



Ideal birth

Your step-by-step
guide to a *real*
birth plan

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Your step-by-step
guide to a
real birth plan

Birth is not only about making babies. It's about making mothers~ strong, competent, capable mothers who trust themselves and believe in their inner strength.

Barbara Katz Rothman

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How to use this workbook

Wherever you are on your journey, **whatever you have arranged** for your birth, and **however it ends up** being, the tools in this workbook will help you to **manage the process** according to *your own values*, and based on **where you are right now**.

This workbook will be useful for women who are:

- very interested in **natural birthing**; or
- generally aiming for an **active labour with few interventions**; or
- anticipating using **pain relief or other supports**; or
- **not really sure** what to expect or how it will go; or
- planning an **elective C-section** *

Where you've come from

You may have **read books or blogs** on what you “must” have in your birth plan, or maybe you've **thought about all the details** to such a degree that it's getting unlikely for things to go according to what you've put down. You may feel as though it's **impossible to plan** for something unpredictable, so why bother.

Why make a birth plan?

Think about it this way – if you're **going to climb a mountain**, you'll essentially need **a map**, some **equipment** and to know you can physically do it.

With birth, the mountain is the inner journey that you will go through **on the way to meeting your baby**. This journey is an adventure, and **each woman walks her own version** of this universal path.

What this workbook will give you

This workbook is for you to **get acquainted with your own internal landscape**, to **make the best map possible** for yourself, and to **identify the tools and supports** you'll need to achieve your goals.

No-one can tell you what “should” go in your birth plan, and while it's true that we don't get to plan all the external details of how it will be, nevertheless, by being in touch with your inner landscape then **the external details start to take care of themselves**.

Having gone through this birth plan process, you are in the best position to encounter every twist and turn on the path of your birth journey with a sense of **readiness and self-trust**.

This way, you get to have **your best birth experience**.

** To use this guide to plan your best C-section birth, you can just modify some items slightly to suit. The journey towards a planned C-section can be just as fraught with anxiety, decision-making and getting your needs met as other kinds of birth – the process in this workbook will help you sort through all that, so you can create the plan that will ideally support you.*

Setting up

The exercises in this book are best done the old fashioned way. You will need:

- **this workbook, printed**
- a bunch of spare **blank paper**
- a couple of **different colour pens**

*(If you haven't got a printer and you're reading this on your screen, then please use **pen and blank paper** to do the exercises as you go. And when it comes time to "fill in the blanks", **write out the whole sentence** rather than just your responses.)*

Getting comfortable

Make yourself a cup of something nice, sit somewhere comfortable, turn off the phone, email, devices and distractions. Give yourself this space... **space to start listening within**, to discover something new and valuable within you.

Your inner truth

Birth is the opportunity to discover something new about yourself – and is not limited by any external events that are taking place around you.

We are going to **gently look towards your inner space**, to identify your thoughts and feelings, your fears and your deepest strengths.

We will **transform difficulties into assets** and we will **affirm where you are right now** as the **best place for you to be**, as you approach the moment of birth.

The outcome – your plan

In the end, you will come through this process with a **tangible, definable set of decisions, materials and support measures** that comprise **your ideal path through the birth experience**.

OK, let's begin!

Birth matters.

It brings us into being, on many levels

Ananda Lowe

Stage 1: Feeling and knowing

Let's **take a moment to tune in.**

Sitting comfortably, take a few deep breaths and **fill your inner space with a nurturing feeling**; breathing out, **let go of any distractions...**

Taking your time, now **ask yourself this question:**

"How do I feel about birth?"

Without trying to name anything yet, **simply let this question soak into you.** Start tuning in to the **landscape of feelings** within.

Don't judge, don't try to change anything, **just observe and feel.**

Now have a **look at the Feeling Words** on the following page. Gently, and with a sense of openness to *what is*, let your eyes wander over the page and **allow words to jump out at you**, while you gently hold this question in your awareness, or in your body:

"How do I feel about birth?"

Write your answers on the page that follows.

