



HypnoBirthing, Fourth Edition: The natural approach to safer, easier, more comfortable birthing - The Mongan Method, 4th Edition

By Marie Mongan

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HypnoBirthing® has gained momentum around the globe as a positive and empowering method of childbirth. Here's why: HypnoBirthing helps women to become empowered by developing an awareness of the instinctive birthing capability of their bodies. It greatly reduces the pain of labor and childbirth; frequently eliminates the need for drugs; reduces the need for caesarian surgery or other doctor-controlled birth interventions; and it also shortens birthing and recovery time, allowing for better and earlier bonding with the baby, which has been proven to be vital to the mother-child bond. What's more, parents report that their infants sleep better and feed more easily when they haven't experienced birth trauma.

HypnoBirthing founder Marie Mongan knows from her own four births that it is not necessary for childbirth to be a terribly painful experience. In this book she shows women how the Mongan Method works and how parents they can take control of the greatest and most important event of their lives.

So, why is *birth* such a traumatic event for so many women? And why do more than 40% of births now end in caesarian section, the highest percentage in history? The answer is simple: because our culture teaches women to fear birth as a painful and unsettling experience. Fear causes three physical reactions in the body?tightening of the muscles, reduced blood flow to the birthing muscles, and the release of certain hormones?which increase the pain and discomfort of childbirth. This is not hocus-pocus this is science.

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Editorial Review

Review

"HypnoBirthing [is] a trademarked curriculum that trains expectant moms in visualization, relaxation and self-hypnosis techniques, which are then used in lieu of drugs. Some studies indicate that hypnosis can cut down on pain and complications and possibly even shorten labor..."

?*Newsweek*

"I've been delivering babies for 20 years, and I've never seen anything like this method. It's incredible!"

?**Robert J. Zahn, M.D.**

"Many of my patients have used the HypnoBirthing Method?results: little or no medication and yet, a more comfortable mother."

?**Gerald A. Hamilton, M.D.**

"This is magnificent! I'll get up in the middle of the night for this kind of delivery any day of the week."

?**Wayne L. Goldner, M.D.**

"[HypnoBirthing] can help alleviate anxiety during childbirth. It also may shorten labor significantly: when your uterus is relaxed, it can perform more efficiently..."

?**Parents.com**

"What HypnoBirthing gave me was a greater sense of my inner strength, and it empowered me through my labor."

?*Better Homes & Gardens*

"My parents saw the video of my birthing, and they couldn't even believe that I was in labor."

?Cathy Stearns, HypnoBirthing mother

"One of the beauties of hypnosis is that it's easy to teach, it can often work quickly and, for most people, it is a positive addition to their treatment."

?Ran D. Anbar, M.D., Upstate Medical University, SUNY-Syracuse

"I didn't think this would work, even after I took the course, but it really did! It's amazing. .. With this [HypnoBirthing] birth, I kept thinking I wasn't really in labor because I kept waiting for the pain to start, and it never did. Instead it was a wonderful experience. I chose to have my daughter in the hospital with a doula to help me, and it was very natural, very peaceful; a beautiful experience. I felt the baby just dropped out of me and you can tell. She's a really calm, happy baby, one who nurses well."

?Spirit of Change.com

About the Author

Marie Mongan, M.Ed., M.Hy., is the founder of HypnoBirthing; she is a life-long educator, former college dean, clinical hypnotherapist, and Director of the HypnoBirthing Institute. She is the recipient of the 1995 National Guild of Hypnotists President's Award and received the coveted Charles Tebbetts Award in 2000, followed in 2009 with being given the highest distinction awarded by the National Guild of Hypnotists, being named for the recognition she has brought to hypnotherapy. In 2013 she was presented with the LifeTime Achievement award from the International Assn. of Counselors and Therapists, being named to this honor for the recognition she has brought to hypnotherapy. Ms. Mongan lives in New Hampshire, but spends much of her time on planes, as do many of the other faculty members of the Institute, teaching in many of the 46 countries where HypnoBirthing is practiced. She is the mother of four adult children, all born using the techniques upon which HypnoBirthing is based.

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Looking Back Over 25 Years

When the publisher of the third edition of our HypnoBirthing textbook invited me to write a revision of the book for our 25th anniversary, it opened up a flood of memories and thoughts about the journey that has brought HypnoBirthing to where it is today. Mongan Method HypnoBirthing is the leader and most comprehensive natural and instinctive birth education program that exists. It has, from the very beginning, reached beyond simple relaxation and introduced many advanced hypnosis techniques into the birthing classroom. The coincidence of this being our 25th anniversary year called back thoughts of experiences that bubbled over in my mind and could not be quieted. Where have we been and where have we gone in a whole quarter century?

At this time 25 years ago, Maura, my daughter for whom the program was developed, had just given birth to our grandbaby Kyle. The other two women who also prepared for their births with HypnoBirthing were due to birth at any moment. The success of Maura's birthing had the hospital staff talking about that woman in Room 201, who had no epidural, had soft music playing, and the room dimmed all through her labor. One of the nurses on duty that day, Pat, who was also pregnant, made it a point to step into Maura's room quite regularly. Each time she just stood by the door with a quizzical look on her face and stared at Maura. On one visit, she spoke, 'And she hasn't had anything for pain? Really?'

