



Hypnosis for Childbirth - What Is It and How Does It Work? by Kerry Tuschhoff, HCHI, CHt, CI

Mention Labor and Delivery to an expectant mom in her last trimester, and chances are good that her heart will begin to race, her mind floods with concern and in some cases, panic. She knows that the day is coming when a force much bigger than herself will take over and her body will govern itself completely. For some women this is a very fearful event, but for a Hypnobabies mom, it is an eagerly anticipated challenge.

These wise women use hypnosis to eliminate pain and fear from the birthing experience. In the past, the word "hypnosis" conjured up images of stage hypnotists re-creating Elvis, or mesmerizing others into embarrassing situations. Now it is common for hypnosis to be used therapeutically in many areas of medicine, dental and surgical anesthesia and personal therapy sessions. Even so, there are many misconceptions regarding hypnosis that can dissuade those contemplating this powerful tool. Here are a few FACTS:

- * **All hypnosis is self-hypnosis; the hypnotherapist is only the guide.** A person chooses to enter into a hypnotic state, stay in and come out **at will**.
- * **Approximately 90-95% of the population can be hypnotized.** Willingness, belief and motivation have great influence over hypnotizability.
- * During hypnosis you are neither asleep nor unconscious, **and will always "come out" whenever you wish.** You are always in **complete** control.
- * **Stronger-minded and stronger-willed people are easier to hypnotize;** not the other way around as is usually assumed.
- * **You cannot be made to divulge information or do anything against your will** while in hypnosis.
- *Hypnosis is not Satanic or religion-oriented at all, just a way to **direct your inner mind toward the positive for great personal benefit.**
- *We are all in states of hypnosis **many times a day** already!

What about Childbirth Hypnosis Classes?

When learning how to use hypnosis for childbirth, you are taught an understanding of how the uterine muscles will work efficiently together, as they were designed to do, when the body is completely relaxed. The depth of relaxation necessary can easily be achieved with hypnosis so you learn these skills in class, and practice them at home every day until your baby arrives.

Important: Comfort in childbirth depends on much more than deep relaxation, so



you are also taught the most in-depth **hypnotic anesthesia techniques** that exist. These make a huge difference in creating your truly comfortable birthing experience, and are easily learned and practiced.

Your Birth Partner can have a very integral role in the preparation process: listening to the CDs, reading the handouts and guiding the Hypno-mother into deep relaxation with hypnosis scripts. They are also an invaluable part of the labor and birth process as they help you to focus and concentrate, as well as supporting you physically. **Please note: Mothers without partners can easily learn, practice and use Hypnobabies on their own.** All aspects of Labor and Birth are covered in Hypnobabies classes, as well as information on Nutrition, Exercise, Avoiding Complications and Back Labor, Fear Clearing Sessions, Birth Plans, Consumer Issues and Postpartum as well as much more.

Fear and Expectation

In other cultures, **childbirth is regarded as a natural, normal event** in a woman's life. The birthing women are given support from other women, and children are often present to witness the event. In this way, birth is celebrated and honored. Young girls then grow up with the belief system that birth is a positive event and their expectations of childbirth reflect this attitude. As a result, their births are similar to their predecessors; without pain and fear. **They have a positive expectation of childbirth.** In our culture, it is very much the opposite. For many generations we have been told that delivering a baby will be untold hours of painfully agonizing work, to be faced with fear and trepidation. We have heard stories from well-meaning friends and family that send shivers up our spines, and so the legacy continues. **We experience pain in childbirth, in part because we very much expect to!**

In hypnosis for childbirth classes, you are taught to surround yourself with only positive people and messages, to create a positive view of childbirth and the expectation that your birthing will be a beautiful, peaceful experience. Hypnobabies' **Fear Clearing Sessions** are integral to this process, as they allow you to address fears, work through possible solutions and then release them. Fear in labor can create tension, which creates pain, then more fear, and the cycle continues. Fear and anxiety can also create adrenaline production in the body, causing the labor to become dysfunctional, a common reason for Cesarean Section surgery. **Freedom from fear can make a significant difference in the birthing experience.**

By learning and practicing hypnosis, you are able to **enter into self-hypnosis instantly**, and create your own natural anesthesia whenever and wherever you need it. This is important as any drugs taken by a laboring woman can be dangerous for her, and especially her baby. Using Hypnobabies, you are in control over your body and emotions, and are an active participant in your birth process. You are always aware of everything around you, and as labor



progresses, you'll go deeper inside yourself, trusting in your body's natural ability to give birth with ease and comfort. Your mind is trained and programmed to give you exactly what you need as you give birth to your baby.

