



Client Testimonial and Birth Story

I worked with Micheline and Tom as their Hypnobirthing practitioner and Doula. Their journey was INCREDIBLE. A true rollercoaster, but they fought for what they wanted, and took back their power. This birth story will make you remember/realise (and gives you shivers) at the true wonder of a birthing women's strength and her innate abilities to bring life in to the world. I am forever blessed and thankful before being able to be part of this amazing journey.

On the 29th of August 2019 I gave birth to my 3rd son, Seth Apollo at home, (on my lounge floor!!) surrounded by the most amazing and loving team. My husband Tom, my mum, my Doula Terri and Newquay midwives, Peggy and Linda.

It was one of the most amazing , raw and empowering experiences of my life, having gone for a home VBA2C (vaginal birth after 2 cesareans), against standard consultant recommendations and having been informed that I was considered "high risk", due to a 1.3 % risk of scar rupture during labour.

QUICK HISTORY

I tried for a home birth with my first son, and after a difficult and complicated 24 hours, starting with a midwife calling in sick, being sent to the Penrice birthing centre and then to Treliske he was delivered by emergency cesarean

I tried for a VBAC (Vaginal birth) with my second son, who was induced against my better intuition at 16 days 'over due date' and even though I was fully dilated and "pushing" ended up another emergency cesarean. This time I was certain that it was unnecessary and more a result of a doctor's ego and impatience that my right as a woman to birth my son naturally was taken from me and my son.

Now, I know my body. and I know it well. It's served me well. I know what its capable of, and I could not accept that THIS body is not capable of birthing these children that it so amazingly knew how to grow.

HOW I PREPARED

3rd pregnancy, and probably my last! My first step was to hire a Hypnobirthing Doula (Terri from Cornwall Hypnobirthing), educate myself as much as possible, surround myself with a tribe of like-minded women who believe in women and our bodies as much as I do.

I attended a home birth workshop with two amazing and very experienced midwives Mandy and Evony (Artemis), and their positivity and enthusiasm (experience based) on the safety and benefits of a home VBAC

sealed the deal for me. That was it I was going to try for a home birth. I knew Tom would need some convincing and my mum would be anything but enthusiastic

But in my heart of hearts I believed that as soon as I crossed the threshold at Treliske hospital, if ANYTHING wasn't going completely straightforward or adhering to a timetable, I would end up being pushed into another cesarean! If you've been in labour before you will be familiar with that place of vulnerability that a woman finds herself in and thus why I believe your support network is crucial.

My midwife Linda, was amazing, we didn't always see eye to eye, but when it came down to the crunch she supported me and put aside her own worries and showed me that she believed in me and my intuitive judgement. When I told her for the first time I was planning a home birth she raised her eyebrows and tried to sway my decision. She booked me in with a consultant to discuss my options. Unfortunately the particular consultant she'd hoped to see was off duty that day, and I met a lady (let's call her DR. Fear) who basically spent the appointment reading me (and Terri my Doula who kindly accompanied me) a list of risks and basically trying to scare the shit out of me. All I heard was what could go wrong. It seemed as though this woman thought I was crazy. I appreciated her concern but also asked if it also occurred to her what could go RIGHT and since I was reading positive stories of Home VBAC's everyday why she wasn't offering me a balanced view on what was possible.

I informed Linda that I was declining any further fear based meetings, she begged me to see one more consultant whom she knew was very supportive, Tom accompanied me this time, we explained that we are very aware of the risks, and that I would be the first to check myself into the hospital if I felt that something was wrong, but I HAD to trust MY OWN intuition, and take back control of my birth story. This consultant was much more positive, and by the end of the meeting everyone was on board, And I had gained their trust.

Now it wasn't to be that straightforward as my 'due date' came and went. 14 days came and went. Calls for induction came and were declined. By now I was getting in the ocean daily, stamping the sand below my feet in a ritualised calling to baby that I was ready. Daily yoga nidra's and daily womb yoga practices encouraging strength, energy freeing and optimal fetal positioning were my focus.

I went to Terri twice for a "baby release" hypnosis script and, while in a completely relaxed state, I asked if there was a reason my body was delaying, the words "SELF DOUBT" emerged in my sub conscious, then I asked my baby if there was a reason for delay, and the phrase "MY TIME IS PERFECT" emerged in my sub conscious. I knew it was a CLEAR message from my baby. MY TIME IS PERFECT. Don't rush this little bun. I focused on this message MY TIME IS PERFECT, from now till labour, anytime self-doubt or fear crept in as the days passed, until nearly 3 weeks after my given due date (standard procedures are to induce at 10 days after)... it all began!