I remember leaving the room briefly to get a tuna fish sandwich (usually a poor choice with a birthing mother); and when I returned, I found a midwife on her knees writing the name of the artist on the tape that was in the tape player that I had placed obscurely on the floor behind a chair.

When Maura's birth was complete, Nurse Pat came back into the room and asked for an appointment with me. As she left, she told the other nurses, 'Hey, girls, this is the way I'm having my baby.' My excitement doubled.

I went home that afternoon, and with my notes taken during Maura's pregnancy and her birth, I began to set down the philosophy of birth that had been waiting all these many years since I was a child. One by one, I started to expand on the chapters of the coil-bound book I had prepared for my first three pioneer moms. I knew that I needed to put these feelings and observations down so that they could be shared with others. Writing that book was the easiest thing I've ever done. My enthusiasm was at peak, and my mind just wouldn't shut down for anything.

With the other two births happening on the heels of the first, and followed by Nurse Pat's birth, HypnoBirthing became a buzzword in that hospital. Soon a number of curious hypnotherapists, who heard about what was happening in Concord, New Hampshire, called to ask, 'Will you teach me what you taught Maura about birthing with hypnosis?' In no time, there were a number of hypnotherapists meeting with eager couples. The National Guild of Hypnotists invited me to present the program at their annual educational convention, and then we were on our way. Simply by word of mouth, we had HypnoBirthings occurring all over the country.

A Paradigm Shift Began

There we were. I began to receive so many calls that I started to teach classes. Pregnant mothers and their birth companions filled the parent classes, and hypnotherapists, nurses, and doulas came to become practitioners.

I had no idea of how urgently pregnant women were craving a better way to birth than the standard births that were offered by hospitals. They were hungry for a program that would allow them to forego anesthesia, but at the same time, make it possible for them to birth gently and in comfort. Since most hospital personnel themselves did not believe that birth could be free of fear and pain, there was only the home birth route, which also bore the burden of lack of public recognition and a lot of misinformation.

I found out quickly when NBC's TV show *Dateline* presented a full-hour feature on birthing with hypnosis.

At the end of the show, hundreds of people called or wrote to producers to tell them that they had neglected to tell the public that the program is HypnoBirthing. The following morning there was a front-page article on the MSNBC website about HypnoBirthing, stating that it was I who founded the program. They gave a link directly to our HypnoBirthing website. Without a bit of exaggeration, I can honestly say that we received almost 5,000 calls and emails over the next few weeks.

HypnoBirthing took on a life of its own, and in a very short time, it took over my life as well. All of a sudden we needed staff to be able to give referrals from a referral system we didn't even have as yet. We needed a second telephone and another person to receive the calls. We stepped beyond the realm of a passion and into the realm of business. A business we hadn't planned for.

It looked as though the change in the way birth was viewed by the general public, and care providers as well, would come easily. With the impetus of that NBC show behind us, we saw a large number of pregnant families flocking to our classes. It became increasingly obvious, however, that not many care providers were impressed.

When I first started teaching and accompanying birthing families into the hospital those many years ago, I remember naively thinking that surely doctors and midwives would be pulling me out of birthing rooms to inquire how they could replicate those beautiful scenes. I was sure that once they witnessed a few HypnoBirthing mothers breathing their babies down to crowning in deep relaxation, they would insist on having all of their moms know how to achieve this phenomenon. I waited. The nurses were enthusiastic, and several midwives joined our ranks. Doctors regularly commented on how 'remarkable' the births were, but except for a few, they showed no curiosity as to how these results were achieved. Even though they saw it happening time and time again, they seemed to dismiss the birthings as flukes.

In looking back now, I must admit the acceptance of HypnoBirthing didn't come the way I thought it would. It was a very steep uphill climb. A few times a doctor would inquire, 'What did you say this is?' Many saw, and frequently complimented, the birth mother on her beautiful labor. Most had no questions, however, and were not interested in knowing how more of the mothers they were caring for could birth in this way.

They quickly dismissed what they had just proclaimed 'really remarkable.' They were content to move on to the next room and suggest a membrane rupture or even a Pitocin drip if the mother was not progressing in line with the Friedman Curve. Pitocin was usually the order of the day if the doctor's shift was to end in a few hours. So often a beautiful calm birthing was given over to manipulation, with little thought to the dramatic change in the mother's comfort level.

Once in a while, a doctor would ask me how I could prove that what we teach in HypnoBirthing classes resulted in what we were seeing. I was always amused by that question. It reminded me of the trial scene from the movie *Chicago*, when the defense attorney is asked for evidence of something he had just brilliantly illustrated. The defense attorney replied, 'And what is it that you are seeing that you need evidence of?'

Though our success didn't happen overnight, as I reflect on those years, I realize that we gradually made some significant changes just from our requests. In the hospital in Concord, New Hampshire, where HypnoBirthing first 'caught on,' as a mother was settling into her birthing room, her nurse would pull a chair over to the side of the bed and ask to spend a few minutes with the family so that, ' . . . I can be sure that I

understand exactly what you mean by some of your birth preferences.'

Over time, we would find that there was already a birth ball in the room, and the nurse would remind the mother to ask when she was ready to use the tub. Someone cared enough to assure the mother that she was welcome and her requests would be honored as far as possible. The nurses' overt support made up for the oblivion of some of the other care providers. Eventually, there were some doctors who displayed approval, but they were closet enthusiasts.

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