



Client Testimonial and Birth Story

Huge congratulations to Lisa and Emma on the wonderful arrival of their son Atticus Fox Ruldoph Eleven. I was blessed to be by their side on this amazing day as I was Lisa and Emma's Doula. This story is the perfect example of how Hypnobirthing can support a change in birth plan, and can really tune you in with your body and what it needs during labour and birth. This story is a hard to read without goosebumps and a tear in your eye. Enjoy!

Let me start by saying I always looked at the pictures of 'those' women. The warriors who gave birth without intervention, who wore smiles straight after delivery. The ones who seemed so strong they appeared to ride labour like a lapping wave. I never believed I could be even half of that woman and I never believed I was capable of extraordinary things.

This is why we turned to hypnobirthing. Being a bit of a pessimist I entered the course unsure what to expect, but Terri's course and her manner of delivery left me enthused, intrigued and informed. I began reading around subjects she had covered, immersed myself in quotes and the Cornwall Hypnobirthing meditation/affirmation tracks became my best friends. We used perineal massage from 28 weeks and from 36 weeks I ate dates and drank raspberry leaf tea. Two days before our baby arrived I had acupuncture too! I really did not want this baby to be late.

As an IVF baby and having had reoccurring low fetal movement throughout the pregnancy (always from my anxiety not actually the baby), the talk of induction was consistently in the air. Each consultant we met on our journey recommended it and no matter what statistics or evidence we asked for, the answer remained that induction would be the safest option for us. We had long decided that we would opt for a C-section over an induction as we wanted our birth to be as drug free as possible and felt strongly that the baby would come when it was ready. Forcing it down the birth canal was never part of our plan, it felt wrong to us. Yet we still met the induction talk at every corner.

With all of this in mind you can imagine my disappointment when I was sent to the Day Assessment Unit on Monday 10th May at 11am with fresh red blood. Terri had rung and prepped me for the conversations she knew I would face at the hospital. I was 37.5 weeks pregnant, to the hospital she knew I had the word INDUCTION tattooed across my forehead. As I sat staring into the face of the latest consultant to pick up my notes telling me if the bleeding didn't stop I would need to be induced I paused. Why? Why did I need to be induced? The monitor had shown the baby was fine, I was fine, so what need was there to act so drastically? The surprise on their face was clear. I had done what it seems many women don't do and I

had challenged the protocol. Terri's face entered my head - yes! I had used the B.R.A.I.N thinking and all alone, in a pressurised situation. I felt a sense of achievement!

Their 'compromise' was to tell me I needed to stay in to monitor me for 24 hours. If the bleeding stopped I could return home tomorrow. If it didn't then we would need to reconsider induction. After taking a deep breath I agreed to stay as this meant the baby could be closely monitored through the night. I didn't realise at that moment how much of a blessing being at the hospital would turn out to be. They found me a room by 3pm and Emma arrived at 5pm. We chatted, I ate beige hospital food and she left again at 9pm. Before she left she dotted lavender around the room, dimmed the lights and laid out my lavender and peppermint laced handkerchief and lump of black tourmaline. Looking back now I think she knew what was going to happen but she didn't tell me.

The next few hours felt like a blur. Monitoring, health checks etc. At 12pm I told them I felt a little crampy and they told me it was due to the bleeding and not to worry. At 2:30pm I asked if I could call Emma in as I was still feeling crampy and was positive the cramps were regular, although I hadn't timed them. They agreed and said she could come up and stay until we went home the next morning. They had no idea my Labour had begun and because I was still chatting, moving around and seemingly acting 'normal' they left me alone between checks. From here the 'cramps' got stronger. I began holding the lump of Black Tourmaline and breathed in the lavender and peppermint on the handkerchief through what I now know were surges. The grounding of the Black Tourmaline was unfathomable and the light surges came and went. By 3:30 the midwife came in and we chatted. I had a few surges while she monitored the baby and I asked her to put on my tens machine. Suddenly everything went from 0 to wow! The tens machine was pointless without realising, I had left it too late and as Emma walked through the door at 4am I greeted her with "please rub my back!!". The surges were coming fast now and the midwife decided to check how dilated I was. When I finally got my bottom on to the bed for her to check, I was 9cm!!

At that moment I felt I needed something to take the edge off. I asked for gas and air as they wheeled me up to the delivery suite. As I reached the bed I instinctively knelt on it, facing over the back. My body had taken over and no matter who asked me to turn, I just knew I needed to stay where I was. I heard Terri arrive (she was our doula, please see my doula story for more information) and I felt myself relax. I had Emma, I had Terri, my baby was ready and my body was in control.

Emma set to work creating the birthing environment we had hoped for. Crystals lay on the windowsill, our playlist filling the air along with the smell of essential oils, each with their own job to do! She continued to concentrate on rubbing my lower back which helped each surge. I remember her dropping Frankinsense on my wrists to help with the transition phase (this seemed to last a while for me) and the effects were instant. I breathed in a new sense of purpose and clarity. No birthing person should ever overlook the power of essential oils. When timed correctly they can create an important shift in the mind - I felt that shift.

Our birth plan flew out of the window as quickly as my waters broke with what felt like a dramatic gush on to the bed. At that moment I realised only I could do this, it was down to me. I had been given the tools, I'd practised them for months and now I had to use them to complete the most important job of all. As the midwife told me to 'bear down' it dawned on me that I couldn't. My subconscious took over and the weeks of Hypnobirthing practise and conditioning came into play. I literally couldn't 'bear down' all I could do was breathe. "Each surge of my body brings my baby closer to me." - that had been my favourite quote, I'd written it on a sticky note on the bathroom mirror but in the hour and 3/4 that

followed it had never felt so true. Each surge really was bringing our baby closer, I could feel him descending, doing his part in the birth, trusting me to trust him to know exactly what to do and when.

I hadn't been prepared for the feeling of him bobbing down then going back up. In truth I now realise he hardly moved but from a birthing person perspective it felt he would almost emerge then retreat back up like a not so fun game of hide and seek! The most surreal part was when his head had emerged and I waited until my body was ready to birth the rest of him. I wish now I had reached down to touch his head, but in that moment all I could do was get ready for the last breath. The final surge brought relief as his body slid out.

When they told me to reach down to take my baby through my legs to hold him I cannot express the feelings which rushed through my entire being. Relief, surprise, shock, joy, wonder and disbelief to name just a few. He was finally here, I could feel his skin against mine, I could hear his cry and his need to be close to me. As I cradled him in, a sudden realisation hit me - I had done it! I had achieved what I never thought I could and birthed my baby - naturally - I was 'that' woman. My body had taken control and proved to me that I was capable of more than I had ever allowed myself to believe.

My son, my Everest, my greatest achievement!"