

BIRTHING NATURALLY

LIFESTYLE ESSAY

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My journey into maternity reflexology began after birthing my own children. I hadn't prepared myself mentally or physically at all for giving birth to my first child so it was a big shock. I really wanted a homebirth but I was discouraged by my doctor because it was my first baby. She implied that it was dangerous, but it's a myth that giving birth in hospital is safer. Studies have shown it's actually much safer to have a home birth if there are no complications in pregnancy. I have often thought if I had been more informed about my choices during my first pregnancy and felt an inner confidence, my birthing experience may have been very different.

After birthing my firstborn son and connecting deeply with him, I felt robbed as if I hadn't just gone along with what I was told and had followed my inner knowing, I could have had a different birth experience. I felt there was something missing for pregnant women, a lack of support. I started thinking about what I could do to help people through that process and nurture them. I had reflexology during my second pregnancy and I found it so simple and powerful at the same time. That really inspired me to further my studies and train in maternity reflexology and massage so that I could work with women in pregnancy.

My second and third births were at home and I felt prepared. I knew my body was primed to do this and I felt very positive. I knew my body was capable and strong enough and I believed I could achieve anything. Birth helped me discover courage, strength, resilience and patience and, of course, unconditional love. It taught me how beautiful and powerful women's bodies are and how important it is to listen to our inner wisdom. I wanted to offer a nurturing space and allow other women to connect with themselves in this way.

Pregnancy and birth is a time of self-discovery. You learn more about yourself during that period than you ever felt possible. Women are aware of the emerging power and strength within them during the transition from woman to mother/pregnancy to birth and are looking out for support that isn't there. Midwives offer women amazing care but they don't have the time to spend with each individual to give them the knowledge they need about how our bodies work and how our animalistic qualities come through in childbirth.

Reflexology offers women an opportunity to focus on themselves, away from these very busy lifestyles that we have. It balances and harmonises the whole being and optimises health. It has proven to be a great success with treating various ailments such as morning sickness, fatigue, back pain, SPD etc.. It gives us time to connect with our inner state of wisdom and the wisdom of our babies. My role is to offer the tools and the space – each woman has the power inside her already, she just needs to tune in and listen.

Before birth became medicalised, women were the main care providers who helped support and nurture the birthing mother. Girls would have witnessed birth themselves, neighbours would have been helping and girls grew up knowing that birth was completely safe and normal. Then doctors decided to intervene but were told not to enter the birthing room until the last minute because it could disrupt the natural flow of birth hormones and slow the labour. They started to come in and take over and push the midwives aside. In some states in America they completely banished midwives. Then women started being told to give birth lying on their back because it was seen as demeaning to go on all fours, so women's natural birthing instincts became controlled with an expectation to behave in a certain way.