

7 ways to  
ride the

emotional  
roller coaster  
of

pregnancy

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A close-up photograph of a person's hands clasped together, with a teal text box overlaid in the center. The hands are positioned in the upper half of the frame, with fingers interlaced. The person is wearing a dark, textured garment, possibly a sweater or cardigan. The background is bright and out of focus, suggesting an indoor setting with natural light. The text 'M E & M Y S E L F' is written in a bold, black, sans-serif font within the teal box.

**M E & M Y S E L F**

When you find out that you are pregnant, there is such a focus on the baby and then on the birth itself that you can get the sense of losing yourself, but in the 9 months of pregnancy, there are so many changes happening to you and your world that it is really important to take good care of yourself.

Your relationship to yourself is changing, you are growing a baby of course and you also have a new perspective on yourself, your body is changing, the way you relate to those changes can be positive and welcoming, if you only had small boobs you may be getting the experience of gaining a pair of boobs! Well that was me anyway, and that is the way my mum spotted that I was pregnant before I even got to tell her!

But there are also some less welcome changes, morning sickness which is rarely just a morning thing! later on in pregnancy heartburn, you can't have alcohol whilst your friends continue to go out, you may feel really tired!

There are major emotional changes too, hormones are bringing a new set of emotions, maybe you are really irritable or weepy and feeling fragile, whatever the emotions are, they are likely to feel a little intense and out of nowhere.

I remember becoming really squeamish, could not stand the sight of anything vaguely gruesome....not a good time to be squeamish!

So what are the ways in which you can make sure you look after yourself?

Make sure you take regular little moments to yourself to switch off, listening to a bit of music, taking a long bath, a nice walk, treating yourself regularly with small kindnesses...

Another really good way to stay in touch with your feelings and emotions is to keep a pregnancy journal, it does not have to be long winded but if you can just answer a couple of questions:

How have I been feeling today?

What changes am I noticing?

A romantic couple is shown in profile, kissing. The man on the left has dark, curly hair and is wearing a blue and white plaid shirt over a white t-shirt and olive green pants. The woman on the right has long, wavy brown hair and is wearing a light blue button-down shirt over a white top and black pants. They are standing outdoors against a bright, slightly blurred background. A teal rectangular box is overlaid on the image, containing the text "ME & MY PARTNER" in a bold, black, sans-serif font.

**ME & MY PARTNER**

Your partner will also be experiencing some changes, not the hormones but emotionally it is also going to be different for him too.

Especially if you are feeling tired, or very irritable, you are likely to end up arguing and when the pregnancy does not yet show very much, it can be hard for those around you to get it!

There is plenty of sympathy and comfort at the late stage of pregnancy but early on is when you need it the most!

There is a really good book for dads-to-be called : "From lad to dad" by Stephen Giles which is very open and practical about the journey for guys, for example in the section on early pregnancy, it says: "Your role: depending on seriousness of the symptoms, a great deal of fetching, carrying, cooking and cleaning as she will be incredibly tired a lot of the time."

Such a good thing to know.... There are also going to be changes in your relationship as both of you have to make the adjustment to becoming parents and planning the future with a baby.

The other thing that can happen is that partners can feel very excluded in the process, a lot is changing and I have noticed that couples are now saying "we are pregnant" which is a big development in the idea that pregnancy is for both of you.

Although professionals are better at including fathers to be, you are the one physically growing your baby so naturally a lot of the focus is on you but there are simple ways in which both of you can be involved.

Firstly it is really important to keep your relationship as a couple going strong by having special dates when you make an effort and keep alive what brought you together in the first place as cultivating your relationship is going to become even more important once you have a baby, as babies can really take over!

The other side of involving your partner with your developing baby is having some special moments when you wonder together about what is going on, gently massage your tummy, listen to music and feel the baby respond (from 5 months or so), shine a light on your belly and feel the baby moves.

