

## Emma and Dan's Story of Nancy's Birth

Emma and Dan attended Zana's hypnobirthing course when Emma was 30 weeks pregnant with their first baby. Emma had read lots about hypnobirthing and had heard many stories about couples who had positive birth experiences by using its techniques. Emma hoped that the course would help to keep her calm and positive in the run up to the birth so that she would be able to take everything in her stride when the time came to meet their little girl.

Hypnobirthing allowed Emma to cope with being induced and enabled her to manage the whole birth without any pain relief. It also gave Dan the confidence to support Emma throughout the birth, keeping her calm and providing support exactly how it was needed.

Here's the email Emma sent to Zana, just after her baby's birth:

I attended one of your hypnobirthing classes a few months ago. Our little girl was born yesterday and I just wanted to send a message straight away because I wanted to thank you. I had to be induced due to my hind waters going but I was induced and had no pain relief whatsoever, not even paracetamol. I can't believe it actually allowed me to get through an induction like that; it just goes to show that hypnobirthing isn't just for people who have 'natural births'. I was petrified of being induced as it was the only thing remaining in my fears that I just couldn't shift... but it must have worked!

Dan was also incredible and helped me through the whole thing and I couldn't have asked for better midwives.

Thank you again, I am truly forever grateful!

Emma

Then, a while later, Zana received their whole story...

My due date came and went, Nancy was very comfortable and showed no signs of arriving anytime soon but it didn't faze me. At 40 weeks +2 my midwife offered a sweep to see if that would trigger labour. I agreed to the sweep as I desperately wanted to meet our baby girl. Over the next few days, I gradually lost my mucus plug and felt things were finally starting. I had a second sweep booked for 40 weeks +5 and I reached this day with nothing further happening. On the morning before my appointment for my second sweep, I felt a small trickle of fluid but didn't think anything of it because I had felt this a few times previously but something made me keep the pad that I was wearing that morning to show the midwife later that day.

I attended my midwife appointment with my partner, and everything was fine with all the normal checks. I mentioned the trickle and showed the pad to the midwife and after answering some questions, we agreed that everything was fine and it was nothing to worry about. We left the appointment and went about our day. About half an hour later, my midwife called me and explained that after we left she felt a bit unsure about what I had told her about the trickle, and so she had phoned to speak to a midwife at the hospital. She asked me to go up to the hospital just

to be safe and be checked over, to make sure that the trickle wasn't anything to do with my waters.

The midwives at the hospital monitored the baby and did a test to see if amniotic fluid was present. The test was positive for amniotic fluid. The midwife left to discuss this with the doctor and returned with a leaflet in her hand. As soon as I saw the leaflet, my heart started beating really fast and I could feel myself becoming emotional. The one thing that I had been struggling to use hypnobirthing to 'let go' of, was the fear of being induced. The midwife explained that they needed to induce me for the safety of me and the baby, that my hind waters had started to leak. This meant that the risk of infection would go up as more time passed. I had heard so many negative stories about being induced and I really didn't want to have any interventions other than the sweeps. This immediately raised my anxiety. I wasn't prepared to risk the health of my baby once the facts had been explained to me and so I agreed to the induction. I expected to have a few days to prepare for this, but they wanted me to phone back in the morning and be prepared to come in at any time from 8am. That means I had about 14 hours until I potentially had to be back at the hospital. I burst into tears on the way home, my anxiety got the better of me and I struggled to bring the hypnobirthing practices to help me get through this news.

My partner, Dan, reminded me of all the positive affirmations that we had been working on and talked me through what was going to happen the next day. He told me to go and lay down in bed and left me with my hypnobirthing track, allowing me to regain my composure. Later that evening, we busied ourselves with making sure our bags were by the door ready to go straight out the door in the morning. After a very restless night, we called the hospital in the morning and were really surprised to be asked to come up to the hospital for 8am – the emotions came flooding back because I expected the ward to be busy and for me to be waiting around in the morning and to have time to prepare. We gathered all of our bags and headed straight up to the hospital.

