

My Joyful Birth

I was eight months pregnant when my husband and I went on our hospital tour. It was there that we first heard of a “doula”. Our pregnancy had gone very well so far. I felt completely healthy and my energy had returned. My husband, Michael, and I were ecstatic about the upcoming birth of our baby boy. With our hospital’s recommendation, we began interviewing doulas. I was particular in selecting a doula as I wanted someone that connected with me, someone that understood my husband and I, and someone that supported the kind of birth we had decided we wanted. Shira Martorana was the third doula we interviewed and although she may not have known it, we knew that she was the one immediately upon meeting her. Shira listened to our questions and concerns and put us at ease. She explained her role as a doula and how she would be coaching us in Hypnobirthing over the next couple of months. She carefully laid out the foundation of Hypnobirthing and how it could enable us to have the birth we envisioned. We felt confident in her skills and knew that she would be an ally to us during our delivery. We could have never known that hiring Shira would be the greatest decision of our entire pregnancy.

Over the next couple of months, we met with Shira on a weekly basis. She coached us in Hypnobirthing techniques and relieved our fears of the “unknowns” of giving birth. After each meeting, we felt more and more confident about the delivery. Michael and I practiced our scripts and affirmations religiously. Shira guided us through it every step of the way.

On the evening of January 31st, 2008 (one week past our due date), I began to have consistent contractions. They were not at all painful, so we went to bed. At 4:30am I awoke and let my husband know that we needed to call Shira. Shira came over and by 6:30am we were on our way to the hospital. I was checked in at 7am and measured 3 cm. Shira kept me up and walking or on the birthing ball as the contractions came closer. At 9am I was at 5 cm. By now we were in the delivery room. Shira’s calming voice and gentle encouraging kept me focused on the fact that my baby was coming to me. As the contractions came, Shira would talk me through them using the relaxation techniques we had learned. Her efforts allowed Michael and I to have much more time together, focusing on each other, as Shira communicated our desires and needs to the nurses and hospital staff. Michael was able to stay close to me, massaging my back, talking to me and giving me strength. Shira kept reminding me that I would soon hold my baby in my arms. She had already eliminated so many of my fears and she kept me centered on the joy that was about to be ours. By 12pm I was at 10 cm and we started to bring our son down his path into the world. Bowman Baker Yanicelli was born at 2:58 pm without an epidural or any pain medicine. I absolutely could not have had the delivery experience I had without Shira. She is one in a million and we were blessed to have had her at our birth.

My son is now six months old. He is healthy and happy, but what is amazing is that he’s always been this way. After his birth, he was alert and not drowsy from any drugs. He breastfed well right away and easily adapted to a sleeping and feeding routine. It still amazes people that Bowman is so smiley, content and serene. We know that much of his pleasant demeanor is a direct result of his peaceful birth. We can never thank Shira enough for what she gave us – the joyful birth of our healthy, happy baby boy!

Love to Shira. Always,
Kristin, Michael and Bowman Yanicelli