

Family Matters

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Mind over matter can make tiny feet patter



■ Ursula is delighted when her technique works wonders.

Ursula's hypnosis helps bring baby bliss

URSULA JAMES has a collection of baby photos that never fail to move her — but they're not of nieces and nephews.

Instead the photographs have been sent by Scots mums overjoyed at babies they'd almost given up hope of ever having.

By Bill Gibb

Ursula is one of the UK's leading hypnotherapists and she has brought baby joy to countless childless couples with her skilful sessions.

She has been a leading figure in hypnotherapy circles for 18 years and is known for her work on ITV's *This Morning*.

She's also a visiting teaching Fellow at Oxford University and lectures at other universities across the country.

Now, as she gets set to address a Body and Soul event in Edinburgh later this month, Ursula told *The Sunday Post* how fertility issues can be all in the mind.

"Often the women come because they have a specific anxiety," she explains.

"It might be a worry that they're not going to conceive and I do a lot of work with those going through IVF."

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Because of this week's fantastic Oor Wullie and Broons special pullout, several regular features have had to temporarily move to different pages. Here's where you can find them . . .

TV and radio



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■ Mums are being helped by hypnosis during pregnancy. Below — Ursula's new book, *The Source*.

Relaxation is the key to conception

■ From P55.

"Then there is the anxiety that they're going to miscarry in the first three months, perhaps because of something that has happened before.

"Frankly a lot of those who come to me say it's their last resort. They've tried everything else and figure that at least this can't hurt.

"It's quite sad because the research on hypnosis and fertility is very good.

"There are many classic cases of women who decide to adopt, buy a dog or just forget about it and then become pregnant.

"It's all to do with not being stressed about it as stress sends your body into fight or flight mode. You're telling yourself it's not safe to become pregnant.

"Some of the stories the women tell me are really heart wrenching. I had one case with a woman who'd suffered eight miscarriages.

"Because she was young she'd been told just to move on, that she'd get pregnant again but she'd never had a time to grieve.

"But when I've been able to teach them the relaxation and hypnosis techniques and they happily have a baby it's wonderful to hear. It's just delightful.

"They send me lovely photos, which I always keep, or letters telling me they're just about to have their second child — when I hadn't even heard they'd had the first!"

The sessions take one hour and anyone expecting a swinging watch to look at will be disappointed.

"I do have one but I've never used it," laughs Ursula, whose new book, *The Source*, is just out.

"After finding out about them and explaining what I do, I then just use my voice. I use relaxation, then direct suggestion and sometimes they don't even realise they've been hypnotised.

"We go into hypnosis much more often than you might expect, when driving a familiar route or as we're dropping off to sleep.

"I then reinforce a positive message about going forwards and then they have a CD to help them follow it through."

And she says that hypnotherapy doesn't just have a part to play in helping women get pregnant, it can be key right through pregnancy and birth.

"I've been teaching midwives how to use hypnosis with pregnant women for the past five years now," reveals Ursula, a patron of Anxiety UK.

"It's becoming extremely popular. There is very good research showing that if a patient has been hypnotised during pregnancy they need less medication for the childbirth.

"They also recover quicker and are less likely to have post-natal depression.

"And the baby is also more likely to sleep at night as a mum who is less stressed during pregnancy has a baby who is less stressed after birth.

"It is becoming a much more acceptable thing for midwives to offer. Women want to be in control and with hypnosis they can control the level of pain and can even turn a breech baby using it.

"I teach the midwives and they then pass it on to the mums."

■ The Body and Soul Fair is at the Edinburgh Assembly Rooms on March 26 and 27.

