



Practitioner Class Handbook



What you will need:

A3 Sheets of paper or magic white boards

Pictures/Posters to decorate the room with

Flip Chart

Handout Booklet

Anchor Music Playing in the Background

Smell to anchor the room (optional)

Herbal teas, coffee and a few snacks

Goodie bag (optional)

Journal and book for each participant

A smile and self confidence!

1

Objective : A gentle birth is important for mum, partner and baby. The value of keeping things as uninterrupted as possible.

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- **Introduce yourself and everyone in the class and housekeeping.**
- **How many weeks?**
- **Where they are having their baby?**
- **Is this their first baby?**
- **Make sure partners introduce themselves as well and are included.**

Exercise

Give everyone two post it notes, so that they can write something on each piece of paper. A word that springs to mind when you say "your word". Emphasise that, however silly, allow it to be. Make sure that they know it's anonymous.

"Labour"

Use these post it notes to reiterate, that this class is as much about the baby as it is for the parents.

Discussion

Hypnobirthing is about allowing baby to come in their own time, without unnecessary interruption or unnecessary intervention. Reminding the group that baby is landing on an alien planet and keeping things quiet and calm in those early moments reduces stress.

It explores ways of supporting mothers through self-belief, choice, patience, environment and respect. Not interfering in the process but allowing it to unfold.

Talk about how these orientate and soothe baby:

- **Mother's smell (amniotic fluid)**
- **Mother's voice**
- **Partner's voice**
- **Dim lights**
- **Softness of skin**
- **Skin to skin and oxytocin**

Leveller

Some people who have come on the class will know everything about oxytocin and others nothing. It is vital that they all understand the basics for the class. This exercise helps people revise/learn and it doesn't take much time! People are always amazed at how much they have forgotten or don't know.

The important thing here is ensuring that the class understands the role of oxytocin, why the brain needs to quieten down and in very brief terms, the stages of birth.

You will need three A3 posters up, ideally prepare them before the class starts to give yourself more time.

Exercise

The three posters read

1. Tell me about your birth hormones

- **Oxytocin adrenaline - can't have them both at the same time.**
- **Oxytocin needs to feel private, safe and unobserved.**
- **Oxytocin releases endorphins, natural painkillers**
- **Adrenaline can slow labour down in first stage but is normal at transition and has a biological advantage by making the mother more alert to threat in this moment so she can get somewhere safe and releasing cortisol in the baby's lungs preparing to breathe.**

2. Tell me about the different stages of birth

- **Simple understanding of early, 1st, 2nd and 3rd.**
- **1 – opening stage**
- **2 – pushing stage**
- **3 – placenta**
- **Say that we will discuss transition later in the class.**
- **From this moment on start to think of birth as a process not stages! Just noticing what is happening in each moment.**

3. Tell me about your birth brain - what does it need?

Allow the mammalian brain to do what it knows how to do by quietening down our higher brain function. The following can have an impact on how we birth:

- **Aspects of self-consciousness.**
- **Time passing.**
- **Ability to analyse.**
- **The brain needs to be comfortable enough to let these go.**

1 minute per poster, time them - they have to write what springs to mind. Be firm on times! You can hurry them up and count down then explore the impact of this on their thought process - being under pressure to make decisions or retrieve information rapidly. A reminder to always take time to make a choice. Afterwards spend 10 minutes going through them and add anything that may have been missed.

Ensure that they understand the role of oxytocin and that this class is about creating the environment for oxytocin to flourish.

Leave the posters up and encourage them to photograph them.

Ask them how it felt to have that pressure of time? When we feel under pressure, we get brain fog. When faced with choices and decisions always buy time. This helps you get into a calmer frame of mind, which helps you to make decisions that are right for you.

2

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Exercise

Suggestibility tests.

Stand in a circle and put your arms out like this in front of you. Now close your eyes...breathing in 321 and breathing out relax relax relax, just allowing your muscles and your mind to relax. Now I want you to use your imagination to imagine that a helium balloon is tied to your left wrist, perhaps give that balloon a colour or a shape. Allow your mind to bring that colour, the lightness of the balloon into your mind. Perfect, now on your right hand I want you to imagine that there is a bucket of sand. It's really heavy, just be aware of the weight of that sand, then turn your attention to the left hand and add another balloon, give that balloon a colour or a shape, your arm is so light as the balloon pulls it upwards towards the sky. Now imagining that someone is pouring water into the bucket of sand, it gets heavier and heavier...just allow your arm to sink into that heaviness, it's so hard to lift it up isn't it - (now open your eyes where you are).

Discussion

Talk to them about how incredible it is that they can change their physical reactions just by using their imagination.

If no-one moves, then say how people learn new things differently, some people take longer to embrace the sensation and are more curious about it, remember you are always in control of allowing yourself to have that experience and the more you practice the easier it will become to adapt and respond to the techniques.

