

Evidence-Based Information & Unconditional Support: Keys to Empowerment

Phrases That Undermine Opportunity for Empowerment

- “I have an 86% natural birth success rate with my clients/students.”
- “Natural childbirth is the way birth is supposed to be and how a mother and her support team will achieve the greatest birth experience.”
- “If you’ve really done your research, of course you will want a natural childbirth.”
- “Over seventy couples have been empowered by my classes.”
- “Women who stay home as long as possible in labor, have better birth experiences.”
- “Each mother-baby dyad only has one birth experience; there is no do-over, only one chance to get it right.”

Phrases That Enhance Opportunity for Empowerment

- “My classes are more about helping women learn to trust their own inner knowing than they are about ‘the research’ and the ‘right way’ to give birth.”
- “Every woman deserves information and support no matter what choices she makes for her pregnancy and birth.”
- “My goal is for my clients to feel like they have tools available to help them handle whatever arises during their labor and birth.”
- “My goal for every interaction with my clients is that I be totally present for them in the hopes that they make the best decisions for themselves and their families – even if those decisions would not be my own.”
- “I trust birth to give a woman huge opportunity for growth, no matter what her birth looks like.”
- “My clients know how to gather information from appropriate sources and use that information to make their own best decisions.”

“Empower:
To *promote* the self-actualization
or influence of.”

- Merriam-Webster Dictionary

“It is unconscionable to place clients [students] in a position of ‘passing or failing’ depending on their behavior as measured against your objectives.”

- Andrea Robertson

Keys to Empowerment

- Be honest with yourself about your own areas of judgment.
- Acknowledge and encourage students/clients to listen to their own intuitive knowledge.
- Encourage clients/students to gather their own information.
Note: Valid sources of information can include:
 - Written literature
 - Empirical evidence
 - Individual knowing
- Set clear goals for every interaction with a client/student.
- Offer education about what constitutes complete, accurate evidence-based information.
- Encourage clients/students to make their own decisions.
- Never edit or frame information to support your own point of view.
- Listen to their birth stories without interruption.
- Fully and unconditionally support them.

“If we attempt to influence a client’s decision-making because we think we know what is best for them, we are no different than the obstetrician who tells them they must have a preemptive c-section.”

- Devon Horsman & April Kline, The Conscious Professional Education Series