

birthtalk

MAKES
BIRTH
BETTER



Romi and Trent welcome their beautiful twin girls in an empowering, gentle birth. To read more of their story, see p 6

Twins!

August 2008

Babies babies everywhere!

This issue introduces five babies born to four couples, all in different circumstances, yet all empowering births.

All of these couples attended Birthtalk's Antenatal Course or Birth After Caesarean course, and we are so excited to be able to share their stories with you.

At Birthtalk, we support couples in working towards empowering births, where they emerge positive, confident and strong, no matter how they are birthing.

We are so grateful to these families for allowing their photos and journey to birth to be published here - and we hope you enjoy reading their stories.

Birthtalk's Benefactor

We are very proud to announce that we are the lucky recipients of a Grant provided by Ward Councillor Peter Matic and the Brisbane City Council. We have used the funds to update our technical equipment, plus produce some beautiful new brochures for our Antenatal Course and the Healing From Birth group.

Counsellor Matic attended a Birthtalk meeting and has been wonderfully supportive of Birthtalk as we work to make our services available to as many women as possible.

Can You Help Birthtalk?

Now that we have our fancy new brochures, we want to get them out there!!

If you can help us by popping a few at your local library or Mother's Room in the shopping centre, or anywhere else you can think of, please contact us at info@birthtalk.org.

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Autumn Issue

2008

Birthtalk was begun in 2002 and is run by a registered midwife/childbirth educator and mum. Birthtalk was created to bridge the gap between what is needed by women to birth in our culture, and what is commonly offered - before and after birth. Our focus is on empowering birth, regardless of where or how a woman gives birth. Meetings are in Brisbane. Phone Consultation is available, and queries via phone or email are always welcome! TEL (07) 3878 7915 (Deb) EMAIL info@birthtalk.org (Melissa)

Events

We now have two venues for our meetings, due to increasing numbers.

Toowong Venue

Toowong Physio Rehab Centre, 13 Morley St, Toowong.

Red Hill venue

Ithaca Hall, Cnr Enoggera and Kennedy Tces, Red Hill.

Our evening meetings run from 7:30pm - 9:45pm.

Healing From Birth meetings are FREE.

For other meeting costs, see our Calendar page on our website at www.birthtalk.org

August

7

Birth Unplugged 7:30pm

Red Hill Venue : how does birth look and sound when a woman is birthing under her own steam AND feels safe & supported? How have different women dealt with pain? What positions did they use?

12

Healing From Birth 7:30pm

Toowong Venue : debrief your birth in the context of gaining clarity about "what happened", and making peace with the experience.

21

Mythbusting 7:30pm

Red Hill Venue : We will discuss myths, fears and misinformation about : big babies, induction, due dates, waters breaking, vaginal birth after caesarean (VBAC), directed pushing, dilation... and any other common areas of confusion you'd like to bring along!

September

4

VBAC Stats & Facts 7:30pm

Red Hill Venue : Birthtalk will present a "big picture view" of VBAC & caesareans - a perspective that can be hard to obtain elsewhere.

We offer evidence-based information within a context that may be helpful for women in decision-making and addressing the issues surrounding VBAC.

9

Healing From Birth 7:30pm

Toowong Venue : debrief your birth in the context of gaining clarity about "what happened", and making peace with the experience.

25

How to Have a Better Birth

7:30pm, Red Hill Venue : What is it about birth that leaves some couples feeling strong, confident and positive about the experience? How can you plan a path to birth that allows you to emerge with a new connection with your partner, and a positive story of your child's arrival?

October

9

How a Birthing Body Works -

natural and caesarean 7:30pm, Red Hill Venue : We discuss how our bodies are designed to support us in birth, and the best environment for our bodies to be able to do their job.

This information is just as vital regardless of whether you have a natural birth or a caesarean ... as you can help your body kick-start these hormones as nature intended, and have a better birth no matter what path you take to meet your baby.

13

Healing From Birth 7:30pm

Toowong Venue : debrief your birth in the context of gaining clarity about "what happened", and making peace with the experience.

30

Supporting your Support People

7:30pm, Red Hill Venue : If you want a birth where you can feel positive, strong and safe, then you need your Support People to have certain information. They need to know what you need. And they need to know how to help you get it.

Birthtalk in Practical Parenting magazine!

Check out the August issue of Practical Parenting magazine, a national publication available in newsagents and supermarkets. Birthtalk was interviewed for an article titled "Fixing The Hurt", along with some very special Birthtalk women, who agreed to share their stories.