Feeling words

Powerful	Cheerful	Questioning	Perplexed
On edge	Doubting	Sceptical	Fulfilled
Uneasy	Harmonious	Light	Uncertain
Impatient	Composed	Distressed	Concerned
Hopeful	Loving	Captivated	Thrilled
Embarrassed	Frightened	Terrified	Curious
Frustrated	Lazy	Pensive	Isolated
Courageous	Unsure	Inspired	Passionate
Miserable	Disturbed	Blissful	Vigilant
Upset	Moved	Proud	Light-hearted
Queasy	Distracted	Powerless	Interested
Liberated	Dejected	Submissive	Sensitive
Scared	Irritated	Overwhelmed	Confident
Open	Guilty	Gratified	Vulnerable
Insecure	Quiet	Content	Respected
Nervous	Elated	Calm	Blessed
Tranquil	Mad	Confused	Mellow
Eager	Ridiculed	Disillusioned	Lonely
Squeamish	Shocked	Worried	Tense
Uptight	Afraid	Inquisitive	Excited
Energetic	Overjoyed	Fearful	Expectant
Ready	Apprehensive	Reluctant	Wary
Jealous	Hesitant	In awe	Angry
Panicked	Overwrought	Indecisive	Ecstatic
Distraught	Timid	Capable	Puzzled
Optimistic	Disheartened	Playful	Happy
Upbeat	Restful	Peaceful	Delighted
Empty	Inadequate	Victimised	Anxious
Respectful	Joyful	Threatened	Withdrawn

Exercise 1: How do I feel about birth?

Write your response, about six to eight words that resonate with you:

Step 1: Working with *what is*

Women approaching the time of birthing can feel a **wide range of emotions, usually pretty mixed**.

In this process we are going to **work with *what is***.

How you feel is how you feel.

This is **your truth**, as it is **for you now**, and we will go deeper into this truth to **find your strength**.

During the birth, you will also be **feeling just how you feel**. So we're going to get to a place of **being OK** with all that's going on for you, so that as you move towards the time of birth you are **processing your experiences as they arise for you**, in each moment.

Step 2: Drawing on the positive

Taking your list of chosen words above, make note the ones that **feel positive to you**.

(If none feel positive? That's OK, just go on to the next exercise. Alternatively, you may want to revisit the Feeling Words and ask yourself, "If I were to feel positive, how do I imagine I might feel?" and use those responses, whatever number of words resonates for you.)

If you only end up with **one positive word** to work with, then just complete *one* of these exercises below. If you have *three* words, complete *three* exercises. Just do **as many positive words as you have**.

Step 3: Knowing and feeling

Now think about **what you know or what you expect** about birth, **something positive**.

Maybe at a stretch you can only find something *just vaguely* positive. Or maybe you're expecting a lot of positive aspects.

This is about *your* path, *your* life experiences, and **there's no "right" or "wrong"**.

In the spaces below, write **what you know or what you're expecting**.
After each statement, add **one of your positive words** from your list.

You may be surprised at what comes out, so **follow your first instinct** if you can. It **doesn't really need to make logical sense**, to you or to anyone else. These exercises work best when done in the **spirit of exploration**.

For example:

I know *birth can be very transformative*. I am feeling
blissful.

I am expecting *that the medical staff will help me*. I am
feeling *interested*.

I know _____
(and/or) I am expecting _____
I am feeling _____

I know _____
(and/or) I am expecting _____
I am feeling _____

I know _____
(and/or) I am expecting _____
I am feeling _____

I know _____
(and/or) I am expecting _____
I am feeling _____

I know _____
(and/or) I am expecting _____
I am feeling _____

I know _____
(and/or) I am expecting _____
I am feeling _____

Exercise 2: Taking another perspective

Now we will **revisit the Feeling Words**.

Take a moment to think about your exposure to **other women talking about birth in a positive way**. Let these memories or ideas come to you – invite them in.

Here, we are going to find **five or six words** that resonate with you, that **feel positive to you**, when you think about or remember **other women talking about birth in a positive way**.

Choosing a few of these positive words, in your own way describe **what you have heard and what women may feel**, when they talk about positive birthing experiences.

(Again, the connections don't need to look logical. This is an exploration process, potentially finding something new that has been hidden.)

For example:

Women say *birth can be something that changes their lives*.
They feel *ecstatic*.

Some women say *they are glad to have gone through the experience*.
They feel *capable*.

