
5 WAYS TO HEAL FROM AN EMOTIONALLY DIFFICULT BIRTH EXPERIENCE

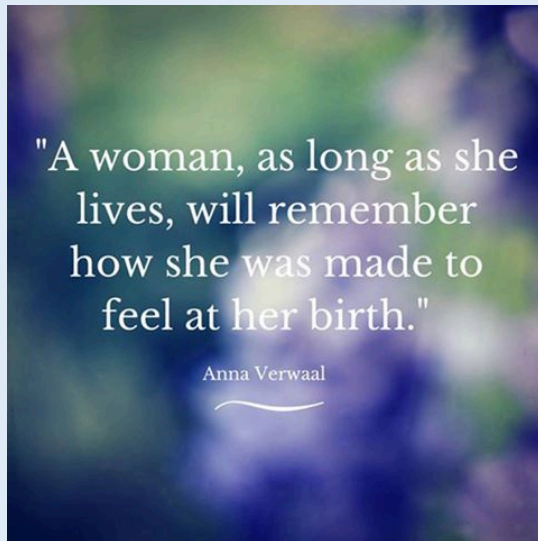


YOUR BIRTH SUPPORT

5 Ways to Heal from an Emotionally Difficult Birth

1. Find a sympathetic ear

Having someone in your life who is able to sit, listen without judgment, and provide validation around how you feel about your birth, can have a deeply meaningful impact on your healing. Choose someone who may have already been a safe place for you in the past. Ideally this will be someone who is a good listener, is empathetic and will simply allow you to tell your story rather than give advice.



If you don't have anyone in your life who can fill this need, you may find an online group that supports people who have experienced birth trauma helpful. You may find sharing your story with others who have also been left feeling disappointed can be quite validating, and helps you to feel less alone in your struggle. Find ways to focus on support within these groups to heal and move forward, as a common pitfall of support groups can be participants getting trapped in their story. This can happen when people feed off each other's

stories around blame of their care provider, the medical system, or their body, or stories that they should have known more or spoken up. When people get stuck in this cycle of blaming and then believing they should have been able to prevent the situation, it can be hard to move on into a more compassionate space, where the true healing happens. If you find a support group that doesn't go beyond commiseration and blame, for your own healing- move on.



"People start to heal the moment they feel heard."

Cheryl Richardson



Sometimes it's suggested to de-brief with a midwife, doctor or doula who attended your birth. Some women find that understanding the medical facts and figures can be one part of the healing process, but I would caution that this is not necessarily the place from which disappointment or trauma usually resides.

One problem around de-briefing with someone who attended your birth, is that this person has their own version or memory of your birth story, which is probably different than yours, and is coloured by their own unique perception of birth and life. If your story is quite different from theirs, in some cases you may find that it only exacerbates your feelings of upset. Another issue to be aware of is the defensive stance from which medical staff may respond to birth disappointment. This can be driven by an understandable fear of litigation, or simply having their expertise questioned. If you are considering de-briefing with a midwife, doctor, or doula, think carefully about what you hope to gain, and how you might be left feeling if you don't get the response you are hoping for.

2. Be patient and compassionate with yourself



The healing process can take time and isn't always a smooth or straightforward path. There can be moments of breakthroughs, and times when you may feel like you're back at square one - this is normal. Accept emotions as they arise. Resisting difficult emotions often just prolongs them. Sometimes really sitting with uncomfortable feelings may bring its own insights. The place that is generally a catalyst for moving forward in your healing is that of compassion, for yourself and everyone else who is part of your birth story.

Moving past feelings of blame, second guessing and judgment can be a huge turning point in the healing process.

3. Prioritise Self Care

It's often hard to find time for self-care when you have children, but there will always be windows of time when you can focus on caring for yourself, provided you have support. Things like yoga, meditation and mindfulness practices, exercising, reading a book and listening to your favourite music, can be done without leaving home, however some women find leaving the house and attending a class or having time away is more helpful.



Nurturing tasks such as healthy food, aromatherapy baths, taking walks, massages, facials, pedicures, and seeing health care practitioners are also great ways to take care of yourself. If you don't have much support, you could try getting out in nature with your children, going to a park, taking a nap or resting when your baby sleeps. It can be hard to ask for help, but it's often an important and necessary part of healing. Spending time with people whose company you enjoy with or without your children can also be nourishing and break the feelings of isolation and monotony that can come with caring for children.



“Our job is not to deny the story, but to defy the ending- to rise strong, recognize our story, and rumble with the truth until we get to a place where we think, Yes. This is what happened. This is my truth. And I will choose how this story ends”.

