

*INITIATING
THE MOTHER*

WITH LAUREN ECKSTROM

FIRST TRIMESTER WORKBOOK

INITIATING THE MOTHER

What does "powerful" look & feel like to you during your first trimester?

What are 3 commitments you will make for yourself during the first trimester?

CLARITY

What is the deepest intention of your heart as you move through your first trimester?

How do you want to feel?

What are your priorities, for yourself & your self-care?

What are you most needing &
how can you provide that to yourself?

MY INTENTION IS:

COURAGE

Get to know your fear. Take time to write about any fears that are present for you.

What would the wisest version of yourself say to you about these fears?

Write about how viewing strong sensations as opportunities gives you more power than viewing them as "pain." How can this revised view help you navigate the inevitable challenges of pregnancy & birth?

Write a mantra for yourself that you can repeat when you face strong sensations.

I KNOW I AM COURAGEOUS BECAUSE:

FLUIDITY

Where in your life can you be more flexible
as you enter this precious time?

Where in your daily schedule can you
create space for rest or self-care?

What changes are you ready to make so that your baby knows there is space for them in your life?

What does fluidity look & feel like in your body, mind, & life?

I AM WILLING TO BE MORE FLEXIBLE WITH:

STABILITY

When do you feel unstable or unsteady?

What supports your experience of feeling stable in your body, mind, & life?

Are there any actions you can take to help enhance your feeling of stability at home, work or with your family?

It's natural to move between feeling balanced & imbalanced. The next time you feel imbalanced, what can you say to support yourself?

**"TO BE EVEN MINDED IS THE GREATEST VIRTUE."
HERACLITUS**

STAMINA

One place I have been overworking is:

One place I would like to
consciously exert more effort is:

When I want to give up, when I think
"I cannot sustain a moment longer," I will remember:

My new definition of "stamina" during pregnancy is:

**"WORK IS LOVE MADE VISIBLE"
KAHIL GIBRAN**

ACCEPTANCE

What are you being asked to accept at this moment in time?

Where can you practice surrendering unnecessary effort & opening more to rest?

Where can acceptance be more powerful than resistance in your life?

What does healthy surrender look & feel like in your body & mind?

**"PREGNANCY IS A PROCESS THAT INVITES YOU TO SURRENDER TO THE UNSEEN FORCE BEHIND ALL LIFE."
JUDY FORD**

MEDITATION

Centering Breath

Take time each day to pause.
Notice where in your body you feel
your breath the most.
Rest your attention on your breath
for 3 full rounds of breath.

Self-Love & Compassion

Each morning repeat these phrases
to yourself & your baby:
"May I be healthy in body & mind."
"May I be truly & deeply happy."
"May I know the joy of a peaceful
heart."

RAIN Inquiry

When you feel worried, stressed, or
uncertain, practice the RAIN inquiry:

RECOGNIZE

ALLOW

INVESTIGATE

NURTURE

"NATURE DOES NOT HURRY, YET EVERYTHING IS ACCOMPLISHED."
LAO TZU

YOGA NIDRA

What is yoga nidra?

Yoga Nidra is a state of awareness, a place between sleeping & dreaming, during which you set the intention to remain conscious.

How to practice:

Lay flat or on your side, not in bed, with a bolster under your knees & a folded blanket or pillow under your head.

Practice in a darkened room.

Practice 2-3 hours after your last meal or exercise.

Why practice yoga nidra

Promotes deep rest & relaxation

Decreases insomnia

Decreases stress

Calms the nervous system

Decreases chronic pain

Increases connection to Self & intentions

**"YOGA NIDRA IS THE YOGA OF AWARE SLEEP.
IN THIS LIES THE SECRET OF SELF-HEALING."
SATYANANDA SARASWATI**

FIRST TRIMESTER CHECKLIST

Create a manageable list of goals to accomplish in your first trimester.

First trimester to-do's:

- 1) **Begin taking a prenatal vitamin.**
- 2) **Find your doctor or midwife.**
- 3) **Schedule your first appointment.**
- 4) **Plan your first ultrasound.**
- 5) **Get plenty of rest.**
- 6) **Establish a regular practice of yoga & meditation.**
- 7) **Stay hydrated.**

FIRST TRIMESTER WELLNESS WORKSHEET

How much sleep are you getting? Are you feeling rested? Where could you integrate a nap into your day?

What foods help you feel grounded & nourished?
What foods leave you feeling nauseated or tired?

First Trimester Snack Planning Tips

Foods higher in healthy fats, such as avocado, nut butter, & almonds can help you feel fuller longer.

