



Client Testimonial and Birth Story

One of the most raw, honest, and powerful birth stories you will ever read! Hannah goes in to some amazing detail with regard to all aspects of her journey - from antenatal fears, hypnobirthing and being sceptical, through to having to dig deeper than ever before to calmly and confidently bringing her baby in to the world.. What you are about to read is all Hannah's own words, but before you begin I would like to say a huge thank you to Hannah and Patrick for allowing me to share their experience to inspire and empower others. Enjoy!!

“So this is what I call a gloves off testimonial - it may not be all rosy but is the truth.

Before Birth in February 2019 I fell pregnant with my daughter Malani Belle, me and Patrick had planned this pregnancy, so I was pretty in tune with everything that was going on. After announcing I was pregnant at 12 weeks suddenly, I had this huge worry and panic that I was going to have to deliver my baby sounds ridiculous how else did I think this would happen?! But the fear that set in was unbearable every day felt like every minute I was worrying and panicking about birth, making up scenarios in my head of bad things happening, pain that's unbearable and so on and so on. I didn't tell anyone about this not even really Patrick I would say I am scared but not how scared I was. I couldn't bear the thought of this anymore so I did some research, I am a person who needs to be organised and have everything planned, Yes, you can't plan for a birth BUT you can be prepared. All we see on social media and TV is how bad Birthing is I couldn't deal with it.

I found out about Hypnobirthing and honestly at first I was thinking this isn't for me I hate meditation or anything like that hate is a strong word maybe dislike I have such an overactive mind I don't like sitting there and being “calm” so reading about breathing your baby down and visualisation etc I was thinking you are having a laugh! Anyway, there was something I was drawn to, so I ordered a book called “Your Birth Your Baby” I started reading this and instantly I knew I had found something for me. Immediately me and Patrick read this book together and started talking about how we wanted to do Hypnobirthing to help me and him deliver our baby. Whilst we started reading this book, I researched local Hypnobirthing and came across Cornwall Hypnobirthing, I got in touch with Terri and booked a private Hypnobirthing course for me and Patrick. I want to add here that we also went to free antenatal classes but no disrespect to our health care they do an amazing job, but these classes were shocking! I left wanting to cry as they joked about you will NEED pain relief and YOU WILL NEVER SLEEP. I sat through a 3 hour class and was hoping to feel educated but I left feeling disheartened and worried. I just knew we just had to do this ourselves.

When we met Terri and also started reading the “Hypnobirthing book” which she recommended as this is the original Hypnobirthing book. I started to feel in control and not as scared anymore. Hypnobirthing really taught us both how to stay calm, control my breathing and use certain techniques to help during the lead up to birth and birth itself. Terri is an amazing person and really helped me start to understand the process of birth. Again I am a person who needs to know everything step by step and this may sound ridiculous again but I had no idea how the uterus worked and how the oxytocin hormone really worked in labour. I honestly had no idea how amazing the body was and how we were made to do this. We don't get taught this EVER! Understanding how the body worked and how I can control certain elements at birth made me feel like I can do this.

What Terri also introduced for us was that it wasn't just me anymore Patrick had a huge roll to play and he pretty much would be in control on the day. At first I was thinking yeah right I am a control freak that won't be happening, but the more I learned, the more I understood that Patrick had a real role to play it made sense, understanding that he was there to make sure I was okay and all I had to do was focus on me was amazing. It really made us bond more than ever before it's such a special thing to have your partner part of the pregnancy and birth, I couldn't believe the relief I felt that he understood the whole process and that he would be there and calm knowing what to do at each step I felt empowered.

So, in summary doing our homework and doing the hypnobirthing course with Terri and really understanding the body and what happens in birth I started to be a lot more calmer. What we were also taught is what happens medically in hospital if certain things do or don't happen in birth which again made me feel more at ease as I now knew what each process was from having medical intervention to none and knowing what rights I have as a mother, the fact you don't need to go on the same steam train into the medical route again. This route may be the best way for you and is absolutely right, but me personally I don't do well in medical environments.

Me and Patrick decided that we wanted a water birth and to not have any drugs (all being well), again people asked me about this and would smirk and say “oh yeah just you wait”, which quite frankly really pissed me off - what happened for one person doesn't mean it will happen to me! But this made me doubt everything I was learning and scared me even more. I am grateful for certain friends and family who gave me honest experiences and were so supportive of this way. I would stay quiet when people used to share horror stories with me. As a mother I would never do that to someone - we need to be supportive with words.

So in the lead up to birth I had no complications, I was training and feeling great, we carried on practising our hypnobirthing techniques to help me get as prepared as I can - I will add here I still had doubts in my mind and I still had fear present but underneath from what Terri taught us I knew it would be ok. I have a massive thankyou to Terri she is a super kind and caring person who really did make my pregnancy and birth so much better than I ever expected it to be coming across her and really being taught with care was the whole part of this amazing experience. Terri's knowledge is incredible I just wanted to wrap her up and keep her in my pocket. I can not express how valuable this course with her is. No matter what route you want to choose medical or non medical this course will help all mothers, fathers or birth partners.

