

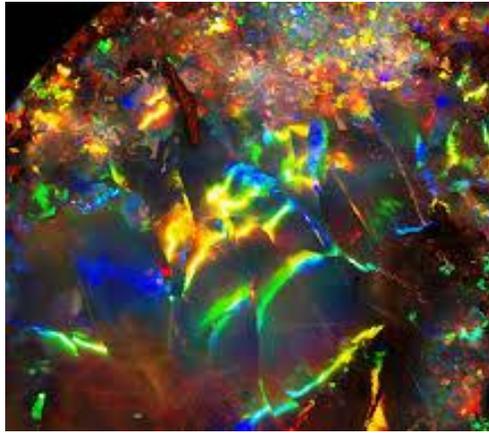
Freestyle Note:

You are a strong Opal woman & the child you are carrying is precious.

From your Opal friend, Darly - Founder of The Opal Place.

If you've ever seen an uncut or unpolished opal rock, it doesn't look very impressive & is often easily over-looked. But when the time & care is put into polishing & nurturing that rock, the result is always the revelation of the most beautiful & totally unique gem - **an Opal**

Darly Royan Paraha



Every Opal is unique to itself & has such a depth of beauty that this world sorely needs. You are that precious Opal.

**Beautiful
Precious
&
Unique**

Never doubt yourself or wish that you were someone else. Instead, take the time to start reclaiming who you truly are. Prison is going to be just a part of your life-story, but you & this child you carry are eternal. **Stand Strong.**

Darly Royan Paraha

17 WEEKS PREGNANT

How Big Is Baby at 17 Weeks?

A baby at pregnancy week 17 is the size of a pomegranate.

Your 17-week fetus is about 5.1 inches long and weighs about 5.9 ounces.

17 Weeks Pregnant Is How Many Months?

At 17 weeks pregnant, you're three months and about three weeks pregnant.



Photo above: A pomegranate & apple

The Opal Place - Our Place of Inspiration

www.theopalplace.co.nz * Postal: Po Box 178, Hawera 4640, New Zealand

17 WEEKS PREGNANT SYMPTOMS

When you're 17 weeks pregnant, symptoms are most commonly due to your rapidly growing baby. Here's what you're likely feeling this week:

- **Increased bodily fluids.** Vaginal discharge, sweat, mucus, and other fluids are in full force because of your increased blood flow.
- **Weird dreams.** You gave birth to a chipmunk? Married your boss? Having strange dreams might be caused by your hormones, but it might also be the result of your nerves and anticipation.
- **Itchy boobs and belly.** As baby's growing, your skin is stretching thinner and can be more sensitive. Resist the urge to scratch, and use a moisturiser to help ease the itch.
- **More rapid weight gain.** You may have gained about 5 to 10 pounds by now. It's normal to gain about 1 to 2 pounds per week in the second trimester. Sudden or excessive weight gain could be a sign of a problem though, so talk to prison staff if you have any worries. (1 pound weight = 0.45 kilograms weight).
- **Stretch marks.** As you're putting on some pounds and your uterus continues to expand and you are probably getting some stretch marks might be inevitable. (Especially if you're 17 weeks pregnant with twins!) Drink lots of water to stay hydrated and use a good quality moisturizer to try to combat them (*stretch marks = stripes of honour*).

Do you have any of these symptoms? If you do write or draw about your experiences & feelings:

17 WEEKS PREGNANT BELLY

Baby's working on getting stronger, and your 17 weeks pregnant body's working on getting bigger, by about one to two pounds bigger per week (one pound weight = .45 kilograms of weight).

Baby's rubbery cartilage is now turning to bone. And baby's growing muscle and fat. Your 17-week fetus is growing a stronger, thicker umbilical cord too.





The Importance of writing a journal for your child

I never really knew my birth mother as a person. The reason being is that during my childhood my only contact with her was during visits which I found traumatic. My birth mother had mental health issues and that only added to my miss-understanding about her. My beloved foster mother, also caused me no end of sadness by never openly telling me how proud she was that I played hockey for my country. Instead she always chuckled and said something along the lines of "oh what is it you play Darly..soccer, hockey or smockey?"

Later when I was in my early 40's I finally got hold of my full childhood social welfare records. In amongst this huge pile of documents I found many hand-written letters from my birth mother to the social welfare enquiring about my wellbeing. I was touched by the obvious effort she took in writing these letters during my entire childhood. There were also countless letters written from my foster mother informing the social welfare of my successes with hockey.



Point is, if I had never got to read the letters that had been written so long ago I never would have got to appreciate my birth mother as a parent, or understood that my foster mother was actually really proud of my achievements. The effect of these letters on me was simple - they helped to heal me.

What I'd like (love) you to consider doing is this. Start a journal now for your child to read when they are older. In this journal capture your hopes and dreams and importantly put into words the struggles you are working on over-coming. Write out your feelings as you carry your unborn baby and then through the years you are incarcerated. In your journal, write, draw, create lyrics, make plans and importantly when your filling in your journal, create each page and entry with love.



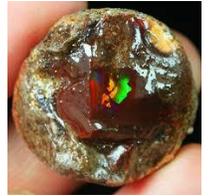
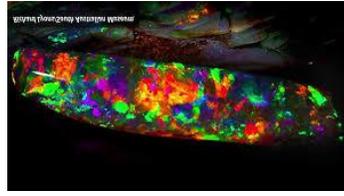
Many of us Opal mums miss out years of our children's lives and sadly some of us never get to spend any time with our children at all. - So tell your story directly from your heart to your child. Say everything you want to say because it's really important that they know you and of your love for them.

Any woman or man is made stronger by the pure love of a mother.

Have no doubt that you WILL be that loving mother.

Darly - Founder of The Opal Place





I am a Strong Woman

Protective & Wise as a Lioness * Blessed is the Fruit of my Womb

My Diary Note: