

# Blissful Birth

## Childbirth, Naturally



## Birth Preparation Workbook

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## Introduction

This workbook will help you overcome any fears and unnecessary tension you have about birth, and teach you how to gain more control over your mind and body so you are fully prepared for your baby's birth.

We start off with how your mind can influence your body, and the effect of your thoughts and beliefs. We'll then move on to the role of fear, and how to safely identify and overcome your fears.

Next, you will learn self hypnosis and relaxation which will provide you with a sense of control and empowerment over your mind and body, both during your pregnancy and when you are giving birth, as well as techniques to help you to manage pain in labour. This will equip you with skills to relax, remain calm and in control regardless of what is going on around you and ultimately, will increase your confidence and your belief in yourself, allowing you to make the experience of giving birth calmer and more positive.

And what's more, research confirms that women who use self hypnosis are more than twice as likely to be satisfied with labour pain management than other women.

Finally, we will cover some of the practicalities of giving birth, such as birth plans, stages of labour, tips for a positive birth experience, and words to avoid.

This is a big workbook, so take it slowly. The more you put into the exercises, the more you will get out of them.

You have taken the first step towards an empowering and positive experience of childbirth, and we are glad to be able to come along with you on that journey.

## Part 1 - How Your Mind Works

Before we start looking at childbirth in detail, it is important to understand a little about how the mind works, and more specifically how it can mess up what we really want.

### ***Conscious vs. Unconscious***

Your mind has two parts – the **conscious** and the **unconscious** (also known as the *subconscious*). If we were to compare your mind to an iceberg, the tip would be the logical, conscious part of our mind, the part that says, “I should lose weight” or “I shouldn’t be worried about losing control”, and the larger part below the surface would be your unconscious, where 90% of your thinking power comes from.

### ***The Unconscious Mind***

Your unconscious controls all the things that happen automatically, for example, breathing, and digestion, habits and any thoughts or feelings that appear outside your control.

The aim of your unconscious mind is to keep you safe. It acts to protect you by filtering millions of pieces of information from your senses to work out if there are any threats nearby to move away from, or sources of pleasure to move towards.

It can do this effectively because it doesn’t spend time thinking about things (that is your conscious mind’s job) – it just reacts.

Our memories, beliefs, values and previous decisions form part of this filtering process – our unconscious mind uses them to help find the most important pieces of information in our environment for us to become aware of.

Sometimes, however, if a fear dominates our thoughts and takes up a lot of our thinking time, the unconscious may perceive that fear as something we want - a pleasure - as we are constantly thinking about it. This is why, sometimes, our fears or worst-case scenarios will come true as our unconscious is constantly working to make our thoughts a reality – *and if we think about something enough, it must be because we want it, right?!?!.*

Many problems can be attributed to our unconscious mind acting on incorrect, outdated or incomplete information. For example, a belief you had as a child may still act as the source of failure or unhappiness in adulthood.

The problem is that once we have created a belief about something, this affects the way our minds filter the information from our senses, so we tend to focus our attention on things that confirm the belief. The maxim, known as Orr's Law, is:

***“What the thinker thinks, the prover proves”***

So, a child continually told by a parent or teacher that they would never amount to much may take this on as a belief, as in the child's eyes the adult must be right. Their unconscious mind holds the belief that “I am no good” and their mind starts filtering their experiences to confirm this belief (*“see, there's another example...”*). The result is that confidence and self-esteem drops, and in turn they carry on acting in a way that confirms that belief even as they become an adult.

## ***The Mind/Body Connection***

In the same way that beliefs can cause you pain, hurt or distress, they can also be part of your success.

Whatever you believe in, you act on – albeit sometimes without knowing why. But this also means that you cannot act on something that you do not, at some level, believe in, because otherwise your mind would just filter it out of your awareness.

Every home comfort we have, from sliced bread to TVs was created by someone who believed they could do it. Without an initial thought and belief, there is no action. Thomas Edison took 800 attempts to make the light bulb. Can you imagine what the world would be like if he had not believed it was possible? Or if he had believed he was a failure after 799 attempts?

So, it is through the power and quality of your beliefs that you create your future.

The good news is that you have the ability to change your beliefs. If you think about it, there are many things in life that you once believed that you no longer do. Common examples include Santa Claus, the Tooth Fairy, and the Easter Bunny (sorry if we broke bad news to you there).

Success is therefore available to everyone.

And it starts with a state of mind...

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