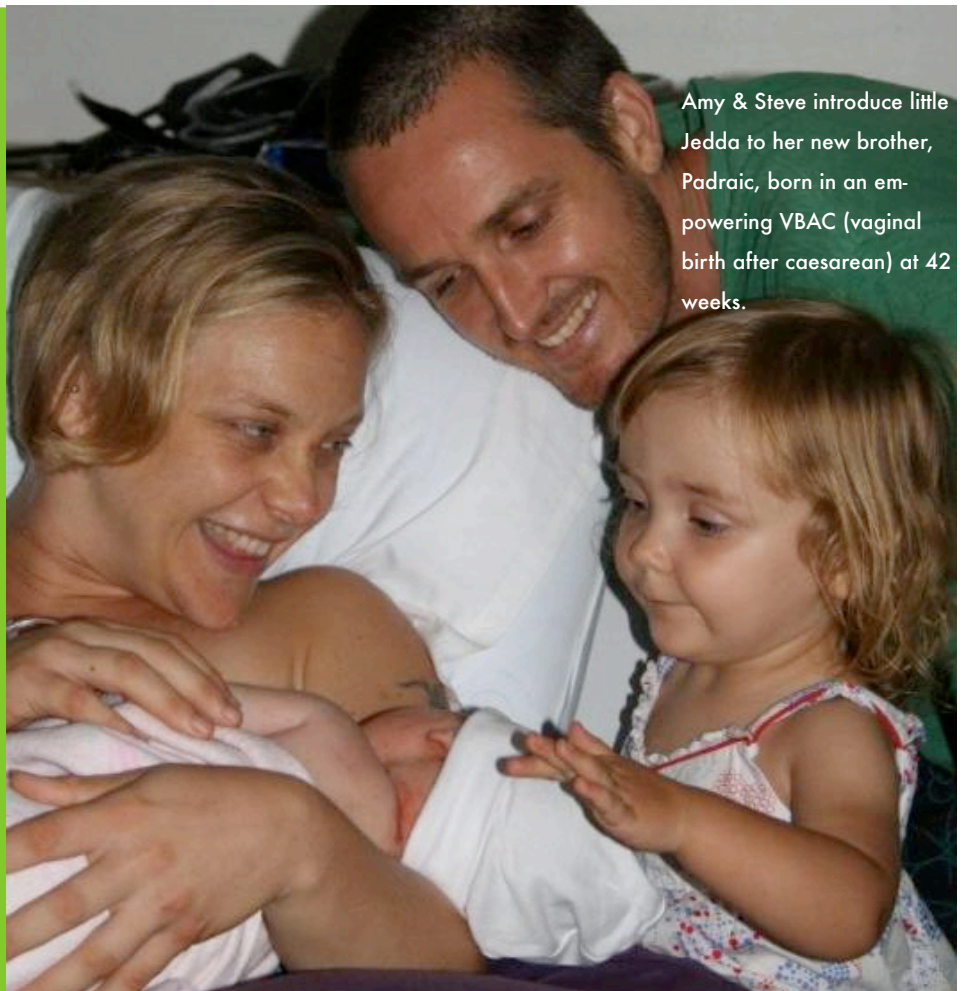


birthtalk.

MAKES
BIRTH
BETTER



Amy & Steve introduce little Jedda to her new brother, Padraic, born in an empowering VBAC (vaginal birth after caesarean) at 42 weeks.

July 2009

It's been a while

Our last newsletter was at Christmas time...but that doesn't mean we've just been lying around in the past 7 months! This newsletter introduces a whole swag of beautiful birth stories, photos and testimonials, and of course, some gorgeous babies :)

New Venue for Courses

All Birthtalk sessions, courses, and groups are now meeting at Toowong Physio Rehab Centre. This is familiar to some as our "Healing From Birth" meeting venue. The more intimate setting is proving popular with new course attendees, and we like it too!

New Website is up!

We are pleased and excited to announce that our new and improved website is uploaded, and waiting to be

explored! There's a host of new articles, birth stories, slideshows, & meeting information. See the Website Update in this newsletter.

We owe an enormous THANK YOU to the wonderful Holly Jewell, who took on the job of designing & uploading the entire site, free of charge. We also want to thank Kylie Miklashek, who designed & donated our gorgeous "blue & green baby" logo, which we love. Both these talented ladies are VBAC mums who attended Birthtalk. In fact, Holly was the first Birthtalk mum to give birth, way back in 2003.