LABOUR AND BIRTH- Hypnotic exhales, the roaring lioness and that paramedic that nearly fudged it all up!

On Wednesday 28th August, Tom and I had just made a plan to sneak off into a guest room and try to "naturally induce labour!!! Just before running to meet him, at 4 pm, I went to the toilet and there was a small mucous show... my heart jumped inside, I knew this was it, but didn't get too excited. My two year old decided to stick onto me, so I went to meet Tom upstairs, with Mason following behind, not caring what he had prevented because I knew it was no longer necessary!!!

My bowels began to clear themselves for about 4 hours! At 8 o'clock I was getting a lot of cramping like feelings, not quite what you would imagine contractions to be like but since my first labour contractions (4 years prior) were very crampy as well I knew this was it.

I put the boys to bed, leaning over the bed and breathing every time one of my crampy contractions came. Then Tom took over and I dashed into the shower, leaning forward with the hot shower spraying on my lower back. I

messed both Linda and Peggy, who were both on call that night, which was all I had prayed for, so I took it as a sign that this was it. I told them just be prepared!

By 8:30pm the boys were asleep and my mum got into action! Reminding me that we had a lot of cleaning and organising to do if we were going to have a baby in this house!!!! We started a mad operation of organising the birthing area. Tom inflated the pool, I cleansed the air by burning sage and palo santo, we lit candles, set up the space, turned on my playlist which consisted mostly of my favourite mantras (and would be on repeat till well after the actual birth) including a particular Shiva mantra that still gives me shivers (or Shivas! ;)) Tom went to bed and I went into a warm bath practising my hypnobirthing/yoga breathing and movements, my mother never leaving my side.

By about midnight I felt the need to call my doula Terri who arrived by 1am, to find me once again on all fours in the bath. I pretty much went between the bath, shower and the couch. We laboured throughout the night (myself, supported by my mother and Terri) . The atmosphere was so peaceful and beautiful, even hypnotic. I calmly breathed through each contraction whether I was standing with the shower on my back, on all fours in the bath, laying on the couch or standing holding the kitchen counter. The mantras that I love so much and the touch and attention of these loving women brought me great strength and confidence.

Terri massaged my feet, sprayed essential oils, reminded me of my affirmations.

I couldn't eat not drink as it just made me vomit.

By 7 am, the kids would be awake soon, and even though my birth plan included them being present, I actually felt the need to focus fully on my surging body and to keep the atmosphere as calm as possible , so while I lay on the couch breathing, Tom, who was awake by now, and thankfully had a good night's sleep ,took their breakfast upstairs for them, which they loved, got them ready and snuck them out and took them to their granny's house.

The midwives were called and they both arrived by 7:15am (Peggy was off duty by now but voluntarily came in to support me. Peggy is a Canadian midwife, very experienced with home birth and knew how important this was to me) I allowed a vaginal examination at 8 am which revealed that even though my cervix was well effaced (thinned out) I was only about 2 cm dilated! (after 12 hours of contractions!) The midwives recommended everyone get a little sleep and then I try to get active to get this thing going! I have to say, there was a moment where my mind began to go to a place that I didn't want it to go. *Maybe I should just pack it in and go to Treliske. After all an epidural feels bloody lovely!! and a cesarean isn't the end of the world.* Self-doubt is funny old thing. You need to nip that sh*t in the bud before it grows and takes on a life of its own.

I told Terri to go and have a sleep in the kid's room and something came over me. F*ck the sleep. It was time to get active. Harness your affirmations Mich. Harness your inner warrior. It was time to become the lioness.

BIRTH

I got up and walk around and suddenly had a massive contraction in the kitchen, half squatting through it. I went in the shower and had a few more huge contractions breathing and squatting through each, with the shower running on my back. When I came out of the shower there was blood on the floor which I wasn't sure of, so we woke up Terri, called the midwives, who were still nearby they came back and examined me. I was now 6 cm dilated! (this was 90 min after the first examination when I was only 2 cm.)

I spent the next 4 hours in and out of the pool ROARING through contractions. The energy had changed, I felt power surging through me. I felt my own power and the power of all the generations of women that had birthed before me. I F*CKING LOVED IT!

