



How to Love Giving Birth

By Avril Flynn LLB Bsc(Hons) RM

How to Love giving birth



Hello,

I'm Avril Flynn. I've worked in the midwifery field for over 10 years. Before that, I completed a law degree, so a huge career change! Having worked as a Midwife and Fertility Nurse in various public hospitals and in the private sector set up my own practice avrilflynn.com providing antenatal, birth and baby preparation classes. I've combined my knowledge as a midwife, childbirth educator, Hypnobirthing practitioner and mother to offer holistic care packages, tailor made for each client. Each class is developed with the specific needs of the client catered for and delivered in the privacy of their own home.

I specialise in offering classes not only to pregnant women but to couples, single parents, same sex parents and parents who are growing their families through surrogacy or adoption. I am a passionate advocate for equal rights for all.

As well as running my own business, I present a popular parenting podcast called Motherboard. I am the resident midwife and pregnancy expert for www.familyfriendlyHQ.ie and write extensively on a variety of subjects from pregnancy to mental health to adjusting to parenthood. I also present live events and host panels around the country and I have done a series of bay-care instructional videos for a popular supermarket brand. I'm privileged to talk to all different types of parents about the tough but rewarding role of raising kids. I think it's so important to give people a voice and to also be honest that parenthood can be tough sometimes- We all need to be kinder to ourselves and also kinder to each other!

I love my work, but my most important and proudest job is as a mum to my son Felix. The picture on the front is of Felix and i about 2 minutes after he was Born! Thank you so much for taking the time to read this short guide on "How to love giving birth". Ultimately, I want to help people have a more positive pregnancy, birth and early babyhood experience and empower and support their decisions.

5 tips to get rid of the fear factor and get excited

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How to Love Giving Birth-

5 Tips to get Rid of the fear Factor and Get Excited

We all do it- when we hear of a friend or family member having birthed their baby, the first thing someone will ask "Are they alright?" or "Is the baby ok?". In our culture, we associate giving birth with a very high degree of risk to both mother and baby. It's not our fault by the way; we are conditioned, almost from the moment we know what birth is, to think that labour and birth are both very dramatic, incredibly painful and extremely dangerous. On TV and movies how many storylines involve a traumatic birth story where something goes terribly wrong? ? And yes, as a midwife I am well aware that sometimes things can go very wrong; but do we have disproportionate idea of the level of danger- absolutely!!!

On the vast, vast amount of occasions things can and do go well. Not only can a good birth be achieved for most women, but a great birth! An experience that can be transformative, healing and a beautiful - don't believe me?? Well it's true- I know because I had the most amazing labour and birth myself, and I believe it much more achievable than people think.

You would think that having worked as a midwife and being caught up in obstetric emergencies a lot that I would have felt nervous about having my son Felix. I truly wasn't. I felt excited and couldn't wait to experience labour. I laboured at home on and off for a couple of days. I felt totally at ease, in control, comfortable and happy. Yes, the contractions were intense, but I felt utterly content and totally trusted my body to do its thing. When I went into the hospital, I was surrounded by my former colleagues and had the most incredible care. When the discomfort reached a certain level, I got a wonderful epidural and Felix was birthed in utter calm a short while later. It was elating and I loved (nearly) every minute of it.

So why? Well I did hypnobirthing which taught me to trust my body and re-wired my thinking to believe I was going to have the birth I wanted. I was in the driver's seat the whole time and was cared for by people that totally respected my decisions.

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Don't get me wrong-I don't believe that a good experience has to be perfect- far from it. I believe that even if a birth ends with an emergency- I think the mum can still have an experience free from emotional trauma. So why do I think this? Well what if I put it another way; what makes an experience or a birth story traumatic for a person? The difference is the *woman's perception* of that experience. When you give birth, you should be the absolute most important person in the room- you should feel included and honoured in the care that is provided for you. It should never be about things done *to* you.

I have trained as a hypnobirthing practitioner and set up my business to help women re-discover their power and help them achieve a great experience- just like me. I call it "being a birth goddess" and I give private antenatal and birth preparation classes where I aid women in planning the experience they want (whether that is a totally drug free birth, or an elective section, or a birth where they have an epidural from the earliest moment!). It's about them, their wishes, their perception, their experience. I teach them to advocate for themselves and help them to remain involved and calm and in control- no matter what happens. I have been able to use all of my knowledge to design totally bespoke antenatal education for parents so that they have the birth story they wish.

So how do you fall in love with birth?

Here are my top 5 tips!!

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1. Stop listening to bad birth tales - Why do people just love telling pregnant people awful stories??? It's like someone saying they are off on holidays and a negative nancy, harping on about a plane that just crashed!! Surround yourself with good stories, if you know someone like me who had a positive birth experience- get them to tell you all about it or if in doubt get a badge like below (Picture from My Instagram).



2. Don't watch "one born every minute" or anything (movies, tv, radio, podcast) that involves negative or traumatic births. Although it's a great tv show- it's a tv show and not reflective of you, your body of your birth! It's like trying to learn how to drive by watching the movie series 'the fast and the furious'- if you want a positive birth, you have to believe you will have one!
3. Educate, educate, educate! Whether it's hiring someone like me, or a Doula, or going to a hypnobirth class, or a yoga birth workshop or an antenatal course that suits you – learn as much as you can about your body and what way you would like your story to be. Read the books that make sense to you. Write your preferences down and make sure everyone that is caring for you knows and will respect them.
4. Pick a maternity provider that is going to support your choices- ALL your choices. If you want an elective c-section there is no point in hiring a homebirth midwife-and vice versa. Pick a care provider, a maternity hospital, a consultant, a doula or midwife service that is going to support your birth preferences.

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5. Learn to be a vocal advocate for yourself or have a doula or birth partner that will advocate for you! Don't forget for a second that this is about YOU- your baby, your body, your story, your experience. You do not have to explain your choices to anyone- they are yours. As long as you feel like the most important person in that room and get the respect that you absolutely deserve, regardless what way your little person arrives into the world, you can have a brilliant birth!

If you would like to learn more, have any questions or if you would like to discuss how I can help you or your family achieve the birth and transition to new parenthood that you would like , then don't hesitate to contact me today. Remember this is your journey, your family and your experience. You are the most important person.

Further information:

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