On arrival, we were taken straight into one of the delivery rooms and made comfortable. I explained my worries to the midwife and she was incredible. She explained everything and understood what hypnobirthing meant and what I would need during the birth. She took my birth preferences from me and went through how we could tailor them to an induced labour. This helped to ease some of my anxieties because it meant that I could still have some say in what happened during the birth, despite being induced.

The first part of my induction was lots of monitoring to make sure that the baby remained healthy and active. Once they were happy that this was the case, the midwife applied the prostaglandin gel and told us to come and go from the delivery suite as we please and to be back in 6 hours' time. We kept ourselves busy by walking, walking and more walking. We stopped for lunch and walked some more. During this time, I felt what I thought might be contractions but they were very irregular and the pain was very mild. After 6 hours had passed, we went back to the delivery room and met with the midwife. Again, my anxiety levels rose because I expected to be able to let my labour continue naturally after the prostaglandin gel had taken time to work. The midwife explained that they needed to get my labour started as soon as possible due to the risk to me and the baby. I agreed and the midwife prepared me for induction: I got changed, the cannula was inserted, the monitors were attached and everything explained. The midwife then broke my waters.

The hormone drip was started at around 5pm. At the beginning, I was able to walk around, bounce on the ball, chat to Dan and the midwives and a relative that visited. It didn't take long for the contractions to start coming regularly and more strongly. Even though they were stronger, I was able to take them one at a time and was still recovering quickly between contractions. The midwife really helped me keep up my hypnobirthing techniques and provided a massage to my hand and lower back with aromatherapy oils, dimmed the lights and left us to listen to the hypnobirthing track. As the contractions become stronger and closer together, it was time for the midwife shift change over to happen. I wasn't aware of this at the time (Dan told me afterwards) but during the changeover of midwives, my contractions drastically reduced. When the midwives changed over at 8pm, it also meant that a few observations were due which made my anxiety rise. I was 7cm dilated. The midwife had to put the dose of the hormone drip up as they needed my labour to continue quickly. The contractions got stronger and stronger and it became more difficult to find a comfortable position – I tried many different positions and even tried to keep mobile but the only comfortable position I could find was sitting on the toilet! After trying more positions and getting a bit frustrated, I mentioned this to the midwife. She immediately provided a solution to this and changed the hospital bed to look like a huge commode with a dip in the middle. This was a really comfortable position and I remained in this position until I delivered our baby. Between 8pm and 9pm, my contractions were very strong. I kept reminding myself of the affirmation “each contraction is one closer to meeting my baby”. In this hour is when I struggled the most and I definitely turned into ‘scary lady’. Dan really kept me focused at this time and helped me get through and manage my reactions to the pain. It was at this stage that I requested an epidural, I felt that I just couldn't manage any longer. I hadn't had any other pain relief so far during the labour, no gas and air, and so this was the first time I had felt that I couldn't cope. I begged for the epidural and, I now know, that my partner and midwife were trying to stall me having the epidural as the midwife felt that I didn't have much longer to go until I would be ready to start delivering. I never thought it would be possible (even though I had read people experiencing it) but I actually managed to sleep between contractions. It was only for a few minutes at a time but I was able to take myself out of the situation and prepare for the next contraction. This is when I fully realised the power of hypnobirthing! Before the anaesthetist got to the delivery room, I kept feeling the urge to push and kept trying to push. The midwife didn't want me to be pushing if I wasn't fully dilated and asked if I wanted her to check. I agreed as I really felt that I needed to push. The midwife found that I was 10cm dilated at a few minutes past 9. Our baby girl, Nancy, was born at 9.13pm. We had the most magical hour or so of skin to skin and feeding whilst the placenta was delivered.

As I had had no pain relief or anything to hinder my recovery, I was able to get up, have a shower and get ready to be transferred to the post-natal ward. Nancy had to be monitored every 2 hours due to risk of infection and we needed to stay the night. By 11am the next morning we were able to go home and start our life as a family of 3. We had the most amazing experience, despite being induced, and I would do it all over again tomorrow.

Thank you so much to Zana. We spent two whole days with Zana doing the hypnobirthing course and I really believe that our positive experience is down to Zana, her patience and guidance. I recommend her course wholeheartedly, even to first time mums because it really does work!