There are plenty of books and apps which are helpful to keep track of the development of the baby inside and the more you find out, the easier it becomes to relate and bond with your baby before birth.



FAMILIES

I say families in the plural  
as depending on your circumstances  
you may have  
two sets of families,  
yours and your partner's  
who will both have a strong  
interest in baby!

There is no shortage of advice  
from older mothers in the family,  
what is really important for you to work out  
is who is going to be supportive to you and who is not.  
Just because an experienced mother  
is part of your family, does not mean that  
she is going to be a positive  
influence in your life.

If relationships are already tense,  
or awkward or complex then they will likely remain so  
around the baby.

Sometimes becoming a mother  
can really bring you closer to your own  
mother and other mothers in your family  
but that is not universally the case  
and you will need to make choices  
about how much you are going to bring in  
your relatives into your lives...

It is certainly important to have conversations with your  
partner too about who you are feeling at ease with  
and who you are not, as sometimes assumptions are made  
which can become hurdles if they are not discussed.

A fun way  
to think about families  
with your partner would be to draw  
on a large sheet of paper the family members you  
have around you, stick figures will do and then pick  
a few coloured pens  
to depict your relationship to each of them (for  
example yellow for annoying, green for supportive,  
blue for cold....whatever you decide!).  
It sounds trivial but getting a chance  
to talk things through beforehand  
really helps prevent trouble  
down the line, even if at this point you don't  
necessarily agree!

STRESS



We all get stressed at times  
of course  
and a little bit of stress keeps us going,  
as long as it is manageable.  
When it becomes overwhelming,  
then you need to take action  
as not only is it a really bad experience  
for you,  
the stress hormone cortisol is also flowing  
through the womb to your baby.

There are several ways in which  
you can manage your stress,  
the first is through making sure  
you have a good amount of physical activity,  
walking or swimming as we need movement  
and our modern lives and jobs often keep us sat at a  
desk.

Eat well and drink plenty of water  
will also help keep your energy levels up,  
if you are suffering from a lot of sickness  
then it is worth adding a bit of sugar and salt  
in water to keep you hydrated and drink small sips  
at a time.

Find time to relax and listen to music  
or listen to guided meditation regularly  
for at least 10 mins at a time,  
even if you don't feel like it.

If it becomes part of your routine  
you will find that it helps.

There are plenty of relaxation and meditation downloads  
available, one good source is [www.meditationoasis.com](http://www.meditationoasis.com)

Get as much rest as you can,  
even grabbing little power naps  
when you can as it will help you rest now  
and get you used to napping  
so that you will be a pro  
when your baby comes!