The Birth - learning from our Hypnobirthing course to write a birthing plan we wrote 2 plans, the first plan was how I wanted to birth Malani in the birth pool etc no drugs. The second plan was what I wanted to happen if we had to have medical intervention. In a nutshell we had planned a water birth at Trelliske

where we had made a playlist for us to have a calm, relaxing music on, we had got some aromatherapy oils to have in a diffuser. We had all these little things to help make the birth a calm relaxing environment and birth plan at the ready, we felt ready. As my due date approached again I had self-doubt whether I could do this etc, but this is where Patrick really helped and started to go through our Hypnobirthing techniques which consisted of a light touch massage- this was like a soft tickle but honestly it worked wonders used to calm me down and I would relax and fall asleep.

D-Day Monday 1st December around 3am - I woke up with what can only be described as intense period pains in my back, I got up and walked around and got back into bed. Patrick was up at 5am for work and I stayed in bed. Shortly after I got up as the pain had not subsided. Around 8am what can only be described as waves started to happen which were like period pains but a little more intense but only in my back and lower tummy. They started to come more regularly and last around 30 secs at this point I started to time them and they were around 8 mins apart I knew I was having contractions, I called the midwife to check if I was having them as I still didn't know if I was or not. She said it sounded like they had started. By this time it's around 10am and Patrick was due back from work. Throughout the day we recorded the contractions and they were getting closer and longer. Around 5pm they were 4 mins apart and quite intense so we called the midwife who said we could go down to the birth centre so off we went bags packed in the car, for the next 30 mins what I can describe in the car wasn't the best but I knew once we were there I could relax. My contractions were really intense at this point - but manageable.

We got there and was waiting to be assessed, we were asked if I wanted an internal exam, which I did, so we could see what stage I was, by this time I was feeling a bit stressed and my contractions were every 3 mins. I was assessed and the dreaded words you don't want to hear was you are not dilated - not even 1 cm you need to go home!!! I was like 'whaaat how can that be I am having contractions every 3 mins and they are intense. God please don't make me do that drive again!!!' So off we left to come back home "until they got a little more intense," she said, this gave Patrick chance to eat too.

It got to around 7:30pm and I was feeling a bit agitated and my contractions were feeling quite intense. So off we went back to the birth centre. That drive again! But we made it, contractions every 2 - 3 mins now we got into the birth centre and I was like 'finally I am here, let's get comfortable!' I was asked if I wanted to have an internal exam and I said yes so I could know in my head where I was in the process. I had an exam and I was 0cm, yes a big fat 0cm dilated are you F-ing kidding me??!! The midwife that was on the night shift could see I was not wanting to leave again so she let us go into one of the birthing rooms and get comfortable. The rooms at Treliske are absolutely amazing nice and spacious low dim lighting, own bathroom, bean bags and beds such a lovely space. Ok so now been in latent labour for 17 hours and not dilated so as you can imagine I was tired and a little bit cranky. The most frustrating thing for me is that I didn't understand how I can be having these contractions that were pretty intense now every 3 mins for 60-70 secs, anyway I tried to focus the best I could on breathing through my contractions and managing each contraction.

It got into the early hours of Tuesday morning and I was still having contractions every 3 minutes by this point I had doubt slip into my mind, I was panicking I wouldn't be able to do it - each stage I had Patrick reassuring me and helping me but I just felt exhausted, the midwife could see I was struggling a little bit and could see I needed to sleep and need a little bit of relief - which I 100% did - so was offered pethidine to help me sleep and relax a bit more, (at this point I was deviating from my plan and I felt a huge guilt over me) but I just needed to get my energy up. I accepted the pethidine and it did the job it made my contractions less intense and I was able to drift in and out of sleep for a few hours this was around 2am

in the morning. Through this whole time Patrick was on hand every step speaking to the midwife out of the room so I wasn't being bombarded and he was on hand with fluids and energy gels - to my dislike as they tasted rank but did the job I definitely recommend these.

I have now been in latent phase of labour for 24 hours long hard graft, so I am feeling a bit more energized now and thinking right let's get ready for the next step, the time is now around 7am and the morning midwife's switch over. A new midwife came in and asked me how I was getting on etc and I was still having contractions every 3 minutes, she asked me if I wanted to be examined. The midwives are so good, they know that it's invasive and try not to do this, but as I had been in labour for 26 hours it was best to see my progress, had the examination and yeah you guessed it I was 0 cm dilated!!! No way I was at this point thinking what the hell is going on! How can this be, is this really how it is?! A million things going in my head.

Because I had been in labour for so long I had to now be moved down to the antenatal ward (which in no disrespect is not a very pleasant place) It's noisy and busy with lots of different people, with all kinds of issues from labour to emergencies. I was upset by this point and I didn't know what was up, Patrick again was helping me through my breathing, doing light touch massage and rubbing my back to help me through. I was placed on a ward and told a doctor would be with me shortly. At this point my contractions had slowed right down, but when they came wow they were intense. The doctor came and spoke to both me and Patrick and we started to hear the dreaded words of inducing, breaking waters. I started to get really upset as I didn't want to go down this route I didn't want to not be in control. Me and Patrick spoke about each moment and each path and how that would affect me and more importantly Malani, my ultimate goal of why we learnt about hypnobirthing and the birth and chose all the options we did is to have a calm birth for me and her having her come earth side feeling calm not stressed. We spoke about maybe having my waters broken (but I needed to be at least 1cm for this to happen) the other option was to have a synthetic hormone to help my cervix dilate. I started to accept the fact that my plans were now going to change.

