

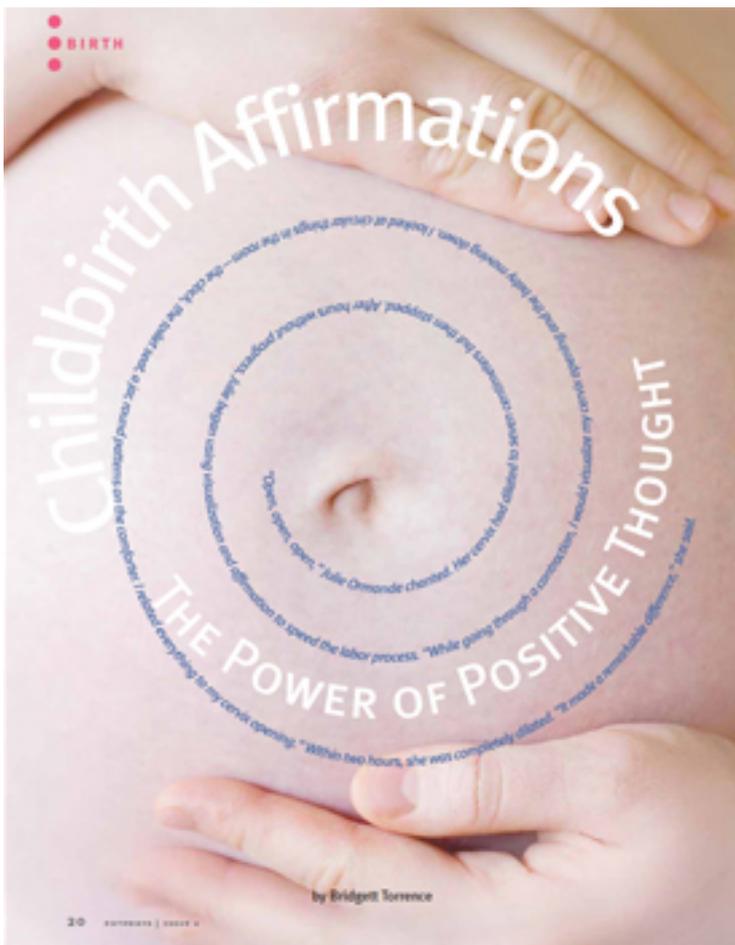
# Childbirth Affirmations: The Power of Positive Thought

Written by Bridgett Torrence

Wednesday, 01 June 2005 00:00 - Last Updated Thursday, 03 April 2014 08:08

Julie's story is not unique. In her latest book, *Ina May's Guide to Childbirth*, midwife Ina May Gaskin relates the story of a woman who said, "I just want to open up and let this baby out." Gaskin wrote, "I had never heard a woman express the wish for her cervix to open while I had my fingers on it to confirm that it was happening. Pretty fancy, I thought, to be able to tell your body exactly what you want to happen and have it comply."

Such is the power of the mind-body connection. According to Susan Fekety, MSN CNM, author of *The Pocket Midwife: Affirmations for Healthy Pregnancy and Normal Birthing*, "Affirmations are mindfully worded statements that guide the subconscious mind to manifest a particular situation. More and more research in mind-body medicine shows that many (if not all) physical responses start in the mind-emotional realm. Think of a blush, or the high heartbeat when a lover approaches, or butterflies in the stomach; what we are discovering is that the body responds to thoughts."



Julie's story is not unique. In her latest book, *Ina May's Guide to Childbirth*, midwife Ina May Gaskin relates the story of a woman who said, "I just want to open up and let this baby out." Gaskin wrote, "I had never heard a woman express the wish for her cervix to open while I had my fingers on it to confirm that it was happening. Pretty fancy, I thought, to be able to tell your body exactly what you want to happen and have it comply."

Such is the power of the mind-body connection. According to Susan Fekety, MSN CNM, author of *The Pocket Midwife: Affirmations for Healthy Pregnancy and Normal Birthing*, "Affirmations are mindfully worded statements that guide the subconscious mind to manifest a particular situation. More and more research in mind-body medicine shows that many (if not all) physical responses start in the mind-emotional realm. Think of a blush, or the high heartbeat when a lover approaches, or butterflies in the stomach; what we are discovering is that the body responds to thoughts."

### Overcoming Fear

Just as positive thoughts can speed up a labor, negative thoughts can slow down or even halt labor. Brooke Myung describes the thoughts that inhibited her labor progress: "The only things I could imagine were being overwhelmed by two children, nursing two and trying to drag myself out of postpartum depression. No wonder it took me 12 hours to get from five to seven centimeters!"

According to Fekety, emotional blocks such as these can be removed by using affirmations that target the issue hindering labor. "In situations where women have a lot of fear, affirmations work particularly well because there is an antidote for the fear in the words she says to herself and fear is one of the most toxic physiologic conditions there is for a pregnant or laboring woman. Fear kicks in all the stress hormones, and you don't want those around."

### Anyone, Anywhere

Anyone can take advantage of the mind-body connection to overcome fear, reduce pain and speed labor by using affirmations. Though many women use affirmations throughout their pregnancies, utilizing the power of positive thought does not require any special training. Furthermore, affirmations are not just for those who choose natural childbirth. Affirmations work for anyone in any birthing environment. They can also benefit women whose labors are induced, who choose pain medication or who require a surgical childbirth.

"A woman can use affirmations to support her chosen method of pain control, whether it's breathing or regional anesthesia," says Fekety. She also notes that affirmations may be helpful in minimizing the possible side effects associated with epidurals; for instance, keeping a woman's blood pressure stable or helping her to urinate after giving birth.