Nausea can be a sign that the body needs more protein.

Consider healthy snacks you can easily prepare & pack such as a protein smoothie, a packet of almond butter, or a hardboiled egg.

Eat when you feel hungry but, if you're feeling sick aim for smaller meals throughout the day rather than 3 large meals.

Track your daily supplements, such as prenatal vitamins & probiotics.

**"WHEN YOU SAY 'YES' TO OTHERS, MAKE SURE YOU ARE NOT SAYING 'NO' TO YOURSELF."
PAULO COELHO**

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SECOND TRIMESTER
WORKBOOK

INITIATING THE MOTHER

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OFFERING

Knowing that "the present plants the seed for the future," what are you offering to yourself & to your baby by comiting to this prenatal

Create an affirmation of offering. For example, "each day I offer, to myself & to my baby, my time, attention, & nourishment."

Create a piece of art for yourself. How do you want to see yourself as a pregnant woman? Draw, doodle, sculpt. Set aside perfection. Let this be an offering.

On the other side of offering is receiving.
How can you practice receiving during your second trimester?

**"MAKE SURE YOU TAKE THE TIME TO FEED YOURSELF WITH
WHAT YOUR SPIRIT HAS TO OFFER."
~ DARREN L. JOHNSON**

STRONG AS A MOTHER

One of my favorite reminders is that warriors don't stay clean & poised. In preparation for labor journal about how "losing it" might actually be helpful to

Write about a time you were incredibly strong. What did you overcome?
How did you overcome it?

Write about a time you & your partner overcame a hardship. How did you overcome it? How did you work together? This reminder will support you when it's time to deliver.

Make a list of what helps you feel strong, focused, & steady that you can call on during labor. For example, your breath or movement.

**"HERE'S TO STRONG WOMEN.
MAY WE KNOW THEM, MAY WE BE THEM, MAY WE RAISE THEM."**

LET GO, LET BE

Where have you become rigid in your vision of how you think your pregnancy *"should"* be unfolding? How can you soften & let go to make space for what is actually arising in your experience of pregnancy?

Sometimes we can't "let go" but, we can let ourselves or something else be. What can you simply "let be" at this moment in time?

When it feels hard for you to rest, what do you most want to remember? This reminder might help you remain accountable to doing the gentler practices in the prenatal program while re-enforcing their value to your health & well-being.

Make a list of what helps you to rest deeply. For example, reading before bed, taking a warm bath, or turning off devices 60 minutes before bed.

"SOME PEOPLE BELIEVE HOLDING ON & HANGING IN THERE ARE SIGNS OF GREAT STRENGTH. HOWEVER, THERE ARE TIMES WHEN IT TAKES MUCH MORE STRENGTH TO KNOW WHEN TO LET GO & THEN DO IT."

~ ANN LANDERS

SWEET SURRENDER

Where in your life can you practice slowing down? If you're resistant to slowing down, what are you afraid will happen? How can slowing down support you & your baby during the second trimester?

What does surrender feel like in your mind, heart, & body? How will practicing surrendering in restorative yoga support you in the journey to birth?

In order to fully surrender we need to feel safe. What helps you feel safe? How can you integrate the things that help you feel safe into your labor & delivery experience? Share with your partner or birth team.

What do you need to put aside in order to surrender? Time? Expectations? Urgency? Remember, "labor has its own clock," so getting clear now on what you need to put aside in order to surrender can help you to better create your birth environment. Make a list.

**"SURRENDER TO WHAT IS.
LET GO OF WHAT WAS.
HAVE FAITH IN WHAT WILL BE."
~ SONIA RICOTTI**

STAYING POWER

In the Zen tradition there is a saying, "do nothing extra." What are you currently doing in your life that is "extra," that is diminishing your energy, self care & preparation for this next phase of your life? What can you eliminate?

Imagine you are in the midst of labor. What can your partner or birth team do to support you in maintaining your focus so that you "do nothing extra?"

When you doubt yourself, when you question your strength, what or who can you call on to help you to stay with your experience moment-to-

Labor requires that you go to your edge & beyond it. What does your edge look like? What would going beyond your edge look & feel like?

**"BIRTH DOES NOT ASK YOU TO BE FEARLESS.
IT ASKS YOU TO BE BRAVE."
~ BRITTA BUSHNELL, PHD**

I AM ADAPTABLE

Journal about the ways pregnancy has already enhanced & enlivened your capacity to be adaptable.

What does it feel like in your body when you are adaptable versus when you are overly rigid or attached to a certain expectation or outcome?

How can practicing your capacity to be adaptable now help support you during labor & delivery?