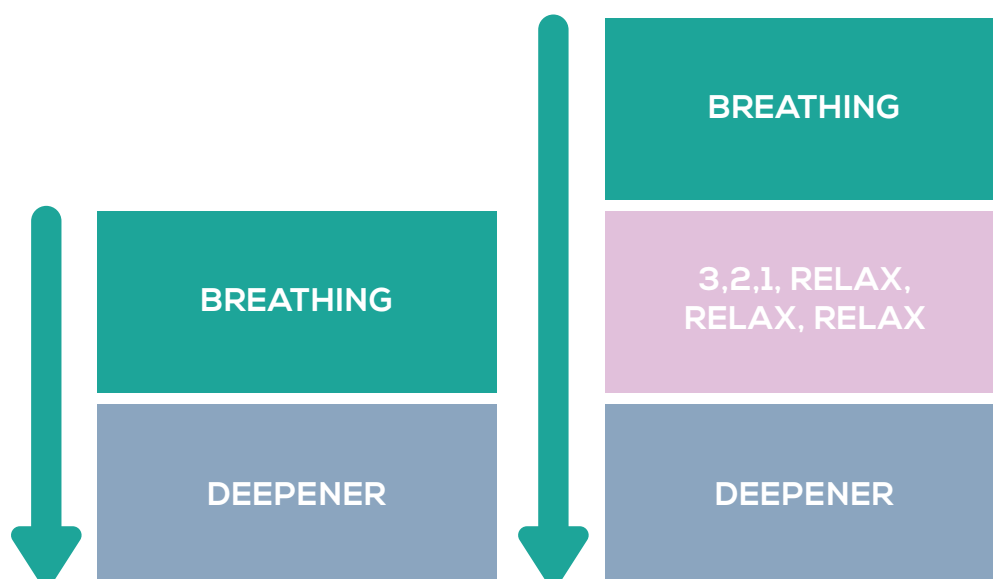
Some people are more open to suggestion than others, and the more you learn today about belief and change, the more you will be aware of your ability to make the changes you need to make so that you can approach your baby's birth feeling relaxed, and calmly excited.

Discussion

Talk about hypnosis, and suggestion.

- **Being open to suggestion not suggestible, open to the experience.**
- **State of change, unlike mindfulness which is about acceptance, being an observer, hypnosis is about changing a habit or behaviour in direct way. Usually by third party suggestion.**
- **Awake hypnosis, in hypnosis most of the time because we are not present.**
- **Stage hypnosis is just that staged!**
- **Ask if anyone has had any experiences of hypnosis that they are willing to share.**
- **Talk about what it feels like**

The three simple techniques are like building blocks. See them as modular, you can build them as you wish. From this moment onwards mix these up and use one of them at the beginning of every short, and long, visualisation in the class. For example...



Breathing

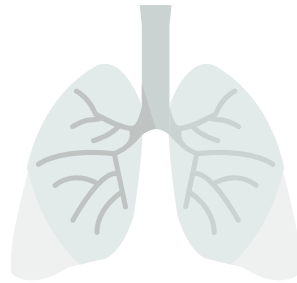
Make yourself comfortable, close your eyes and as you do notice how your jaw and hands soften. Breathe deeply, taking deep breaths in and allowing deep breaths out. Place your hands on your belly as you take deep belly breaths, down into your heart centre, be aware of the rhythm of your breath soothing you. Breathing in and breathing out. Connecting with the space around you and within you, but feeling grounded and centred, relaxed and comfortable. Breathing in and breathing out. Focus on your breathing, breathing in a relaxed and comfortable way. Let the rhythm of your breath soothe you. Be aware of your body softening. That's right. Stay with this for a moment just allowing yourself to find your rhythm in the song of your breath. Now open your eyes and come back into the room.

321, Relax Relax Relax

Make yourself comfortable, close your eyes and as you do notice how your jaw and hands are softening. Breathing in deeply, taking deep breaths in and allowing deep breaths out. Focus on your breathing, breathing in a relaxed and comfortable way. Let the rhythm of your breath soothe you. Be aware of your body softening. Now, breathe in 321, breathe out, relax relax relax, as you do all your muscles loosening and softening. Each time you breathe in... 321 and breathe out... relax relax relax your body will soften and relax quickly and easily. Choosing to be in a mindful state of deep relaxation, during birth will relax your muscles allowing them to move comfortably and harmoniously. Going deeper still now, into your breathing.....breathing in 3...2...1, breathing out relax relax relax, deeper into relaxation, that's right, your whole body letting go. (leave quiet for a few breaths) Now bringing yourself gently up out of a state of hypnosis, still very relaxed and comfortable 123 awake awake awake. Back to a normal state of wakeful awareness.

3, 2, 1 Relax, Relax, Relax

**Breathe in
relax**



**Breathe out
let go**

3

Allowing a comforting relaxing feeling to drift down through all the muscles in your head, down through your eyes. Every tiny muscle softening, relaxing, letting go, down through your cheeks, mouth and jaw. Your jaw loose and soft....

2

As your jaw softens, your neck and shoulders sink into your body, letting go of any tension, that comforting feeling drifting down through your chest, each breath taking you deeper into relaxation....

1

Your breath carries that relaxation deeper into your body, down through your abdomen to your baby, nudging your baby gently down, letting go deeply comfortably, soft, open, strong....



*Relax
Relax
Relax*



Deepener

Close your eyes and focus on your breathing...nice deep breaths in and deep breaths out. That's right. As your shoulders soften and you find comfort in the rhythm of your breath you become more and more relaxed. Breathing in 3...2...1 and breathing out relax, relax, relax. Your muscles softening, from the top of your head, down through your body, so soft and so relaxed now as you allow yourself to sink into where you are seated or are lying. Aware of your relaxed heaviness or lightness. Now, deepening that relaxation as I count down from **10-1**. **10** becoming more and more relaxed, **9** the more relaxed you are the easier it is to let go, **8** as you let go you sink down deeper into comfort, so soft so relaxed, **7** deeper and deeper into relaxation, **6** comforting feelings moving down through your body, **5** doubling that relaxation, **4** drifting down even deeper, **3** enjoying that sense of letting go safe in the knowledge that you are always in control of just how deeply you go, **2** very relaxed now, and **1** one will find it very easy to drift off into this comfortable state of comfort whenever one choses. Your body softening, expanding, comfortable, powerful, confident and relaxed. (now coming back into the room awake and alert.



