

# FROM ANXIOUS TO EXCITED

## 10 steps to feeling calm & confident about labour

- 1 Find the positive** Seek positive birth stories & positive people. Watch mybirth.tv on YouTube; turn off One Born Every Minute. Go to a Positive Birth Group or similar. Tellmeagoodbirthstory.org.uk is fab & has a buddy system.
- 2 Mind training** Athletes do it. Top CEOs do it. Whether you use affirmations, meditation, visualisations, mindfulness or hypnobirthing, your mindset will help you be more confident & can help you have an easier birth. Giving birth is an involuntary bodily function. Mind training can help your monkey brain take over.
- 3 Relax** Good for lowering anxiety, & therefore good for baby, but there's more. Practise means your body will relax quicker. The more relaxed you can be in labour the smoother & quicker labour will go AND it makes contractions less painful. Most of the pain relief for childbirth works by relaxing your muscles.
- 4 Build your team** Surround yourself with people that will keep you strong & help you feel safe. Consider hiring an independent midwife and/or a doula. Both reduce your chance of interventions & build your confidence.
- 5 Knowledge is power** Educate yourself. Birth isn't like it is on the telly. Learn what birth is really like, & what happens. Women's bodies are amazing; your body is amazing. The uterus is blinking awesome!
- 6 Skill up** Practise following your instincts: what does your body need now? Find a breathing technique that works for you: just focusing on the out breath is a good one. Visualisations/hypnobirthing. Movement/yoga.
- 7 Environment** Your birth environment makes a difference to how relaxed you feel, and therefore how easy birth will go. Go for dark, quiet, and full of love. Put up twinkly lights & affirmations. Plan for hours of early labour at home.
- 8 Start low** Go in at the lowest level, you can always move up. Home birth or midwife led birth centre/unit. Relaxation, breathing, gas and air. Off the bed, moving about. Midwife led care. Bath/birth pool.
- 9 Change your perspective** Every appointment, test, intervention is your choice. It is your body, your baby. What do you want? Midwives & doctors get caught up in their day job but individualised care is possible. Just ask.
- 10 Believe in yourself** You have skills & knowledge that you can use. You know what helps you to relax, and to cope. Your surges can never be more than you because it is you, your body doing it. And your body is amazing. You've got this!