



Client Feedback and Birth Story

Kelly and Jim's birth story of their daughter Emily.

I first met Terri at a pregnancy Pilates class, she came to meet the group to tell us about the benefits of HypnoBirthing. I was sceptical about what she was saying at first but having heard so many 'horrific birth stories', HypnoBirthing was something I had briefly read about already. I thought it wouldn't hurt to contact her and all I can say is I have no regrets at all!

Terri came to discuss the course with my partner and I one evening. Her positivity about HypnoBirthing reassured me that it was right for us, Jim needed a bit more persuading but he agreed to take part in the course as it was what I wanted to do. After the second session he was converted, we both really understood the labour process and how the methods Terri was teaching us would help me be in manage my labour.

I read the book Terri supplied but the 5 course sessions where we practised the techniques were invaluable and really cemented what I had read. After the sessions we felt thoroughly prepared to meet our new little one. I continued to practise the breathing techniques so they became second nature and I continued to listen to the rainbow relaxation CD every day, this really helped me to relax and I'm sure contributed to such a trouble free pregnancy.

The course over and our bags packed, it was just a waiting game

I had spent the morning doing my daily horse chores, not giving any thought that I would meet baby Emily fairly soon. At 2pm I was driving home and I felt a few twinges and light stomach cramps. I didn't think anything of them and took the dogs for an hour's walk, however it didn't take long for the waves of cramps to get stronger. These continued until about 7pm but I carried on as usual, cooking tea etc.

At this point we realised that labour was actually happening and it wasn't just 'practise tightenings' I was experiencing. I felt I needed to focus at this point to work with the cramps and sensations I was feeling. I put on my rainbow relaxation CD and sat on my birthing ball at the kitchen table – the only place I felt comfortable was on my ball but I needed something to lean on.

I began using my calm breathing whilst listening to the CD to help keep me relaxed. Then when I felt a surge coming, I used longer breaths to focus me through each one. I think I counted every second from 7pm until I left the house that evening! The counting, combined with the breathing, the CD and moving on the ball really helped me get into a relaxed 'zone' – there was a pain but it was a manageable strong pressure rather than an unbearable pain. I visualised waves too, to help ride the surges and positively reminded myself that my body can't throw anything at me it can't deal with – I just needed to work out how to deal with it!

We timed the surges but they were not regular, although were lasting over 30 seconds. At 9pm we rang Penrice Birthing Centre but were told to stay at home as only having started active labour a couple of hours before, I would have a while to go yet. At this point Jim was building the crib, having previously experienced the births of his 2 sons, he was predicting a long night ahead.

I continued in my zone, just breathing through each surge. I couldn't stand anyone talking to me or touching me, this just distracted my focus. The surges were getting more regular. We rang Penrice at 11pm to again be told they wouldn't expect me to be ready to come in as it was my first baby, I spoke to them myself and they eventually agreed we could go in. The walk from the kitchen to the car was horrendous (my focus was lost when I had to move and my coping methods went out the window) and the car journey was even worse! (Had I not been fully dilated at this point, I am sure I would have been able to continue with the breathing methods on route to the Birth Centre).

As we pulled into Penrice car park I could feel that the baby was coming – this was 12:15am on 20th December. I made it inside and laid down to be examined but it felt so unnatural and uncomfortable I got up, I needed to be in the upright positions we had discussed in the sessions with Terri. It was at this point I was told I was fully dilated and I had cut it fine getting to the Birth Centre!

I wanted to get into the birthing pool but there wasn't time to run the pool, this was the only point I really got anxious throughout the whole labour as I had set my heart on a water birth if I got to Penrice. However, I gave myself some harsh words and got my counting and breathing rhythm back to get refocused.

I squatted and leant over the bed, then my waters broke and within 5 minutes I could feel her head crowning. I resisted the urge to push and breathed as we had discussed in our sessions. Emily was born at 12:35am (20 minutes after we arrived at the hospital). I'm just glad I wasn't going to Treliske, as I would not have got there in time!

I was so proud to have delivered my baby with no pain relief and so naturally, at no point during the labour process did I feel I needed any pain relief (and I don't have a high pain threshold at all). The whole time I was at home, I felt I was in control of staying relaxed using the methods Terri had thought me, which enabled my body to labour naturally and fairly quickly for a first baby.

Emily was very calm when she was born and was feeding shortly after. I delivered my placenta naturally after about 20 minutes and only had a minor graze which didn't require any intervention. We had some rest for a few hours and then left the hospital at mid day to go home.

Doing the HypnoBirth course certainly made us both see birth in a very different way - by how working with the body and not against it makes a huge difference, it certainly did for me. I really enjoyed my labour experience and wouldn't have changed anything. 'Enjoyed' and 'labour' were not two words I would have thought or put together at the start of my pregnancy.