

# The Birth of Mila

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My husband and I were always interested in a home birth and when we attended the Choices in Childbirth information session at CMP, there was no doubt that this was the path we wanted to take. The unbiased information we gained from this session was invaluable and our choice was made with a feeling of safety and confidence. From the very beginning our midwife, Marilyn, was a wonderful support. We always felt at ease and assured in her presence. The lead up to the birth was a very happy and joyous time in our lives.

We always thought I might go into labour early but as with many first pregnancies, there was always the chance I could go over. It was a Wednesday morning when I went to the Mums and Bubs group in North Fremantle to speak to some mums about their home birth experiences. I was experiencing mild period style cramps but didn't think anything of it as I had experienced a tightening of the uterus throughout my whole pregnancy – so I just figured it was more intense versions of this as I was further on. At the session I mentioned this to one of the mums who also said she had experienced similar pains for 2 weeks before she went into labour – so with that I didn't give it another thought.

That Wednesday was a beautiful summer's day in early February. My partner and I went for a long beach walk and a swim in the ocean. We were in such a happy place and looking forward to our future together as a family. As we slept that evening I awoke with stronger and more frequent style cramps. I looked at my clock but there wasn't really a rhythm so I tried to go back to sleep but without much luck as I kept on waking with each contraction. At this stage I woke my husband, Simon, and we decided to get up, have a cup of tea and play scrabble to help pass the time and occupy us for a while. It was during this time that Simon also set up the birthing pool. I still don't think that it actually dawned on us we were in labour. We both felt so calm and considering I still had 10 days until my due date, we both thought it might have been a false start.

Come 8am we decided to ring Marilyn and just let her know what had happened during the evening. We knew the contractions weren't close enough for her to be here, but we just wanted to keep her updated. She came over that morning just to chat and see how things were. I was able to talk through the contractions so we all knew it would still be some time yet.

With that Simon went to work for an hour to tie up a few things. My contractions then stopped. The moment Simon came home my contractions commenced again and this time they were strong and constant.

The afternoon was spent wandering around the house with the intensity growing. Marilyn arrived that afternoon at 4pm. I was so relieved to see her, as I knew that this meant our baby would be arriving soon.

The following hours were spent mainly in the birthing pool. The complete sense of relaxation and relief I felt as I jumped into the birthing pool for the first time was amazing. Simon would spend most of the time facing me holding my hands and Marilyn would apply pressure to my lower back. At times when the contractions were so intense and close together I wouldn't let either of them leave me, not even for a second. I drew on so much of their strength and energy to get me through.

I also needed to be very positive so with every bit of pain or negative feeling I had – I would turn it around. Every contraction to me was also an expansion – my body opening up to be able to give birth to our baby. Every 'ow' was a good thing as the more it hurt, it meant the closer I was to meeting our baby.

At one point the pain was so intense but I seemed to be having mini catnaps between each contraction and I remembered Marilyn mentioning in our meetings that this was one of the transitions of labour. Even though the pain was so very intense I became excited and felt a renewed energy, as I knew this meant we were getting closer. It was from here I started to push.

At one point I asked what the time was and it was close to midnight – hearing that I decided I was ready to go to bed and that it was time for baby to come. I pushed and pushed – even inbetween when I should have been resting, I pushed.

Marilyn asked me if I could feel my baby's head – but I couldn't feel anything hard and it was then that we realised that our baby was still in her sack. Marilyn broke the sack and asked me if I would like to catch my baby. It took my breath away in emotion and amazement as with another couple of pushes my baby slipped out, into my hands with which I brought her up out of the water and up close to my heart. I just held her there – the most perfect hug I have ever received. It was a few moments before we even realised she was a little girl. The complete love and joy we felt at that moment was overwhelming and amazing.

Our beautiful Mila Grace was born on Thurs Feb 4 at 11:58pm.



We stayed in the pool for some time before moving to our bed where she was straight onto the breast. It was here that Simon also cut her cord and I birthed the placenta. The days that followed were full of baby bliss and it was a joy to be in our own home to experience this time as a new family.

I can't begin to express our gratitude to our midwife, Marilyn. She held our birthing space with such love, trust, confidence and guidance. I felt so proud of our birthing experience. To be able to choose to birth in a way that was right for us and to be supported in that choice is truly a precious gift.