Why might adaptability be important during your postpartum phase & in motherhood?

**"YOU CAN'T STOP THE WAVES BUT, YOU CAN LEARN TO SURF."
~ JON KABAT-ZINN**

MEDITATION

Breath Counting

Each day set aside 3-5 minutes to practice breath counting.

Inhale for the count of 4.

Exhale for the count of 8.

This is a powerful tool to help you prepare for labor & delivery.

Gratitude

Create a daily gratitude list.

Each day write 3 new things, experiences or people you are grateful for.

Include WHY you are grateful for those experiences.

Your Highest Self

When you are in a state of doubt, worry or concern, what would your Highest Self say to you?

Journal for 10 minutes from the perspective of your Highest Self.

Set a timer & free write for 10 minutes without stopping.

REPEAT TO YOURSELF:

"KIND HEART * FIRERCE MIND * BRAVE SPIRIT"

YOGA NIDRA

What is yoga nidra?

Yoga Nidra is a state of awareness, a place between sleeping & dreaming, during which you set the intention to remain conscious.

How to practice:

**Lay on the floor on a yoga mat resting on your left side or with a bolster under your spine. Do not lay down in bed.
Practice in a darkened room.
Practice 2-3 hours after your last meal or exercise.**

Why practice yoga nidra

**Promotes deep rest & relaxation
Decreases insomnia
Decreases stress
Calms the nervous system
Decreases chronic pain
Increases connection to Self & intentions**

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SECOND TRIMESTER YOGA NIDRA

What, if any, communication or messages did you receive from yourself?

What is your vision for your first year of motherhood?
What reminders will you bring with you from this practice?

SECOND TRIMESTER CHECKLIST

Create a manageable list of goals to accomplish in your second trimester.

Second trimester to-do's:

- 1) Continue taking a prenatal vitamin.**
- 2) Explore the option of hiring a doula for your birth**
- 3) Find a birth education class to attend.**
- 4) Plan your 20 week ultrasound.**
- 5) Get plenty of rest.**
- 6) Continue a regular practice of yoga & meditation.**
- 7) Stay hydrated.**

SECOND TRIMESTER WELLNESS WORKSHEET

If your energy has returned it can feel tempting to fill your schedule before the baby arrives. Take a moment to consider how you can use this time in a balanced way. Create a mindful gameplan for yourself. What is most important?

What does self care look like in your second trimester? Be specific. Plan exact dates & times in your weekly calendar for your self care. Share these commitments with your partner or birth team.

Second Trimester Suggested Reading

Birthing From Within by Pam England

Transformed by Birth by Britta Bushnell, PhD

Ina May's Guide to Childbirth by Ina May Gaskin

Like a Mother by Angela Garbes

The Birth of a Mother by Daniel N. Stern

Track your daily supplements, such as
prenatal vitamins & probiotics.

**"A WOMAN WHO LEARNS TO VIEW, & IS VIEWED, AS STRONG, CAPABLE, &
PROTECTIVE OF HER UNBORN, IS MORE LIKELY TO BIRTH WELL & BEGIN
MOTHERHOOD WITH A POSITIVE ATTITUDE."**

~ PAM ENGLAND

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THIRD TRIMESTER WORKBOOK

INITIATING THE MOTHER

What does "powerful" look & feel like
to you during your third trimester?

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for yourself during the third trimester?

RADIANTLY ROOTED

When you imagine moving through the stages of labor, what tools will you call on to calm, ground, & steady yourself?

Which breathing practices do you find most comforting & supportive?

Create your own phrase or mantra to repeat during your third trimester that helps you feel rooted.

Which tools can you commit to practicing daily in preparation for your birth experience?

"WHEN THE ROOTS ARE DEEP THERE IS NO REASON TO FEAR THE WIND."

SUPER WOMAN

How has your personal definition of strength changed during the course of your pregnancy?

What do you want to teach your baby about what it means to be strong?

When you imagine entering postpartum,
what will strength look like for you?

Describe how asking for help, allowing yourself to rest, &
being compassionate with yourself are strengths.

**"SOME WOMEN ARE LOST IN THE FIRE.
SOME WOMEN ARE BUILT FROM IT."**

MINDFUL MAMA

Where do you tend to rush? What transitions do you hurry through during your practice & your life?

What consequences do hurrying & rushing have on you, your mind & body, your relationships, & life?

When you imagine slowing down,
what arises for you?

How can practicing slowing down now help
support you in preparing for postpartum?