See page 23 of the mag for an excellent overview of the issues facing women struggling to move on after a traumatic birth. Birthtalk has already been contacted by women across Australia who have seen the article. We have included, with permission, an extract from one such email :

"It was great to find the FANTASTIC article about you in Practical Parenting magazine & now to finally have some Australian support. I had a very disappointing first birth nearly 5 years ago and suffered PTS from the birth trauma. The most brilliant thing I think your website has done beautifully is it's tone. The way you have written is very gentle, non-judgemental and perfectly to the point. It is exactly what I needed to read when I was going through my birth crisis and I do so wish I had it on hand 4 years ago! I have had enormous trouble explaining the whole "healthy baby/so and so had it far worse" point of view. I now want to hand out a copy of your web page and say "Here, look this is what happened to me and please don't say those unhelpful things you said to me." Anyway- thanks again. It is lovely to know you are out there. E



Empowering

planned repeat caesarean

Monique's first birth was a caesarean, that turned out to be a less-than-positive experience. She attended Birthtalk and learned how to make her upcoming birth a positive event, regardless of how her baby was born.

Dear Birthtalk

I'd like to let you know that we delivered our baby girl, Nina Elizabeth, on Tuesday 10th at the Mater Mothers', weighing 4135g (9lb 2oz) and measuring 52cm long. She was born by elective caesar, but thanks to the knowledge and support that you gave me through the Birthtalk classes I attended, it was a much more positive experience than I had during Will's birth.

We had a midwife in attendance from before I went into theatre and were able to enjoy skin on skin contact within minutes of her birth. She spent the next 20 minutes on my chest and I was able to touch, kiss and sing to her and hardly noticed the rest of the operation on the other side of the screen. She also went on the breast in Recovery and consequently is breastfeeding like a pro.

We're doing pretty well, I've recovered from the caesar much faster than last time, but the middle-of-the-night 3-hour feeding sessions are taking their toll, and I feel like I spend literally half my life sitting on the couch breastfeeding. Oh well, it's only to be expected, I suppose and won't last forever. Worth it all, though. She's lovely.

Thanks for everything you've done and I hope you can continue to help other parents as much as you've helped me. I'll be passing on your details to anyone else I know who's having a baby.

Regards
Monique



FIRST-TIME Mum &

Dad's positive hospital

birth with Doula support

Katina and Aaron attended Birthtalk in preparation for their first child's arrival. They employed a Student Doula to attend the birth with them, at home and then in the hospital.

Labouring at home

I was in labour for two days in total. I laboured in the comfort of my own home with the help of my doula until the contractions became strong enough that I felt I wanted to go to hospital, plus I was bleeding a lot and we felt it best.

Unreasonable Birth Plan?

The doctors at the hospital had crossed out my birth plan saying that my desire to birth as naturally as possible was unreasonable. The head midwife didn't think so and appointed me one of her best midwives, who came in from home to be with me. I was 4 cm dilated on arrival at the hospital and my son Joshua was born 12hrs later on 30th October 2007 (9 days "overdue").

Eyes closed and focussed

I requested gas immediately on arrival and found it helped tremendously. I spent most of the time in the dimly lit ensuite in the shower on a birth ball with my eyes closed focusing through prayer on the Lord's strength. After a while we decided on a change of scenery and on coming out of the ensuite I breathed in the lavender oil that was present in the room, it was so wonderfully intoxicating and I was so relaxed at this point that I felt ready to have my baby.

Into the hot tub

However I requested a VE, despite not originally wanting any. And I was told that my dilation had not changed and the baby's head was lying to one side. So we decided to attempt to get him to move on his own by getting into a hot tub. Only I wasn't allowed to take the gas with me as the tub was in the ward.



Negotiating under pressure

The effect of the gas wore off and I was no longer relaxed enough to handle the pressure being placed on me by the doctor to make a decision as to whether to rupture my membranes. After a lot of confusion, and trying to negotiate in between increasing contractions I decided to give in as long as I could be given pethidine to make up for any increase in pain that may occur.

I birthed on all fours

I gave birth to Joshua on all fours on the bed not long after my membranes were ruptured. Transition was scary and I begged for an epidural not realising Joshua was so close - so I didn't receive one, and I'm pleased I didn't as I had clearly written in my birth plan that I did not want one on any terms!