Birthtalk on Facebook

That little blue & green baby logo makes an appearance on Birthtalk's Facebook page...and we'd love to see you there too! We send meeting reminders, and notes of interest via Facebook...plus you can leave us mes-

sages, and be part of an online community dedicated to positive birth, and healing from birth. Just go to our new website and follow the blue link to our Facebook page. Our sister group, the Caesarean Awareness Network Australia (CANA) has a Facebook page too, so look out for that as well.

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Winter 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 have a positive 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

All meetings are now held at the Toowong Venue

Toowong Venue

Toowong Physio Rehab Centre, 13 Morley St, Toowong.

Our evening meetings run from 7:30pm - 10pm.

Healing From Birth meetings are FREE.

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

If you are interested in attending, please ensure you contact us via email or phone beforehand due to limited availability of places in some sessions.

June

23

Negotiating the Health System 7:30pm

An eye-opening exercise, giving you knowledge and power to negotiate your way to a better birth.

25

Supporting your Support People 7:30pm

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.

July

7

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.

16

Confidence Shatterers 7:30pm

This meeting looks at what to do when your pregnancy or labour are not 'textbook'. What can you do if things are not unfolding how you expected?

23

Birth Unplugged 7:30pm

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?

30

VBAC Panel 7:30pm

we invite women who have worked towards VBAC to share their insights & experiences - a popular & inspiring evening

August

4

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.

Clinical Advisory Group

Debby Gould, Birthtalk co-founder & midwife, is continuing her role on the Mater Mothers Clinical Advisory Group, giving input on various policies. She is currently looking at the VBAC policy, homebirth transfer policy, and working on the creation of a Normal Birth Policy.

Birtherd at the Royal?

Deb is also on the Royal Brisbane and Womens' Hospitals Health Community Council, focussing on maternity services, so if you have birthed at the Royal & have

some feedback, please let Deb know as your input is needed at this time.

Other Presentations

Deb also presented at a Special Event organised by Joyous Birth, featuring Canadian midwife, Gloria Lemay, where she spoke of Birthtalk's philosophy and understanding of Birth Trauma. She also recently attended a Home Midwifery Assoc meeting, explaining Birthtalk's philosophy & role in the community, especially in the areas of promoting positive birth, and preventing and healing Birth Trauma.



Debby Gould, Birthtalk co-founder & midwife, sharing her knowledge

First-time Mum

Empowering hospital birth

Hansa & Haydn had hired a doula, and attended Birthtalk's "Path to a Better Birth" Course (along with their doula) as part of their preparation.

Wanting a normal birth

We began Birthtalk meetings to try to understand the fears and issues that prevent a lot of women from having a normal, natural birth. A large number of friends had issues with their births, such as failure to progress due to fear, or the cycle of interventions that eventually lead to caesarean. Of course some of these were bound to happen regardless, however I thought that a number of them could have had a different outcome with information and addressing the underlying anxieties.

Furthermore, my partner had a lot of anxieties about me being in pain during labour and birth, and a desire to control the situation, and therefore I was concerned that we could encounter some emotional issues during birth and potentially some interventions. Ultimately I wanted a normal birth if possible.

Concerned about partner

Before coming to Birthtalk, I had reasonable confidence in my ability to birth, or at least to deal with whatever situation came up during labour and birth. However I was concerned about my partner's anxieties and desire to control the situation, and I was worried that this would lead to interventions. And to conflict between us on the day – this is not ideal.

Emotional growth

My partner and I both changed significantly over the months that we attended the Birthtalk sessions. In particular, we grew emotionally and became more comfortable with birth. We also gained knowledge and the sessions helped us to direct our own research.

Benefits of a doula

Also, having a doula was such a wonderful security blanket for us. She helped us to find research that was of interest to us. Our minds were at ease as we knew that we wouldn't be "rail-roaded" by the hospital staff into doing



something that we didn't want. Making decisions under the pressure of birth wouldn't be easy.

Wonderful experience

I felt that I had a really wonderful labour and birth, mostly due to not feeling any fear or anxiety. I felt comfortable with what was happening, as I had enough information to guide me through whatever was happening. I laboured at home for about 24 hours, watched a movie, cooked, went for a walk, did some reading, massage and tried to nap.

I didn't let Haydn know that I was in labour (I wasn't sure myself) until Transition. When we left home we were in transition, and then by the time we got to the hospital we quickly progressed into Active Labour.

During active labour, I was totally focussed on the job I had to do. We had intended on burning oils, putting on music, getting in our swimmers to go in the bath, etc, but when it started, I didn't even think about that again.

Totally focussed

There were hardly any words spoken throughout, and I was totally focussed. Haydn was incredible, just being there and supporting me. Our doula was excellent – taking the stresses away from us. The midwife and student doctor were brilliant. The only thing that bothered me was the monitoring (portable Doppler was used) – the gel was cold and the whole sensation distracted me for a minute every time. But it was preferable to the continual monitoring.

Exhausted & invigorated

And then baby Emma was born, and our world changed. She arrived at 3am, which was about 4.5 hours after the start of active labour. And I felt exhausted and invigorated all at the same time.

Following the birth, I felt confident in my abilities to be a parent, and to nurture my child. I felt calm and happy, which assisted in bonding with my baby. The issues that came up after the birth were easier to deal with, such as initial problems breastfeeding, mastitis, reduced freedom, financial dependence, and general parenting duties.

My partner and I feel that our relationship is stronger, and we are more aware and considerate of each other. Personally, I feel honoured to be a woman who has become a mother, like millions of women before me. I hope I can do this role justice, now and in the future.

Recommending Birthtalk

I often suggest Birthtalk to friends who have had a difficult birth or unwanted caesarean. Especially if they are thinking of not having any more children due to the fear. I also suggest Birthtalk to women who are planning on getting pregnant and haven't yet dealt with any emotional issues that may prevent them from having the birth that they want. Of course, they need to find their own path, however most people don't know what their options are except what their obstetricians tell them.

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Empowering hospital VBAC

at 42 weeks

Amy & Steve attended Birthtalk's VBAC Course, and after a long wait, finally met their new son...

Padraic finally arrived on Saturday 27 December, at 42 weeks on the dot. A bushwalk at Mt Nebo on Friday seemed to get things going in the nick of time - I was due to go in for a stretch and sweep Saturday morning!

Contractions came to visit late on Friday night and labour was in full swing by 3am; all 4.25kg and 54cm of bub was born vaginally, sans-drugs (but with a little bit of ventouse help) at 11am. The photo (on this newsletter's front page) was a few hours later when our two year old Jedda came to meet her brother; I just love it - its already blown up and waiting to find a home on our wall.

So far Padi has been feeding like a trooper and sleeping well, which has been a great way to kick things off. Even though I have been a little physically sore; mentally and emotionally the labour and recovery has been fantastic for me. Feeling very empowered! I honestly believe that I would not have had this outcome if we hadn't come along to Birthtalk.

Reframing my wants/needs from 'has to be a vbac' to - let's aim for a good birth - has allowed me to accept the way things panned out, because I know full-well that we asked all the questions and understood the impacts of our decisions.

Steve was an amazing support during labour, we had a great



team going and he also was in there asking the questions and keeping up a great environment for our little one to be born into. Jedda is truly in love and is being truly helpful, even if we do have to keep reminding her that blankets over Padi's head aren't ideal :)

Thanks so much for doing what you guys do - it is a truly amazing thing! Good luck for 2009!

©Amy & Birthtalk

When should we come to Birthtalk?

And other FAQ...

1. When should we begin attending Birthtalk Antenatal sessions?

Unlike regular Antenatal Courses, (which you attend in the latter part of your pregnancy), we encourage you to come to Birthtalk as soon as you can. The information we offer can be very helpful when considering your care options, which requires a set of knowledge not often available to couples. Plus the earlier you attend, the more chances to hear positive stories, and good news about birth.

2. Should my partner or support people attend?

It is highly valuable for them to be at as many sessions as possible. It is vital for a birthing woman to be surrounded by people who not only know and love her, but also who trust birth & understand the importance of good support. Birthtalk can be a place for them to build this trust, based on facts and enhanced by hearing other women's stories. They can't support you well if they don't know why you need this support.

3. Is Birthtalk a Natural Birth group?

Birthtalk is not a homebirth group. We are not a natural-drug-free birth group. We are not a 'vaginal' or 'caesarean' birth group. We are an EMPOWERING birth group, and support women working towards a positive birthing scenario, in a variety of settings. We have women attending working towards everything from homebirth to elective caesarean - but ALL are working towards a better experience of birth.

Homebirth after

previous traumatic birth :

Kirsten's story

Kirsten and Duncan attended our "Path to a Better Birth" Antenatal Course, and Kirsten also attended our Healing From Birth support group. Their daughter, Akir was born peacefully at home..before the midwife arrived.

A previous traumatic birth

Akir's birth story begins with the birth of her older brother, Finlay, in 2005. At 33 weeks gestation I experienced a bleed and presented to the hospital for examination. Naive and uninformed I was quickly channelled through the fear-driven medicalised system: My desires for a natural and empowering birth, all too soon, quashed. .

Lacking the knowledge to make an empowered decision and without the skills to negotiate the system or ask the appropriate questions I, regrettably, handed over my innate birthing wisdom and power.

Violent ordeal

The induction was a violent and extremely traumatic ordeal. The syntocine regime caused me to go into one long contraction. The only thing which was progressing the labour and instilling contractual rhythms was acupuncture treatments from Annie, my dear friend and support person. But still "little progress" was made; my body simply was not ready to give birth and my son was not ready to be born. The longer that nothing happened the more my anxiety level increased as I felt pressure to "perform".

Scared and overwhelmed I got lost in a drug induced daze. With the threat of a c-section looming I eventually agreed to an epidural which, thankfully, relaxed me enough to give birth vaginally. At the time of birth more than 13 people crowded into the room and out of all of them only one, Annie, showed any regard for my wellbeing or the sacredness of the event which had just happened.

Not what birth should be

There is much more I could say in regards to Finlay's birth but ultimately I was left feeling powerless, empty, traumatised, guilty, ripped off. I knew



deep down that this was not what birth should be. I vowed that next time it would be different.

Unresolved emotions

By the time I fell pregnant with Akir I felt that I had healed from Finlay's birth but went to a Birthtalk 'Healing From Birth' evening to "clear the slate". To my surprise the evening evoked a lot of unresolved emotions for me and I knew that I had inner work to do to ensure Akir's birth would not only be different, but would be her own.

Inspired by Georgina Kelly's "The Art of Mindful Birthing" course and the book "Birthing from Within" I began to journal and draw my fears and my vision of how I wanted the birth to be. I read books on natural birth and attended Birthtalk's "Path to a Better Birth" Antenatal classes. Intellectually I became informed and emotionally and spiritually I healed a little more from Finlay's birth.

Clearing away fears

Importantly I realised that this second birth was not about righting a wrong... it was about clearing away my fears and emotional blocks to ensure this baby was born according to its' own destiny. It was about me doing everything I could to inform myself and set up a safe passage for my babe but then emotionally stepping out of the way and handing the outcome over to faith, confident that I had done everything I could. I came to trust birth, trust my body, and trust that the baby knew how to be born.

It was through this deep process work

that, at approximately 30 weeks, I decided to give up my place in the Birthcentre and have a homebirth. I knew that this time around I needed not only a natural birth but an undisturbed one. I wanted to labour "like a cat in the dark" undisturbed, uninhibited. I yearned to dance the hormonal cascade of my birthing body and surrender my mind to the innate wisdom of my body's own rhythms.

My partner's healing journey

I felt confident that a homebirth could provide this ends. The children's father was at first relatively unsupportive, however I stayed in my power knowing without a doubt knew this was how I needed to birth and how this child needed to be birthed.

I knew that his reluctance was fear-driven response based on lack of information so I worked hard to get him on board by providing him with information and statistics on birth and inviting him along to Birthtalk Antenatal classes. Certainly by the end of this process he not only had the information to make his own decision about the best birth practise for our family, but also began his own healing journey in regards to Finlay's birth. A definite turning point.

See the next page for Akir's complete Birth Story...soon to be on our new website

The birth of Akir -

homebirth after previous traumatic hospital birth

Akir's Birth Day

At 39 weeks at about 4.30am on September 19 I woke up with tightenings but thought that they were just Braxton Hicks and thus tried to go back to sleep. Shortly after I felt like a "thud" and the tightenings became a little more painful. Again (out of self-preservation) I convinced myself that I could not possibly be going into labour today and passed them off. I continued to lie on my side and imagined a wave on the ocean washing over me. Eventually I got up and cleaned the bathroom, tidied the house a little and got out some baby clothes "just in case". I then went back to bed for a short time, still somewhat convinced that this could not possibly be the time for which I had spent months preparing for.

Restless, I got up again. I decided to do some laundry as I thought that if I was going into labour I needed Finlay to have some clean clothes to go to his Nanna's (I had made a decision that an active 3 year old boy was not conducive to how I needed to birth).

Things picked up quickly

The contractions picked up and soon began to take my breath away. Although things were happening quickly I thought that it may happen late that evening and tried to encourage Duncan to go about his day as normal as I wanted all the space I could to labour in. However, to my surprise, things picked up extremely quickly, and let's put it this way, the clothes dryer was still turning away after Akir arrived!!

Once the contractions started to take my breath away I retreated to the bath. We called my midwife to advise that things were progressing, informing her that the contractions were 5 mins apart and that we would call her when they picked up. Within a short time, I asked for Finlay to be taken to my mum's; thinking I would be labouring all day I also requested some juice and fruit from the shop. Just as the boys were leaving I had a really strong contraction, I yelled out but they did not hear me, instead, closing the door and starting the car on their 45 minute round trip to my mum's. I was now alone in labourland.

Alone in labourland

The hot water of the bath began to make me queasy so I stood up under a cool shower. The next contraction was again intense. I remember thinking to myself "these are not 5 minutes apart" and getting out of the shower I timed the interval - they were 1 minute apart. I tried to walk into my bedroom but was quickly drawn back into the bathroom: I was having difficulty standing due to the sheer intensity of what was happening to my body and I was also conscious my waters had not broken and could feel myself holding back with carpet underfoot. I sat on the front of the toilet (yes, very glamorous, but god it felt good!) and here I stayed, gripping on to the bench and bath on both sides, riding each contraction as it surged forward.

With each surge I would come to full attention, never have I felt so alert or present. Completely in the moment I repeated my mantra "allow", "surrender" and held the intention to do this both mentally and physically. Between contractions I would lull, head hanging down almost limp. For once in my life my body was the master of my mind and my innate birthing wisdom drew forth to direct the journey.

I felt completely uninhibited and free as my body show me how to move and how to sound in order to birth this baby. I remember at one stage screaming out of a fleeting moment of fear but I quickly told myself to get a grip and get my voice down low. I also remember having a silent contraction: Completely zoning out and lifting myself above the pain barrier to a place where I was truly one with my mantra. The feeling was absolutely amazing! I remember trying to do another one, but was not to be as mental thought took second place to the inherent physical process at play.

I'm starting to push

The rhythmic dance continued and all of a sudden I thought... "I am starting to push... surely I can not be pushing...." But with the next surge I felt my pelvis expand as the head moved through.... "my god I am moving this baby... now!!" (Yes, it took a while for my logical mind to catch up to my body).

After two or three more surges I could



see the baby's head crowing: I could see the babe was still in its purplish coloured caul (water sac) and reached down to touch the head. At that stage thankfully I heard a car pull into the drive and then the front door open. I yelled out to Duncan.

He came upstairs and his mouth dropped when he saw me. "We are having a baby", I yelled. "Yes I can see!", he yelled back. He dropped to his knees in front of my and tried to call my friend who lives at the road and recently had an unassisted homebirth, I guess he was trying to get some tips!!

He bumbled around and called the wrong person. I needed him to be present with me and what was happening so out of desperation I yelled "Don't worry about it just catch the baby!!" With that I gave another push and the baby slid out, the caul breaking as the babe hit Duncan's hands. The babe started crying immediately. I will never forget the feeling of her slippery newborn skin in my hands and against my chest.

I collapsed to the ground, muttering repeatedly "We have just had a baby... we have just had a baby.... (expletive ... expletive!!)" And if I was not already in shock, I check to see what sex we had. Convinced I was having another boy, I remember looking down thinking, "something is missing", then it sunk in... we had a girl!!!

(continued next page)



Our midwife arrived

Exhausted, elated, shocked, my mind turned to ensuring this baby was kept warm so we got into the bath. Shortly after I birthed the placenta with relative ease. Duncan called our midwife to inform her, grabbed a colander for the placenta, and put old sheets and blankets on the bed and soon he had us tucked up in our bed. Our midwife arrived 45 minutes afterward as did my dear friend and acupuncturist Annie. It was lovely to be surrounded by womenfolk and have them to debrief with and care for me.

Stark contrasts

Akir's journey into this world was truly a remarkable and enlightening journey. It was filled with fear, tears, courage, triumph, joy. Her journey was in stark contrast to Finlay's crowded medicalised ordeal. In fact the intimacy and closeness I was gifted with her birth and early days reopened many wounds as I realised what Finlay and I had missed out on and what we could never experience together. Although a great deal of healing has occurred, I believe a residual sadness will always shroud the birth of my dear Finlay. In saying that I am eternally grateful for both experiences as they have both gifted me with wisdom and without experiencing how wrong birth can go perhaps I would never have discovered how beautifully right it can feel. Blessing to all those involved, I am grateful beyond words.

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To see Birthtalk's Tips for Healing a bad birth go to www.birthtalk.org/TipsForHealing.html

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 courses at www.birthtalk.org

"I didn't get my VBAC... but I got my dream birth"

Danielle - empowering caesarean at 34 weeks



Danielle and her husband Phillip attended Birthtalk's VBAC Course in 2008.

Course attendees learn how to work towards an empowering birth in any scenario, where they can emerge positive, confident and strong. They learn the benefits of the hormones available to them, and how to get these hormones kickstarted in a less-than-optimal situation. They also learn the importance of being central to the birth experience and the positive outcomes this could have on their postnatal period and beyond. Danielle and Phillip took this information to heart, first in changing care-givers mid-pregnancy to get their needs better met. Then they really put those skills to the test when put in an emergency situation, by negotiating to ensure they still were involved in decision-making, by getting the hormones flowing, with support from excellent care-givers, and giving their child the best possible start.

Dear Debbie and Melissa

I wanted to write and thank you for all the info and support my husband

and I got last year during our second pregnancy on our quest for a VBAC. In the

end our son was born 6 weeks early at Selangor (we

changed care providers half way through and that made all the difference in our confidence) due to

IUGR (Intra Uterine Growth Retardation). We were very lucky to end up with a live, healthy baby as

things went downhill real fast. So I never got the

VBAC but I got the dream birth experience. Even

though we have faced an incredible amount of trials what with special care and then me having a number

of complications post-birth, they were absolutely amazing up there. I now understand what you guys

mean by it being the experience and not how the

baby comes. We have been floating on happy hormones for the past few months

and our little family is going from strength to strength. Ethan James was born on

November 10, 2008 and weighed in at 1.7kg. He spent a total of three weeks in

the special care nursery but was healthy and thriving from birth, surprising all. I

can't thank you guys enough. This experience has completely changed my outlook

on motherhood and life. It has been the most hectic and scary journey ever but I

would not change a single thing. For the first time since I had my first child three

years ago I feel like a strong woman and a real mother to both of them, not like I

am just watching anymore. Many of the midwives recommended that I participate

in a birth debrief, both from this and the last birth - we didn't get there as bubby

came too soon - so I will get to see you at one of those meetings in the future.

Thank you again

Empowering Caesarean for transverse lie

Kathryn & Gregg attended Birthtalk's "Path to a Better Birth" Course in preparation for the arrival of their first child. They were planning a natural birth, but things took an unexpected turn in the last week of the pregnancy.

Scared about birth process

Our sister-in-law, who was at the time a trainee doula, promoted Birthtalk to us - it turned out to be the best investment we made in our education and preparation for birth. I was quite scared about the process of birth as my mother had miscarried 3 times, and had a difficult birth for both myself and my younger brother. Gregg's mum had also had miscarriages, and difficulties with Gregg's younger brother.

I guess I was hoping for reassurance and I certainly wasn't getting this from my work colleagues or other mothers in the community I knew. My sister-in-law had difficulties with her first birth, but subsequent ones were better, so I knew from her experience that it couldn't always be a bad experience. I was led to believe that the prenatal classes held by the hospital would not have much value and would do no more than tell me how many nappies I had to buy for the hospital stay; another misconception from my peers and mothers out there.

Negative stories everywhere

Before coming to Birthtalk I felt excited but fearful - the only stories you hear from people were how bad it was for them. Unfortunately, there are not a lot of positive birth stories out there - it's almost as if there's a private competition between mothers to see whose experience was the worst!

A fulfilling experience

Birthtalk has absolutely changed my views, and knowledge base, and feelings about birth! Even though my birth didn't go as planned (not the first preference in our birth plan), I had a very fulfilling experience as I was very much a part of the process, not just the "lump of meat giving birth". The birth, as can be seen in the photos, was a most fulfilling experience for both of us. We are



so thankful to both Melissa and Deb for their education and support and the sharing by other mums and dads who attended the course, and the encouragement of mums who returned to share their testimonies.

Doing things together

Our relationship has always been about doing things together - this was a major one! We read everything we could, attended Birthtalk together and shared our thoughts and feelings and made decisions based on what we'd learned. My physical challenge has been feeding Lachlan due to my inverted nipples, and the adjustments we have had to make in our relationship as a couple due to fatigue now that we have a baby to care for has been a challenge for both of us. We're not perfect, but we're doing well together as a family and when possible make time for each other. The rewards of having a happy and loving baby are well worth the wait.

Confidence from the birth

I certainly didn't know what to do [when I first had my baby], nor do I really know what's ahead, but because of the confidence I gained through the birthing process, I am confident as a mother that I will be able to handle whatever challenges may come along and know what questions to ask in relation to medical issues using the techniques used at Birthtalk.

Breastfeeding support

Having joined up with ABA at the baby show last year, and attending a Breastfeeding Education Class at the Logan Hospital run by ABA gave me the con-

fidence to fulfil my preference to breastfeed my baby. With what we learned at Birthtalk; the benefits of having skin to skin contact with baby a.s.a.p. after birth, I insisted that no matter what method of birth, this was one of a few things that really was not negotiable in the birth plan, unless of course I was unconscious or in some circumstance that would prevent it.

The midwife in theatre ensured this did happen for us and as a result, Lachlan immediately attached and has not given up since. I could totally understand why some women give up as my inverted nipples made it extremely uncomfortable, painful and excruciating when the left nipple cracked on several occasions throughout the majority of the first 8-10 weeks of breastfeeding.

The last 6 weeks have been more comfortable on the right side, however, the left side is still painful, but only on initial attachment; once Lachlan has drawn the nipple out and the let down has happened and the flow starts, it's much more comfortable. Only time will tell whether this discomfort eases, but I am determined to breastfeed Lachlan for as long as I can.

Feeling connected

I can't imagine not feeling connected to Lachlan. From the moment we found out I was pregnant, we "bonded with our bump". When he was born, we were both overwhelmed with finally meeting him; Gregg got to cut the cord and he attached to me straight away while I was still being stitched up. Our bond has only improved and intensified since then. We can't imagine life without him.

Confidence from empowerment

After the birth, I feel absolute confidence in myself. I still have a lot to learn and that will happen as we grow together as a family. Due to having such an empowering birth experience, Gregg and I feel we can handle any obstacle that may come our way - we will be able to overcome or adjust as the need arises. We have already faced many challenges together as noted earlier.

Doula in the family

My Doula was my sister-in-law which was very convenient. I remember when we announced to the family that I was pregnant that Jo came up to me and said, "That's wonderful news, because I've decided to become a Doula". Gregg and I looked at each other and Gregg said, "That's great Jo - what's a Doula?" Having a Doula was extremely beneficial as Jo was a great resource of information, guidance and support to both of us. Her calm and confidence on the big day was also invaluable as we felt we were in a bit of a whirlwind, with not being "psyched up" to be parents so suddenly.

Birthtalk for high-schoolers!

I would absolutely recommend Birthtalk! It should be part of the High School curriculum. Unfortunately for Gregg and me, we lost both our Mums to cancer in the last few years and we didn't have the benefit of their wisdom or support through the pregnancy and subsequently the birth and beyond.

As I said earlier, you only hear about the negative birth stories when in a group of women "at the office" or in other social situations. Birth is not as scary as people make out and I am so thankful we made the decision to attend the Birthtalk classes. It certainly made a huge, positive difference to the outcome of our birthing and subsequently, our ability to parent. For us, Birthtalk gave us the opportunity to see birth as a wonderful experience, no matter how it actually turns out. And even though we had to throw our natural birth plan out the window, we were in charge - it was hugely empowering, and we both think we're better and more confident parents as a result.

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See Kathryn's Birth Story at right...



Lachlan's Arrival - a Birth Story

An excerpt from Kathryn & Gregg's journey to an empowering caesarean, as their baby was lying in the transverse position (see the full story on our website)

...My appointment with my Obstetrician was first up the following morning (Gregg's last day at work). My Obstetrician, knowing my preference for a natural birth, laid out all the options. Basically, it came down to if I went into labour and prolapsed the cord, which would be highly likely given Lachlan's position, we would have about a 10 minute window to get him out safely, and keep me healthy too. As we live an hour from the hospital, this was a risk not worth considering. Getting to that decision though, we employed the method of questioning that Deb and Melissa taught. After careful consideration of all the options, we agreed caesarean was the only way to ensure Lachlan and I survived the birth. My Obstetrician got on the phone to the theatre at Mater Mothers Private to find out when we could do the caesarean. I guess both Gregg and I were thinking it would happen in the next few days, but didn't prepare ourselves for the question from my obstetrician: "how does 2:30 this afternoon sound?"