Brené Brown- Rising Strong



4. Journaling

Writing your birth story down is something that many find therapeutic. You may notice patterns of thinking in what you write, gain new insights, and find the process cathartic. You can choose to throw your writing away and not read over it again, or keep it to re-visit at a later point to see how far you have come. It's sometimes suggested to write for fifteen or twenty minutes a day for four or five days in a row, just allowing any thoughts, feelings or parts of your story to arise. You can take note of anything you notice shifting with this process and gain new insights for yourself.



Another approach is to write your birth story out as if it were an empowering experience. Facts about the events or stories we recall are only a very tiny part of the story. The majority of our narrative is based on how we have interpreted it, and the meaning we have given it from our own unique perspective and conditioning.

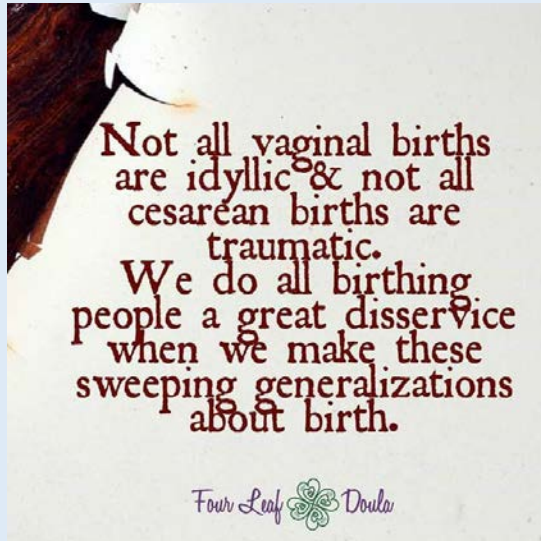
Re-writing your story from a different stance is a way to see things that you may not have noticed before, to perhaps uncover strengths that you previously failed to notice or acknowledge at all. Re-framing your birth story is a vital piece of the healing process.

5. Get professional help

Some of us believe that talking about our birth with someone won't change how we feel. After all we can't change what happened. While it is true we can never go back and do our birth over, working with someone skilled can help us to see our story in a new light, re-frame the meaning we have given this story and help us feel differently about this life changing event.

We may also wonder if anyone else could possibly understand our upset or wonder if they think we are being silly or over-reacting? This is a common worry because emotional upset after birth and birth trauma is not well understood. Rest assured that

anyone who specializes in this work will understand the many complex reasons that people can feel let down, upset, betrayed and angry after giving birth.



If your feelings aren't resolving, or you don't have anyone you feel who can listen or understand, consider speaking with someone who is trained in the area of Birth Trauma/De-Briefing and listening to birth stories. This could be a birth story healer like me, a counsellor, psychologist or social worker who is trained in birth trauma. Some people also find Trauma Sensitive Yoga, Breathwork, EMDR (Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing), Somatic Experiencing and Kinesiology helpful for shifting trauma.



“We are not meant to stay wounded. We are supposed to move through our tragedies and challenges and to help each other move through the many painful episodes of our lives. By remaining stuck in the power of our wounds, we block our own transformation. We overlook the greater gifts inherent in our wounds - the strength to overcome them and the lessons that we are meant to receive through them. Wounds are the means through which we enter the hearts of other people. They are meant to teach us to become compassionate and wise.”

Carolyn Myss



About Nicole:



Nicole is part of the first Advanced Birth Story Medicine® cohort, spreading this work throughout Australia and the world. She is also the first Certified Birthing From Within® Mentor and Advisor in Australia. In 2017 she was appointed as a Birth Story Listener Facilitator working with Pam England Creative Director of Birthing From Within®.

She is also a writer having had articles published in Elephant Journal on the topic of birth stories and birth trauma. She will be speaking at the Homebirth Australia Conference in November 2017 and presenting at the 3rd Annual Nursing and Midwifery Conference in Newcastle in September.

Nicole is an experienced Naturopath, specializing in women's health, with over twenty one years in the industry. Her

experience as a childbirth educator highlighted a need for a dedicated service to help people process their birth experiences. Through her own first birth experience, she knows how devastating and challenging birth trauma can be. She is dedicated to helping people heal their birth stories, as well as educating the public and researching this important area of study.

See Nicole's articles here:

<https://www.elephantjournal.com/2017/05/changing-the-way-we-share-our-difficult-birth-stories/>

<https://www.elephantjournal.com/2017/06/when-a-positive-birth-story-is-a-problem/>

Nicole Tricarico
Birthing From Within® Mentor & Advisor
Birth Story Healer. Naturopath
Birth Story Listening Facilitator.
Phone 0410 592 264



Your Birth Support <https://yourbirthsupport.com/>
Email: natuopathnicole@gmail.com