I had few interventions (no vacuum or forceps), no episiotomy, no tears (just a "graze"), and I went home the next day (despite being very light headed and having fainted after giving birth). Oh and my baby was in the very best of health, content, alert & feeding well!

Birthtalk was reassuring

I found the information Birthtalk provided not only supplemented the hospital prenatal classes, but provided much more practical and reassuring information and was invaluable preparation for both myself and my husband. Birthtalk has been described as being empowering, however I prefer to think that

Birthalk teaches that whilst you need to surrender to the birthing process, you don't need to surrender to the doctors, who in their best intentions can often take the control away from the mother and thus inhibit her ability to surrender to her body's own natural ability.

A time of great joy

Giving birth can be a vulnerable, scary time in a woman's life. But Birthtalk showed me that it doesn't have to be, and that it can actually be a time of great joy and bonding with your baby. Whilst giving birth is such a humbling experience, it is also one that can give you such great confidence. Confidence in yourself and confidence in the creator who made us. Whilst Birthtalk does not touch on this spiritual element I found their support useful in discovering the secret women's business that shouldn't be so secret!

Recommending Birthtalk

I recommend Birthtalk to anyone who is pregnant, and partners too. My husband really enjoyed coming along too! They are an excellent source of knowledge even if you have given birth several times before. I will definitely be visiting again with pregnancy number two!

Kind Regards
Aaron & Katina

Empowering

VBAC

Kylie attended Birthtalk's Birth After Caesarean Course, and had Deb from Birthtalk as her Doula.

My First Birth

My first baby was born by emergency caesarean. I was thrilled to have a happy healthy baby boy, but felt a certain feeling of loss and failure and it was NOTHING like I had imagined. The aftermath of this experience left me with feelings of uselessness, incapability and despair. It was a beautiful time but it was not how I had imagined it and I felt guilty for feeling like this since I was holding a beautiful healthy child. Shouldn't I just feel grateful?

Pregnant Again

When I fell pregnant with my second child, I was shocked to be met with the obstacles and apprehension about whether or not I could have a vaginal birth. This time around I had an obstetrician, thinking that this would give me more personalized care. This was not the case. My obstetrician was telling me that "my first baby was big, so chances are this would be too and that probably wouldn't be able to deliver and that I was already behind the 8 ball so don't get my hopes up", He also had no room for leniency - I was booked in for a caesarean if I reached 41 weeks.

Birthtalk was pivotal

A good friend put me on to Birthtalk - I was determined to guide this next birth along a better path. I wanted to make the right decisions for the right reasons.

Attending Birthtalk was a pivotal point for myself and particularly my husband. Birthtalk was a wealth of knowledge and support and I found the meetings somewhat addictive!

I gained knowledge to face my fears and restore my belief in my birthing body. I learned more than I could have read about what our bodies instinctively do during labour and how letting go and surrendering to what was happening devoid of interruptions is the best and most efficient way to labour.

A change of plans

Finally I decided (at 33 weeks) that I



needed to leave my obstetrician and go through a midwifery system for my best chance for a VBAC. I also asked Deb to be my doula, and I cannot speak highly enough of her during the last few months.

Restoring my faith

Birthtalk has not only restored my faith in birth and women's birthing abilities, but brought them to a new level. I learned so much about hormones and how our bodies work, plus it helped me use visualization in my labour that I believe was the reason I didn't feel scared and thus had a smooth labour. We are more powerful and intuitive than we know and it helped me to question Doctors and midwives and steer my labour to where I wanted it to go.

An empowering second birth

I went into spontaneous labour 5 days past my due date. As in my first birth I had quite strong Braxton Hicks for weeks leading up to the birth. So when I woke up this evening around 3am I got up and walked around to be sure. The next one was strong, and I had to breathe a bit to get through it. Along with it came a surge of adrenalin. We called Deb and she said she would be here in 1 hour. After another 2 contractions, each decidedly stronger, I called Deb back to ask her to hurry!

At 4.30am with Deb and my husband by my side I felt pushy! The next con-

traction my waters broke, or rather exploded! I used a lot of visualization, breathing and deep noises to help me through each contraction. By the time we got to the hospital I was full of confidence and more than ready to have my little baby! I still get chills thinking about that final moment when I saw my baby enter the world.

In the days and weeks to follow I felt calm, confident and very bonded with Lola.

Having a Doula

Having a doula was great, better than great. Deb was instrumental in giving me the right tools to make all the right decisions for me to make my labour the best it could be. It was very reassuring to have her there in case things didn't go as planned, so I could focus on my job at hand, Dylan could focus on me and Deb was really there for both of us.

