naan jalapenos pizza, organic corn, bean and goat cheese. Yes, my aunt loved eating them and did not vomit either. My uncle was all overwhelmed with my research and thanked me.

I knew we needed to do more. I learned of ways to cope with pregnancy challenges, I learned of Choleostasis, umbilical cord and liver functions. I learned of Caesarian section and normal delivery and the positions a baby could take when inside the womb. In the interim, I also managed time to learn Mandarin from one of the Chinese neighbors of the apartment, prepared a list of names for the unborn, fixed my aunt's labor bag and wished her luck before leaving for India. I learned that kids are a bundle of joy that come after loads of pain. Only if they knew it earlier on..! My persistence and overwhelming belief in myself helped me build self-confidence and self-reliance.

I laugh thinking of times when I would read Mandarin aloud for the unborn treasure to hear and pick up the language with ease later on! It was an overwhelming experience that taught me to be independent and responsible.