

Embrace Your Birth

Now comes the time to truly embrace your birth. You now have the knowledge that most interventions are not necessary during birth, and may even be harmful. So, how do you arrive at a place where you can achieve the birth of your innermost desires?

TRUST: You can confidently expect your pregnancy and birth to go well and that, after a natural labor, a beautiful baby will be born to fulfill your expectations. You must return to your most basic instinct, and believe in your ability to trust yourself and your baby to safely make the birth journey, even though popular attitudes say otherwise.

One of my favorite quotes concerning childbirth comes from Immaculate Deception, (1) as follows:

“If you tied 95 percent of women in labor to a tree in Golden Gate Park, the baby would fall out...But I would never do a home delivery because it wouldn't be safe.” Fred Ostermann, M.D. quoted in Newsweek

If this is so, then why is the cesarean rate in this country closer to 25% than to 5%? Why are the vast majority of women interfered with in labor, rather than being left alone allowing their bodies to birth their babies? Why does so much fear surround childbirth? Why have women come to believe that their babies must be in constant danger during the birth process, so much so that one quarter on them are born by cesarean section?

What can society do to give the process of childbirth back to the mothers? Childbirth is not dangerous. Women were designed to give birth and babies were designed to be born! How are babies born in taxi cabs, in airplanes, and, even in homes, when no doctors or nurses are present? Babies know their way out - they create their own journey - just as they create their own “birth” days, no matter

what the date on the calendar says.

When you think about all the stories you hear surrounding childbirth, from friends, family and colleagues, are they positive? Do the majority of these stories leave you feeling frightened; doubting your ability to give birth naturally? Do you hear epidural stories - stories of inductions for late babies - stories of scheduled cesareans? Could all of these things be good for babies? NO! Would these babies have been born without these interferences? YES!

Fear is a disturbing emotion: conjuring up images of danger or pain. When women fear the pain of labor, or the birth process, it brings on anxiety. Fear and trust can not co-exist. Women must choose between one and the other.

When fear is the deciding factor, women accept epidurals to deal with the pain, or an induction of labor to deal with the threat of danger to their babies. Fear dictates the choice of a cesarean delivery. Sometimes a mother is fearful for herself or her baby; or sometimes the doctor is fearful of malpractice. Either way, fear dictates what action is taken. This is wrong.

FAITH: Like trust, faith is not based on proof. Faith comes from the inner self. It is the belief in something that you cannot touch or see. Faith will bring your baby, without medical intervention. Faith is knowing that your labor will start when your baby is ready to be born. It is the assurance that your contractions will be tolerable. Faith is the certainty that your baby will be safe during the birth process. Faith is the confidence that you must have: first in yourself, then in your baby, that you can give birth to your baby, your way.

Your pure birth (hopefully at home) will instill upon you an *euphoria* - a feeling of happiness like never before. In the first moments after birth, when you are holding your wet, birth-scented newborn baby in your arms you will know a profound joy. One that is deeply diminished by epidurals, and by hospitals.

Your baby will be aware and awe-inspiring; taking in your face and your voice while you marvel at his perfection. In his book, Babies Remember Birth (2) David Chamberlain writes, "Your infant will be in a state of heightened alertness and responsiveness in the hours surrounding birth. If delivery is done without drugs, expect your baby to be wide-eyed and alert for an hour or more. This is a time for gazing at each other and engaging in other deeply personal communication. At this time your baby's memory and learning ability seems to be enhanced."

Most babies are born so effortlessly you wonder why there needs to be any "attendant" at all. Babies want to be born and once labor starts, they are consistently making their way.

The intricate transformation of birth is one between the laboring woman and her baby. The two work together with every contraction to bring about the baby's safe passage. The tenderness and intimacy shared between a man and a woman as they work together to bring forth their baby is profound. This energy of joy and the promise of a new life brings sacredness to birth.

When you are ready to embrace your birth, you will realize that you do not need drugs or machines or even hospitals to bring forth your baby. You will accept the labor that your baby dictates as the one that is uniquely yours. You will not place limits or time restraints on your labor. Your water will break when it is time. Your pushing will not be controlled by anything except your baby's desire to be born. When your body says "push" you will. Your baby will be born gently and will emerge fully aware. You will be filled with a sense of relief and accomplishment like you have never known before.

The "womanness" of birth is something we need to reclaim. We are slowly making strides, with the use of doulas and certified nurse midwives in

the hospital setting. But to be truly appreciated, birth must be brought back home again. Home to the women and the families. Home because there is no intervention. Home because it is safer. Home because women can give birth without being medicated when they are loved and nurtured in their own space and their own time.