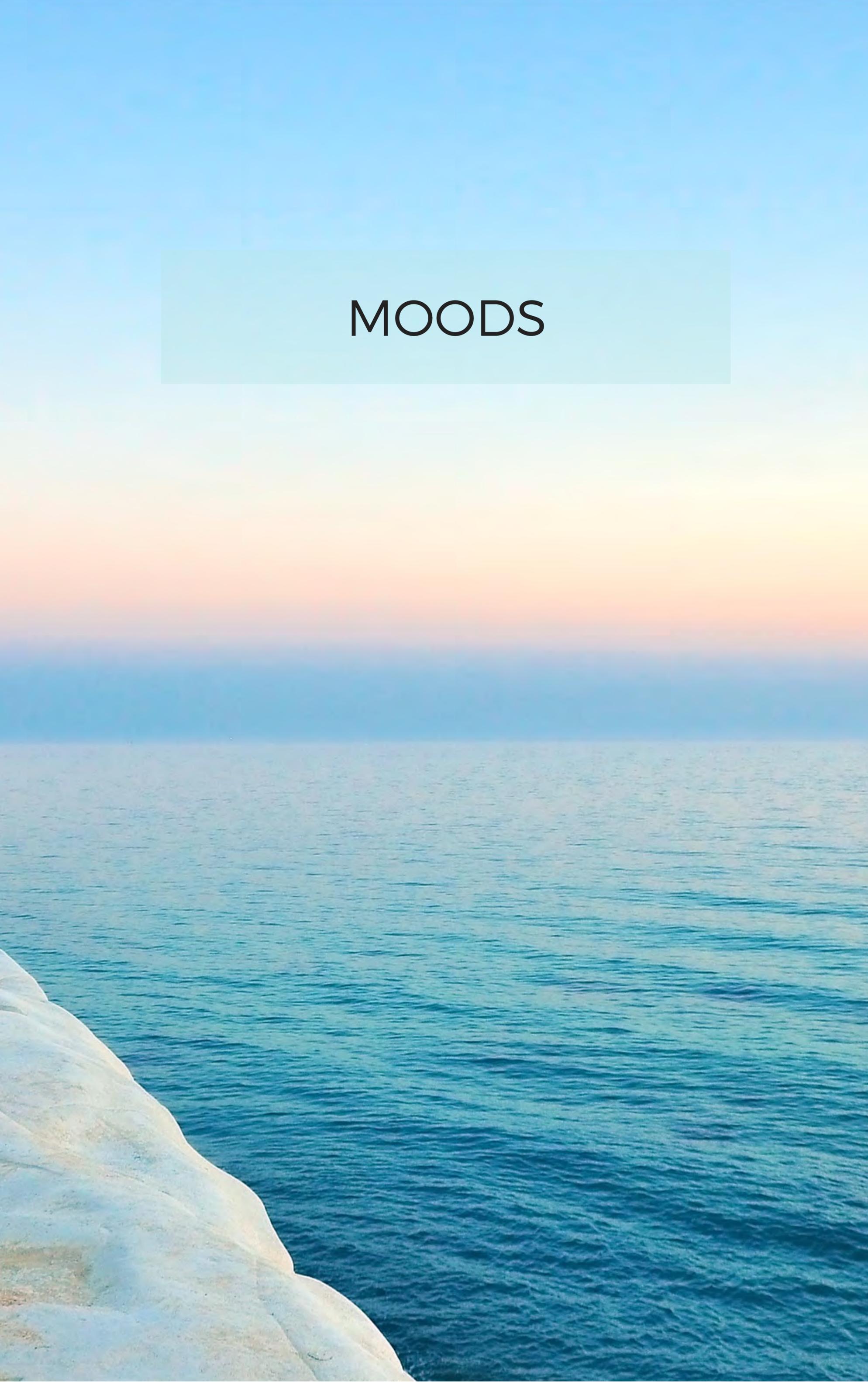
Another aspect of helping yourself  
dealing with stress is having some positive phrases ready  
when your mind goes

into a negative spin full of doom and gloom.

So when you start hearing yourself say : "it's all going wrong,  
my day is a disaster etc..."  
practice asking yourself:

'did anything go well at all? ' "was there a good moment?"  
as we tend to generalise and forget some of the things that  
happen... We also berate ourselves by saying "I am so  
stupid" rather than "I did this wrong or made a mistake but  
I have also done lots of things right today" and start listing  
them...

# MOODS



Pregnancy tends to accentuate your personality so if you are a calm and laid back person, you are likely to be very calm and relaxed and if you are a busy, active person, you are likely to get busier and more active!

However there are fluctuations of moods which are linked to the hormonal changes in the body so you are likely to feel moods and emotions which you are unused to.

It is so important to be compassionate to yourself and just accept that there will be mood changes and of course crucial to explain to your close ones that you are feeling unusually moody.

In order to cope with the moods, once you have accepted that they happen, you need to prepare in advance and work out what helps you specifically.

Do you need to be by yourself  
for a little while?  
do you need a cuddle?  
watch some funny Youtube clips?  
phone a friend?  
what works best for you?

