



# midirs book reviews



Connecting you to the world of maternity books

© utemov - Fotolia.com

## The Natal Hypnotherapy™ Better Birth Companion

- **Effective birth preparation: your practical guide to a better birth.** Howell M. Headley Down: Intuition UN Ltd, 2009. 294 pages. £8.99. ISBN: 9781905220595
- **Effective birth preparation [CD].** 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. Natal Hypnotherapy. Headley Down: Intuition UN Ltd, 2010. £11.99. ISBN 9781905220502

The *Better birth companion* toolkit is comprised of a book and a Natal Hypnotherapy CD for birth preparation. The book is laid out into three key parts: the process of instinctive birth and the impact of fear on labour; understanding hypnotherapy; and how to use hypnosis as preparation for birth.

The author's tone is down to earth, conversational and positive about childbirth, putting the reader at ease, and is broken up with useful subheadings, bullet points and bold text. Each page also has a succinct quote on childbirth and mothering at the bottom. Throughout the book are women's personal experiences of childbirth, which are fascinating to read and help put the main content of the book into perspective. Overall, the book places a lot of emphasis on learning to trust the instinctive nature of birth and aims to equip women with confidence for their own labour. I particularly enjoyed the focus on the emotional aspect of labour, rather than the physical process.

Another excellent aspect of the book is a focus on the role of the birth partner, including acting as a gatekeeper between the birthing woman and medical staff, and the physical and emotional support a woman requires during labour.

The toolkit includes a birth preparation CD which can be used from 32 weeks onwards. I found the CD useful as a way of relaxing during pregnancy and reducing fear in the run-up to birth. I used it daily after my due date and probably twice daily when I came up to 42 weeks' gestation, before going into labour naturally. I would wholeheartedly recommend it as a relaxation technique for other pregnant women.

Used alongside the CD, the book acts a practical workbook with space to jot down thoughts, feelings and emotions surrounding pregnancy and birth. I also found the comprehensive Appendix section of the book useful, as it contained frequently asked questions about hypnosis, an explanatory list of other complementary therapies which could be used during pregnancy and birth, and a glossary of terms.

I think the toolkit would be extremely useful for pregnant women preparing for birth, or for midwives interested in the use of hypnotherapy during labour.

**Reviewed by Tasha Cooper, Assistant Editor, Essentially MIDIRS.**