If you can do that today in a room you've never been in before with people you've never met before imagine how well it's going to work when you have been practising them regularly"

Use these techniques throughout the day before each exercise. Choose the breathing, or the 321 or the deepener as an intro to each hypnosis visualisation or track so they can experience is throughout the class and feel more confident using them.

If you feel you are on time or have extra time, you can do them again back to back.

Ask for feedback, use hypnotic suggestions for example

"Isn't it amazing how quickly they make a difference".

"If you can do that today in a room you've never been in before with people you've never met imagine how well it's going to work when you have been practising them regularly"

Add your own

.....

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.....

Use these techniques throughout the day before each exercise. Choose the breathing, or the 321 or the deepener as an intro to each hypnosis visualisation or track so they can experience is throughout the class and feel more confident using them.

Tip: You can also choose to add the spotlight of calm, as an alternative technique for the rapid relaxation. Notice what you can see, hear, feel in each moment. If you find your mind wandering come back to your breath with the words. Breathing in and breathing out. You can find a reference to this in the revised version of the book on page 161 – the mindful spot light, or spot light of calm.

3

Objective - to understand the different aspects of pain and the impact of your thinking about pain on experience.

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Understanding the connection between expectation, fear and pain.

Experience is based on our expectation of a physical experience or can be shaped by fear arising from your own experiences or by others. We have always understood the connection between expectation and pain, but only now that we can use fMRI to explore this response have we really begun to understand how powerful it is..

You will need to demonstrate that the information we store unconsciously can trigger a reaction even if consciously we believe we are ok. This is important as the participants will need to understand why working at a deeper level using hypnosis is so important. It's not just relaxation!

Describe it as a rapid exchange in your brain, like a reference system in a library which helps everything from making a cup of tea, to driving a car. The brain has a reference system for birth as well! Your body will try to get you out of a situation that you would prefer to avoid based on a previously negative experience or experiences learned through other people.

Exercise

Ask the class if anyone has a phobia. If not use public speaking as an example. Ask the person what happens if they were triggered. Write these down on the board. Make it very clear to the class that the person very often knows that the thing they are phobic of, will not hurt them, but they cannot stop that behaviour even if they try. They need to understand that this is an automatic response and is a fight, flight, freeze, survival response.

- **Heart rate up.**
- **Muscles tense.**
- **Blood to arms and legs so you can fight or run away.**

- **Thinking disrupted as brain is non-essential.**
- **Instinct is to get somewhere else safe.**
- **Young can't be born where threat perceived.**
- **Think of mammals!**

If we grow up believing that birth is dangerous, painful and so forth, it may create fear and trigger fight or flight and fire up our sympathetic nervous system. The fight or get out of here reaction.

USE YOUR EXPANDING CIRCLE TO DEMONSTRATE THIS REACTIVE NATURE OF THE AMYGDALA.

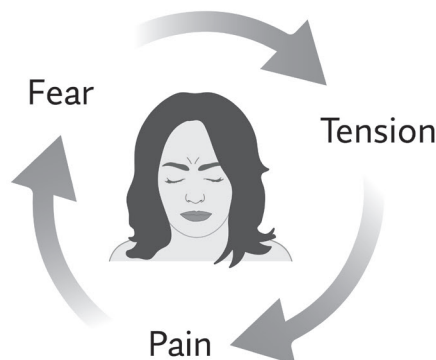
Hypnosis differs from relaxation because it works with this unconscious response, making changes at a very deep level. This is important for birth as it changes the physiology of muscles and can alter the course of birth.

Exercise

Let's look at this more deeply

For this you will need your balloon, picture of the muscles in the pelvis and the ribbon (which you will give to the couples).

- **Blow balloon up and show longitudinal and circular muscle movement.**
- **Show picture of the pelvis, noticing the psoas.**
- **Do the arm movement demo to show muscle changes.**
- **Use the soft ribbon as a muscle demonstration.**
- **Give them the ribbon as an anchor during birth - hands soft ribbon soft.**



Exercise

Demonstrate how tension in the hands and body can transfer to the pelvis

Close your eyes and focus on your hands, relax your hands, and turn your focused attention to your pelvis, now soften your hands, keeping your focus on the pelvis, now tense them again, do this a few times just being aware of the physical change in your pelvis.

Expectation and Experience

The class must understand how their expectation can shape experience. You can use your story of the blood or tomato ketchup here. Or you can use your own story!

When working with hypnosis we can alter our experience or expectation through several different methods.

1. **Change your expectation (through stories, experiences, naming the sensation).**
2. **Distraction**
3. **Visualisations or Imagery**
4. **Switch or Dial**

Exercise

(Quick relaxation, deepener or 321 to start then...)

Right now, if you have any unwanted sensations or feelings in your body, I want you to allow yourself to focus on them. If you don't, imagine how you expect a contraction wave to be. Now I want you to focus on the sensation you have chosen, give it a colour a shape or an image. (pause). How could you change that colour or shape or image, to make it feel different and better? What do you have to do in order to allow it to disappear completely and for good? Just allow yourself to do it in your mind, keep changing it with whatever resources come into your mind, allowing yourself to be creative. You can be as imaginative as you wish. Take a moment, carry on until that unwanted sensation or feeling has gone completely and for good, and when that unwanted sensation has gone completely and for good you can allow yourself to open your eyes. Coming back into the room fully awake and alert but very comfortable.