Make a list ahead of time so that  
when you do feel moody and out of sorts  
you can just pick something  
from your helpful list,  
the reason being that by the time  
you get to that moody feeling  
you will have no idea of  
what might help!

If you are finding that your moods,  
either anxiety or depression  
or  
extreme irritability  
are really long lasting and affecting  
your life in a significant way,  
then you need to speak to someone,  
either a friend  
who can listen  
and remain impartial  
or a professional.



WORK



Your relationship  
to your work is also likely to change  
as your pregnancy evolves.  
In the early days you may not want  
to announce it and yet you are likely  
to feel tired and nauseous at times,  
having to hide the symptoms  
and pretend that all is well.

Hopefully employers are more  
enlightened about maternity  
nowadays  
but regardless of where you work,  
unless you are self-employed,  
there will be a degree of concern  
from them about how  
to replace you,  
and uncertainty about how long  
you might be away for...  
Your work itself might feel different  
as your priorities shift a little  
and you have to be careful  
not to put too much pressure on yourself  
to accomplish quite as much as you  
would before the pregnancy.  
There may be mixed reactions  
from your work colleagues too  
depending on the work environment  
and the numbers involved.

Some women  
might have been wanting a baby  
and trying for a long time,  
others might have had losses,  
you don't need to know the circumstances  
but make sure you don't take  
some of the reactions personally,  
if someone suddenly becomes distant  
it may have nothing to do with you really!

Again

make sure you stay close  
to positive people  
who you feel supported by  
and try and stay away from anybody  
you feel may be negative towards you.

Work can be an obvious  
source of stress  
so keeping yourself  
as positive as possible  
is the best way to manage it.

A lot of our own identity  
can be closely linked to our work  
and our profession  
so there will be changes  
there too as  
you become a mum as well.

# FRIENDSHIPS



Depending on your circumstances  
and the circle of friends you have,  
you may have to re-negotiate  
some of your friendships.

You may find a shift towards  
other couples expecting  
or with children already.

Of course you can keep friends for life  
regardless, but there is likely  
to be a period towards  
the end of pregnancy  
and in the first few months  
when you are rightly  
so obsessed with your baby  
and all things related

that your single friends may naturally  
fall away as they get bored with the conversation!

I remember when I was 19  
my best friend unexpectedly  
became pregnant and had her baby,  
I thought that we might never again  
be able to have a conversation  
about the state of the nation  
or latest art exhibition  
as she was completely engrossed  
in how much milk the baby had had and how many  
poos he had done!

A few years later  
we were back on the art exhibitions  
with the little one in tow....  
but at the time  
I really thought we had nothing  
in common anymore!

This may be quite different  
for your partner  
who may still have his mates  
and continue to go out with them  
in the same way he always had.  
It is so good to make friendships  
with other women  
who are also pregnant though,  
I did not have that with my first child  
and I really missed it.

Often you can find a group  
through your antenatal classes  
and I bet some of these women  
will stay friends for life,  
it is such a unique experience  
that it makes a big difference  
when you can share it with others  
in the same boat.



Hi, I am Dr Marie Renaud, I have been working with families for the last 30 years as a Clinical Psychologist in the NHS and I have now started my own company, through which I offer coaching to parents-to-be and new parents.

If you are interested in my expertise, you can visit my website:

[www.lifewithnewbaby.co.uk](http://www.lifewithnewbaby.co.uk)

or check me out on Facebook: <https://bit.ly/FBBIZ>

or join the FB group: <https://bit.ly/20GP16>

The exciting news  
is that you don't have to wait  
any longer to get the amazing shift  
that you need  
to start feeling fabulous  
in your pregnancy.  
I am inviting you  
to receive  
**a free 60 minute call**  
with me.

You will leave this call  
with clarity, confidence  
and the steps you need  
to create a feeling of abundance,  
love and harmony in you  
and your relationships  
as you create  
a new life  
within.

<https://bit.ly/12Appts>