### Creating Affirmations

Creating custom affirmations is easy. Affirmations are always in the present tense and stress one positive language. Some examples from *The Pocket Midwife* include:

- My body grows the perfect size baby for me.
- I wait patiently for the start of my labor.
- My baby is born at the perfect time.
- I welcome this opportunity to change and grow.
- My body knows exactly what to do.

Discover the affirmations that say most meaningful to you and practice them. The power of affirmations is yours for the taking, resting on the tip of your tongue.

### Affirmations for Partners

Partners can be empowered by affirmations, too. "The dad who's terrified through the whole labor misses a lot of the good stuff and he's not able to appreciate what's going on," explains Ina May Gaskin from her home in Tennessee. "Some partners don't know they can change the woman's hormone levels and blood just by being sweet to her... if he discovers his words or caresses can actually remove pain for her, how liberating is that?"

Affirmations also help partners who share some of the same fears mothers do—will I be a good parent, will I be able to provide for my child's needs, is our relationship ready for a child, will I be able to love a second child, what if something goes wrong during the birth? Addressing these issues and overcoming fears can empower partners, allowing them to be supportive and experience childbirth firsthand.

Bridgett Torrence is a mother, editor and freelance writer. She attributes her positive birthing experiences to the power of affirmation. Write to Bridgett at [torrence@mommyinsanities.com](mailto:torrence@mommyinsanities.com)

[Appearing in Issue #6. Order A Copy Today](#)

### Overcoming Fear

Just as positive thoughts can speed up a labor, negative thoughts can slow down or even halt labor. Brooke Myung describes the thoughts that inhibited her labor progress: “The only things I could imagine were being overwhelmed by two children, nursing two and trying to drag myself out of postpartum depression. No wonder it took me 12 hours to get from five to seven centimeters!”

According to Fekety, emotional blocks such as these can be removed by using affirmations that target the issue hindering labor. “In situations where women have a lot of fear, affirmations work particularly well because there is an antidote for the fear in the words she says to herself and fear is one of the most toxic physiologic conditions there is for a pregnant or laboring woman. Fear kicks in all the stress hormones, and you don’t want those around.”

### Anyone, Anywhere

Anyone can take advantage of the mind-body connection to overcome fear, reduce pain and speed labor by using affirmations. Though many women use affirmations throughout their pregnancies, utilizing the power of positive thought does not require any special training. Furthermore, affirmations are not just for those who choose natural childbirth. Affirmations work for anyone in any birthing environment. They can also benefit women whose labors are induced, who choose pain medication or who require a surgical childbirth.

“A woman can use affirmations to support her chosen method of pain control, whether it’s breathing or regional anesthesia,” says Fekety. She also notes that affirmations may be helpful in minimizing the possible side effects associated with epidurals; for instance, keeping a woman’s blood pressure stable or helping her to urinate after giving birth.

# Childbirth Affirmations: The Power of Positive Thought

Written by Bridgett Torrence

Wednesday, 01 June 2005 00:00 - Last Updated Thursday, 03 April 2014 08:08

---

## Affirmations for Partners

Partners can be empowered by affirmations, too. “The dad who’s terrified through the whole labor misses a lot of the good stuff and he’s not able to appreciate what’s going on,” explains Ina May Gaskin from her home in Tennessee. “Some partners don’t know they can change the woman’s hormone levels and blood just by being sweet to her... If he discovers his words or caresses can actually remove pain for her, how liberating is that?”

Affirmations also help partners who share some of the same fears mothers do—will I be a good parent, will I be able to provide for my child’s needs, is our relationship ready for a child, will I be able to love a second child, what if something goes wrong during the birth? Addressing these issues and overcoming fears can unfetter partners, allowing them to be supportive and experience childbirth unhindered.

### Sources:

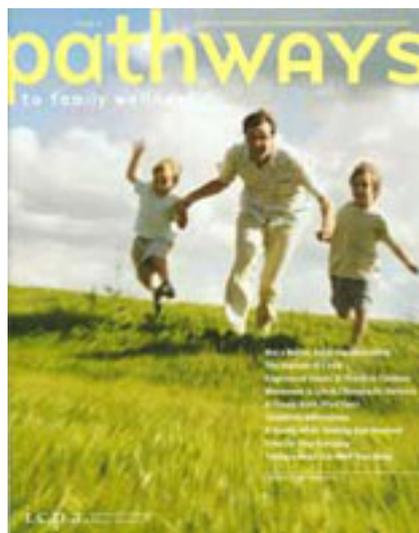
1. Fekety, Susan. Personal interview. Portland, Maine: 9 October 2003.
2. Fekety, Susan. *The Pocket Midwife: Affirmations for Healthy Pregnancy and Normal Birthing*. Excerpts courtesy of Fekety. (Publication data on request)
3. Fekety, Susan. The Pocket Midwife: [www.pocketmidwife.com](http://www.pocketmidwife.com)
4. Gaskin, Ina May. *Ina May's Guide to Childbirth*. New York: Bantam, 2003.
5. Gaskin, Ina May. Personal interview. The Farm, Tennessee. 10 October 2003.
6. Myung, Brooke. Personal interview. Modesto, California: 9 October 2003.
7. Ormonde, Julie Suzanne. Personal interview. San Diego, California: 4 October 2003.

## Childbirth Affirmations: The Power of Positive Thought

Written by Bridgett Torrence

Wednesday, 01 June 2005 00:00 - Last Updated Thursday, 03 April 2014 08:08

---



This article appeared in [Pathways to Family Wellness](#) magazine, Issue #06.

View [Author Bio](#) .

To purchase this issue, [Order Here](#) .