I guess we must have looked shocked seeing the Obstetrician's facial expression in response. Gregg was thinking of all the things he was going to do at work that day with handing over to his replacement, as he was taking 6 months long service leave. I was thinking, well we have a basic bag packed in the car, but my toothbrush and pillow are still at home. Gregg and I then looked at each other and realised none of that mattered. We said, with some trepidation, "fine". We're just so thankful we had already confidently made the decision that the caesarean was the only way. We realised we would have time to go home to get my pillow and toothbrush and pack a couple of things for Gregg for that night and be back by 1:30 p.m. in time to prep, so hit the road. We rang my Dad and said "are you ready to become grandparents this afternoon?" There was silence on the other end of the phone, followed quickly by excitement... (see www.birthtalk.org for more)



Gregg & Kathryn in their hospital room - about to become parents

Website Update

New Suggested Reading page New Google Maps New Birth Stories New Articles New Suggested Reading page New Google Maps New Birth Stories New Article New Suggested Reading page New Google Maps New Birth Stories New Article New Suggested Reading page New

Come and check out our new Website!

Easy to get around

Thanks to our web designer (and Birthtalk mum) Holly Jewell, the new website is a breeze to navigate. Just check out the Site Map (linked at the bottom of every page) to get to the section you want. New sections make it easy to find information, such as "Planning a Positive Birth", "Articles by Birthtalk", & "Caesarean Issues". There is a whole section dedicated to Birth Trauma, hopefully answering some of the questions we get in the many emails and phone calls from women on this topic.

Meetings Information

Our IRL meetings are now all held at the Toowong Venue. All info you will need, including Calendars for each course, times, topics & a Google map can be found in the Meetings section & Calendar section of the website. There are also FAQ for our courses and support group.

Women's Stories

So many women have sent their gorgeous photos, and inspiring stories, to make our website not only a beautiful place to visit, but a source of some invaluable insights. Birthtalk is about not only the birthing process, but the emotional journey to get there. That's why we have two sections for Women's Stories: one, called Journeys to Birth, where women, and some men, share their decision-making processes, and the stages of understanding and personal growth, to get to the birth. The Birth Stories section is purely about the Birth Day - what happened, how it felt, and everything that makes each birth unique & amazing.

New Suggested Reading

We have now uploaded the List of Suggested Reading that we provide for

Course Attendees, onto our website. These links are to evidence-based information on a wide range of topics, including "Prelabour Rupture of Membranes", "Induction", "Third Stage" (delivery of placenta). There are also links to information about the hormones available during labour, and issues surrounding "going postdates" (ie going past your due date).

Check these links out, to gain knowledge that will support your decision-making, or even help with the healing process from a traumatic birth. The Suggested Reading list is at : www.birthtalk.org/articles.html

Courses Full

The May-July VBAC & Antenatal Courses are currently underway, and both courses are full, apart from a few casual spots. To go on the Waiting List for an individual session or future courses, just complete an Online Enrolment Form. You can also keep up-to-date with announcements about upcoming events via our Facebook page, or joining our Online Mailing List on our homepage.

New Slideshows

We are so privileged to be able to share with you the intimate moments of Birthtalk families meeting their little ones. We now have 2 new Slideshows, showing "First-time parents", and "Meeting 2nd & 3rd babies" on our new website. (www.birthtalk.org/Slideshows.html) These are also on our Facebook page, so you can leave a comment, as others have done, if you feel so inspired :)

Thanks for reading...and if you have any feedback about our website, please do let us know :)

Need help? Confused about your options?

Birthtalk's co-founder, midwife Debby Gould, 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.

Need help with a Birth Plan? She can help you formulate a Birth Plan, which includes an education process & can be a great communication device between you and your support team.

Going over your Birth Notes? Debby can explain and explore your previous Birth Notes, and help you consider ways to have a better birth next time. She can also offer support after a traumatic birth experience.

Due soon? Deb can even hold a private Crash Course if your baby is due before our next Antenatal Course concludes.

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

To contact Deb call (07) 3878 7915 during school hours.