

PREPARE FOR SECURE ATTACHMENT

DURING PREGNANCY

Do the things that bring you pleasure. Sing, dance, paint, nature, walks, books, sex.

Take time out. Rest. Sit in silence. Immerse yourself in nature. Fill your senses with natural beauty. Nature is so restorative and supportive.

Bathe in a happy memory once a day.

Sing lullabies. Play your favorite songs and music.

Talk to your baby out loud. Tell them how you feel about them coming. Tell them about yourself.

They want and need to hear you. Your voice, they receive and understand much more from your tone, mood and inflection.

Ask them questions. How do they feel? What do they want to eat? Would they like to go for a walk? This dialogue prepares you for a lifetime of intimate connection with them. It opens you up to them and helps you to include them, to begin to make a space in your heart and life.

It allows you to know yourself better, thoughts, questions, anxieties. And it helps you to feel. As you talk to your baby, your feelings will come forward, which connects you to them very deeply. This begins and strengthens your bond. And in pregnancy your mind and heart are more open than usual.

Your feelings don't hurt your baby, as long as you are managing them and expressing them. Expressing them can be good for the baby because this is teaching their nervous system how to deal with feelings. It is the emotional states that don't get resolved, that linger on and get suppressed that can have a negative effect.

A SAFE SPACE FOR LABOR

Prepare to trust yourself and your inner knowing. To trust the strength of your body and theirs. Surrender the instinctive, animal states of mind that will transform your experience of pain and allow for uncomplicated labor.

Complete freedom of expression is most important.

It is written in your body. Trust this. Don't take away its power.

You need to be allowed to take charge when you feel the need to.

You need the space and encouragement to follow the powerful impulses that arise in your body. In how you want to move or what position to be in.

Privacy. Non-invasive support. To feel safe and comfortable to be as noisy and emotional as you need to be. To grant yourself full permission. Letting it all out can help to move things along and create release. Fullness of joy can be diminished if we hold back from letting it show. Letting go of all social inhibition literally reshapes your body and alters your brain chemistry in ways that greatly ease the labor.

Familiar environment. Soft lighting. Favorite music. Senses treated gently.

It is worthwhile to challenge the belief that it's all painful. Your expectations are made far worse because of what we've been led to expect. The pain is real, but often the extremes are caused by the body's reaction to fear and expectation of pain.

Stress hormones can bring about the wrong kind of contractions around the uterus, that interfere with normal processes and increase the pain. Protecting and attending to your emotional wellbeing is the best painkiller.

THE FIRST MOMENTS

After birth is so important.

Babies tune into their environment and are very sensitive and observant from the moment they emerge through the birth canal.

For the first hour following birth, you and baby are under the effect of a powerful and natural hormonal infusion that makes you both super alert, senses highly focused, and hearts open.

As soon as their eyes open, they'll look to connect with you. You might be shocked by their ability to look deeply into your eyes and within moments to know and be able to tell you apart.

Every one of their senses are switched on at birth, ready to be permanently imprinted by the look, smell, feel and taste of you. The sound is already recorded in their mind before birth. Every part of the journey has been carefully orchestrated by nature so that you, undeniably, become imprinted into their mind and body through each of their 5 senses. This is the original falling in love and you are the one.

The earliest days of forging attachment have a remarkable impact on their nervous system and brain chemistry. Their biology reflects their attachment history like notes in a diary and the neurological changes that take place at this critical time are manifested in their personality.

Their emotional memory of how they're ushered into the world lives on in their body and unconscious mind, shaping their attitudes and behavior and coloring their emotionality.

Some of our deepest hopes, loves and fears have their roots in the primal stages of life.

Closeness and touch can also help the baby to sync to your sleep cycle, the advantages of this need no explanation.

Keep your baby close to you throughout the day and sleep close together, enough so they can hear your breathing. They'll learn the difference between day and night and adapt to your sleep-wake rhythms early.

Talk to them. Let it be natural, whatever facial expressions come to you. Use simple words, wordless sounds, simple expressions. Be gentle and calm. Repeat a few times and wait. Give them space to take it in. Don't overstimulate.

If you do this a few times a day, making this time together, you'll learn their language and feel much closer to them. Healthy mirroring. Establish a sense of self. They learn about who they are, through the way they are looked at, spoken and responded to.

These earliest memories are recorded as, I am loved. I am wanted. I am worthy.

When you give them this kind of attention from the beginning, it is the greatest gift. Your time, loving attention, and responsiveness.

As babies look out into the world, they are looking for connection. Someone who sees them and cares for them. They look for mirroring.

If they're not met, they feel a huge sense of loss and begin to feel uncertain and insecure. Their fast growing brain records the sense that relationships are unreliable. Nothing is more important than responding to them, promptly and consistently.