Notes

A series of horizontal dotted lines for writing notes.

4

Objective : To understand why belief matters and how to change it. Understanding how beliefs affect decision making. Choice can be made from knowledge not fear.

4

Objective : To understand why belief matters and how to change it. Understanding how beliefs affect decision making. Choice can be made from knowledge, not fear. Experience and outcomes can be shaped by beliefs.

Whilst you can't plan your birth you can decide how you wish to experience your birth and how you want to approach it. This about identifying what values someone wants to ascribe to their birth.

The group need to understand how their brain filters information based on their beliefs - whether they are negative or positive.

Use the research about lucky and unlucky by Richard Wiseman to demonstrate this. (You can find more in the online course on this). Your brain is looking for familiar patterns that are consistent with your core beliefs. Or you can use the example of the Facebook book feed and how we see what we subscribe to and we subscribe to things that are consistent with our beliefs. If you want to change what you see you have to start by changing what you subscribe to.

We all have a core belief system. To change a habit or a belief you have to change your core beliefs and because your clients are here today, they have taken this first step to changing their belief system. Let them know this! And how positive the step they have taken is.

To change a belief takes practice, this is why repetition is so important, regularly saying affirmations and seeking out information and knowledge that supports your intention.

What is your intention?

Exercise

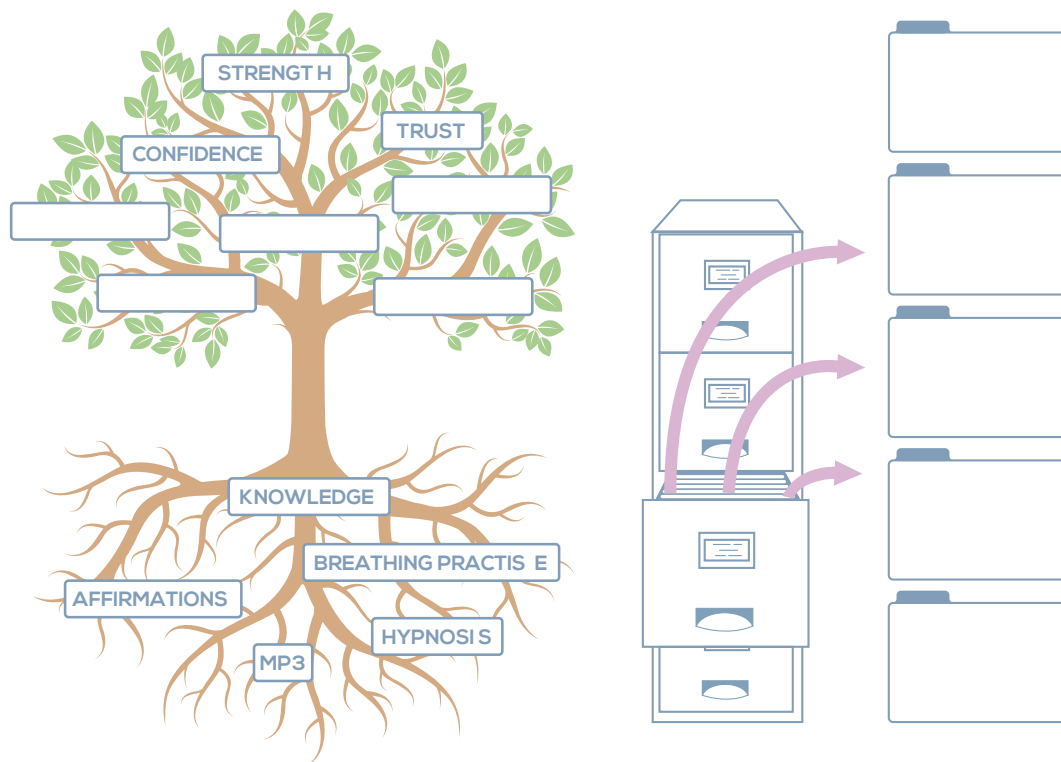
Use the tree to help them understand that to change their response they need to decide how they wish to be. Confident? Trusting? Fearless? And ask them to consider what they need to do to get the information to help them feel this way. They may have to actively seek out information that helps them change

some of their beliefs. This is a reflective exercise to go away and consider, encourage them to set an hour aside to sit and think through their values. What is important to them? Consider if they have any worries what would they need to learn or know to let go of that worry. Use the tree exercise in their journal.

The filing cabinet is also a method of really addressing this and thinking about what information they need to be accessing, from where and by whom, to populate their filing cabinet. It's in their journal so they can spend time thinking about what they want to put in!

Get Creative:

Use a vision board or use the class journal to make visual statements of your intent for a positive birth and things that support that as a core belief. (You could run an extra session doing this with participants).



Where is messaging coming from?

This is all about changing external and internal messaging.

External dialogue

Give everyone in the group two post it notes and ask them to write where they get the most negative messaging about birth. Just the two most powerful sources of information? Then put them all up on the board and discuss how they could change this.

Internal dialogue

Affirmations can help change the internal messaging -which is just as important. They can use the affirmations in the book or they write their own. Affirmations are usually more powerful if you align them with existing values. They can be amplifiers! What do they believe they are good at, what are their strengths, how can they apply that to birth?

