

POST CAESAREAN:

living in your body.. birthing in all its glory

Heather Bruce

I am starting this somewhere behind and outside the assumptions that we all carry – and yes this is a birthing tale ..

Our bodies are not just a collection of physical structures with a personality wired into them. We are also present as many fields of energy, grids and layers of consciousness, separate to our physical body and our thinking mind. These together allow us the depth and full experience of being here.

As we go through life, we all tend to blithely wander about in our stories, busy with the things that fill our days. We are blissfully unaware that we have a life script; there are assignments, and we will be tested; there are forks in the road, and we do get to make choices, and these then impact upon us for ever.

When we just assume that a particular story line will unfold, we 'live' at face value. We can become very surprised and even alarmed that what we expected (as 'our right') did not happen. This is never more so than in the reproductive game, where nature has been subsumed in the push for safety/perfection, as seen through medical eyes. The end results are more often than not, traumatised women, (trauma indicated by mastitis/post natal depression/psychosis/lack of bonding.) Woman interrupted speaks volumes here.

Were we to take a more Tibetan medical approach, we would be very aware of the likelihood of 'karma' working – especially in the interface of living and



birthing and dying. Past behaviours, actions and thoughts all come into play, but our modern medical model ignores this karmic aspect.

How do you recognise karma at work in your life? Ask yourself, 'What do I really not want, and will I do anything to avoid? There is usually some energy to be cleared for you around these answers.

Without addressing in virtual time there is likelihood that what you resist is what you need to live through. All manner of birthing stories I have to illustrate this. You look to what is physically happening in real time, or what can be redirected with some inner work. You will be amazed at what 'miraculously' moves when perception shifts.

The inner birth work that advocates such as Ina May Gaskin, Jenny Blythe and Pam England teach is often what

dictates whether we move forwards in our life script, or whether we go around in the circles, repeating the same old patterns. Orthodox medicine seems to miss the causal relationship incurred whenever energy is in motion, or stuck, focusing entirely on the gross and obvious which is considered real and tangible. If we are not tuned in sufficiently, we too can buy the idea that we are just a package of tissue encased in blood and wrapped up with nerves and consciousness.

Some of us know that we are much more. More than this - we feel. The more aware birthing attendants know that by shifting the focus to the inner work prior to the event of birth, women can become conscious of the undercurrent that can dictate our path. Inner work gives space for life to weave itself within our internal tapestry. We can find space to heal past wounds. Some of us may have had shocking sexual and emotional pasts – whether in this 'now', and 'here' or some other 'there' we tap into. This may cause a split in the fabric of time that we move backwards or forwards into at crucial times – such as the primal times in birthing.

Many may see the quick, organised and uneventful 'sunroof' option of an elective caesarean as a release and easy way out of internal mess and disruption, the 'safest' and most convenient way to add to

the family. Others, desperate to be 'as natural' as possible, may do all the battling possible to obtain a space and carer who will allow them to access their right to birth naturally. However, they forget that just like running a marathon, there are preparatory stages before lining up to begin the race. In the push to safely house the Self to birth, it is sometimes forgotten that there is real inner work to be done.

So, for whatever reason, it may come to pass that a surgical removal of baby is deemed necessary.



The Caesarean we had/have to have

When we are interrupted in any way, we pay a price. In the case of a caesarean section, there is the intentional use of poisonous substances (anaesthetics) and surgery, with the attendant invasion of cold, loss of blood, injury to tissues and so on.

There is a lot of time for private reflections after birthing. In this space or void, some women can get into emotional circles that spin around on an axis of betrayal they may experience.

They may feel or believe their body, partner, baby or the medical system failed them. They think on what could have been done or said to have given a different outcome. All of this can lead to blind alleys and cul de sac psychological processing. What is needed is acceptance, self nurturing and mothering of self AND the new baby so the woman can move through this experience into a wholeness.



HEALING ... babies

Night terrors are sometimes birth trauma repeating. Trauma can be carried in babies born via or surgery or those born naturally. It is easily viewed in physical terms by looking at the bridge of the nose. If your toddler/baby has a blue mark/vein there, your baby is carrying birth shock. *Healing Birth* vibrational essences can help in clearing birth shock.

Please also refer to the works of Dr Michel Odent and Dr Sarah J Buckley regarding the hormonal flooding that creates easy birthing. The artificial look-a-likes, especially used routinely in hospital settings, are often the cause of post birth complications. These do not show up in the mortality figures, but in quality of life issues for everyone in the family



HEALING... physically

Even the most planned surgical cut has consequences. Nature allows us to expand to birth. We are naturally flooded with hormonal helpers at this time. Dr Sarah J Buckley www.sarahjbuckley.com and Dr Michel Odent www.WombEcology.com have written much on this. We as mammals are able to replicate

ourselves *and* nourish and provide immunity (through lactation) for them, along with our loving attention. All of this just bubbles out of us - if it is allowed to work as nature designed us for.