At one point however, the midwives suspected that there was still a lip of the cervix that hadn't completely dilated, which was why the baby wasn't completely descending. They got me out of the pool for a vaginal exam on the couch. There was a tiny lip of the cervix not quite dilated, so here some AMAZING OLD SCHOOL COMPETENT midwifery came into action. Laying on my back I pressed my foot into Peggy's shoulder and during the next 5 or so contractions she got her fingers in there and on my exhale bearing down she used her fingers to push the last bit of the cervix back. I won't lie, THAT PART WAS VERY INTENSE. After the 5th or so time she got it! Cervix was clear - get low and get this baby out!

Now I was lunging on the floor, surge after surge baby was crowning and then going back inside, (Peggy assured me that baby was just softening the tissue so there was no tearing. This comforted me even though I was feeling impatient. Finally I got myself into a deep squat and I could feel the top of my baby's head with each surge.... it was happening

until.....

THE OVER-ZEALOUS PARAMEDIC THAT MADE IT ALL ABOUT HER!

THE LOUNGE DOOR FLEW OPEN MID CONTRACTION.....

We all looked up there was a paramedic, a young pretty woman with a blonde ponytail who meant business.

"I can't get through!" she shouted (NO INTRODUCTION, NO EXPLANATION AS TO WHAT SHE WAS DOING HERE, JUST ...MOOOOVE"

Peggy, the legend that she is, ignored her and continued attending to me, so she pushed her way through to me, How long has she been pushing???

Peggy- about 1 and a half hours

Paramedic-I need to do her obs!

Me-what do you want

Paramedic-I didn't come here to be spoken to like that!

She starts digging in her bag, clips this heart rate thing on my finger...

....

VIBE IS CHANGING.....

WHAT THE F*CK IS HAPPENING!

I WAS JUST HAVING A BABY, NOW I'M A MEDICAL PATIENT

DEJA VU, 2017, THE EVENTS THAT LED TO MY CESAREAN, SOMEONE WHO JUST CAME AND SNATCHED IT AWAY....

Something came over me; I took the clip off my finger and threw it, then I looked at her and shouted

"I'M IN LABOUR. WILL YOUUUU FUCKKKK OFFF!!!!!!!"

She storms out of the room in a tantrum to rival my toddlers'...

In that moment I swear the universe aligned. Something about telling her to f*ck off lit the fire that burned away the last bit of self-doubt inside of me - I had finally taken my power back, I had finally trusted my own body despite everything around me. I actually looked at Tom and laughed as she left the room! Now she was in the corridor talking to Linda so Tom goes and tells her to please go outside and stop disturbing us!

15 minutes later, my body surged I squatted, I roared, Seth Apollo's head was out and the rest of him just slid out like jelly. My baby was in my arms, 21.5 hours after the first signs of labour. I did it. WE did it!!

It wasn't quick, it wasn't straight-forward. I wasn't even in the pool. but he was here, and he was perfect, and I credit the loving strength of the women that held the space for me and Tom during the process and I loved every minute.

PLACENTA

In a seemingly cruel twist of fate the placenta refused to descend, possibly stuck on an old cesarean scar, (I'm sure if I waited it would have come out on its own but I was so stoked with the baby's birth, I didn't feel to risk any complications) It actually turned out to be part of destiny as I transferred to the hospital I met 2 lovely female paramedics, who weren't surprised by their colleague's childish behaviour. I told them to thank her because she gave me the fire that I needed to get the baby out! As my mum and Tom arrived, they saw the doctor that delivered my first son, Dallas, exactly 4 years (minus 2 days) before. She gushed and thanked him.

In Treliske, who walks in to see me but Dr Fear, the initial consultant, I got to tell her in person that I delivered my baby at home. I made my peace with her as she was the one who pulled the placenta out, in the same room that I delivered both Dallas AND Mason. It was surreal. Rolling in the deep by Adele was playing.

And finally, the next morning, who opens my curtain to check on me and the baby but Evony, the first person that told me I could have a home VBAC. I got to tell her all about it and thank her in person. Seeing her felt fateful and as she closed the curtain, I felt this chapter of pregnancy and childbirth and all that I needed to learn about myself, that began 4 years before was closing.

I am so grateful to each of my children for how they came into the world and what they taught me. I am so blessed AMEN!

Note: It turned out that my midwife had called the paramedics to be on standby because there was some blood loss, and they 'interpreted' it as a haemorrhaging woman in labour. Had she assessed the situation when she arrived or even asked somebody what was the situation, she would have soon realised that there was no emergency! She's lucky that all she got was one F*ck off, for disturbing a woman who had had a baby's head crowning through her vagina!!!!