Encourage them to use the affirmations from the book and also use their own. Affirmations are more powerful when linked to existing values so, "I am patiently waiting for my baby", or "I am encouraging my baby to come when the time is right for them"!

Stick affirmations up around their house to help embed those suggestions in their unconscious, before long they'll begin forming their belief.

The final part of this section is the fear release. Make sure that they go to the loo before beginning and get comfortable. It is useful if they have bought yoga mats, blankets and pillows for this exercise.

Letting Go Birth Script

Just allow your eyes to gently close, and as they close just beware of how the muscles around your eyes appear to relax.... and as they relax you become aware of a warm relaxing feeling moving through all those muscles around your eyes..... your eyelids becoming so heavy that even though you could open them if you wished, you are much more comfortable allowing them to stay closed.

Don't relax too quickly, just be aware of how easy it is to listen to my voice and allow that relaxation to move down....as you become aware of that warm relaxing feeling moving down into all the muscles of your cheeks, down into the muscles around your mouth, and then down into the muscles around your jaw. And as you relax the muscles in your jaw..... you may notice how the muscles in your neck and your shoulders relax.....that warmth moving down into your neck and shoulders.... you may be aware of your shoulders becoming more relaxed....as if all the tension and anxiety held there is just melting away.... and as that sense of relaxation grows you may become more aware of noises and sounds around you.... the sound of my voice, the sound of the music ...or perhaps any other sounds.....normal everyday sounds as the world goes about their business.....those sounds just sending you even deeper into relaxation, safe in the knowledge that you are in control at all times of just how deeply you need to go to reach that comfortable state of deeply relaxed hypnosis.....allowing your conscious mind to drift off into that comfortable and familiar state of not quite being awake.....or not quite being asleep..... you know that lovely feeling of letting go..... letting go even of the effort it takes to listen to the sound of my voice..... as that warm relaxing feeling is drifting down into the muscles at the top of your arms..... drifting down.... into your forearms wrists and hands and fingers.....perhaps you are wondering which arm is relaxing more quickly than the other perhaps you are aware of the sense of that warm relaxing feeling, moving comfortably down into the muscles of your chest and your abdomen....becoming aware of your comfortable breathing..... breathing in a relaxed and comfortable way, with a slow breath in and a slow breath out.

And I wonder if you've already started to notice that relaxing feeling drifting down into the tops of your legs.....drifting down into your shins calves ankles and feet and toes. Your whole body

feeling very deeply relaxed.....and you know that at any moment you could open your eyes and come back to the room if you wished, but its so much easier to just enjoy this sensation of relaxation.

How does it feel when you allow yourself to relax? Isn't it nice to know that you are able to drift off so easily.....you may have already started to notice the changes taking place in your mind and body..... positive changes.....and may notice that as you focus on them you go even deeper into relaxation.

In a moment I'm going to count down from ten to one and as you follow my voice you can enjoying that sense of letting go...
10...9...8...7...6...5...4...3...2...1.

I don't know whether you can feel a tingling sensation or a feeling of lightness or heaviness, I don't how quickly you are going to feel that you are so much more comfortable, so much more relaxed. I'm curious to know, just how those physical changes will happen.... when you realise your mind has the power to change how you respond to events in the world around you at home and at work, what you will change in order for you to look forward to the birth of your baby with calm excitement.

I don't know if that's what you are feeling but I do know that because you are listening to me right now you are allowing yourself to make that change...to let go of all those negative expectations and feelings about birth and parenting.....so that you can create space for new feelings, positive feelings to take root.

Now allowing yourself to focus on how you want to feel, how you want to be in looking forward to your baby's birth. How would it feel if you were comfortable knowing that you began to look forward to the birth more and more safe in the knowledge that you have the confidence and trust that your baby and your body know what to do.

I don't know exactly how this is going to happen, but I do know that you will find out and because you want to make those changes..... you can allow them to happen in a way that is comfortable for you. In fact, it will happen so easily and so subtly that you will just suddenly realise how well you are feeling...how happy, relaxed and in control you are about your baby's birth.

Now, while you relax I want you to allow yourself to imagine that you are on a path, through a wood.....you are coming to the edge of the wood.....walking at a slow comfortable pace.....the sunlight is dappled on the floor of the wood, scattered across the leaves which crunch underfoot as you walk into the sunlight on the edge of the wood and into a meadow. It's a warm sunny summers day, the perfect temperature, perhaps there is a gentle breeze. A meadow stretches out in front of you and into the distance you can see hills and mountains, it's a meadow with flowers dotted through the long grass.....their colours vibrant.... softly swaying in the wind. You become aware of the sound of birdsong being carried on the wind, it's a beautiful place, you feel calm and peaceful here.

But as you stand there you become aware of a heavy pack on your back, its straps have begun to dig into your shoulders..... rubbing on the skin under your clothes, your back begins to bow and ache and you become distracted by the pack which is preventing you from enjoying this beautiful view. Ahead of you there is a path leading to the hill in front of you, instinctively you know that this is the path you need to take, and so you summon your strength, and begin to walk along the path, all your focus and strength is maintaining a good rhythm and even pace so that you can conserve your strength.

As you follow the path up the hill, the journey becomes easier and easier and you begin to reflect on the contents of that pack. What is it that has weighing you down, stopping you from enjoying this view, from enjoying the peace.

