

From the Waters Birth Stories

Home Birth Story

Dear friends,

I have to share my miraculous birth story! My second son, Aiden, was born at home on May 10 in a 3 hour labor with almost no pain. He was born sunny-side up (OP) with his head at an angle in the birth canal and a cord around the neck once--read c-section waiting to happen in a hospital environment. But, I had planned a water birth at Sage Femme [freestanding birth centre]. We didn't make it to the birth center in time but Judy, Melissa, Didra my Sage Femme midwives all made it to my house in time as did my doula Germaine Reidy.

I gave birth in my bathtub surrounded by loving wise women with my husband in attendance and the support of my compassionate 3-yr old son in early labor.

At 5am I got up to pee. I was 6 days late with a second baby. I had missed giving birth on the full moon (Holi and Purim both!)*. I felt like an elephant who would certainly gestate for 24 months. Without telling me, my mom told my dad on Friday night that the baby would come on Saturday (she lives in a different state but she knew). At 5 am on Saturday, I returned from the bathroom to lie down with my husband and my son. I held my son's hand to my breasts and remembered our two years of breastfeeding. I remembered when he was so tiny, my little newborn who had grown so big. I felt waves of love wash over us as I lay awake watching him sleep. Then I felt a warm trickle between my legs. I woke up my husband, so excited to meet my baby.

Four soaked bath towels later, we knew my water had broken but we didn't call yet. Just one hour later at 6pm little baby cramps came but didn't hurt at all. Then cramps turned to little contractions. My son snuggled with me. He let me hug him for each contraction and so I had so many endorphins that it didn't hurt. When the contractions were hard enough for me to groan, he giggled at mom's funny noises. I called through the long list of friends to watch him in labor but they were almost all sick. At ten minute intervals, wise women arrived beautifully orchestrated by my husband's excellent phone support.

They would come up the stairs and appear at my door.

Somehow, Judy got me from my bed to my bathtub. The water felt so good. Labor was so much easier when I was ensconced in a warm womb too. Light started to stream through the windows. It was celestial. I closed my eyes and saw a great white light. I was not afraid. I was with Judy and Melissa. Germaine held my head under my neck. Every part of my body held by a woman released, so I could just hold my split pelvis together as a pushed [a condition called pubis symphysis dysfunction]. They knew the baby was op but I didn't. Judy told me to push it under my pelvic bone. She narrated everything to make the baby come out the old fashion-way-- by understanding the shape of my particular body and the position of my specific baby and the timing of this one birth. The three pushes under the bone hurt and the neighbors knew a new neighbor was on his way. But all other pushing didn't hurt. I opened my eyes and a blond midwife in training was backlit like an angel. I said " I don't know you" she just smiled.

Little me, with no tolerance for pain, fear of hospitals and any metal instrument-

-I pushed out this 8lb 1ounce baby OP with a big head at an angle like a mother goddess. I saw the other side and came back full of wonder and amazement. They slipped the cord off his neck and put a warm slippery piece of me on my chest. Melissa caught him and Judy brought oxygen for him. He had an apkar of 3.8--the apkar wasn't made for water births... for example pinkness is one of the scores. Anyway, he had a low 1 minute score and a high 5 minute score. Judy and her team had everything under control. Germaine was by my head and taking pictures once he was born. She didn't seem to notice when I sucked on her knuckles while pushing. It was her first homebirth too.

After this birth, all the pain of my pregnancy melted away immediately. The depression lifted like veil into smoke. The deep aches of my tired bones subsided. I stood from the birthing bath, having seen the peace of death, and rose to walk back into youth, back into happiness, back into my life as a healthy 32 year old after months of bedrest, pain and physical and mental suffering during this second pregnancy. Germaine massaged me through these 9 hard months and Judy and Melissa made sure to treat every aspect of my pain and depression so I would not have post partum depression.

Miraculously I have post partum EUPHORIA!!! I can't get over my pleasure at meeting my son, at sharing the experience with my family. The next day I wanted to have sex again, to have ten children, to give birth to the world. Right after the birth, I walked a few light steps to my own bed and snuggled with my newborn in my own home. Like generations of women before me, I gave birth in my own home, in peace, without interventions or any metal whatsoever--just boiling water and lots of love.

He was born on March 10 and I am still EUPHORIC. I share this detailed and very personal story because I want everyone to know that birth doesn't just have to be safe and respected, it can be miraculous, celestial, a transcendental pleasure. My first birth at Sage Femme was under the magic dark blanket of night. There was much pain but no fear and that was all I had wished for. I only hoped my second birth would be as safe and supported and short as my first so I had no way of knowing the wonder that would unfold.

We are so lucky to live in SF where we have great midwives and doulas. I highly encourage everyone to have a doula and to seek out midwives. I totally respect any woman's choice to find the birth right for her hospital or otherwise, so long as it's YOUR choice.

With love and magic,
your fellow mama
Deborah

* Purim is a Jewish spring holiday and Holi is a Hindu spring holiday. They are vibrant festivals of reversals and spring fever, lucky days.