Women say _____
(or) Some women say _____
They feel _____

Women say _____
(or) Some women say _____
They feel _____

Women say _____
(or) Some women say _____
They feel _____

Exercise 3: Mixing thoughts, feelings and ideas

Now we are going to **mix it up** a little.

When it comes to many of life's challenges, we **feel things** and we **know things** and we **hear things**...

We **think we are clear** on the difference but, in fact, our subconscious is **always linking things together for us, creating our experience** of the world in each moment.

Here we are going to work with the beautiful ability of our subconscious to **make connections**, by mixing it up a little.

Making light of the negative

This exercise will be **most powerful** if you have **some negative words** in your very first list, from Exercise 1.

(If you only have positive words there that's OK too – by doing this mix-and-match you will still be creating an opening into new thought.)

How to mix

We are going to make a salad of ideas! Each statement will use:

1. A **(negative) feeling** from Exercise 1
2. A **statement** of what others say from Exercise 2
3. **Any positive feeling** from either Exercise 1 or 2

In no particular order, you first **start with a (negative) feeling**, then **add what some women say** and then **how it's possible to feel – drawing from the positive words** you have already discovered.

Again, **don't feel you need to be logical**, nor do you have to match them to the statements you had them with before. **Mix it all up.**

For example:

Even though I feel *apprehensive*, some women say *birth changed their lives forever*. It's possible to feel *joyful*.

Even though I am feeling *threatened*, women say *birth can be really blissful*. It's possible to feel *curious*.

Even though I feel _____
(or) Even though I am feeling _____

Women say _____
(or) Some women say _____

It's possible to feel _____

Even though I feel _____
(or) Even though I am feeling _____

Women say _____
(or) Some women say _____

It's possible to feel _____

Even though I feel _____
(or) Even though I am feeling _____

Women say _____
(or) Some women say _____

It's possible to feel _____

Childbirth is more admirable than conquest,
more amazing than self-defense, and as
courageous as either one.

Gloria Steinem

Stage 2: Looking for tigers

In the following exercises we are going to **gently discover the fears and apprehensions** that can **impact on your body's ability to progress naturally into labour**.

Then we will work through them, **unravelling the charge** associated with the fears, **shifting your feeling** about these areas **from "resistance" to "doable"**.

Nature and tigers

Imagine you are a cavewoman, very pregnant, ready to meet your baby.

Scenario A – you are alone in the jungle. Night is falling. Animal sounds emerge from the dimming tangle of trees and vines. And, from just over the next hill, comes the unmistakable roar of a tiger...

In this situation, Mother Nature, in her wisdom, will protect you and the baby by holding off on labour until you are in a safe place, protected and supported...

Scenario B – you are deep in a warm, protected cave. Right at the mouth of the cave are the men-folk. A fire is burning and they sit, holding their spears, each taking turns to check for danger outside. Deep in the cave, by the soft glow of another fire, all of your sisters and aunts and the elder-women are gathered. They are all here to support you, to care for your physical needs, to coach you through the journey that they have all walked, the journey which brought you and each of your loved ones into the world. Their experience and nurturing presence is instantly calming. You feel safe to let go, safe to follow your instincts.

In this situation, the mother's perceptions flow into the body, bringing the awareness of safety and protection. Nature's wisdom will bring the baby into this setting, the safest setting for the natural vulnerability of birthing mother and baby.

And so what do we modern women and this cavewoman have in common?
What can we learn from these scenarios?

Our physiology, in fact, is **essentially unchanged** from thousands of years ago until now. Mother Nature's wisdom **protects new and vulnerable life** by working with the **awareness of the mother**. When the mother **perceives safety**, the **baby can come**. When the mother **perceives danger**, Nature will try as hard as possible to **stall the process** until danger has passed.

For us, however, **these days the dangers are not real tigers.**

Our tigers are metaphorical, and so we **need to go looking for them** in places we may not expect.

Exercise 4: Lurking tigers

Here are some **common places where tigers can lurk**. For each area, complete the blanks with **two to three feeling words** from the list of Feeling Words.

Don't analyse or think about it, just select those that ring true, even if it doesn't make sense to you immediately.

Take your time to reflect; **feel into each statement**.

