

Nathan Jürgen's Birth Story

EDD: 31st October 2008

Planned Birth: VBAC

Tuesday 28th October 2008. Mid Afternoon.

Started feeling uncomfortable twinges, but I ignored it as regular end of pregnancy labour pains. But by 5pm they were still there and getting more noticeable. That night I could not sleep and spent the night in the lounge with what were now regular contractions. I was very excited to go into spontaneous labour and couldn't wait to meet our little guy! The contractions continued all of Wednesday – I remember taking Aiden (my oldest child, then 22 months) to his swimming lesson. Wednesday night I got comfy in the lounge again, this time armed with notepad and pen and a digital watch to time the contractions.

10pm. The contractions were lasting up to 40 seconds each and were getting stronger and closer. They were strong enough that I had to stand through each one! Between contractions I dozed on the couch. I sent hubby to bed, as he was already tired from worrying about me the whole day and trying to keep everything calm for Aiden. My mom was also in bed at our place – to stay with Aiden when the time came to go to the hospital.

2:30am. I woke up to realize that the contractions were fading away – the gap was getting larger and larger and the contractions were definitely subsiding. When the gaps were back up to 40 minutes between each one - I went to bed (about 3:30am). Aiden woke up at 4:30am for some reason and only wanted me. What fun to watch kiddies TV shows at 4:30am when you have only had an hours sleep in 24 hours.

Thursday was a normal day, busy with Aiden and pottering around as usual. Except I was a lot more tired! My mom went back home and everyone relaxed again. Chatted to Rosalia who was advising me through the last of the pregnancy telephonically and she said that it was my body preparing and practicing, and that it meant that the end was definitely in sight. She said that she would be surprised if I made

my Gynae appointment the following Tuesday morning.

Thursday night I was in bed fast asleep immediately after Aiden was in bed. I had a fabulous night's rest, and woke up on Friday 31st October at about 2:30am with a bit of discomfort. I dozed the rest of the "night" until Aiden woke at about 6am.

Friday 31st October (due date). Contractions started in earnest from about lunchtime. It was exciting and it just felt different to the way it had on the Tuesday. I knew this was it! Hubby rushed to finish work off early and to get home. He spent most of the afternoon playing with Aiden and trying to get me to drink more water.

I checked and re-checked the hospital bags about 11 times, and then by 3:30pm stayed in my bedroom, focusing on each contraction that was helping to bring about my little miracle. At about 5:30pm I bathed with Aiden, watching my tummy ripple and harden with each contraction. The bath was fabulous for easing the discomfort, but when I got out, oh boy! The contractions were powerful enough that I had to stand through each one. For some reason I stood facing the wall, hands on the wall and rocked from side to side through each one.

When my husband put Aiden to bed, I went through to say good night, and to tell him that I was going to the hospital soon to get his baby brother. My mom was on her way already, and Aiden went to sleep easily and happily.

By 8pm, it was getting rather tricky – the contractions were happening 3 within 10 minutes, and the rocking was more frantic. Through one particular contraction I held my mom's hand and Jürgen's hand and squeezed, while kneeling on the floor. My hubby suggested that I call Rosalia to see if it was time to get to the hospital.

While chatting to her, another contraction hit and it was so intense that I dropped the phone. Jurgen picked it up and finished the

conversation. He then told me that it was time to get over to the hospital. We were very excited and nervous – so much so that we were right by the hospital before we realized we forgot the camera! I made him turn around and go back home to get it.

8:30pm. We checked into the Labour ward and I got comfy. The nurse wanted to monitor baby for an hour – I told her that she had 10 minutes, and I told her to go and read my birth plan before we spoke again. The hospital had “lost” the copy I submitted a few weeks earlier, but luckily I had about 10 copies with me and gave her one to read. By the time she got back 10 minutes later I had removed the monitor, as it was too annoying to labour while lying down.

9pm. I just wanted to hear that I was past 3cm dilated (which is almost where I got to with Aiden’s labour). Imagine our joy when she said I was 5cm dilated already!! YAY!!

I spent most of the next hour and a half in the bath with Jürgen sitting in the bathroom chatting to me. During each contraction I would turn onto all fours and rock again.

At 10:30 pm they came to check me again – I was only 6cm, so labour had definitely slowed down. (This is quite normal; when you move locations during labour it does slow down: every new person you encounter during labour also adds to your labour time!)

At 11pm she came back again – now things were moving again, but I was just past 6cm dilated. During the internal, a hard contraction hit and my membranes ruptured. Oh wow! After that things were hard and fast!

I was walking around the labour room, naked, because I was most comfortable like that. The nurse kept trying to put the hospital gown back on me and I kept pushing it off. They asked me to get back onto the bed at some stage and I then laboured on all fours. Jürgen had to hold me across the shoulders and neck as I was rocking so hard back

and forth they were all worried I would rock myself off the bed. He says that I almost dislocated his shoulder. (hehe)

Now there were two nurses with me, and they were very supportive! The one told me to scream as it would release the tension and relax me. I felt a bit silly screaming at first, but really got into it and started to enjoy the release it gave. (they eventually went to close the doors! Hehe).

By 11:50pm I was fully dilated and in transition and they wheeled me through to the delivery room. They had Jürgen give me gas – but I said no thanks: it just made me feel dizzy and queasy! I told them I wanted to go home and that I was too tired to do this. The nurses laughed and held my hands while they told me that there was nothing else to do – the hard part was done and my baby was nearly ready to meet us!

The gynae on call arrived and his first words to me were: “why didn’t you have another Caesar?” Both Hubby and I nearly told him to get lost. But this baby wanted to come and he realized that it was imminent. He then jokingly asked if we wanted the baby born in October or November as it was a few minutes to Midnight. As is standard hospital procedure (although I only found out afterwards – apparently the forceps help to ease pressure on the c-section scar) he then gave me an Episiotomy. With Hubby watching. (sigh). He then used forceps to help deliver our beautiful baby boy at 10 minutes after midnight. As per my wishes, they left the cord pulsing and Jürgen was allowed to cut it when the time was right.

I held our little one while they delivered the placenta, and stitched me up – I had also torn in addition to the episiotomy, but the nurse would not tell me how many stitches it took – “too many!” was her only comment. Then they cleaned us both up and left us as a family in the dim lighting of the delivery room, where I fed my baby and we finalized his name. This was incredible – to have that calm and quiet space where time seemed to stand still and it was just us there to

enjoy the moment.

We were all tired by now and Jürgen called them to come and take me back to the room. He wheeled Nathan to the nursery and tucked him in, and then came to say bye to me. I went for a lovely sleep and he went home to sleep for 2 hours before Aiden woke him up wanting to know where mommy and the new baby were.

I slept till 3am, and then got up and went for a shower. I then went to find my baby and to watch him sleeping.

Would I do it again? In a heartbeat! My next baby is due January 2011, and I am already making plans to ensure that the experience is even more positive and uplifting, even for my husband who was rather traumatized after watching the episiotomy and forceps delivery by a gynae who makes no secret of the fact that he does not support natural birth.

The entire experience was magical and the internal power I derived from knowing that I had birthed my baby the way I was designed to against all odds – against so many people telling me that it was impossible, that I was crazy for trying – carried me for many months. Still to this day, when I look at Nathan I think of that incredible experience, of what it taught me about myself and what I am capable of.

Above all else, it showed me that I am strong, that I am woman! And no one will ever be able to take that phenomenal experience away from me. I am so grateful that I was able to see this through. I am grateful for a husband who supported my decision even when he was worried and nervous and scared for both of us. I am grateful that I was stubborn and determined enough and above all else that both Nathan and I were healthy enough to do this together!