

Billy's Birth Story

So, I have decided to write down the story of my second child's birth, as it was quite the 24 hour or so period of my life.

A little background: I had what I would consider a very easy pregnancy with my first child, Sammy. I had a little bit of back pain, and a little bit of heartburn. That was the extent of my discomfort.

I had what I would consider to be a pretty easy labor with Sammy as well. He was born after 9 hours of labor. My water broke at midnight, my doula came over, and I labored for the first 5 hours at home as my labor steadily progressed. At 5am or so, we headed to the hospital. I was in my transition period in the car, so by the time I got to the hospital I was really far along. I had to push for several hours, however, as Sammy's head was a little bit cocked and I couldn't seem to push him out. Finally, I had become fatigued, and I didn't feel like I could get the baby out on my own. So, I told my doctor at the time to do what she needed to do to get the baby out. So, I had an episiotomy, and out popped Samuel Benjamin Horowitz. Two days before his due date. All in all, not a bad labor. No drugs, except for the local anesthetic for the episiotomy.

Everyone says your second labor is shorter than your first. Um, not necessarily.

I was hugely pregnant with my second child, Billy. I think I was as big at 7 or so months with Billy as I was at the end of my pregnancy with Sammy. Things were different when I was pregnant with Billy, as I didn't feel nearly as well, I had a child to take care of, I had a full time job, and we were looking for a new house, so things were super busy. Because my pregnancy was so different with Billy, I was certain he was a girl - NOPE. Given that Sammy was born a couple of days before his due date and because I was really big with Billy, I was certain that he would come before his due date just like his brother did - NOPE. You would think that I would have learned that I shouldn't make assumptions about pregnancy, labor, or childbirth, but I kept making them anyway - STUBBORN. So, there I was, 40 weeks pregnant, and no Billy. So, I waited patiently for him to be ready to come on out. I was starting to get the sense that he was showing me who was boss, and guess what, with natural childbirth he is the boss. My doctor was fine with me waiting, but she said if I hit 42 weeks with no baby, we would have to have a little come to Jesus meeting. I said no problem - we're not going to get there. And we didn't - I was right about something (or more likely just lucky). Finally, at 41 weeks, Billy started to get serious about coming out. And here is the story of labor and childbirth with Billy.

So, I went into labor early Tuesday morning, sometime around 2 am. My contractions progressed through the early morning until they were about 7 to 10 minutes apart. I called my doula, Amanda, a little later in the morning, maybe 7 am or so, as I thought we were moving along. So, Amanda came over, and there we were. My contractions really weren't progressing. I was trying to get some rest, and I was getting a little, but not much.

We decided to take a walk, and I decided we needed to stop at Shipley donuts (donuts taste extra good when pregnant). I was hungry, as my body was working hard already, even though contractions were still only 7 to 10 minutes apart. Amanda and I decided to try different laboring positions, as it seemed like something was holding my labor and my baby back. So, we tried several hip and groin opening labor positions, but we weren't getting the labor to progress. So, next step - labor inducing massage. Amanda has a colleague, Rowan, who is a doula/massage therapist/tarot card reader/very interesting person. Amanda used the term "very colorful." (or something like that) to describe Rowan. She said she had gotten in trouble in the past as she had not warned a client about Rowan's "colorfulness". I said I didn't give a rats ass how "colorful" she might be - If she could help my labor progress, bring her to me. So, Amanda called Rowan, and Rowan scooted to my house on her Vespa, and she arrived at 2 pm for a labor inducing massage. Rowan was indeed colorful- and by colorful I mean, open, honest, and all around pretty bad ass. She asked me various personal questions, and massaged several spots on my body, including the groin area. The most interesting question she asked me was whether I had any fears about this labor or baby. I thought about it for a minute, and thought, yes, of course I have fears. Most particularly, the fear of having an unhealthy baby, since I did have that experience the first time around. I thought I was passed this fear, as I had most certainly chosen to get pregnant again, and was very excited to have another child, so I guess I just assumed I was past the fear. Perhaps not. As I described this fear to Rowan, she said that she had a thought (she says she has thoughts that come to her), and the thought was something along the lines of "this time will be different," or "it is not the same." Well, I don't know that I believe in these types of thoughts, or premonitions, or whatever you want to call them, but I was certainly happy to hear any positive thoughts. Actually now that I am thinking about it, she may have had this thought before I even told her about my fear - I can't remember the exact sequence. In any case, she had the thought, and expressed it. So, she finished her massage, wished me the very best of luck, and was on her way. I took a shower a little bit after she left, and I thought about this fear a little bit more, knowing I needed to let it go, and I cried. I cried and cried. And I felt better. Rowan left at 3, and by 5, my labor had intensified, and we decided it was time to go to the hospital. Did Rowan help progress my labor? Who knows, but I think so. My husband Dan says that if nothing else, she was a very welcome distraction. :)

We arrived at the hospital a little after 5, and were immediately admitted to a room, which was nice. My labor was progressing, but within an hour of being at the hospital, fatigue really began to set in, and sometime between 6 and 7, I expressed to Dan that I wasn't sure I could continue like this. I was considering an epidural, as I was in pain for sure, but mostly I was just exhausted so much less able to tolerate the pain. I just powered through for a bit longer, as things were moving, but, I was getting more tired and weaker by the minute. At about 8 pm, I decided that I couldn't do it anymore. I had hit a wall, and decided I couldn't continue as I was, and I asked for an epidural. I was just completely spent and was fighting my contractions instead of working with them. Amanda and Dan questioned this a bit, as they knew I hadn't wanted this, but at that point I was literally begging for drugs. So, we began the process of the epidural. But, it is a process. You can't just get the thing lickity split. So, there I was, a sappy puddle,

begging for drugs, and leaning heavily on Dan (and probably causing him significant pain, both physically and emotionally), and Billy decided to drop hard and fast. My doctor came back in the room as the pushing had begun. I looked right at her and told her to cut the baby out, pronto. She didn't think she could, as she didn't think the baby was far enough down, but she examined me, and Billy was right there, waiting to be pushed out. So, I got onto the hospital bed (this whole time at the hospital, I was never laying in the bed - I was standing and squatting, holding on to Dan, or the bed, or whatever was in front of me), and had the second episiotomy in my life. My doctor told me to push one time really hard, and literally, I did not think that I could. But I did. One major push, and Billy was out. All 9 pounds of him (holy crap he was big). I think I pushed all of maybe 5 times with Billy.

OMG I was so happy he was out. But I was shivering, shivering, shivering. I did not want to be touched. I was so, so exhausted. I have to say, I didn't even want to hold Billy right away. I just couldn't. I was still hurting, and I wanted some pain medication, and I wanted it ASAP. The doctor was talking about Demoral, and Amanda consulted with me making sure I wanted it, and I did. Looking back on it, I probably would have been fine with some extra strength motrin or something, but I wanted something that would work fast and well, and Demoral did those things. So, there I was, getting Demoral after my drug free child birth (except for the local anesthetic for the episiotomy).

So, needless to say, this labor did not go as I had expected or planned. I'm not really sad or mad about it, just still a little surprised by it. I don't feel negatively about the experience and I there are certain definite positives I took away from it (besides the obvious positive of having Billy, which, of course, I am eternally grateful for and wouldn't trade for the world). These are in no particular order:

1. I had assembled a great team for myself who took great care of me
2. I dealt with a fear that needed to be dealt with
3. I met a new, very interesting person
4. I shared an important experience with my husband
5. I learned something about my body's physical and mental limitations

What a day it was. Billy is two months old tomorrow.