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Birthing With Hypnosis

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Becoming a mother creates a significant number of changes in our lives. It is one of the greatest life changes you will ever experience. One woman's emotional response to her situation will be different than the next, although external circumstances may be similar. Therefore, we feel individualized preparation and care is far more effective when it deals with a woman's specific needs, fears and concerns about upcoming motherhood and childbirth. It is, and should be, a uniquely individual experience. Childbirth preparation classes may teach you visualization and relaxation techniques, but your fear and anxiety about this life transition will be calmed only by addressing your individual concerns.

Can your thoughts affect your birth? It is true that our beliefs and expectations influence our ability to cope with labor, which in turn can impact the hormonal flow and physiology of the process. But this effect is directly related to the more complex biological responses to fear. The brain regulates labor in response to many messages, including the woman's emotional state.

The limbic system is often described as the emotional center of the brain because it sends messages to the body based on emotional arousal. Hormones, neurochemicals and other substances are released according to an individual's perception. Heightened levels of fear and anxiety dur-



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ing labor have been found to decrease the flow of oxytocin which is released by the pituitary gland. Prostaglandins are circulated throughout the blood stream, helping to soften the cervix as the oxytocin causes the uterus to contract. The amount of these secretions released are determined by the hypothalamus, which is affected by the limbic system. An interesting cycle briefly describing how fear, tension and anxiety play a major role in this process.

If a woman is realistically prepared to cope with labor, knowledgeable of the process and receiving adequate emotional support, she is more likely to actively approach each contraction, rather than attempt to avoid it. Psychological readiness occurs because we are given the encouragement and opportunity to address our concerns. Our psychology lives inside our bodies. The mind-body connection is based on a relationship with our physicality.

Your job in labor will be to follow your baby and adjust to the labor process. Visualizing or using self-hypnosis, to prepare for birthing will help you to become com-

fortable with labor when it occurs, no matter where your labor takes you. The "Sichort State" is the deepest level recognized today. Whether you have a vaginal delivery, as visualized, or a cesarean birth, you will have followed your baby. Using the methods we teach you allows you to obtain a very deep level of relaxation. You will definitely find the metaphors useful in dealing with contractions, even if your labor takes you down a different path. The suggestions we give allow you to adjust in a more relaxed manner to whatever situation comes up.

Your personalized relaxation tapes will address your unique concerns. This personalized experience will allow you to work through feelings associated with childbirth before delivery, thereby reducing tensions and fear during labor. You will experience increased comfort and calmness. Visualization has been found to be effective in releasing fears and calming the spirit. You will have more energy which allows you to adjust more easily to labor, and increase the potential for a healthy childbirth. Visualization also allows you to establish a bond before birth by opening your heart to your child.

Hypnosis facilitates prenatal bonding, noninterventive birthing and postpartum adjustments. It creates a bridge between the unconscious bodily processes of childbirth and the emotional and psychological growth required during this wonderful time in a woman's life. The objective is to address your individual needs in a meaningful way and guide you toward a happy, healthy birthing experience.