As you reflect on that you find you cross the brow of the hill and find yourself on a plateau, where there is a large hot air balloon in front of you, its colours vivid and bright against the cornflower blue sky. Walk over to the hot air balloon and when you reach it, you are able to take the pack off your back, as you do you feel a great sense of relief, aware of your shoulders feeling lighter and looser – you can look in the pack if you wish and allow yourself to become aware of all those rocks and bricks which have been weighing you down, stopping you from looking forward to the birth, expectations, things that people have told you, images or films that you may have seen, other experiences. As you look into the bag you realise just how much they have been distorting your view of birth and this new perspective enables you see them for what they really are.

You now have the choice to put this bag into the hot air balloon, and as you heave it into the basket you take a deep breath and feel a sense of letting go, of lightness and relief, of pressure dropping. As you look into the basket you notice that there is another bag in there with your name on it....take that one out....and you notice instantly how much lighter it is....open it up and have a look inside.....a beautiful light streams out, this light is representing all the skills and abilities that will allow you to have your best birth....free of worry and in control.... knowing and being in touch with your own inner strength of just how powerful you are. Put this on your back, and as you do you feel inspired, uplifted full of energy, really tuned into your baby and your body with a positive perspective.

Now allow yourself to untie the ropes that tether the hot air balloon to the ground and as you do, the hot air balloon lifts up into the sky with its cylinders firing.... the higher and higher it goes the lighter and lighter you feel..... the more confident you feel in your own ability to work with your baby and with your partner to have the birth that you want. You realise the importance of this moment....and allowing the space for a positive experience, to give your baby the opportunity for a gentle birth, you realise it is within your power to make happen. You realise that you are able to birth confidently and to take control of the things that are important to you and your partner.

The higher the hot air balloon goes the more invigorated you feel... the more confident you feel.....getting lighter and more confident, the hot air balloon getting smaller and smaller, more and more confident.....and then the hot air balloon is just a speck in the distance and as you take one deep, breath, breathing in that fresh meadow air, you are aware that it has disappeared altogether.

And then you are able to turn your attention back to the meadow..... you become aware of the different sounds of birdsong, the scent of the flowers undisturbed. You are aware of the different colours of green, as the grass ripples in the sunlight, and just as every blade of grass in that meadow is unique..... you are unique, you instinctually know how to birth your baby and when you trust in that instinct...you allow yourself to let go....safe in the knowledge that your baby and you are working together...you can allow yourself unburden your mind of those things that you have unnecessarily been carrying around with you. Becoming aware of each moment.....and the power within you to recognise that you

choose to relax and enjoy each moment, free from worry about the past or the future, knowing that you can create the best environment possible for birth with integrity, knowledge, trust and choice.

As you become aware of this at a very deep level you will become aware of feeling lighter and happier, you'll sleep better and more deeply, able to let go of the day much easier than ever before. In the coming days and weeks this feeling of confidence, calm expectancy will grow stronger and stronger deep within your heart, so that you know at a very deep level that your body can and will birth your baby. Everything that you have learned today will take deep root in your unconscious mind, not because I'm am saying how you are able to birth your baby, but because you know deep down that you can, that's why you came today isn't it, because somewhere a part of you knows that you can do it when you have the right knowledge.

Now that you have that knowledge it will continue to expand and your confidence will grow each and every day. And if you were ever to be in a situation when someone cast doubt on what you have learned today, remember that we see what we choose to see, and in that moment you can choose to let it go.....imagine putting a protective force field around yourself where any unwanted comments, thoughts or feelings, just bounce off while you stay calm and confident in your own beliefs. Imagine right now what colour that force field would be. Imagine how good it feels to be in that calm space inside easily able to deflect any unwanted thoughts, feelings of comments.

Now take a deep breath in, breathing in light down into every part of your body, this light moving into every part of your body, feeling a deep sense of calm, confidence and spaciousness. Stay there for a moment, just breathing in calm and confidence. Aware of that connection with your baby, loving your baby, your bump, telling your baby that you are doing this together, that they are surrounded by love. Take a moment to do that.

Perfect. Now it's time to return to the room. Taking a deep breath, connecting with your body. Feeling your weight where you are sitting or lying. Deep breath, wriggling your fingers, wriggling your toes.

And I count to 5 you will return to a normal state of awareness, coming back from the meadow, fully alert, awake and aware. 1 feeling more and more aware, 2 feeling sensations return to you arms and your legs, 3 become more aware of noises and sounds around you, allowing your self to adjust to those noises and sounds, 4 become alert and 5 feeling fully alert energised but still very deeply relaxed.

5

Objective: To understand why the role of the birth partner is so important and how to be a compassionate birth partner.

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Have a discussion about why the role of the partner has changed so much over the years. It can be very hard for a partner to support without having never experienced this before (historically many birth partners would be a female family member who had given birth themselves).

This section is about partners being able to recognise how their own fears and worries can crowd a birth room. Learning how to be responsive, not reactive - being able to sit with their feelings so that a mother can freely and completely inhabit the birth space unhindered by other feelings and emotions. This is about being a compassionate and loving partner.

Ask them to consider what their own worries and fears are, they may need to work at sitting on their hands!

Exercise

Break them up into two groups, there are two posters, the mothers and their partners. Then ask each group to write on the posters what they expect to be doing, and what their partners want them to do.

- **Practical Partner**

Selfcare/Massage/Room and so on.

- **Protective Partner**

Advocacy, BRAINS - refer to their journals and go through BRAINS and GUIDING STARR here. Refer back to the exercise at the beginning of the class when they were rushed into retrieving information. Have birth plan to hand! Know it thoroughly..

