This booklet has been developed for your personal use in pregnancy and available only to Mandala Birth clients.
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Creating a ‘birth plan’ is one part fore thought, 1 part education, and 1 part intention. I put this at the front of the booklet not to have you fill it out right away but to have you browse, taking your time, reflecting and checking in with yourself. Do parts jump out at you? Do you know exactly how you’d like a certain situation handled? or "Whoa! I never thought of that" Please look over the following and meditate on them.

Birth Preferences
Intentions for a Sacred + Empowered Birth

My Name: _____________________________
Birthing Place: __________________________
Estimated Due Date: _____________________
Special considerations (strep b, diabetes, rh-):
______________________________________
______________________________________

Support
Doctor/Midwife: _________________________
Partner: __________________________________
Other support persons: ______________________
Students/residents (yes/no): ________________

Interventions
Induction methods: ____________________________
___________________________________________________________
If labour slows: _____________________________________________
___________________________________________________________
If pushing is not productive: _________________________________
___________________________________________________________
If C-section is necessary: _________________________________
___________________________________________________________

Labour
Environment: _________________________________________
___________________________________________________________
Relaxation Methods: ______________________________________
___________________________________________________________
Fetal monitoring: _________________________________________
IV: ______________________________________
Hydration + Nourishment: _________________________________
___________________________________________________________

Delivery
Preferred position/s for pushing: __________________________
___________________________________________________________
How/when to push: _________________________________________
___________________________________________________________

Post-Delivery
Who/when to cut: _________________________________________
Vaccinations/Drops: _______________________________________
Circumcision: ___________________________________________
Feeding: _________________________________________________
Bonding: _________________________________________________

Announcing Birth
Who to call: _____________________________________________
___________________________________________________________
Who to text: _____________________________________________
___________________________________________________________
When to post online: _______________________________________
When to have visitors: ______________________________________

Other Notes:
___________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________

For a more in-depth birth plan completed online please visit: http://blog.earthmamaangelbaby.com/birth-plan/
What are your feelings about birth?
Fears, worries, concerns, excitement?

Example:
I’m worried about having a big baby and tearing. I’m scared of the pain.

Colour, draw, fill with words, collage
Birth Partners Role

So you’ve hired a doula, not to replace your partner but to amplify their ability to assist in labour, to help you understand the normal process of birth; to work with you during labour and birth and to create the most positive, empowered, sacred experience possible.

The partners role is not that of a coach. A coach is someone who knows the game, the rules, has probably played before and is very familiar with how the sport works. This is NOT the description many partners would use when thinking about themselves and birth. Very few partners are familiar with birth. Most partners truly appreciate not having the responsibilty and pressure of being the ‘birth coach’ placed on their shoulders. Rather the partners role becomes to serve the labouring mom and new baby by doing the following:

- Help create and protect the sacred birthing space
- Give mama your attention and presence
- Breathe with mama
- Support her, physically, allowing her to lean on you, emotionally and spiritually, providing her with encouragment and faith
- Touch. You are her beloved, you know what comforts her and relaxes her, be aware of the response your touch elicits
- Help her find her rhythm
- Reframe, keeping her head space positive and motivated
- Reassure, your words will mean the world to her during labour
- Be aware of yourself, taking care of yourself, feeding yourself, taking a break when needed

Birth Environment

The environment you create to labour and birth in is extremely important. Creating a space where mama is comfortable, able to relax her guard, release tension and fear and move into what we call a labour trance. On a deeper level what we are catering to are mama’s hormones, specifically the hormone oxytocin. This hormone is what causes the uterus to contract. Oxytocin is present during pregnancy, labour, birth, breastfeeding and sex; and the qualities that help this hormone flow freely are very similar to those that are in place during love making.

- Comfort
- Warmth
- Soft texture
- Low lights
- Privacy
- Intimacy
- Sense of safety
- Freedom

The environment can directly effect and inhibit the release and production of oxytocin. In fact in the wrong environment the opposite hormones needed for labour to progress are produced; adrenaline. Adrenaline activates the Fight or Flight part of the brain and puts into motion the Fear-Tension-Pain Cycle.

To disrupt the Fear-Tension-Pain cycle we want to keep mom feeling safe and as comfortable as possible, by invoking the 4R’s, Relaxation, Rhythm, Ritual, and Reframing or the Safety Cycle.
The 4R's are the common denominators for women who labour and cope well. Most especially rhythm which when repeated becomes ritual.

Examples of the 4 R’s:
Relaxation: using one of the many relaxation tools in this guide
Rhythm: Closing her eyes, swaying, breathing deeply and visualizing
Ritual: The repitition of her rhythm
Reframe: "I can't do this!" --> "You are doing this!"

Is This Labour?

How do you know labour is near? Some physical pre-labour signs are restless backache, cramps, diarrhea, nesting, non-progressing contractions, bloody show and leaking amniotic fluid. Mom might also be more uncomfortable and irritable.

