

## Hypnosis for Childbirth – What IS It and How Does It Work?

By Kerry Tuschhoff, HCHI, CHt, CI

Mention “Labor and Delivery” to anyone expecting a baby in their last trimester, and chances are good that their heart will begin to race, their mind will flood with concern and in some cases, they will even panic. Everyone knows that the day is coming when a powerful force will take over and their body will govern itself completely.

For some, childbirth is a very fearful event, but for Hypnobabies students and their partners, birth is merely an exciting challenge. The wise people who use Hypnobabies Childbirth Hypnosis can help lessen and sometimes eliminate fear and discomfort from their birthing experience, and actually enjoy their baby’s birth in more comfort, joy and love.



Hypnobabies mom Cassandra, just moments after giving birth to her son using Hypnobabies.

In the past, the word “hypnosis” conjured up images of stage hypnotists re-creating Elvis, or people clucking like chickens. Now it is common for hypnosis to be used therapeutically in the practice of medicine, in creating anesthesia for surgeries and dental work, and for personal therapy sessions. Even so, there are many myths and misconceptions regarding hypnosis that can dissuade those contemplating using this powerful tool for change.

### A few FACTS about Hypnosis:

- All hypnosis is self-hypnosis; a hypnotherapist (or Hypnobabies instructor) is only a guide. A person chooses to enter into a hypnotic state, elects to stay in hypnosis, and decides to come out of the hypnotic state at will.
- Approximately 90-95% of the population can be hypnotized. Willingness, belief and motivation, and the removal of misconceptions have great influence over a person’s ability to enter the state of hypnosis.
- During hypnosis you are not asleep or unconscious, and you will always “emerge” when you wish.
- Strong minded people more easily enter into hypnosis, the opposite of what is assumed.
- You cannot be made to divulge information or do anything against your will while in hypnosis.
- Hypnosis is a pleasant way to relax and direct your inner mind to accept positive imagery and circumstances.

### What about Childbirth Hypnosis Classes?

When learning how to use hypnosis for childbirth, you are taught how the different uterine muscles work efficiently together when the body is deeply relaxed. The depth of relaxation needed to facilitate an easier, more comfortable birthing can easily be achieved with a deep, somnambulistic state of hypnosis, as found in Hypnobabies. You learn these skills in weekly classes, and practice them at home every day until your baby arrives.

Birth Partners also have an integral role in the preparation process: listening to their own Birth Partner, Relax and Feel Confident hypnosis audio track, reading the handouts and guiding the pregnant student into a deep state of hypnosis with Hypnobabies “scripts”. Birth Partners are an invaluable part of the birth process since they help their birthing partner to focus and concentrate on their birth hypnosis tools, as well offering emotional and physical support.

For a birth hypnosis program to be completely effective, other aspects of preparation for childbirth need to be covered in classes as well, topics such as: Nutrition, Exercise, Becoming Healthy and Safe, Fear Clearing Sessions, Routine Medical Procedures and the Risks and Benefits of Each, Birth Plans and a Hands-On, Birth Rehearsal Practice Session. All of these and much more are invaluable aspects of Hypnobabies classes.

### **Fear, Expectation and Language Impact Childbirth Outcomes**

In other cultures, childbirth is regarded as a natural, normal event in life. When giving birth, they are supported by many others, and young girls are often present to witness the event. In this way, birth is celebrated and honored. These young girls then grow up with the belief system that birth is a positive event and their expectations of childbirth reflect their attitude. As a result, their births are similar to their predecessors ... many times without pain and fear. They develop a positive \*expectation of childbirth\*.

In our culture, expectations about childbirth are very much the opposite. For many generations we have been told that delivering a baby will be untold hours of painful, agonizing work, to be faced with fear and trepidation. We have all heard stories from well-meaning friends and family that sent shivers up our spines, and so the legacy continues. Therefore, we often experience pain in childbirth, in part, because we very much **expect** to!

In Hypnobabies Childbirth Hypnosis classes, our expectant students are taught to surround themselves with only encouraging people and messages, to create a positive new view of childbirth and the expectation that their birthing will be a beautiful, peaceful experience. Fear clearing sessions are integral to this process, as they allow each person to address fears, work through possible solutions and then release them.

Fear during birth can create tension, which creates pain, then more fear, and the cycle continues. Fear and anxiety can also create adrenaline production in the body, causing birth to stall or become dysfunctional, a common reason for Cesarean section surgical birth. Freedom from fear can make a significant difference in the birthing experience.

By learning and practicing Hypnobabies Childbirth Hypnosis, hypno-students are able to enter into self-hypnosis instantly, create hypno-anesthesia and direct it to wherever they need it during their baby’s birthing. Each birthing student becomes more in control over their body, and is an active participant in the birth process. They are aware of everything around them, and as birth progresses they naturally flow deeper inside, trusting in their body’s innate ability to give birth with more ease and comfort. Through learning, practicing and using Hypnobabies hypnosis techniques, the inner mind has been re-trained to provide the confidence and physical comfort that they need during pregnancy and childbirth...

### **Is it Possible to Give Birth Much More Comfortably?**

YES! It is when our students have learned and practiced their Hypnobabies “homework” faithfully ... and ... there are many variables in birthing that can affect the outcome. Couples need to have a positive and realistic view of hypnosis for childbirth. Each pregnant student and their partner must take responsibility for the choices they make while pregnant (choice of prenatal care-provider, place of birth, people who will attend the birth, etc.) and realize that their choices can affect the dynamics and outcome.



Many a potentially wonderful birth experience has been thwarted by not making fully informed choices. Pregnancy and birthing choices are addressed and explained thoroughly in a consumer-oriented childbirth class like Hypnobabies. Without a doubt, hypno-students are much calmer and more relaxed during birth (which automatically creates more comfort), while receiving powerful post-hypnotic suggestions that lessen fear and discomfort.

**Benefits of Using Hypnosis for Childbirth During Pregnancy, Birth and Postpartum:**

- Nausea can be lessened or eliminated
- Sleep during pregnancy becomes enhanced
- Pre-Term labor can be slowed or stopped
- Breech and posterior babies can be encouraged to turn
- 'Late' babies can be encouraged to be born
- Shorter labors due to less resistance in the birthing muscles
- No drugs at all, or less medication during childbirth means less risk of side effects for the birthing student and baby
- More energy conservation due to deep relaxation throughout the birthing process
- A calm, peaceful birthing environment
- Fewer interventions and complications during labor
- More alert babies who breastfeed and bond better initially due to fewer/no drugs in their systems
- Breast milk production can be enhanced
- A more comfortable postpartum recovery period because hypnosis tools help with discomforts
- Our Birth Partners experience hypnosis in class as well as on their own "Birth Partner Relax and Feel Confident" audio track, something that no other childbirth hypnosis program offers!
- The skills you both learn for relaxation and hypnosis are useful for the rest of your life.

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