About **other people's birth stories** I am feeling

When I come across **images or stories** about birth on TV, movies or social media I feel

When I think about **being in a medical setting** I feel

About **my in-laws' involvement** in the birth and the newborn time I sometimes feel

About **my own family's involvement** in the birth and the newborn time I sometimes feel

With regards to **my partner's words and actions, beliefs and values** around birth I feel

Regarding my/ our **plans for the postpartum period**, I often feel

When I **think about induction** I feel

About **my own pain threshold**, I feel

Around the issue of **control (in control / not in control)**, I feel

About **my level of knowledge or what to expect** about birth, I'm feeling

When I think about **the car journey from home to hospital** I feel

About my **doctor, midwives and other medical caregivers** I'm feeling

About **my level of understanding of pain relief options**, I feel

About the **possibility of C-section** I feel

About the **"the unknown"** when it comes to birth I feel

About the **arrangements** I have in place for my **older children** when I go into labour, I feel

Wrangling tigers

Now you will **take the tigers** that you've uncovered from Exercise 4 and start to **pull the issues apart, reclaiming** the bits that you're OK with and then working with what's left to **reduce the emotional charge**.

The fact is, **some aspects of birth are hard** – maybe not for everyone, and maybe not in the same way from one person to the next. But **most women will struggle** with at least **some aspects of birth**.

What matters is **how we frame it for ourselves**, because this impacts not only the choices that we'll make going into the experience, but also the way we look back on it afterwards and how we connect with the postpartum period.

When we **work with what is**, we **give ourselves permission** for **some of it to be hard** and **some of it to be OK**.

Like climbing a mountain, it's getting to the end of the journey with a **sense of empowerment and a feeling of achievement** that makes the challenge worth it to us. Maybe some parts are no picnic, but that doesn't stop the experience as a whole from being extremely valuable, something to be proud of.

Exercise 6: Starting with the positive

So, just as we did with Stage 1, we are going to start here with the **positives** that came to light in Exercise 4.

We are going to **reaffirm those positive feelings** and we are going to **amplify them** – just because it feels good! Also, by amplifying the positive, we **open our mind to see and respond positively** to other areas, inviting novel and creative ways of approaching the more difficult parts.

(You may not find anything positive, and as you may have learned by now, that is completely OK. We will process the negative parts soon.)

*If you have **no positive feeling words** here, you have permission to skip to the next exercise. Alternatively, as with the exercises in Stage 1, you can choose to **revisit Exercise 4**, perhaps with a different coloured pen, asking “**If I were to be feeling positive** about this aspect, how do I imagine I might feel?”. You can **skim through the list** of prompts until you find one that's **easier to respond to positively**, and start there. And then maybe you can complete **one or two more prompts** in this way.)*

Step 1: Amplifying the positive

Going down the list of prompts, if you've answered with a positive feeling then **write out the whole statement, finishing with the positive feeling word**.

(If you've answered with **more than one positive feeling word** to a particular prompt, then **write out the whole prompt again** using the next positive word. When we amplify, we want to luxuriate in the good feeling! So no shortcuts!)

Step 2: Reasons to be positive

Below each prompt + feeling, find **a few reasons** why this is true.

Again, if something comes to you that your logical brain says "huh?" to, then don't censor it. At some level it is true for you, and we are strengthening positive connections here, so it's constructive and beneficial to **just go with what comes up**.

For example:

About **my in-laws' involvement** in the birth and the newborn time I sometimes feel

_____grateful_____nervous_____respectful_____

About my in-laws' involvement in the birth and the newborn time I sometimes feel grateful

Having help

My mum not here

I think it's going to be hard

I'm bad at asking for help but my mother-in-law is so pushy I don't need to!

About my in-laws' involvement in the birth and the newborn time I sometimes feel respectful

They all work full-time yet are willing to help

It was hard for them raising their own kids but they're still happy to be generous to us

They don't really agree with my values but they'll show up for us anyway

Exercise 7: Taming tigers

In this exercise we're going to take those **issues that are carrying a negative charge** for you, and you're going to **reclaim the positive**.

It's a **sorting method**, drilling down into each area so that you feel **more and more "OK"**, and the remainders, the difficult parts, are identified very specifically – creating a **sense of "doable"**.