- **Mindful Partner**

Being there not doing anything, positive, often silent, compassionate birth partner "I hear you, I love you I am here for you". No need to fix, acceptance. You can use the Spot Light exercise here.

Lastly ask them to write down why their partner will make the perfect birth partner for them and give it to their partner **(make sure that they know this is anonymous and just between the two of them)** . **While they are waiting partners can write what characteristics their wife/partner has that will help them why they are going to have a great experience of birth.**

6

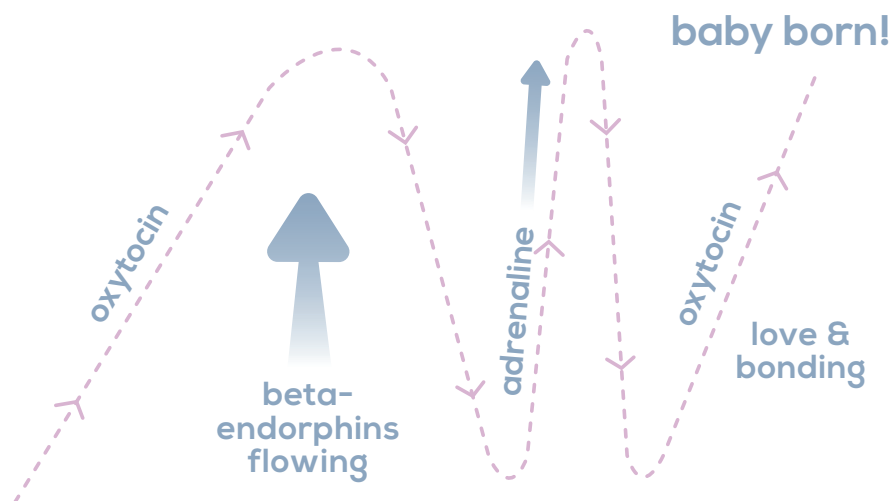
Objective: To understand environment and why it matters. Creating positive associations with the environment that allow oxytocin to flow freely.

6

Objective: To understand environment and why it matters.
Creating positive associations with the environment that allow oxytocin to flow freely.

The class needs to understand the role of oxytocin and adrenaline and how our unconscious associations can affect our physical response. Being in an oxytocin rich environment where you feel safe, private and undisturbed will enable oxytocin to flow. Whereas if you are in an environment that triggers adrenaline, even very slight, it can affect the progress and experience of birth.

- **Decisions about place of birth shouldn't just be about Physiology but also the psychology.**
- **It's important to make a choice not based on fear but on research and knowledge.**
- **It can be helpful to see our senses as a sat nav to our emotional responses.**
- **What we see, feel, hear and smell can trigger an emotional response based on past experiences.**
- **If labour slows down it can be because of environment - don't think "what's wrong" always think "what's changed" .**



The undisturbed flow of oxytocin and adrenaline during labour.

Exercise

Use either the 321 or the deepener to take the group down into a light state of relaxation then ask them to think about what they need to go to sleep at night.

“(321 or deepener) As you become more and more relaxed just notice how your room would be if you needed to have a really great night’s sleep, bring the room into your mind, be aware of what you can see, what you can feel and what you can hear. Imagine how comforting it is to be able to securely drift off into a deep sleep, remember those things, now coming back into the room, 123, awake awake awake.”

Have a discussion about what those things are - do they need the curtains closed, the doors locked? Why? If someone they didn’t know was watching them go to sleep could they do it?

- **Comfort**
- **Dark**
- **Partner**
- **Water**
- **Temperature**
- **Sounds**

Exercise

Follow with the ENVIRONMENT Exercise:

Separate the groups into the women and their partners, then ask them to put the feeling with the image. When they are done turn it over. Discuss how to change the environment.

- **If you feel self-conscious what steps could you take to feel less self-conscious? (Water, clothing, privacy, dimming lights)**
- **If it's noisy what steps could you take to shut out the noise. (Headphones)**
- **How would you change smell?**
- **Think water, vision boards, scent, blankets, pillows, dim lighting, Staying at home as long as possible.**
- **If at home think about keeping that space free of disturbance, darkness music and so on.**

Notes

A series of horizontal dotted lines for writing notes.



**Objective: To feel confident in how to apply the techniques on the day.
(handout the stages of labour)**

7

Objective: To feel confident in how to apply the techniques on the day. (handout the stages of labour)

Talk about their birthing zone and how birth can be a mindfulness practice when we can go within and focus on each moment. Use the birthing zone to describe this. Hypnosis is there only if you need it. "You have everything you need within you".

Have a discussion about contractions:

- **The rise and fall of a contraction that is part of spontaneous birth.**
- **Use examples like a wave or riding a bike up a hill.**
- **Focus on it as it rises, be curious about it, turn your attention inwards NOT outwards. It's much easier to manage when you get into your zone early on in the contraction.**
- **They can stop and start according to your physiology and environment. If all is well trust that they are happening as they should. Think not "what's gone wrong" but "what's changed".**
- **See early contractions as interruptions to your day. Think about 'your mind as a spotlight', go for a walk, nest, watch a film, have a bath, even go shopping. (you can use stories here of women who have taken this approach)**
- **Length of labour is often relative, second time mums may have shorter births because in early labour they don't consider labour to have started and their attention is elsewhere.**
- **Reframe, 10 hour, to 4 to 2 approx!**

Use the introduction 321 or deepener to get them relaxed. Ask the group to imagine a tightening in their belly rising, then read the contraction infographic out to the pace of 1 minute 30 seconds.