Too good to be true?

Can women give birth without experiencing pain? **They can, and there are many variables in labor and birth that can affect the outcome!** Couples need to have a positive but realistic view of hypnosis for childbirth. Each pregnant woman and her partner **must take responsibility for the choices they make** while in labor and how they can affect the dynamics and outcome. Many a wonderful birth has been thwarted by not realizing how to make positive, informed choices and yet these issues are easily addressed and learned in a good consumer oriented childbirth hypnosis class such as Hypnobabies.

Without a doubt, all of our Hypno-Moms are much **calmer and more relaxed** during labor, which automatically creates more comfort, as well as having ***powerful* post-hypnotic suggestions to actually eliminate pain and fear.** How effective is this? Statistics vary depending on the goals of each Hypnobabies mother, **as well as the dedication and compliance to the program.** Our Hypnobabies Instructors all have backgrounds in both hypnotherapy and childbirth education and are able to address each woman's personal needs to help her achieve her goals for childbirth.

Statistics: The following are statistics for Hypnobabies only: (our very successful 6 week course, 18 total hours of instruction)

- 1) Pain-free births - 70-75%.** Women who report that they felt mostly pressure, tightening or mild cramping sensations.
- 2) Pain-free until transition - 15%.** Pressure only, until the 10-60 minute transitional period, with mild to intense degrees of sensation thereafter. "Very manageable."
- 3) Pain-free until active labor – 10%,** with mild to intense degrees of sensation thereafter This group can have any number of things that affect their birth experiences; prodromal labor, posterior or asynclitic presentations that do not resolve, other labor complications, emotional issues, lack of support, or they simply did not do their homework! (30 - 45 minutes a day) **Hypnosis for childbirth won't help a mother or a couple that is not willing to do the work involved in preparing for their baby's birth.**

All women reported that the Relaxation and Fear Clearing in Hypnobabies were invaluable to them during their labors.

Benefits of using hypnosis for childbirth:



- * **Fewer drugs or no drugs** at all - less risk of side effects on mother and baby.
- * **Shorter labors** - resistance of the birthing muscles as a response to pain is minimized or eliminated.
- * **An awake, energized mother**, due to total relaxation throughout the birthing process.
- * **A calm, peaceful birthing environment.** A comfortable natural birthing also allows for a joyful, rested mother and a calm baby post-partum.
- * **Breech and posterior babies can be turned** using hypnosis.
- * **Fewer interventions and complications** during labor.
- * **Babies who are better sleepers and nursers** due to fewer drugs in their systems.

It is well worth the time to look into hypnosis for childbirth as an option, both for yourself and for your baby. **Natural Childbirth without intense discomfort has many benefits to mom and baby**, and the deep relaxation has even helped many a nervous dad to enjoy pregnancy and childbirth, since they experience hypnosis in Hypnobabies class as well! In addition, **the skills you will learn for relaxation and hypnosis will benefit you for the rest of your life.**

Kerry Tuschhoff, HCHI, CHt, CI is a Certified Hypnotherapist, Hypnosis Instructor, Childbirth Educator, Hypno-Doula and Founder/Director of Hypnobabies Network in Cypress, CA.

She teaches Hypnobabies Childbirth classes, Hypnobabies Instructor Training Courses, Hypno-Doula Workshops, Pregnancy Nutrition and Breastfeeding workshops, Birth Hypnosis Specialty Courses and gives seminars in her community on natural pregnancy and childbirth options.

Kerry also created the Hypnobabies Home Study Course for women who need self-study options for hypnotic childbirth, and is the author of Hypnobabies, Eyes Open Childbirth Hypnosis, The Introduction to Childbirth Hypnosis Workbook for Professionals, and The Hypno-Doula Training Workbook.

The foremost expert in Hypnosis for Childbirth, she is also the “Ask the Doula” Expert on www.Pregnancy.Org and an international conference speaker and lecturer.

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