

## Hypnosis can help take pain out of childbirth, woman says

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ST. CATHARINES -- You can feel your eyelids getting heavier and heavier. You're relaxed and breathing deeply, letting the air fill your lungs.

Now push!

The above scenario may be what comes to mind when one is first told of hypno-birthing. But it's somewhat different than that.

Kathleen Milligan, a hypnotherapist and childbirth educator, started up her business, Love Your Labour, in a downtown office this past March.

Using hypnosis to assist child birth is all about taking control of the process, she said.

Milligan is the mother of two girls, ages six and 10, and recalled the difficulty of giving birth to her first child.

"It wasn't really what I expected," she said. "The feeling of loss of control was what I felt."

Of course, going in she had certain expectations, none of which were pleasant.

When shown on TV or in the movies, child birth is a traumatic and painful experience, she said. That's all women hear about, she said, they don't hear anything else.



Hypnotherapist Kathleen Milligan said hypnosis can help women during childbirth by focusing the mind on something else other than the pain of labour.

The funny thing about the way the mind works, Milligan said, is if it's focused on something, such as pain, that's going to be the overwhelming experience. It becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy.

With the birth of her second child, Milligan used a hypnotherapist, who she and her husband saw once per week for half-hour sessions. She learned how to relax her body using specific breathing techniques to put her body in a calm state, which produces a natural anaesthesia.

The result was a quicker, less painful labour, she said.

"I felt really empowered, pleased and overjoyed -- all these feelings you have after giving birth to a baby," she said.

She decided to train in hypno-birthing and hypnotherapy, and after taking some business classes in January, opened her 11 Bond St. office in March.

Clients, often with their birthing partners, will typically begin seeing Milligan a month prior to when they're expected to give birth. She will ask them about what their specific concerns are and what they expect. She'll then use hypnosis to teach them how to numb their body, starting with their hand and eventually moving to the pelvis area.

To demonstrate their new-found ability, Milligan will often pinch their hand, or place it in a cold bucket of ice water for long periods of time. Then she'll show them what it's like when not in a hypnotic state.

"It's really hard to believe," she said.

By the last session, the client is able to hypnotize themselves.

For more information, visit [www.loveyourlabour.ca](http://www.loveyourlabour.ca) or call 905-685-7352.

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