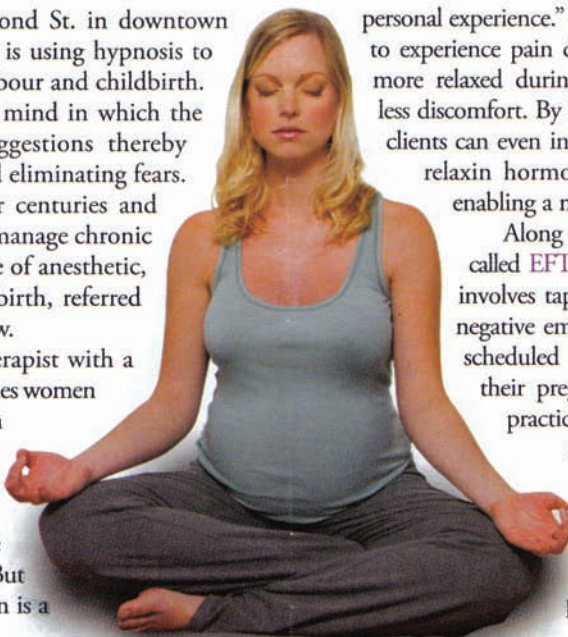




Labour Is A State Of Mind

IN A SMALL OFFICE on Bond St. in downtown St. Catharines, Kathleen Milligan is using hypnosis to ease the way women experience labour and childbirth. Put simply, hypnosis is a state of mind in which the subconscious is receptive to suggestions thereby enabling changes in behaviour and eliminating fears. The technique has been used for centuries and can help people to quit smoking, manage chronic pain and can even be used in place of anesthetic, but the use of hypnosis for childbirth, referred to as "hypnobirth" is relatively new.

Milligan is a certified hypnotherapist with a background in social work. She teaches women hypnosis techniques, allowing them to overcome the fears, anxiety and thus pain normally associated with labour and childbirth. "We change the belief that labour has to be conventional," explains Milligan. "But it's not a pain-free birth because pain is a



personal experience." However hypnosis can train the mind to experience pain differently, allowing the mother to be more relaxed during labour, which in turn perpetuates less discomfort. By harnessing the subconscious Milligan's clients can even increase the secretion of endorphin and relaxin hormones into the body, thereby further enabling a more relaxed and engaged labour.

Along with hypnosis Milligan uses a process called EFT (emotional freedom technique), which involves tapping on acupressure points to release negative emotions. Typically Milligan's clients are scheduled for four sessions over the course of their pregnancy, with visualization techniques practiced at home. Milligan is not present at the births, as all hypnobirths are self-guided. A hypnobirth normally allows for shorter labour, fewer complications and often permits mothers to forego an epidural or other pain relievers. www.loveyourlabour.ca

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