



My birth stories, by Ele - The Hugging Doula

My passion for pregnancy and childbirth - and the phenomenal way a woman's life changes with maternity - began at a very early age, and I had my first child at 25.

Back then none of my friends was even thinking about family or babies and I walked through my experience of becoming a mum by myself.

My baby was breech and, even if I tried to invite her to change her mind and get in the right position through moxa... she didn't like it and remained breech. *The Dr told me I would have to have a c-section, I didn't know I could have other options... and I booked the surgery.*

I remember being in the theatre room, looking at my husband through a glass (because he wasn't allowed to be in the theatre with me) listening to the Drs chatting and pulling my belly. After a few moments, a beautiful baby was shown to me and immediately taken away for routine checks, bath and cloths... and I remember looking at my husband holding her fully in love and telling me "She's beautiful! She's perfect!"

While the Dr was stitching my belly, I asked him: "When will I be able to have a vaginal delivery?" He laughed and said "In 9 months!"... and I knew that my next baby would have been with me immediately after being born!

Once the surgery was done I remained in a room for a couple of hours with Gaia: she looked at me, she latched... and our love story began.

When I got pregnant with Gaia I didn't have any knowledge about birth. No idea of my options for a c-section nor of the existence of Hypnobirthing. I think it would have helped me, especially the possibility of using a deep relaxation technique during the spinal anesthesia as I remember myself at that moment as being very scared and tense. I'm not sure if 15 years ago I would have also learnt about "Family-centred c-section" during the course.

After 17 months from Gaia's birth, I was pregnant again, and I was happy... extremely happy! Of course, I was delighted because I was expecting a baby... but also because I was excited to have MY natural birth! Everybody I spoke to at the time told me that I was crazy, I should have gone for a c-section. "Why do you want to suffer?" was the normal question.

I knew why! Because I missed the experience of feeling my body working with my baby to meet each other. Because I missed that special moment when your baby is born and put on your belly to crawl to your chest! Because I researched and learnt the benefits of having a natural birth for both mums and baby. Because... I wanted it!

Was is it easy to have a VBAC? First I had to go scouting for the right hospital and I was quite surprised to discover that in Milan, in 2008, only a few hospitals would allowed me to attempt a VBAC.



Once I found the right hospital, I didn't study too much about what to do. I spoke with my neighbour who just had a water birth and I waited for my baby to decide to come to see me. (Please keep in mind that in Italy we have a different medical system where for natural deliveries the midwives are in charge of taking care of the mums and the doctor has to be in the maternity ward only in case of emergencies).

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The labor started at home at 3.30 pm on a Saturday afternoon with the bursting of my amniotic sac and very tinted waters! The surges arrived immediately after as a tsunami: very intense and one after the other!!!

My husband and I rushed to the hospital and I was told I was 5cms dilated. The baby was doing great! The midwives trusted me and let me enjoy my labor. I wanted to try many different positions as each contraction was guiding me and I remember keeping each position for around 30 minutes to then change to another one. I have very vivid memories of feeling my baby moving inside my womb during each contraction and of myself focusing on breathing deeply as my friend told me to do. My mum's voice kept coming to me telling me "Don't be scared of giving birth to your baby! Think about all the women that did it before you, and of how many siblings there are in the World! If it was so horrible... no one would have more than one baby!

At a certain point, I got a sea glass that I collected a few months prior during my long walk on the seaside and I started rubbing it with my thumb as I used to do when I was at the beach thinking about when I would have been in labor. That movement and sensation in my hand brought me back to how happy I was waiting for that moment and pumped my self-confidence to keep surfing each wave like a pro!

After 4 hours dancing with my baby, I started to ask to go to the toilet (I had the nightmare of pooping while pushing the baby out). Nothing was coming out from my intestine and it got clear that it was my baby willing to come to hug me!

The midwife asked me if I wanted to be on my all four but, because I always saw women delivering laying on the bed, I refused her offer and I semi laying holding my legs towards my chest.

After 15mins of "pushing" she was on my belly... and I remember thinking and saying "Oh my gosh! She is heavy!!! She was 4kg!

How did I feel??? I will never forget how GOOD I felt! I was burst with powerful energy, proud of myself and empowered like a lioness!

Lea's birth changed my life.

After taking the Hypnobirthing trainer course, I realized that I used many of the hypnobirthing techniques and I believe that they would have been extremely useful during my third birthing experience.

After 18 months I got pregnant (again!!!) and at that time I was studying for becoming a Doula. I learnt how the mind can influence your body and how it is



crucial for the woman to feel safe and trusted but, at the same time I supported a birthing mother who had a very traumatic birthing experience and *I got scared of not managing to have my natural birth. I was diagnosed with Gestational Diabetes and threatened of having a c-section when I was 38 weeks pregnant.* I tried my best to give to my baby the right gentle and respected birth that I wanted for her and I consented to have a sweep when I was 37 weeks. Looking back at what happened during that labor I think that my baby wasn't willing to leave my womb and my rational mind was too scared that the Drs would have chosen how I would have birthed my baby without my consent. Because of the birthing culture that I grew up with, *I wasn't aware that I would have been able to refuse certain procedures.* My body shut down different times during labour and the only way to release my tension was to get the Epidural recommended by my midwife. I believe she knew what was going on. I didn't want it as I felt that I could cope well with the surges but, as soon as my rational mind was put to rest, my body did as she wanted and after 30 minutes Tosca was born. The effects of the Epidural were still very mild, and I remember feeling the urge to push and the strength that I put with the few waves that came for my baby to be born. I believe that knowing how to relax and release the anxiety and worries that were suppressing me during the last months of pregnancy would have been of great help.

Most probably I would have felt more empowered about standing up for my decisions about not rushing a planned c-section and I would have lived the final weeks of my pregnancy building up my self-confidence.

During labor I would have used the hypnobirthing scripts and the affirmations to keep my mind relaxed and positive.

Check out my [Hypnobirthing course](#) as I created it keeping in mind all of the women that I supported in the past 10 years.

I promise you that it will be an incredible tool to have for you to achieve a respected and positive birthing experience.

Thanks for reading my birth stories,
Feel free to get in touch to talk about yours!

I hug you with love,
Ele

Check my trainings and most important achievements [HERE](#)