Deb is my birthing hero, she is knowledgeable, compassionate and an absolute rock. I can't thank her enough.

Looking back

When I think about Lola's birth I have feelings of warmth, safeness, excitement and strength. It is a thrilling and overwhelming moment that I am forever grateful for experiencing.

©Kylie & Birthtalk



ECSTATIC : "I felt like I could take on the world and do anything!"

Empowering Vaginal Twin Birth

Romi write about meeting her babies

During the birth I was excited but focused on meeting our babies. I also knew that the only way through the pain was to go forward and push these babies out. I trusted that my body would know what to do to birth the twins.

Immediately afterwards I felt elated and high and like I could take on the world and do anything! I was in awe of these babies that we had created. I also felt so proud of how Trent and I had worked through the labour together and knew that this had brought us so much closer.

I felt extremely supported by Deb (my doula) throughout my pregnancy and relieved knowing she was at the birth to support both Trent and I through the process.

Attending Birthtalk totally changed how we approached the birth of our babies! The impact that meeting Deb and attending Birthtalk had on me was that I learnt how to have faith in my body which gave me the confidence to change obstetricians and hospitals at 29 weeks as I realised how unsupported I was. This changed the entire course of events of our birth experience in a positive empowering way.

Looking back, the birth was one of the most empowering, difficult and amazing things that both Trent and I have ever experienced in our life. I wish that every woman and her husband would experience this joy and satisfaction. *Romi*

Need help? Confused about your options?

Birthtalk's resident midwife, Deb, offers Private Consultations. From preconception & early pregnancy, right through to postnatal support, Deb can create a consultation tailored to your needs.

Confused about your options regarding the birth? Obstetrician or midwife? Hospital or Birth Centre? Private or Public? She can explain the benefits and differences between each of these and help you find the best place for you to give birth.

She can help you formulate a Birth Plan, or explain and explore your previous Birth Notes, or even hold a private Crash Course if your baby is due before our Antenatal Course concludes.

You can sit with Deb at her place, or yours, and explore your options for your baby's arrival together.

Contact debby@birthtalk.org or call (07) 3878 7915.

Website Update

New Private Consultations page New FAQ pages New Birth Stories New Private Consultations page New FAQ pages New Birth Stories New Private Consultations page New FAQ pages New Birth Stories New New Private Consultations page New FAQ pages New Birth Stories New FAQ

Come and check out additions to our Website!

New FAQ Pages

We love hearing from women wanting information about Birthtalk and the services we offer. However, we realised that many of you were asking the same questions, or had similar concerns. For that reason, we have created our new FAQ pages, to give you access to information that might give an immediate answer to your query.

You will find these new pages are linked on the Calendar page (www.birthtalk.org/calendar.htm), just underneath the service described, eg after the dates for the Healing From Birth support group is a link to FAQ about the group.

Birthtalk Interstate?

Birthtalk often fields queries from interstate, with women looking for local groups for support and education. Whilst Birthtalk is available only in Brisbane, we do have a small network of colleagues across Australia whom we are delighted to recommend.

To access these groups and individuals, please email us at info@birthtalk.org and let us know where you are in Australia, and whether you are looking for empowering antenatal education or support with healing, or birthing after caesarean (or all of the above!).

New Birth Story

We are very honoured to be able to announce a new story on our website. The beautiful arrival of Nathanael Tran, first child of Anne-Marie and Cuong, is shared, with all the intimate details that make each birth unique and personal. We are so grateful to Anne-Marie for this moving account of her birth. Anne-Marie, joined by Cuong where possible, attended sessions in Birthtalk's Antenatal Course.

Just go to our Birth Stories page on www.birthtalk.org, and follow the link to Anne-Maree's story.

And **see right** for an extract from the birth story, when she was still at home and her labour was intensifying.

Debby's Doula Page

Debby from Birthtalk also offers Doula support, and Private Consultations, and now announces her own webpages. To access her site, and read about her services, plus testimonials from women who have employed Deb as a Doula, just go to www.birthtalk.org/contactus.htm and follow the link.



Want a Doula?

Contact us at info@birthtalk.org for a current list of Doulas in the Greater Brisbane area.

We can also provide a list of questions to ask any Doula you interview.

Doulas often attend Birthtalk, so it can be a great way to meet your potential Birth Support Professional in an informal setting.

