



*Sofia*  
MIDWIFE

# Preparing the inner landscape for birth

Birth is not only a physical event. It is a threshold. And the most profound preparation you can do is not gathering more information, it is learning to listen to what lives within you, beneath the noise.



## My story with Internal Family Systems and birth...

In my early years as a birth worker, I noticed something I did not expect and could not easily explain. I would arrive at a birth, prepared, present, devoted, and somewhere in the intensity of it, I would feel myself disconnect. Not physically, but inwardly. A quiet dissociation, a sense of watching from somewhere just outside myself. Birth, with all its rawness and power, was doing something to me that I couldn't understand. And it took years to heal that dissociation in my body and soul. I did not ignore it. I turned toward it, to explore it.

*The more honestly I tended to my own inner world, the more capacity I discovered to hold space for the women in their vulnerability.*

Years of continued inner work led me to Internal Family Systems. IFS offered me a language for the parts of myself that had been quietly running in the background. As I brought those parts into the light with curiosity and compassion, something in me settled. And as I settled, I found I could hold more space, more stillness, more of what a woman in labor truly needs in labor, presence.

What I began to see, again and again at births, was a particular kind of suffering that had nothing to do with the physical. Women who had prepared more thoroughly than any generation before them, they'd listened to every podcast, taken every class, memorized every position, arriving at birth with their rational minds wound tight and their bodies bracing for an event they had studied but not yet learned to trust and surrender to birth.

*It's not birth women have to surrender to it is themselves.*

The modern birth space does not always help. Hospitals, with their monitors and protocols and clinical language, can quietly teach a woman that birth is a problem to be managed rather than a passage to be moved through.

Childbirth education offers so much that is valuable, the mechanics of labor, the wisdom of movement and positioning, the importance of the pelvic floor. But there is a dimension of birth that most classes explain but don't actually dive into: the emotional, hormonal, primal interior of the experience. The place that has no language. The place that is not reached by information.



Hormones are not separate from emotions, they are emotion made biochemical. The oxytocin that opens labor, the endorphins that carry a woman through transition, the primal surge of adrenaline at the moment of birth, these are not mechanical processes. They are the physiological expression of an inner state. And they flow most freely when a woman feels safe, unheld by fear, and willing to descend into a part of herself she may rarely visit in ordinary life.

*That descent, into the raw, primal, wordless self, is not something most modern women practice.*

We live in minds that are busy, analytical, productive, defended. IFS does not ask us to abandon that mind. It asks us to gently set it aside, to let it rest, to find the deeper intelligence that lives beneath it. When I began offering IFS to the mothers I worked with, I witnessed something tender and consistent. Fear, when met with compassion rather than information, softened. Pain, when approached with curiosity rather than bracing, became something a woman could move with rather than against. The overwhelm of too much knowing gave way, slowly, to the quiet voice of embodied intuition, the kind of knowing that doesn't come from a podcast or a birth plan, but from within.

*IFS does not fix something is broken. It illuminates what was always whole, and helps a woman remember the tools and resources she has within.*

This is the work I am devoted to. Not replacing the beautiful physical and intellectual preparation that exists, but adding the dimension that has long been missing: the emotional, the primal, the innermost. Helping women meet themselves before they meet their birth. Helping them arrive at that threshold not just prepared, but truly present, aligned within, open to what comes, and trusting the ancient wisdom their bodies already carry.



## **Foundation: What is IFS, and Why Does it Matter for Birth?**

Internal Family Systems (IFS) is an evidence-based, non-pathological model of the mind. It recognizes that we are made of many inner parts: a worried planner, a fearful protector, a grieving part still holding an old story, and that beneath all of them lives a calm, wise Self. IFS does not ask you to eliminate fear or doubt. It asks you to turn toward those parts with curiosity and compassion, so they no longer have to run the show at the most vulnerable moments of your life.

In birth, that matters enormously. The hormones that carry labor forward—oxytocin, endorphins, adrenaline—are exquisitely sensitive to the emotional climate within. When fear tightens its grip, the body responds in kind. When you can meet fear with gentleness rather than resistance, something in the body can soften and open.

## **Five Practices: Using IFS to Prepare for Birth**

### **1. Meet Your Fear Before Birth**

Fear of birth is not weakness. It is a part of you that loves you and wants to protect you. Rather than pushing it away or drowning it in information, turn toward it. Ask it what it needs you to know. Often, fear softens simply by being witnessed.

Try this: Sit quietly and place a hand on your heart. Ask: what part of me is most afraid right now? Notice where you feel it in your body. Breathe into that place and simply say, inwardly: I see you. I'm here.

### **2. Put Down the Research and Come Home to Yourself**

We live in a time of extraordinary information. Podcasts, studies, birth stories, courses — all of it can be useful, and all of it can become a way of outsourcing trust in yourself. At some point, preparation means turning inward. Your body has its own knowing. IFS helps you clear the noise so you can hear it again.

Try this: Take one day each week in your third trimester as an information fast. No podcasts, no research. Instead, journal one question: what does my body already know about this birth?



### **3. Tend to the Parts That Carry Old Stories**

Many women carry stories that were never theirs to carry, a mother's traumatic birth, a culture's fear of women's bodies, a medical system that taught them to distrust their instincts. These stories live in parts of us that formed long before this pregnancy. IFS offers a way to gently update those parts, so they are not the ones guiding you in the birth room.

Try this: Reflect on the birth stories you grew up hearing. Notice which ones still live in your body as tension or dread. In a journal or with a practitioner, ask: whose fear am I carrying that isn't mine?

### **4. Practice Accessing Self Energy Before Labor Begins**

In IFS, Self is the calm, clear, compassionate center within you that is never lost, only obscured. Birth will ask you to access it under extraordinary pressure. Like any practice, the more you visit it before labor, the more readily available it becomes when you need it most.

Try this: Each morning, take three slow breaths and ask: can I find the part of me that is not afraid, not overwhelmed, not planning? Rest there, even for one minute. That is Self. You are building a path back to it.

### **5. Learn to Recognize Your Protector Parts**

We all have parts that protect us from vulnerability, a controller who plans obsessively, a skeptic who doubts everything, a pleaser who defers to every provider. These parts serve a real purpose. But in birth, which asks for surrender, they can become obstacles. Knowing them by name makes them far less likely to ambush you.

Try this: Notice what happens inside when you imagine losing control in labor. What part rises up? What does it do?

## ***Embrace Your Inner Wisdom for Birth***

If you're curious and want to explore more. Book a free consultation to try IFS for birth preparation [here](#)