

# CESAREAN COURAGE

By Avital Kline

As a doula, I keep up with "birth stuff". I read blogs, research and discussions on birth. There is a lot of talk about the medicalization of childbirth, about VBAC and VBAC bans, and women's choices and lack of choices and OBs fear-mongering and the negative effect of interventions and early inductions. We talk about the benefits of home birth and midwifery care, doulas, Hypnobabies, water birth, unassisted birth, hands off birth, free birth, active birth, gentle birth, natural birth....but what we really talk a lot about is fear and the cesarean "epidemic".

We, in the birth community talk a lot about fear because childbirth in our culture is saturated in fear. And there is no doubt in my mind that it is because of this culture of fear that we have such a high cesarean rate. And in all our talk of unnecessary cesareans, and of fear, I don't hear a lot of talk about courage. The truth is, no matter what the culture is, it takes courage to give birth. A lot of courage. The courage to give birth is in every woman, whether she knows it before hand or not, and even if she thinks it isn't there, she finds it inside of herself.

And all those mothers having cesareans? They have courage. Courage that needs to be recognized.

In our analysis of cesarean births and their increasing numbers, we get caught up in the focus of why the cesarean was or was not necessary, if this or that intervention caused it, if only that had been done or not done then perhaps the birth could have been vaginal. We get angry, we get sad, we work to change things. This is all good and very important, because too many women are subjected to unnecessary cesareans.

But can we please stop, for one moment and recognize, that no matter how educated or uneducated, coerced or informed the choice that woman on the operating table made or didn't make, whether that cesarean was elective or emergency, necessary or unnecessary - it takes a lot of courage to get there. Our birth culture may be saturated in fear-based decisions, but behind every cesarean and "unnecesarean" is a woman of courage. In that moment, it doesn't matter how that woman got to the operating table. It doesn't matter if the surgery is necessary or unnecessary, what matters is that it takes extraordinary courage to say:

"Cut me open.

I love my baby so much, that I will do anything to get my baby out of my body alive.

Lay me out, cut me open

because I love my baby so much."

That is courage. That is bravery and sacrifice and mothering in its purest form. That is the willingness to lay down your body and risk your life that your child might be born, that your child might live.

*Cesarean mothers are BRAVE.*

In the midst of our efforts as doulas and mothers and midwives and counselors and friends, in the work we do to educate and empower and change things...we need to take a moment to recognize the courage it takes to lay down and allow yourself to be cut open to have your baby.

And so, I recognize a few of the women in my life who have had the courage to give birth to their babies by cesarean:

Leanne  
Shadow  
Jenny  
Ivy  
Joy  
Christina  
Mieke  
Vanessa

Sarah  
Mary  
Leone  
Tonya  
Tracy  
Robyn  
Barb

Bryana  
Claudia  
Kara  
Sunny  
Elodie  
Katie  
Me

"First Kiss" By Amy Haderer at [Mandala Journey](http://www.mandalajourney.com)



Written by  
**Avital Kline**  
Wife, Mother, Friend  
Birth & Post-partum doula  
Le Leche League Leader  
avital@gmail.com