

## 10 ways to give birth like a Goddess.

You totally have this, yes we know birth can be unpredictable, but that should not stop women having a voice, being listened to and respected for the decisions they make about their care.

1.

Ask questions. About everything. Literally everything. “What are you doing? Why are you doing that? What other options do I have? Are there any risks with doing that? What else can you do instead?” Ask questions about where you birth, when and with whom. Ask what the evidence is and if there is any contradicting it. Learn about levels of evidence and recommendations in pregnancy. Know your hospital's policies on induction, monitoring, appointments, home visits, breastfeeding and bottle-feeding, support people, bed sharing, everything. Read every one. And most importantly **learn the difference between policy and evidence.**

2.

Birth at home if you choose too. On your turf – your safe haven, your space where you can move about and feel totally in charge. When you invite your midwife in, it is in your space, according to your rules. In any birth space you go into that isn't your home, remember it doesn't mean you are handing yourself over. Make the space your own. You are still the decision maker. #WHOSINCHARGE

3.

Say no if that is what you want to do, you do not have to give justification or explanation. (You know, there is no legal requirement for you to give a good enough reason for refusing something?). Just make sure this is the right thing for you. Discuss your thoughts with your partner and doula if you wish. You should never feel pressured or bullied into a decision. Remember you have to live with it. You are the expert about you.

4.

You have the power, you take the higher ground. Tell them to wait when they knock on the door, and if they come in unannounced send them out again. Reclaim your space and your privacy. This is your body and you choose who sees it. Don't be afraid to take your time, it is ok to wait until YOU are completely sure to make a decision. If your appointment isn't long enough ask for another one. If that's not enough ask for another. This is about insuring you are 100% in the know and have time to talk through options.

5.

Move beyond the binary thinking. It isn't public v private, midwife v doctor, home v hospital, vaginal v. cesarean. There are a million different possible ways your birth can go. I guarantee there is always a third option. It is possible no one has thought of it yet. It is NOT possible you only have 2 options. This kind of thinking makes people very easy to control. Tailor your care to your needs. Be in the centre of every decision. All of you. Not just your uterus and the life it contains, but your hopes, dreams & identity including spirit and emotions.

6.

Prioritise your needs above your baby. Really hear me here YOU MATTER. You matter because you are a person in this world and your experience and decisions matter. You matter just because of you. It is also good to know that no one in this world will love and care for your baby more than you will. So make sure you are ok, because if you are ok you can make sure your baby is too.

7.

Make decisions based on your feelings. The maternity system is obsessed with data. There is a risk for everything, Every choice has a number. And sometimes those numbers are really important, and sometimes they are arbitrary. It is ok to make a decision or not make a decision based on how you feel. This is just another kind of knowledge. No one can argue with how you feel. Pay attention and communicate this feeling if you can.

8.

**NEVER EVER** start a sentence with “Am I allowed to...?”. Try “I want to”. Or even “I am going to”. It is not acceptable to be saying “They want to...” or “I’ve got to be ...” this is you handing over the decision making. Take time to talk it through, be heard. You will feel much better being part of it and “We have decided the best option for my care is...” – You are included and heard.

9.

Know your power, learn your rights. Get a doula if you can, they are worth every penny. Collect the people around you that hold you up. Don’t allow anyone in your space that keeps you small. That is your mental space as well as your physical space. You are so powerful – feel it. You have not just created but also gestated a baby inside you. Your body is amazing. Don’t let anyone make you feel anything less. BOOM.

10.

Change your mind. If it feels like things are spiralling out of control or even gently heading in a direction you don't feel comfortable with and you want to get off the train. Get off. Shut it down. Try something else. You DON'T have to do anything just because you said you would. You have no obligations to anyone but yourself. And I mean only yourself. Change your mind whenever you feel.

Last but not least share these with your partner, your doula and anyone else. You are on it and you are regaining the power that you have always had, your using it now, when it matters most because **Every Birth Matters**.

**What do you need to do now?**