Our tool for this process

We're going to **work through the steps** of this process using the **very simple, very powerful Serenity Prayer**.

*(This short version has long been an essential tool in 12-step programs such as Alcoholics Anonymous. It's a powerful way for any of us to **face complex or difficult issues** and find a way **peacefully to move forward**.)*

*A brief note: For the first word of this prayer, you may **substitute whatever is meaningful to you** – if you already have a religious or spiritual tradition or practice then this may be easier – otherwise many people use something like:*

Higher self
Higher power
Wise self
Subconscious
Universe
Collective unconscious
Angels/ guides (etc)

*The main point is that we are **asking for something that exists outside of our normal, rational, thinking mind**. We are acknowledging that when we are facing these dilemmas, then **the rational mind has inherent limitations** that **prevent us from finding the full story**. So, understanding that this is the purpose, just **choose the wording that works for you**.*

[God], grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change,
the courage to change the things I can,
and the wisdom to know the difference

How to work through the process

Going one by one, take **each prompt from Exercise 4 that has a response of a negative feeling**, then work through it using the steps below.

Go through the steps **completely with one [prompt + negative feeling] combination**, then return to Step 1 and go through the steps for the next one, until you've processed them all. This will give you a **huge amount of useful material** to allow you to then **construct your personal birth plan** in the last stage of this workbook.

An example for all the steps together is shown on the next page.

Step 1: Asking for wisdom

Take a moment to **ask the loving, wise space around you** – or within you – to **help bring wisdom to you** for this exercise.

This is the third line of the prayer, asking for wisdom, **from a deeper aspect of our experience** than the ordinary day-to-day awareness.

Step 2: Finding what can change

Start with the **first prompt** in Exercise 4, or **choose one that carries a lot of emotional charge** for you.

Write the prompt and one negative feeling in the middle of a blank page.

Now, **asking for wisdom**, and **taking your time**, listen within for what you **may be able to change about this**.

It doesn't need to be very logical, we are sorting deep connections here, so **be a little loose** if that helps.

If you find something, no matter how small, or loosely related, that you can change, then **connect it to the main prompt with an arrow or line**. You may find **ideas branching off each other** too – just go with it.

Continue like this until you've **identified a number of things** that can change. Several. There's no magic number, but you may start feeling a little different, maybe softer or lighter, as you go through this.

Step 3: What are the feelings

Run your eyes over the page and find some ideas here that you've written that may carry **a bit of a sting or discomfort for you**. Go back to the Feeling Words and see which feeling(s) jumps out at you. **Write the feeling(s) next to the idea that feels uncomfortable.**

Now **underneath** (or on a new page), **for each idea that's uncomfortable**, write the statement:

"[Higher power], about [aspect] I feel [feeling]. Please grant me the courage to make a change."

Step 4: Seeing what cannot change

Repeat this process, either using a **different colour pen on the same page**, or **starting with a blank page**. The **prompt goes in the middle** of the page, just as before.

And, as you may have guessed, now you will **identify which aspects you can't change**, or feel you can't. Again, the ideas need only be loosely connected.

As you go through, you may find ideas branching off each other. You may see that from these connected ideas there are things you can change and things you can't – you can **repeat this with all the connected ideas too**. Not to make work for yourself, but the opposite – because **with every sorting exercise you start to feel clearer, lighter, more positive**.

Step 5: What are the feelings

Now **go through all the "can't change" items** and, as before, for **each one that stings** find a **Feeling Word** (or two) to go with it.

And as before, underneath, or on a new page, **for each aspect that stings**, write the statement:

"[Universe], about [aspect] I feel [feeling]. Please grant me the serenity to accept this."

Step 6 [optional]: Asking for wisdom again

If you get stuck and can't figure out if you can or can't change something, you can **find a Feeling Word and write this**:

"[Angels], about [aspect] I feel [feeling]. Please grant me the wisdom to know whether I can or cannot make a change."

