

Letting go...

Labour requires flexibility. Labour is about yielding rather than directing. There is a major physical process happening that has an original blueprint already drawn in your body and to try and control, to redraw this blueprint may change it but not necessarily improve it.

The uterine contractions of labour have often been likened to the waves in the ocean. The waves begin slowly out in the ocean and as they come closer they begin to swell and build until they reach a peak and then they crest and continue to flow right onto the shore. The water is also flexible in nature, molding to the contours of the land and the shoreline. Following the natural flow of contractions allows you to cooperate with the force of nature.

Give yourself permission to express yourself during labour. Whether it is breathing, yelling or singing your way through a contraction, complaining, or grunting, each woman must find her way of releasing tension. It is important to do it in a focused way as part of your breathing techniques. This release is an important goal during contractions as is complete relaxation between contractions.

Part of the intensity of labour comes from the physiological opening of the cervix to ten centimeters, which happens only when giving birth. There is a simultaneous psychological and emotional intensity to labour that may facilitate bonding in the moments immediately after giving birth.

Working through labour contractions is a little like mountain climbing. There are moments when your muscles strain and then you rest between efforts. They may be moments when you feel that you can go no further. This is a good sign of progress. Just commit to doing one more contraction, then one, and one more and so on until you are done. You will be able to do more than you think you can. Listen to your support team. Trust in your strengths. As you meet your baby at the end of labour, you will feel the reward.