

Assisting Childbirth and Pregnancy with Hypnosis

by Marilyn Wienand, CHt

HypnoBirthing® is the best thing that has happened for pregnant women since sliced bread, or, better yet, disposable diapers. HypnoBirthing® is a program using hypnosis to assist women through pregnancy and birth. The woman has hypnotherapy sessions, which give her an ability to relax and allow her body to open for the birth and to be free of fear or resistance. Old fears from previous programming are replaced with positive attitudes and expectations. She visualizes how the uterus and the body open to allow the baby to come through the birth canal easily and with a minimum of discomfort (some women experience no pain at all). The babies arrive unstressed and full of vitality, and the mother recovers from the birth experience very quickly.

Besides the weekly or bi-monthly hypnosis sessions and group classes, the mother to be listens to a self-hypnosis tape daily, practicing the skill of slipping into the Alpha or Theta brain wave level easily (Alpha and Theta brain waves are the relaxed levels of brain activity, typical of the hypnotic or trance state). The therapy sessions and the tape teach the mother how to relax deeply and allow the natural function of her body to take over, without being hindered by tension or fear.

The husband, or birth partner, is taught how to assist her into the relaxed state, and they practice at home on a regular basis. During the birthing experience, he will also be giving her positive affirmations and encouragement and act as an advocate for her, if necessary. There has been much information in the recent times about the mind/body connection and the power of guided imagery. We can use these techniques to greatly benefit the mother with the birth partner's help.

Mothers and fathers can have a holy experience during the birth, bonding with the new baby in a deep and mystical way. During the weeks preceding the birth, the mother and father tune into the baby and communicate how much they love and welcome him or her. During the birth, a triangle of energy is created between these three beings. Think about the possible impact this approach could have on the child and the family!

In this approach, the mother is taught to never listen to fear stories about birthing. All old programming in her psyche is replaced with positive expectations. Fear affects the birthing process in a very negative way because it leads to physical tension. The body and, specifically, the uterus are hindered from loosening and opening in the natural way. In the absence of tension and fear, an euphoric state, which is a natural pain blocker, can be created.

As a Hypnotherapist, I know how much mental expectations affect the body. When the mother has received deep programming to respond to the birthing experience with total relaxation and positive expectation, this is what her body provides. As an example of how the mind controls the body, imagine eating a piece of lemon right now. Undoubtedly, you began to salivate.

Culturally, our society also has deep programming regarding the birth experience. In pre-history, during the time of Goddess worship, the woman giving birth was revered and coddled. She represented the Goddess. Conversely, the attitude of birthing being called the "curse of Eve" goes back further than 2000 years. During the dark ages, she was hidden away in dark, dirty places and was denied medical help; the male doctors were not allowed to assist her. Midwives were even called "weh Mutter" (pain mother) in medieval Germany. This attitude still exists in many parts of the third world today. It is time

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for this to change! Not only do we need to assist the woman to release her current fears but to also release the deep programming from the past.

I believe that every woman has within her the power to call upon her natural birthing instincts, with the help of this wonderful program. Mothers are taught to be okay with the situation if intervention is needed. It seldom is, however. Typically, less than 1 in 100 births need medical intervention if the program is followed sincerely.

When labor comes, she responds to a learned signal to go into hypnosis and extreme deep relaxation during each contraction, which we call "surges." Virtually anyone can experience hypnosis. It is a natural state that the mind experiences off and on. For instance, when you are driving and suddenly realize you don't know where you are, this is called "road hypnosis." Your subconscious took over while the conscious mind was off somewhere else. We often slip into this state while watching TV or reading a good book. Everything disappears except the one thing on which the mind is focusing.

Each couple participating in the program attends classes, and receives the tape and book developed by Marie Mongan, the founder of the HypnoBirthing® Institute. Please look at the web site for more information. www.hypnobirthing.com. The following materials are available from the institute: 1) the book, HypnoBirthing®, A Celebration of Life; 2) the video, HypnoBirthing® Stories; and two tapes, 3) Birthing Affirmations and 4) Rainbow Relaxation.