See our Calendar pages for upcoming meetings at www.birthtalk.org

Extract from Anne-Marie's Story



"At 3am things changed – it was as if a switch had been flicked, and I knew that at last I was on my way to meeting my baby. The surges were more intense, lasted for longer, and were much closer together. Time distorted dramatically – I kept thinking to myself 'half an hour must have elapsed' but each time I looked at the clock no more than seven minutes had gone by.

Often only 3 or 4 minutes had elapsed. I was awed at the intensity of the surges as they rolled over me, and I was filled with confidence that my body obviously knew what to do. I felt the world had shrunk and I was only aware of the existence of a space of about 3 metres around my body. Quite soon I woke my husband, and told him I needed his emotional support. He came and sat beside me.

The intensity of the surges was such that at 4am I told him to call the midwife and let her know that we were in labour. I marvelled when I heard his calm voice speaking to the midwife: again another switch was turned on and from that moment on my husband became the father of our little family."

See the link on our website for the rest of Anne-Marie's story at www.birthtalk.org/BirthStories.html

Film Screening in September

Please see below details about a film screening and presentation in September. The film is titled "Orgasmic Birth", and will be followed by a facilitated discussion with Henci Goer, author of 'The Thinking Woman's Guide To a Better Birth' and Dr Sarah Buckley, author of "Gentle Birth, Gentle Mothering".

Both these women's books are highly recommended reading by Birthtalk, and are on high rotation in our library. We have not seen the film, but invite you to check out the website (see below), and hopefully that will give you some insight into what the film entails. This event is a fundraiser for the Maternity Coalition, and Birthtalk will be attending. Perhaps we'll see you there!

For info about the film : www.orgasmicbirth.com/

For info about Henci Goer - www.hencigoer.com/

For info about Dr Sarah J Buckley - www.sarahjbuckley.com/

Maternity Coalition - www.maternitycoalition.org.au/

Had a Bad Birth?

There are some things you can do right away to begin the healing process...

1. Get validation

A woman's first step on her path to healing is usually when she realises that it would be understandable if she felt bad about her birth. This is the moment when she realises that her feelings are OK, her response is normal, and her emotions are understandable, considering her experience. Many women find Birthtalk is the first place they receive this validation.

2. Get Your Notes

Accessing the Notes from your previous birth can begin a new phase of the healing journey. Going over the records with an experienced and understanding midwife can offer new insights, highlight new areas to process, and enable a woman to begin to reclaim the birth as her own. Many women take advantage of a Private Consultation with Deb, midwife and Birthtalk co-founder, to go over their notes.

(see www.birthtalk.org/articles.htm to find out how to get your notes)

3. Write your Birth Story

The process of writing the Birth Story (perhaps using your Medical Records as a guide) can awaken a heightened understanding of the experience, and an appreciation of just what you went through. It may also pinpoint areas that are hazy that you may want to explore further.

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Featuring

- Presentation by Henci Goer
- Screening of *Orgasmic Birth*
- Facilitated discussion with Henci Goer and Dr Sarah Buckley
- Limited copies of DVD will be available for sale

Tickets
\$30

Date: Wednesday 17th September
Venue: The Palace Cinemas, New Farm
Time: Doors open 6:30pm Welcome drink and canapés on arrival
Screening begins 7:00pm
Tickets: \$30 per person. Bookings essential, limited seats available
Payment: Phone CEA on 07 3285 8233 or email mail@ceabrisbane.asn.au
by Tuesday 9th September 5pm. Major credit cards accepted

Henci Goer's latest book is *The Thinking Woman's Guide to a Better Birth*. You can find out more about Henci and her book at www.hencigoer.com. A Resident Expert for the Lamaze Institute for Normal Birth at normalbirth.lamaze.org, you can visit her online at www.lamaze.org/NormalBirthForum.

For further information about the film, visit www.orgasmicbirth.com.

Presented by **Maternity Coalition Qld Branch**
in conjunction with Childbirth Education Association, The Home Midwifery Association, Caesarean Awareness Network Australia, Birthtalk, Friends of the Birth Centre & Kindred Magazine.



birthtalk.org
makes birth better™



DID YOU KNOW?

Birthtalk are also co-founders of the Caesarean Awareness Network Australia (**CANA**).

If you are considering a caesarean, or birth after caesarean, visit the CANA website for resources, articles, VBAC info, a Positive Caesarean Birth Plan, & more.

www.canaustralia.net