



## ECSTATIC BIRTH

**Ecstatic means to stand outside oneself, to be in an other than usual state of consciousness.**

*Spring 2013*

The blueprint for childbirth - the hormonal design - is for an experience of an altered state of consciousness, that has as part of its condition, less or no pain. This blueprint includes a mind-space of total **focus**, **trust** and **knowing** and a **deep connection** with the baby.

To give birth according to her cellular imperative a woman must be undisturbed, cared for and supported by trusting attendants in the right environment, not told what to do and not directed to according to a clock. The environment best suited to ecstatic birth is similar to the environment best suited to intimate love making - quiet, dark and private. The woman needs to be able to flow with her body in labour in the same way she does in love making. No holding back, **total instinctual behaviour**.

Her hormones, **oxytocin and endorphin**, enable this and allow the part of her brain, the hind-brain, that drives the involuntary process of labour and birth to be in command. If she is required to answer questions, talk about unrelated things, if there are bright lights, noise and people coming and going, the woman's neo-cortex is stimulated and she is lifted out of her altered state of consciousness and the birth process is slowed.

If she experiences **fear**, either her own or someone else's, she produces **adrenaline** and the labour can stop. Her body is not designed to give birth with a lot of external stimulation. It will, however, there will be more pain and it will be a slower process.

*The pain of labour is a gateway to an altered state of consciousness and ecstatic birth.*

Women need to be focussed totally within themselves to reach this space, the focal point being the pain. They need to know their fears and have faced them so that when they arise in labour, with the pain, they are **prepared with the antidotes** to their fears.

A woman's fears arise during her pregnancy, they take the shape of the everyday dramas that play out in her relationships. By recognising this natural process - the arising of her fears - and being with them, seeking counsel with her partner, her mother, her midwife, her women friends, the woman will come to know how to deal with her fears. This is the preparation for ecstatic birth.

The woman in labour who moves how her body tells her to move and makes the sounds that come from deep within her is coming from her **deeply intuitive self**. Uninhibited. She is untamed, undomesticated, **wild**. None of that "too posh to push". This woman connects with her innate body wisdom, surrenders, and the birth force flows through her. She **lets go** of her fear of death, gives birth and is **herself reborn**, a woman in her power, beholden to no one. Ecstatic birth.

### **Anna's Story - A Story Of An Ecstatic Birth**

*Anna was planning her fourth birth, this would be her third **homebirth** and second **waterbirth**. She had quick labours before with the midwife arriving just before the birth and this time, her last baby, she wanted to*

*savour the experience of giving birth.*

*“I really wanted to feel it this time and not feel rushed.”*

*During her pregnancy, Anna came to one of my workshops and had a connection with **Artemis** during a shamanic journey. She sensed Artemis’s headdress of a crescent moon, and on further research into the Goddess, was drawn toward her from her desire to use mental focus as her tool during this birth.*

*Anna’s previous experiences of giving birth had taught her the importance of **focus** to help her “cope with the pain” of the contractions. With her first two births she paced the floor and focused on her breath, and that worked. In her last birth she got into the birth pool just before she started pushing, and with this birth she got into the pool sooner, enabling her to slow down, withdraw into herself and really focus.*

*“It was a longer labour because it was calmer, so much more powerful but also peaceful, **I totally let go, which I haven’t been able to do before. The difference was my level of focus.**”*

*“I was consciously using my breath to move the energy downward through my body, using the pain of the contraction to open my cervix. I was saying to myself ‘open, open, open.’ I felt the whole lot, **I didn’t know I could feel as much as I did! I felt my cervix actually opening.**”*

*“Being in the water, my whole body was relaxed and so I could focus on the contractions, my cervix opening, feeling the energy moving downward and grounding me. Instead of pacing around as I had before in labour, I used internal focus and this enabled me to **fully surrender**. I was totally inside myself, I could hear my other children, sip the water Jane was giving me and gently hold Tom’s hand, but all the while I was also observing the whole thing. I had never experienced anything like it before, being totally relaxed, **completely within myself** and also **observing it all** at the same time.*

*Jane had talked to me about this possibility, she called it **Unity Consciousness**. The contractions were very strong, I felt some pain but not excruciating. I felt so powerful, calm and relaxed. I also felt a small part of something very big.”*

*“This labour was different too with the **level of connection** I felt with Tom. Our support person for the children didn’t make it to the birth so Jane was with them, playing trains down the other end of the house to where I was in the pool in labour. She came in to check every so often but Tom and I were basically alone. I loved it, it was so special. His simple touch, no words, no ego, united, our baby, our birth, our experience. I didn’t even think about this possibility before the birth, I didn’t think it would be logistically possible.”*

*“I was observing myself as well as being in my body in labour, I felt my cervix open and then the baby move down inside me. I was leaning my arms over the pool side and on my hands and knees just breathing the baby down. I felt her head coming out and heard Matilda, my two year old, laugh. Even immersed in what I was doing I felt a feeling of gladness that she was happy. The baby came out with the next contraction and I scooped her up into my arms. I leant back against the pool holding the baby and closed my eyes, I felt the **power, happiness, contentment and love** flow over and through us.*

*Everyone was oooing and ahing and eventually one of the children asked if it was a boy or a girl. A girl! I’m so pleased my three children watched their baby sister be born, they just think it’s a normal thing. As Jane says **‘an everyday miracle.’**”*