

Meeting the Fear

A Guided Journaling Exercise for Birth Preparation

Set aside 20–30 mins.

Take 3 deep breaths before diving in, softening your body.

This is not about eliminating fear. It's about understanding it and creating support around it.

1 Name the Fear Clearly

Prompt: *What exactly am I afraid of when I think about birth?*

Write it clearly: *"I am afraid that..."*

Be specific:

- I am afraid the pain will overwhelm me.
- I am afraid of tearing.
- I am afraid I'll lose control.
- I am afraid I'll poo.

Clarity reduces anxiety.

2 What's the Story Underneath?

Fear often carries meaning.

Prompt: *If this fear came true, what do I believe it would mean?*

Examples:

- If the pain is intense, it means I can't cope.
- If I tear, it means my body failed.
- If I feel overwhelmed, it means I'm losing control.
- If I need help, it means I'm weak.

Gently ask: *Is that a fact — or a story?*

3 Separate Facts from Fear

Bring knowledge in.

Prompt: *What is actually true about this fear?*

Examples:

- Contractions rise and fall — they are not constant.
- Endorphins increase during labour.
- Most tears are common, minor and heal well.
- Pooing is common, easily managed, and usually unnoticed by you.
- Feeling overwhelmed often happens at transition — and means birth is close.

Write what is factual, not imagined. Knowledge reduces uncertainty; uncertainty fuels fear.

4 What Would Help Me Feel Safer If This Happened?

Prompt: *If this fear showed up during birth, what support or tools would help me cope?*

Examples for common fears:

- Pain: A partner reminding me to breathe through each wave.
- Overwhelm: A request for the room to be quiet.
- Tearing: I have strategies I know to reduce tearing.
- Pooing: Reassurance that it's normal and handled discreetly.

Other suggestions:

- Clear information before any intervention.
- Reassurance: "You are safe. Your baby is safe."

This turns fear into a practical, actionable plan.

Complete this sentence: "*If ___ happens, I will ___.*"

5 Who Am I When I Feel Supported?

Birth uses the nervous system you already have. You don't get a new one in labour.

Prompt: *When I feel safe and supported in everyday life, how do I handle challenge?*

Examples:

- I take things one step at a time.
- I go quiet and focus.
- I lean into support.
- I adapt.

Write an anchor statement:

“Even if ___ happens, I can ___.”

Example:

Even if I feel overwhelmed, I can slow down and ask for support.

Read it aloud. Let it land.

Fear doesn't mean you're not ready. It means you care. Preparation is not about controlling birth, it's about knowing how you will meet it.

The Takeaway

Fear doesn't mean something is wrong.

It usually means something matters.

When fear has clarity and a plan, it tends to quieten down.

When fear is listened to and supported, it often softens on its own.



Want support in preparing for birth?

I offer one-on-one sessions to work through fears and support creating a birth map.