To say a few months after surgery that woman is healed, is to miss what else really happened. Even the best surgical precision still attacks us to the core. Firstly, the wound is on all physical levels. All the major abdominal muscles have been sliced through, creating an inherent weakness in our front section. Now the back muscles need to take on more than they were designed to do.

Unlike older men with colon cancers and other abdominal operations, new mothers do not get the luxury of being attended to, they are expected to be providers. Within a few days we are back to the circus of life again. The body has to resolve the post baby body, create milk for newborn *and* heal from a very invasive operation. So do we actually let nature take care of us, whilst we are taking care of all others? Isn't a baby moon is imperative for all new mothers?

A new Mum who has had surgery, especially if it was the end of a traumatic cascade of interventions, needs two or three months of active recovery.

Often women do not realise that the loss of sexual sensation is a consequence of a caesarean

"Healing Birth" vibrational essence

This essence has been prepared with families in mind. Everyone can take the seven drops, either under the tongue, in water or in the case of a baby on your finger and onto any orifice. This will calm the inconsolable baby and assist in clearing shock and trauma. Usually only a few doses are needed.

This can be sourced from
Kalinia Rose of www.roseofraphael.com.
I also stock it in my Hawthorne clinic.

My daughter was born just over four years ago via C-Section. This wasn't elective, I have a bi-cornuate uterus and my daughter wasn't only lying in a breech position but in an "L" shape. There was no way, I was told, that she could be birthed vaginally, much as I wanted to.

Since the operation, my uterus had felt like a lead weight - it was always there, always heavy. I mean I could feel my uterus ALL THE TIME, where with other parts of my body I don't notice them unless I touch them or they're doing something.

I knew this wasn't "right" but couldn't get anyone to listen to me, so just accepted that this was part of "my lot" in having to have had a C-Section.

On top of that, ever since the birth of my daughter, having an orgasm just wasn't the same. It was a similar sensation to that when I was pregnant - my uterus sort of went tight and the orgasm most times just disappeared.

Again I just thought this was obviously part of the deal of childbirth.

Since having being cupped and having acupuncture my uterus is "gone" - it's just normal. The heaviness, the lead weight has departed and I don't feel it anymore unless I have my period and even then my period pain has reduced to almost nothing where previously I needed a hot water bottle.

And best of all - I've had the first orgasm since before I got pregnant that made me go AHHH! The tightness has gone and I have a full orgasm.

section. In my personal case, I had vaginal anaesthesia until a very wonderful osteopath worked on me for some time. Many women regain their vaginal tone, libido and ability to orgasm, following sessions to clear the tangle their bodies were left in. For some, this is a revelation, as sex was just consigned to the 'have to' basket.

Years ago, a woman coming to see me about a whole raft of mature-age issues arrived back at the clinic to tell me that her husband had expressly told her, to tell me, that he was rapt - she had all the vaginal tone back that had been lost since she had her last child (13 years before). She was not aware of the difference - but somehow just treating the scar had tightened everything up down there.

Often the physical is minorly disturbed. When we are not going to die from it and all medical people tell us that it will always be like this, we just learn to live with it. Other women have severe and entire body issues after these operations.

Years ago, a woman came in with Reynard's syndrome - a circulatory issue. She, like everyone had her pants pulled down, for me to examine the bikini line. Sure enough, apparently two scars, years ago. As I was needling these, I found a third. Yes, sure enough, she had had a baby at 18. As a good Catholic girl, she was traumatised silly and had a Caesarean section. She never even saw the daughter she would have loved to have had.

Eighteen years later, with significant lack of circulation part of the treatment to wholeness was restoring the flow. In this case there were remarkably resistant emotional blocks. Her whole life was redefined - her relationships

with all, and the impending introduction to her daughter. The scar carried all these blockages and not just the physical ones.

Sometimes, the scar left behind is dreadful to at look - keloid, purple, raised and interfering with body image. Scars of any description can be normalised - but caesarean section scars really cut to all layers, interrupting all levels of energy flows on an acupuncture grid. Why is this? Looking to any wall chart of acupuncture meridians (lines of energy) it is easy to spot that the whole front of the body - along the major tracks of qi and blood, are disrupted by major abdominal surgery and need realigning afterwards.

About eleven years ago, I had a woman arrive with a severe neck ache that was constant. No amount of osteopathic or other structural or acupuncture was relieving it. I discovered a very faint scar on her abdomen. In her teens she had had a baby who was adopted out. The scar was just a distant memory.

After I scraped a needle back over it, I realised that it was the likely culprit, as the flow through there was broken (easy to tell - the skin on scar feels different to the neighbouring skin). After that one session, her neck was no trouble.

