



In some places women were even strapped down to give birth. Yet instinctively we all feel like we need to move in labour and help baby get into a better position to progress things.

I think that birth in our time is often seen as something separate from ourselves. It needs 'managing'. It's something we go to hospital for and it's dealt with there. You go there and surrender yourself. You hand over your clothes and are reduced to becoming a patient. We've stopped connecting to birth in a way that is primal. We don't want to face it because we've been brought up in a culture that feeds us fear about childbirth. It's not fearful, it's a challenge and one that we're perfectly designed to face. The fear factor does diminish when you put in the groundwork and prepare for birth and find your inner confidence and safety. Doing that preparation is a journey in itself and a great joy that balances the body and mind, and ultimately is what we need to feel like we can go through the transition and manage labour pain effectively.

A normal gestation of pregnancy is from 37 to 42 weeks so for doctors to decide on an estimated due date of 40 weeks isn't always helpful.

Women can get naturally fixated on that and then we feel anxious when we go over and interventions are suggested. This can prevent the flow of oxytocin as we become more anxious – we need that hormone as it triggers labour contractions and it only comes when we are in a relaxed state. When anxious, we produce adrenalin and then oxytocin can't flow, nature won't let it.

There can be an awful lot of pressure on women to be induced, which often leads to further intervention. A lot of women aren't informed very well about the process of induction and what it entails and they often go on to have epidurals because the process is so intense. Of course there are instances when interventions can be life-saving but in general I believe birth should be left alone – it's a natural event and intervention should only be used when it's really necessary.