These signs are all normal and can cause quite the stir of excitement, these signal to you that your body is getting ready to bring baby earthside, hormones are shifting. As things progress contractions will get longer, stronger and closer together, if you choose to have a cervical exam you may be between 0-4cm dilated at this stage. This is early labour. No one knows how long early labour lasts, but it is common for first time moms to have 12-24 hours of early labour.

During early labour your cervix is changing its job, for the last nine months the cervix's duty was to bear weight, hold baby in, keep baby safe and protected and stay closed. Now the job of the cervix is to ripen, efface and dialate. Or soften, thin and open.

So what to do during this time?

Depending on what time is it is when early labour begins, do what you would any other day. If it's the middle of the night, go to sleep. If it's daylight, rest and ignore these early contractions. Your goal in early labour is to rest, stay nourished and ignore these contractions until you can't any longer.

If mom can walk, talk, rest or sleep through contractions this is most likely early labour. For partners trying to assess how things are going, be aware of moms behavior between contractions? Is she present and engaged, chatty, making eye contact? Does she have a good amount of energy? It's probably still early labour.

What to do to pass the time in early labour? Brainstorm with your partner a list of 10 activities you could do together. The perfect early labour activities engage the mind and busy the hands, but don't wear you out or fatigue you.

1. _______________________________________
2. _______________________________________
3. _______________________________________
4. _______________________________________
5. _______________________________________
6. _______________________________________
7. _______________________________________
8. _______________________________________
9. _______________________________________
10. _______________________________________
Positions for Laboring Out of Bed

WALKING, STANDING, AND LEANING
- All may help stimulate effective contractions
- All use gravity to help baby's descent

KNEELING
- May relieve back pain
- Helps baby rotate to most favorable position: occiput anterior (OA)
- Relieves hemorrhoids

SITTING
- Uses gravity to help baby's descent
- Allows rest between contractions

SQUATTING
- Uses gravity to help baby's descent
- Opens pelvis to provide more room
My Top 5 Comfort Measures:
1. ___________________________________
2. ___________________________________
3. ___________________________________
4. ___________________________________
5. ___________________________________

Birth Affirmations & Mantras

- I put all fear aside as I prepare for the birth of my baby
- I feel confident, I feel safe, I feel secure
- My baby is perfectly positioned for every phase of labour
- My baby’s size is perfect for my body
- I am strong
- My muscles work in complete harmony to make birthing easier
- I am prepared to meet whatever turn my birthing takes
- I deepen my relaxation as I move further into labour
- My body knows exactly what to do
- I approach my birth with optimism and confidence
- The power and intensity of my contractions cannot be stronger than me, because it is me
- My body opens, my mind quiets, my baby descends
- Our baby knows how and when to be born
- I can and I will
- My body is not a lemon!

“Giving birth should be your greatest achievement not your greatest fear.” - Jane Wierdman

Tip:
Create a Birth Altar, a sacred space dedicated to your positive beliefs about birth. Decorate it with images of strong women you admire, your birth affirmations, a favourite saint, or crystals, love notes from friends, family and your partner, your birth preferences, and a candle. Spend a few minutes each day at your altar in meditation. Take deep, peaceful breath, inhaling through the nose, exhaling through the mouth, rewiring your nervous system with the calm images of
My name is Darla Sparrow, I want you to have a sacred + empowered birth. I love seeing a woman fall into a trance and work with pure divine effort to birth her baby. I believe honouring a woman in pregnancy & birth is good for birth outcomes, and that the spiritual and emotional are an important part of childbirth preparation. It is my joy to hold sacred space for women as they labour, to witness their strength and afterwards, hear them say, “I did it!” I deeply enjoy mothering the mother in her postpartum time with placenta encapsulation and remedies.

PRENATAL CLASSES

I offer 7 week childbirth education series, which teaches the stages of labour, coping techniques, breastfeeding, as well activities for preparing spiritually + emotionally for labour and new motherhood.

- Prepared + educated going into labour
- Creates confident partners

BEGINNING MARCH 2015

PLACENTAENCAPSULATION

I am trained and certified to encapsulate placentas for new mothers, providing her with a unique supplement created by her, for her. Placenta capsules support emotional wellness, breastfeeding relationship, healing and recovery and are high in:

- Iron
- B vitamins
- Hormones such as oxytocin

BIRTH DOULA SERVICES

As a birth doula I am hired by the mother to walk through pregnancy + birth with her providing emotional, physical and educational support.

- Doulas relieve stress and fear
- Mothers have more comfortable easy births
- 100% support start to finish
- Postpartum follow up

“Birth is not just about making babies, it is about making mothers, strong, confident mothers.”

RENTALS

- Birth Tub Rentals
- TENS Machine Rentals

“I wish a doula like Darla could be at every birthing woman’s side. Her energy was warm and comforting and she seemed to anticipate the family’s needs throughout their labour and birth. It was a privilege and a pleasure working with her. We are fortunate to have her in this community.”

-Sivan Bar-Sever, East Kootenay Midwives

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