This sometimes is all that is required to allow a subsequent baby to turn from a breech condition. Many years ago, I noted that my statistics were not as they said to expect in the Chinese acupuncture literature regarding breech turning. I looked at the ones who were frankly going nowhere - and realised that prior abdominal scarring was probably stopping turning into 'normal' from happening. Whether this is due to tension on any level, it comes down often to just restoring normal.

One woman came to see me after three caesarean sections; including one that had been *specialy* performed horizontally and longitudinally internally to supposedly prevent her from attempting another home birth. All her babies came at least two weeks after the allotted time, and were all hassled out of her. This final pregnancy was a desperate attempt at home birthing. She arrived for her appointment about 30 weeks, with signs of pregnancy stress – swelling and protein in urine.

After the initial settling down treatment to correct these issues, over the next three months (yes another *late* arrival) I needed these past scars a number of times. This led, after a lot of acupuncture and cupping on her bottom and other interventions I routinely use, to a quick and easy VBAC 16 days 'late' after, three previous caesarean sections and two different internal scar lines. The baby and mother were fine, and the scars which had had plenty of attention were absolutely perfectly behaved.

1. Healing the Scar

Acupuncture

Find an obstetrically inclined acupuncturist and have scar treatments. I am currently training acupuncturists internationally to be more sensitive to these issues. The www.easybabies.com.au site has 'practitioner tools', if your therapist is unsure. (This work is post-graduate and few are trained in dealing with life and its mishaps, as it is not within the basic, Chinese orientated courses or texts).

Using a wellness model, any good natural body worker should be able to adjust your body back to pre baby shape.

"I left Heather's after she attended to my C - scar, went home, and the next morning found myself trying on several pairs of knickers, as they all seemed to be too small. Then I realised that I was feeling them and the elastic - for the first time since my babies were born - and that now I had my belly back - I could FEEL again"

Comfrey Ointment

Rub in Comfrey ointment, not Vitamin E or anything else on the healed scar. Spend about two minutes twice daily for a couple of weeks, pinching and awakening the scar and surrounding areas. Comfrey heals the auric holes, it also normalises skin growth. I always wait until the scar is healed as it hurries up the closure. You want it to do it naturally first.

Moxa

If you have access to a moxa stick, hold the lit stick about one centimetre over the scar. Move the moxa stick slowly along the length of the scar, allowing the heat to penetrate for about 30 seconds in total. This only need to be done once, and not whilst bleeding, or if the scar is very distressed. Always drink before and after using moxa, as it is very dehydrating.

2. Healing the Body

Osteopathy/chiropractic

Find a specialised osteopath, chiropractor, or a cranial sacral worker to look over yourself and your bub. This is very

important, as everything shifts post birth – regardless of how the baby arrived. The ligaments and tendons will be softer until the breasts retire from active duty, and a few tune-ups will really stop the aching neck and shoulders that often accompany the strange feeding positions you find yourself in.

'What Dads Can Do' manual

This has far more than birthing information. After birth, the same birthing preparation moxa and massage allows the tensions and stresses to dissolve, allowing the beginning of sensuality again. Very strong 45 degree pressure on the point Bl 35 (on the bum) found in the book will direct energy to the perineum, allowing both healing there, and also normalisation – which sometimes gives back the orgasmic response. Thinking laterally with every piece of information, rather than awaiting spoon feeding is an invaluable tool also.

3. Heaing the Vagina

In addition to all mentioned in all other sections (as we are a whole unit) the following:

"Since having the operation, I found myself bereft, as the exquisite sensitivity of my belly, that made foreplay just so delicious, was gone. There was no feeling there at all above the scar. The actual scar healing had been quick - there is just a very faint line there - but, I had lost the most precious part of making love for me.

Then Heather fixed the scar, as part of the general treatment I came for. I have myself and my belly and pleasure back again -. I would have never thought a few needles could be so powerful."

Physiotherapy

Many physiotherapists now have an inner speciality and work vaginally. This is often the only way healing can occur – from the inside. This work is very calming. Sexual and sensual intimacy is the glue that allows a baby to have a happy home. This is very necessary as Dad has often lost his lover, and needs to be included. You may also have lost all sensations.

A woman asked me what she could do about the tattered vaginal entry she was left with, as stitching was not done after the birth. Her baby was 14 months old, and she was missing her man. I sold her *What Dads Can Do*, and suggested he follow the birth preparation protocol (which is also part of the sexual return page). Within a month the healing had happened and they were happily in bliss again.

These apparently impossible (the medical model has no answer for) issues often just need a new pair of eyes on the job. Massage and moxa is often all that is needed to restore

normal, in addition to dedicated time together as a couple.