I was given a tens machine to help with my contractions and the doctor said she was going to leave me another couple of hours, by this time it's now past lunchtime so total time in labour 33 hours. I had also had some codeine at this point which, to be honest, didn't really do anything. Patrick is helping me stay fuelled with energy gels too and water, I still wanted to try and stick this out and avoid the medical route, so at this point we really dialled in everything we learnt in hypnobirthing. I had the tens machine on my back which had a boost button which every time I felt a contraction coming Patrick hit the boost button and it made it less intense. Patrick at this point sat behind me and was doing light touch massage on my back which really helped me, he also started to help me do some visualization techniques, which really took my mind off everything that was going on (honestly I was so sceptical about this but it 100% works.) We had a really good routine going and it was the first time in the 30+ hours I felt in control.

Times up - the doctor came round at 4pm and said we need to make a decision about what we were going to do and she wanted to do an internal exam, whilst she got ready to do this I was saying in my head I am dilated 4cm I could just tell. I needed to be 4cm to be in active labour and be able to go back to the birth centre. I had my internal examination and I was 4cm!!!! Thank God!!! I was also told at this point that Malani's head wasn't pushing down on my cervix because she was back to back! So now, finally it made sense. There was no pressure on my cervix to help this process so this is why it took so long. At this point I wanted to celebrate, honestly, I had never felt so happy in the 37 hours. Immediately I asked to go back

to the birthing centre, and they were pretty shocked I asked to do so but said yes as I was in active labour.

Its time - It's now 5pm and we head back to the birth centre I get checked into a room and we start and make it comfortable put on our music on, our smellies on and got comfortable. Contractions wise were coming every 3 -4 mins. The pool was being filled up, but I wasn't allowed in this just yet as it could cause me to relax. We used gas and air which massively helped my breathing, Patrick at this point constantly making sure I had water and was rubbing my back and doing light touch massage. Things were progressing really well.

After 2 hours, I got into the pool and immediately had more relief and felt more confident through each contraction, Patrick not leaving my side and working through each contraction with me. The change over of the midwives happened for the evening and I was being looked after by a lovely midwife called Kirsty, who already looked after me the previous night, so again I started to feel even better about everything and started to feel more relaxed, around 7pm Kirsty asked to check me to see where I was so I had an examination and I was 6cm so progressing. They say you will dilate 1 cm every 2 hours so if that was the case, I had another 8 hours to go. In my head I said no way she's coming before 12am!

40 hours into labour now. Things began getting more intense but me and Patrick carried on doing what we were doing. My Mum was also here along with my Dad (who was not in the room) My mum was there but didn't interfere with what we were doing but was nice to know she was there. I didn't take note of anything really apart for what Patrick was saying or telling me. Around 9pm I felt the need to push - I panicked a little as I thought her head came out, Kirsty was not in the room and I was telling Patrick to get her. She came in really calm and asked what's the matter, I said I could feel her head, she checked to see what was going on. This wasn't her head - this was her amniotic sack, my waters had not broken but the water sack had come away and came out like a water balloon (weird I know) but the best way to describe it.

Ok so fast forward 2 hours and I now was getting my contractions along with the need to bear down and push, I am still in the water at this point no gas and air as I was focusing too much on what I needed to do. Every contraction I could feel her moving down I knew that I just needed to dig in and I would get to meet her, Patrick was with me every step telling me what to do and caring for me at each point. 1 hour later at 12:15am my beautiful daughter was born in the water. She was passed to me and I could not believe it. We had done it, the way I wanted to, and she was healthy and calm. It was the best experience I have had.

We did delayed cord clamping and kept my placenta for encapsulation. Malani was born and I was ok - no tears or need for medical intervention. We spent time bonding with our new daughter and relaxing; it was great. 2 hours later we got ready to come home, by 3:30am I was home our little family all together.

Without Patrick learning and being so calm and loving through all the hard times in the latent phase to the birthing (he was incredible) I don't know how I would've done it. I am always grateful to him and love him more than ever! I honestly thought I had lost control at one point and if it wasn't for everything we learnt and Patrick persevering and helping me through, I know the outcome would have been very different. Our whole experience really was great, I had a tough time in the latent phase but now knowing she was back to back I understand why.

If you're reading all of this, it's my opinion and experience, but hypnobirthing 100% helped me have a calm birth in the end. Not every route plans out but if you stay in control and have the support you can do it. I am looking forward to my next baby knowing everything I do now. My 1st time wasn't perfect and I had some challenges, but it panned out to be the perfect ending. Total of 45 hours labour, but out of the 45 eight of them were the active part and that was the easiest bit.

Malani Belle Devaney born 4th December 12:15am 6.9lb.”