**"PATIENCE IS NOT SIMPLY THE ABILITY TO WAIT - IT'S
HOW WE BEHAVE WHILE WE ARE WAITING."**

~ JOYCE MEYER

INNER GUIDANCE

Describe three times when you listened to your inner guidance.

What gifts do you receive when you trust your intuition & innate wisdom?

What are the consequences of not listening to your inner guidance?

Create a mantra or phrase to repeat to yourself to enhance trust in your intuition & instincts.

"INNER GUIDANCE IS HEARD LIKE SOFT MUSIC IN THE NIGHT BY THOSE WHO HAVE LEARNED TO LISTEN."

~ VERNON HOWARD

MOTHER NATURE

What are the positive attributes, lessons, & memories that you absorbed from the nurturing figures from your childhood?

If any, what are the attributes & habits that you learned from the nurturing figures from your childhood that you do not want to pass on?

As a mother, who do you most want to be?
What do you most want to teach & impart to your baby?

Inevitably you will experience many moments where you do not fulfill your
imagined motherly nature. How will you take care of yourself in those

**"WE DO NOT INHERIT THE EARTH FROM OUR ANCESTORS,
WE BORROW IT FROM OUR CHILDREN."
~ NATIVE AMERICAN PROVERB**

I WILL SURVIVE

You have survived 100% of the challenges you have ever faced. Remind yourself of some of those moments here:

What did you learn about yourself?

when you are in the midst of labor, what can you remind yourself you are capable of?

Create 3 - 5 supportive, encouraging, confidence building phrases. Share them with your birthing partner

**"WELL BEHAVED WOMEN RARELY MAKE HISTORY."
~ ELENOR ROOSEVELT**

MEDITATION

Birthing Breath

**In preparation for labor,
practice visualizing breathing
up your back body & down
your front body.**

Birth Visualization

**Begin visualizing your baby in the
ideal position for birth.**

Use the mantra:

**"your back is to my belly,
your head is down,
your chin is tucked."**

Grounding in Labor

Continue practicing the birthing breath:

Inhale to the count of 4

Exhale to the count of 8

Remember the phrases:

"My breath is slow, deep, & relaxed."

"I am calm during labor."

**"WORDS ARE THE MOST POWERFUL DRUG KNOWN TO MAN."
~ KIPLING**

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THIRD TRIMESTER YOGA NIDRA

What, if any, communication or messages did you receive from your baby?

How did those messages change or remain the same each time you practiced this yoga nidra?

THIRD TRIMESTER CHECKLIST

Create a manageable list of goals to accomplish in your third trimester.

Third trimester to-do's:

- 1) Continue taking a prenatal vitamin.**
- 2) Explore the option of hiring a postpartum doula.**
- 3) Find a baby care & lactation class to attend.**
- 4) Create your birth plan & fourth trimester plan.**
- 5) Get plenty of rest.**
- 6) Continue a regular practice of yoga & meditation.**
- 7) Stay hydrated.**

THIRD TRIMESTER WELLNESS WORKSHEET

Create a sustainable daily routine to help prepare for labor, delivery, & postpartum. Consider the following:

- 1) Practice breath techniques for labor.
- 2) Begin speaking to your baby.
- 3) Visualize your baby in the ideal birth position.
- 4) Practice pelvic floor exercises.
- 5) Meditate daily for 15 - 20 minutes.
- 6) Spend time outdoors, walking or hiking in nature

Create a fourth trimester plan.
Consider the following:

- 1) When will you stop working?
- 2) How much time will you take off if you plan on returning to work?
- 3) Who will you invite into your home during the first few days, weeks, & month(s) you are home?
- 4) How can visitors best support you? Make a list. Tape it to your front door & refrigerator.
- 5) Plan a meal train or pre-prepare meals that are easy to reheat in your first weeks postpartum.
- 6) Have contact information for lactation support.

Third Trimester Suggested Reading

Transformed by Birth by Britta Bushnell PhD

The Birth Partner by Penny Simkin

The Fourth Trimester by Kimberly Ann Johnson

Ina May's Guide to Breastfeeding by Ina May Gaskin

The Happiest Baby on the Block by Harvey Karp, M.D.

Important Websites

DONA.org: Certified Birth & Postpartum Doulas

LLLl.org: La Leche League International

breastfeeding support

MealTrain.com: Create a free meal train calendar for

postpartum support for family & friends

**"BIRTHING IS THE MOST PROFOUND INITIATION INTO
SPIRITUALITY A WOMAN CAN HAVE."**

~ ROBIN LIM

NOTES

NOTES

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I highly recommend exploring these special teachers, their beautiful offerings, & powerful teachings.

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Britta Bushnell PhD at BrittaBushnell.com