

I often tell my clients that labor is like one very long conversation with yourself.

It can go something like this: *My insides must be caving in. I've never felt anything like this in my life! How much more of this can I take? How much more?*

Or it can be a song of reassurance and confidence:

*When I listen carefully, I hear my body adjusting to what's going on. I know these feelings arise from a single muscle that's been waiting all my life for this particular day, for the birth of my baby. I can't wait to meet my baby!*

As a doula, I believe my work involves equal parts guiding my clients in preparation and helping them moment-to-moment through labor. In our prenatal meetings, I stress to my clients how important it is to give some thought to that upcoming conversation.

The mind is a powerful tool. We can use it during labor to calm ourselves, to build confidence, to reassure. A former client, during transition, said to herself after every contraction, in a quiet voice, "Good job, Adrienne." I wanted to applaud. She deeply understood that a mind that is calm creates a body that is willing.

It is never too soon to start this mental preparation. Sometimes my clients attach a list of affirmations I have given them to the bathroom mirror and look at it every morning:

*I will have a strong and healthy body. I trust my body to know how to birth this child. I trust my instincts to know what I need in labor. My pelvis releases and opens as have those of countless women before me. Strong contractions help my baby come into the world.*

I counsel my clients to be alert to anxious thoughts about birth. This is especially important during the third trimester. I recommend they get in the habit of calmly and deliberately plucking out the fearful thoughts and replacing them with chosen affirmations. By denying the mind fearful thoughts, we prepare the body to labor in peace and confidence.

In this way, we empty the mind's bank of anxious thoughts and build up a repository of positive ones - affirmations to draw from during labor. To support the soon-to-be-mother, her partner and I periodically repeat these affirmations during labor, to remind her of the well of resources inside her own body. Together we draw on the positive to bring babies warmly into a circle of family love.

## Affirmations for Childbirth

- ☞ Choose three or four that resonate with you. Repeat them often, especially if you are feeling anxious or fearful.
- ☞ Birth is a safe and wonderful experience.
- ☞ I will give birth without complications.
- ☞ I am not afraid.
- ☞ I know my baby feels our calmness and confidence.
- ☞ I trust in my ability to give birth.
- ☞ My body knows exactly what it is doing.
- ☞ I am confident in my ability to birth naturally and easily.
- ☞ During labor and birth, I am completely relaxed and comfortable.
- ☞ I will have an uncomplicated, peaceful, joyous and pleasurable birth.
- ☞ My baby is healthy.
- ☞ I am completely cooperating with my body.
- ☞ I will breathe deeply and slowly to relax my muscles, making it easier for my uterus to work.
- ☞ My body is made to give birth, nice and easy.
- ☞ I believe my baby's birth will come quickly and easily.
- ☞ My body is completely relaxed.
- ☞ All I need to do is relax and breathe - nothing else.
- ☞ Everything is going right.
- ☞ I feel the strong waves of labor and know that everything is normal and progressing.
- ☞ Relax my mind and muscles.
- ☞ Courage, faith and patience.
- ☞ My body knows how to have this baby just as my body knew how to grow this baby.

☞ Keep breathing slow and even.  
Inhale peace, exhale tension.

☞ Keep my mind on acceptance  
and surrender.

☞ I show absolutely no signs of  
fear or concern.

☞ I surrender my birthing over to  
my baby and my body.

☞ My body has a wide open space  
for my baby to descend. There  
is nothing in the way.

☞ My body will give birth in  
its own time.

☞ I love my baby and I am doing all  
that is necessary to bring about  
a healthy birth.

☞ Birth is an easy and natural  
occurrence for which my body  
has been perfectly designed.

☞ The strength of my uterine  
contractions is a sign of my  
feminine strength.

☞ I have the energy and stamina  
to birth my baby.

☞ There will be no complications.

☞ I surrender to the contractions  
and relinquish control of the  
forces within my body.

☞ I allow my body's natural anesthesia  
to flow through my body.

☞ I do not fight the birth in any way.  
My body is totally relaxed. I am  
not afraid.

☞ The power and intensity of my  
contractions cannot be stronger  
than me, because it is me.

☞ I am ready and prepared  
for childbirth.

☞ My job is to simply relax and  
allow the birth to happen.

☞ Just let my body do it; let it happen.

☞ I see myself handling  
everything beautifully.

☞ Each contraction produces a healthy,  
positive pain that I can handle.

☞ Birth will go exactly as it should.

☞ My mind and body can handle  
a labor of any kind

☞ I will have a strong and  
healthy baby

☞ I trust my body to know how to birth this child

☞ I trust my instincts to know what I need in labor

☞ I trust my instincts to do what is best for my baby

☞ I am a strong and capable woman

☞ Only I can give birth to this baby and I accept responsibility for that challenge

☞ My body knows how to birth my baby

☞ I trust my instincts

☞ Babies are born when they are ready, not when doctors, midwives or anyone decides

☞ My body is indeed beautifully and wonderfully made

☞ It's good for me to take care of myself. I get to have a voice

☞ I have to be truthful with myself

☞ Listen to my body and heart

☞ I deserve to have the birth I desire

☞ I trust my body

☞ I trust my pain

☞ I trust my labor

☞ I trust in my baby

☞ I am a strong and capable woman

☞ I am a powerful, loving and creative being

☞ I am now willing to experience all my feelings

☞ My pelvis releases and opens as have those of countless women before me

☞ I accept myself completely here and now

☞ I now feel inner peace and serenity

☞ I accept this labor as my labor and believe it is the right one for me and for my baby

☞ I love and accept my body completely

☞ I accept all my feelings as part of myself

☞ I feel the love of others around me

- ☞ My baby knows all is well
- ☞ My heart knows what my baby needs, my mind is learning
- ☞ I am a powerful, loving and creative being
- ☞ I accept myself completely here and now
- ☞ I now feel inner peace and serenity
- ☞ I accept all my feelings as part of myself
- ☞ Good strong contractions help my baby come into the world
- ☞ I embrace the concept of healthy pain
- ☞ I have enough love to go around, the universe always provides
- ☞ I am strong, confident assured, assertive and very feminine
- ☞ My body contains all the knowledge necessary to give birth to my baby
- ☞ My baby knows how and when to be born

- ☞ Birth is a safe and wonderful experience
- ☞ My baby will be born healthy and at the perfect time

### **For a Subsequent Pregnancy**

- ☞ This is a new birth and a new baby unique unto itself.
- ☞ I see my last birth as a learning experience from which I am growing and changing.