Example:

Meet doctors and midwives and explain how I feel

Feeling: anxious

Find out more about what happens and the hospital policies

Try some hypnotherapy

When I think about being in a medical setting I feel

Ask Josie if she could teach me some EFT to see if

Ask midwives how they've helped other women who are scared of hospital, see if they have ideas

Have to birth at hospital

Only other option is home birth

Can ask about birthing centre

Feeling: overwhelmed

Wise self, about meeting with the doctors and midwives I feel anxious. Please grant me the courage to make a change.

Wise self, about the only other option being home birthing I feel overwhelmed. Please grant me the serenity to accept this.

Exercise 8: Reclaiming the positive

Now, taking all those ideas-maps you've just created, run your eyes over all the aspects you've identified and find those that have a **neutral or positive charge**, even if just slightly positive.

Go to the **Feeling Words** and find a word that resonates, writing the feeling under the aspect you've identified.

For example:

Ask midwives how they've helped other women who are scared of hospital, see if they have ideas.

Feeling: Hopeful

Try some hypnotherapy.

Feeling: Peaceful

Repeat this for every item that has a positive or neutral charge.

*(If you're not sure about a particular item, you can either **ask for wisdom** and try to sort it further, or simply **move on** to the next one.)*

Birth is about radical, creative, life-affirming change. It is about adaptation on a nearly unbelievable scale.

Mark Sloan, MD

Stage 3: Making your cave

You have done the most incredible amount of **deep sorting** – sorting through your **thoughts and feelings**, through **associations and connections**, some that you may not have even been aware of.

Now we are going to **use everything that you've discovered** so far, and we're going to **create your very own cave** – metaphorically, of course.

You are going to put the **tigers in the jungle** and your **protectors at the cave entrance**. Then, within the **safety of your cave**, you're going to **surround yourself with support, positivity and guidance**.

Exercise 9: Tigers in the sanctuary

Grab a **blank piece of paper**. Write in the middle **“My Tigers”**.

*(Let's own this! Each of us has our **very own set of personal tigers**, based on our inherent nature when we were born, combined with everything that's happened during our individual path through life thus far.*

*So here, you are going to create your own wildlife sanctuary, where **your tigers get to exist in peace**, just as they are.)*

Around the page, write all of your statements from Exercise 7 that you are **unable to change**.

For example:

Universe, about how people keep telling me their induction stories I feel disturbed. Please grant me the serenity to accept this.

*(As you do this part, you may notice that you're able to **split some issues** into aspects that you can & can't change. Go ahead and do that, then **put the “cannot change” statements in your tiger sanctuary**.)*

Exercise 10: Guarding the cave

Now we're going to **put your wisdom and your courage** at the mouth of the cave.

In the **centre of a blank page**, write:

“[Subconscious], about birth I have mixed and changing feelings. Please grant me the wisdom to know what I can and cannot change about all facets that I encounter.”

Now all around this you will put firstly **any statements that you weren't sure if you can or cannot change**, asking for wisdom. For example:

Divine guide, about being able to breastfeed I am feeling confused. Please grant me the wisdom to know what I can and cannot change about being able to breastfeed.

Next, put **all the statements about what you can change, for which you've asked for courage**. For example:

Higher self, about asking my doctor to explain more about induction options I feel unsure. Please grant me the courage to make a change.

Lastly, go back to Exercise 3 and write your **mixed-salad statements**, for example:

Even though I am feeling threatened, women say birth can be really blissful. It's possible to feel curious.

Exercise 11: Your cave, the inner sanctum

And now for the grand finale!

This is the part where you may just really surprise yourself at the **range and depth of support, wisdom, resources and strength** that have been **within and around you** all along.

Grab a **piece of blank paper** and write in the middle **“Me in my cave”**

And starting from the very beginning, you are going to make a big beautiful **collection of statements, thoughts and feelings** that actually **belong to you**, and have been **yours all along**.

From Exercise 1 – write **all of your positive feeling statements**. For example:

*I am expecting that the medical staff will help me.
I am feeling interested.*

From Exercise 2 – write all of your **positive statements about what other women may say and feel**. For example:

Some women say they are glad to have gone through the experience.

They feel capable.