Then say smiling "how was that? You can do it can't you - it feels quicker than you think"

Movement can be great and is entirely compatible with hypnosis and mindfulness. You can use it on a ball, walking and so on. You can do this demo while they are sitting on balls.

Mindful Movements

As you rock on your ball, count down, 321, relax, relax, relax, each movement you make taking your body deeper into comfort, aware of the contact your foot makes with the ground, the weight of your body as it rocks, each movement bringing your attention to the rhythm of your body, the movement of your knees as they bend, your hips as they move from side to side in a gentle soothing rhythm, aware of sounds momentarily then letting them go, they are of no consequence to you, they remind you to draw your focus into your body, in this moment, you are at one with your body, bringing attention to your movement, your jaw relaxed, your shoulders relaxed and your arms heavy and relaxed as they move beside your body or in your lap, your breath moving through your body in time with your movement, the rhythm of your body, the sound of your breath, the movement of your hips, your feet touching the ground. Each tiny movement or sensation relaxing you more deeply, bringing you more into yourself, bringing your attention into your body, your movement, your breath in each moment being present, in each moment choosing to be relaxed and trusting that the movements your body is making internally are as natural and comfortable as the movements your body is making externally. Now gently opening your eyes back into the room.

Exercise

Shoulder anchor. In transition it can be really helpful to feel firm support. You can create an association with a feeling of strength, calm or whatever you wish.

It is very important that they create an association with a specific moment when they felt that feeling. For example if they said "when I did my skydive" you have to find that moment that they

really felt a sense of achievement (It probably wasn't when they were about to jump out of the plane!)

Introduce with breathing, a 321 or a deepener.

Now that you are very relaxed allow yourself to connect with that moment when you felt a sense of calm, achievement, strength, purpose, you choose the moment that is right for you. Allow yourself to really connect with that feeling, if it were in your body where would it be, if it were to have a colour what would it be? Be back in that moment again, being aware of what you can see, feel or hear, that's right. (PARTNERS PUT HAND ON SHOULDER) savour that feeling right now, (SIGNAL FOR PARTNER TO TAKE THEIR HAND OFF) now we are going to replay that like a film, so rewind and experience it again, imagine really being in that moment, aware of what you can feel, see, hear or sense, (PARTNER PUT YOUR HAND ON THEIR SHOULDER) enjoy that feeling, that connection. That's right. Now relax (PARTNERS TAKE HAND OFF SHOULDER) Now we are going to rewind one more time, so really allow yourself to be immersed in that feeling, just enjoy that moment, now, the sense of being there feels easy and comfortable. (PARTNERS PUT HAND ON) Just relax into the feeling, your body and mind connecting comfortably and easily. Each time you feel your partner's [insert name if possible] hands on your shoulder you feel relaxed, strong knowing at a very deep level that you can do this. (HANDS OFF) Now coming back in the room, feeling your weight on the chair, feeling yourself coming back up to the surface. 123, awake awake awake.

Transition

Talk about how important it is for a partner to recognise the signs and see it as a normal part of labour, nothing to change or feel concern about. Be encouraging and loving.

Have a bit of discussion here is needed about how contractions feel, transition, but always positive, reframe any fears with stories or by changing perspective.

Use the infographic that is in their journals.

Breathing down and the urge to push

Discussion

Many hypnobirthing methods talk about different types of breathing. The most important thing is to relax your jaw and relax your hands, keeping body as soft as possible.

- **You may get a rest and be thankful stage before your body starts nudging your baby down. Just keep breathing and listen to what the body need in those moments.**
- **Baby will continue to move down through peristaltic waves**
- **Urge to push is not feeling a little pushy, it's an "I can't stop it feeling".**
- **Use image of the exit button, between the cervix and perineum to illustrate the baby exit reflex.**
- **10 cm is not always a green light to push, your body will continue to move baby down until it's the right time.**
- **Imagery of flowers opening and of large openings like a cave opening can be helpful at this stage**

Exercise

[Imagine there is a big green exit button between your cervix and your perineum. This is different in every single woman, it may be nearer to your cervix or your perineum. You don't know, your midwife doesn't know, only baby's head knows. As your baby begins to move down, your body will keep nudging baby down, until it reaches the exit button and is positioned in the perfect place for your body to push them out. When your baby's head presses down on this button it sends a message to the brain that baby is in the perfect position and your body will start to push. You will notice this, just go with it!]

If you feel the urge to push you can use a coffee plunger breath, pushing your breath down, while keeping your jaw relaxed

Keep taking deep breaths, don't hold your breath.

Baby is born!

- **Keeping the room dark, quiet, warm**
- **Leaving cord to stop pulsing (wait for white)**
- **Baby skin to skin – the Golden Hour**
- **Blanket over shoulders, keep body warm**
- **Enjoy baby! You've done it!**

Final Exercise

Word association again, but say the word birth instead of the word labour. They can throw the original ones in the bin if they wish, and they can take the new ones with them or take a photograph of the board for their vision boards.

Fantastic! Well done you have finished and sent more excited couples away to prepare for a positive birth. Take a deep breath, clear up, go home and put your feet up.

Class Follow up

Send a follow up email to all your class attendees with a thank you reminding them that you are there for them.

Send them any additional information or signposts that you talked about on the class, it may include social media accounts or websites.

