

*How can you start to trust that your body was designed to have a baby? To love your body that is going to give you this amazing human life made in your likeness?*

# Fear of BIRTH

*By Cheryl van der Mark, D.C.*

**Why do we as women so often discount ourselves? Why do we underestimate our abilities, our strengths, our bodies? Why do we lean into fear so often instead of trusting our bodies, our intuition, and our given abilities?**

When it comes to the birthing process, we have been taught by society from a young age that we will need to depend on others to extract our babies, that it will be a terrible, difficult process; and we know that we will be constantly checked to see what scary things may be wrong at each stage of our pregnancy and birthing journey. We couldn't possibly support our own babies through this powerful rite of passage naturally, could we?

What if there was an alternative narrative? What if our bodies were designed to have a baby? What if we knew that our bodies were so amazing that they can take two microscopic cells, put them together, and create a human being? What if we knew that the physiology in our body was such that it knew what to do at each and every stage of labor if we were just taught the skills of how to work with it instead of against it, releasing the fear that impedes the process?

As a birth educator and perinatal Doctor of Chiropractic for 20 years, I have seen countless women come through my office scared, dependent, and unknowledgeable about their pregnancy and impending birth. Trusting that the system has it all figured out, and that someone, somehow, will tell them what to do and how to get through this experience as it is happening.





Don't get me wrong, I have also served full-time in health care in the third world for years, and I have seen the issues that can arise when emergency maternal care is not available. There will always be a need for skilled obstetric care. However, I have also seen how a woman can trust her body and lean into the innate process that is designed to occur when independent of maternal care, and by learning the skills she needs for birthing.

Many years ago, my husband and I birthed three beautiful children, using my own self-taught birth skills, and a passion was born. As a young mom, birth coach and ICPA chiropractor, I started teaching parents birthing classes based on physiology, anatomy, empowerment, and the interplay of the mind, the nervous system, and the muscular system. Combining that with the Webster Technique to balance the pelvis, I've had the blessing of hearing hundreds of families achieve positive birth stories. My passion for women to be able to experience an innate labor and delivery has grown over the years and the thrill of teaching women to understand their bodies from a physiological perspective so they *understand why* and how they too can trust their bodies, has been amazing!

How can you start to understand the natural birth process? How can you break down the walls of fear that society has placed on you? How can you start to trust that your body was designed to have a baby? To love your body that is going to give you this amazing human life made in your likeness? To believe in yourself and to trust that you are strong enough, powerful enough, and brave enough?

## START WITH THESE KEY POINTS:

- 1)** Believe in yourself! You can do this! Your body was designed to have a baby. Trust in your body's wisdom for the process to unfold.
- 2)** Understand the process. Educate yourself not just about pregnancy and baby care but more importantly the stages of labor, contractions, the birthing process, and how to handle each stage. Seek out prenatal education that teaches you the skills needed to "complete the marathon" victorious and proud.
- 3)** Work on identifying your fears and your partner's fears regarding labor and delivery.
- 4)** Let go of the fear. Research those fears...are they warranted? What are the odds of your fears happening? Do you need to be consumed by them or could your mental energy be better used on visualizing your amazing birth?!
- 5)** Watch natural home or hospital births online, not just difficult deliveries.
- 6)** Ensure pelvic balance through prenatal chiropractic care.
- 7)** Talk to people who have had great births.
- 8)** Surround yourself with supportive practitioners, friends, and family.
- 9)** Be prepared, but don't focus on the potential problems.
- 10)** Practice, practice, practice relaxation techniques, meditations, supportive postures and pelvic floor awareness.

Know that whatever the outcome, you did your best and be proud of yourself! Trust your body, let go of anxieties and fear, prepare, and enjoy. You got this, Mama! 💪



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