From Exercise 6 – write all of the **prompts that have a positive feeling word** in response, along with the **notes that you made** for each one. For example:

About my in-laws' involvement in the birth and the newborn time I sometimes feel grateful

Having help

My mum not here

I think it's going to be hard

*I'm bad at asking for help but my mother-in-law is so pushy
I don't need to!*

From Exercise 8 – **all around the outside of the page**, write **all the aspects from your sorting process** that have a **positive feeling** that goes with them. For example:

Ask midwives how they've helped other women who are scared of hospital, see if they have ideas.

Feeling: Hopeful

*(As with the previous exercise, if you find yourself **able to sort and process** as you go, then please go with this impulse.)*

The beautiful thing about your subconscious is now that you've opened this way of connecting and reconnecting, this momentum will continue below your level of awareness, **bringing you insight** as you move closer to the birth – and **supporting you with knowledge and guidance during the actual birth process**.

Birth is an opportunity to transcend. To rise above what we are accustomed to, reach deeper inside ourselves than we are familiar with, and to see not only what we are truly made of, but the strength we can access in and through birth.

Marcie Macari

Stage 4: Actions and plans

Now it's time to gradually emerge into day-to-day reality. With all this deep processing, you've identified **what you need in order to feel safe and supported** during the birth, **things you may need to find out** and **things you may need to change**.

Going back over all of your writing, and allowing new ideas to come to you, **jot down some notes** in the following sections:

- **What information** do I not have, that is stopping me from being ready?
- What do I need when **labour begins at home**?
- What do I need to put in place for the **transition from home to hospital**?
- What do I need when I'm **at the hospital**?
- What do I need in **the days after the birth**?
- What do I need in **the weeks after the birth**?
- Do I need to get any **professional support or advice** for something?
- What does **my partner need to know**?
- What do **my medical caregivers need to know**?
- What does **my family and/or in-laws need to know**?
- What do **my friends need to know**?
- Are there any **practical things** I need to organise or get before the birth?
- What else do I need to know, do or arrange **so I feel "ready"**, so that everything is sorted?

The parts that relate to your medical care

You can summarise and give to your caregivers. You may want to discuss **some aspects of your tigers**, and maybe some **aspects of what's in your cave**, so they **best know how to support you**.

The parts that relate to other people

You and/or your partner can go about **bringing people onto your page**, so you can focus on where you're at, knowing that arrangements are in place.

Things you need to find out, to do, to organise

Ask your partner to **help you break it down**. Agree with each other **how you'll get through it** as soon as you're both able to, so your body gets the feeling that **it's "done" and that you are "ready"**.

And there you have it – this is *your own* *real* birth plan!

The instant of birth is exquisite. Pain and joy are one at this moment. Ever after, the dim recollection is so sweet that we speak to our children with a gratitude they never understand.

Madline Tiger

Goodbye and good luck!

So now you have ***your own birth plan***, the **map** and the **tools** that you can draw on to **support you through your journey**.

How we can help you

If you would like **professional support for pregnancy care and birth preparation**, please don't hesitate to **get in touch**.

Along with **helping you with health complaints and anxiety during pregnancy**, we also offer **“Pre-birth Acupuncture”** – a specific program for the final month of pregnancy, to get your body into the best position for birth.

Benefits of Pre-birth Acupuncture

Clinical trials suggest Pre-birth Acupuncture can:

- shorten labour time (2 hours on average, which means a more efficient labour)
- reduce the need for induction
- increase the likelihood of normal vaginal delivery
- decrease requests for epidural
- decrease emergency Caesarean rate

Pre-birth Acupuncture helps towards:

- preparing your body for labour
- ripening the cervix
- alleviating anxiety around the birth
- giving you energy for labour and recovery
- dealing with specific complaints (see below)

You can see more on our website – download other resources, **read our blog** about pregnancy and birthing and get in touch with **one of our practitioners: www.OceanAcupuncture.com.au**

**Please accept our very best wishes for the birth,
for meeting your baby, and the time beyond!**

By Lois Nethery, on behalf of all practitioners at Ocean Acupuncture

We'd love to hear from you!

Did this workbook help you?

If you've already been through the birth, **how did it go?**

We'd **love to hear** your stories – **your *real* stories!**

How are you feeling about birth now... **how did you go** with the planning... **how did you go** with the birth... is there **anything else** you'd like to know?

We would love to hear from you – please email us at **info@OceanAcupuncture.com.au** and share your story.

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