HEALING ... emotionally

There really needs to be a birth trauma unit, as the refugees from these interrupted pregnancies with unnatural conclusions ('safe births') keep coming to practitioners such as myself. The *price* to all is missed by the hospitals, as there is little litigation around this area. No one to my knowledge has yet sued for loss of maternal bonding and quality of motherhood from their apparently 'safe' handling.

Nurturing through nutrients

Emotional healing is done in conjunction with physical healing. Taking heed of other suggestions I have made in other related articles such as *Practical Hints for Healing the Mother Within* (available at www.homebirth.org.au) would be very helpful here.

A sensible course of action is to take adequate *liquid Zinc*, Magnesium supplements. Additionally half a B complex vitamin supplement sometimes *six* times a day keeps a new mother sane, well rested, her hair on head and breast milk flowing. Deficiencies of all of these nutrients are seen when 'stressed' and are further worsened through being 'stressed'.

Kinesiology

Kinesiologists often are specifically trained to work with birthing issues, both those arising from our own, or from birthing our children.

Gestalt Therapy

Jane Campbell-Kaye, (see www.activebirthyoga.org) is the therapist of obvious choice. Jane has trained many other women to work with pregnancy. She has now followed this with a special insight into undoing and reweaving the post birthing world through gestalt therapy. For those outside the Brisbane area, find a therapist who is recommended and specialises in the birth continuum, to assist you on your journey.

What to do to heal and prepare for a VBAC

- ♥ Undo the last birth by attending to all issues, on all levels, preferably prior to subsequent pregnancy.
- ♥ Consider following Gabrielle Targett's advice, www.alabouroflove.com.au, and write your birth story *before* it happens, and then live it.
- ♥ Become truly conscious. Live as though it really matters what you say and do and don't say and do. By reprioritising – as though you had just 'lost' everything physical and gained the freedom of just being here – then, what would be important? By being less busy and doing fewer things things, the boundaries of *want* may change. A wealth of things may await you when live more simply.
- ♥ Why not find a wise woman and allow her to initiate you into being more of who you are – a doula or a midwife, standing beside you and being there.



Choosing a VBAC

If you have had a Caesarean Section and think a VBAC is a good option then consider two questions:

What happened last time?

What steps are in place to ensure this is a different script – not just a second or third time around repeat of the same?

Think of this as a uni assignment. What if you have not read the question correctly and you keep rewriting and resubmitting. What happens when you have not understood

what is actually expected of you?

Are you doing this to actually bring forth life or are you doing this to present yourself yet again at the cusp of 'getting it'? Does anyone stop and ponder on what they would wish for themselves? Does anyone actually stop and script what they want? Do we know what is *best* for us?

When you still yourself and ask what you are here for, you are presented with an opportunity to abandon other's realities, and go with what feels right - really feels right for *you*.

Do we take heed if someone offers a suggestion that we do not like the sound of? Do we want to shoot the messenger? No! We just tend to try to avoid the inevitable and hope for the best. Begin your journey at conception by reminding yourself why you want a baby? Generally speaking women have babies for intimacy,

touching and a depth of experience that starts the process, and stays with us, if we let it.

Start the conception process by going to www.foresight-preconception.org.uk and www.easybabies.com.au. Follow the information on conceiving a baby and living more simply. Additionally consider going to "What Dads Can Do" manual/DVD and follow all the pelvic opening massage moves - more sensation, less pain and tension and no gynaecological problems all lead to better sex and connection - this also leads to easier birthing, on all levels.

Whatever route you choose, please take with you a sense of humour - we all script this. When and if we choose to change, it is always going to rattle our and other's cages, generally cause consternation, and create new beginnings.

We can't quantify what we feel in our hearts, but we should endeavour to be all the nature intended us to be.



Heather Bruce is an acupuncturist, naturopath and Chinese herbalist, author and mother of four. Her passion is to assist people to help themselves, through the acupuncture/common sense mode. More articles on a variety of topics can be found at Heather's website www.easybabies.com.au. She is the author of "What Dads Can Do - a manual for partners of pregnant women" and has been a regular contributor to *Down to Birth* since 2005. Heather recently ran an acupuncture workshop for midwives and doulas in conjunction with the Home Midwifery Association to extend and compliment the wisdom and skill base of the women who support birthing women in Queensland.



Healing @ 86 Women's centre

Balance

physical, emotional, mental and spiritual

Birthing

all aspects of self, and of new beings

Breathing

the essence of life from Buteykoto yoga

Heather Bruce

Acupuncturist, Chinese herbalist & naturopath with 28 years experience in infertility, pregnancy and all aspects of birthing, is working with a group of practitioners at **Healing @ 86** to compliment her existing practice, including:

- ♥ Birthing debriefing - Gestalt group and individual sessions,
- ♥ Prenatal and women's restorative yoga
- ♥ Hypnobirthing and doula

Phone: 3899 2274 for an appointment or go to www.easybabies.com.au for more information