

A++ would do again (a birth story)

Ah Sundays. A day of rest – unless you're the mother of a second born arriving to turn everyone's lives upside down!

3am. Sunday. 17th of April. 2016.

There I was, fast asleep on the couch upstairs (because *The Man* was downstairs snoring like a chainsaw) and then.. I woke up to a contraction.

Shit. That was an actual contraction, not one of those fake "I think I had a contraction" contractions I'd been having for the past few weeks. Oh my god, what have I *done*, I remember this. This was NOT a good idea.

I was partly excited at going into labour on my own, partly terrified and partly horrified that my midwife was out of town and I had, as predicted gone into labour when she wasn't here.

I waited to see if another one happened, holy crap it did. Holy crap I AM in labour. Waited another 6 or 7 minutes and it happened again, and then again..and then I went and woke up *The Man*. He got up and had a shower as you do at 4am..and then they started coming every 5 minutes instead of every 6 or 7. We decided to call *Shell* and have her come and join the 4am party. For funsies.

We rang the hospital too and they were happy for us to keep on keeping on at home. The contractions were still coming every 5 or 6 minutes so I got up and had a shower, then blow dried my hair, then got *Shell* to straighten it for me (all in between contractions).

Shell was meant to be coming over to look after Angus in case we had to go to hospital - or that was what I told her, really I just wanted someone to do my hair for me.

Hey I wanted to know my hair looked good in labour even if the rest of me didn't!

After that I went upstairs and they fizzled out back to 7 or 8 minutes, even 10 minutes apart for the rest of the morning, and the pain was not too bad really – especially if its only painful once every 10 minutes! The midwife was still confident I wouldn't have the baby before she got back. I just had to hold on until 2am Monday. Easy peasy.

I can't remember when but at some point that morning Mum came and picked up Angus and took him back to her place so I could rest.

When I realised that *Seachange* was on Netflix, that was my day set. So *Second Born*, reminiscing about my childhood Sunday nights watching *Seachange* will forever remind me of being in labour with you.

Be thankful we didn't call you Diver Dan.

The day went pretty quickly, or it seemed like it did. About 3pm things started to ramp up, and all of a sudden it wasn't as fun anymore! I decided now was a really good time to re-read the 'birth skills' book I'd used last time with Angus. It helped! I also realised it was unlikely my midwife was going to make it to the birth. I just hoped the midwife we got at the hospital was nice.

Around 6pm things were getting quite intense and the contractions were about 4 minutes apart, with some more frequent and we debated about calling the hospital again..what if we went in and it fizzled out and we got sent home, or we went in and I was only like 2cms dilated, I would have been devastated!

We decided to call and while *The Man* was on the phone to the hospital I was pacing up and down the hallway and I heard him say "okay so maybe we should stay home a bit longer" when I had a bad enough contraction that I interrupted him and told him no we needed to go to the hospital – right NOW.

The trip over to Wodonga was awful, it seemed like *The Man* was taking the scenic route which is also the bumpiest. Why maximise time on the smooth 110kmh freeway when you can take the back streets. I expressed my displeasure. Repeatedly.

Then, instead of dropping me off at the front door of the hospital he *parked the car* and made me walk the interminable distance to the front door; I took many breaks in the couple of hundred metres it took to get there. It honestly felt like it took forever to get to the front door!

When we finally got inside they sent us down to a waiting room. There was this older man in there and I went to walk in and sit down but felt a bit self conscious what with being in agony and all, so turned around and hobbled out. Thankfully he must have felt sorry for me and cleared out very quickly.

Not long after our amazing midwife Megan arrived and took us down to the birth suite. Megan was the hospital midwife on duty. I knew she was going to be great right away, and I pretty well relaxed then. Even though our private midwife couldn't make it I feel like I got super lucky to get Megan, she was terrific!

We debated about finding out how far along I was, did I want to know?? The contractions were every 3 minutes now. Nah, of course I did, my control freak mind could not cope not knowing if I was actually in active labour or not. So Megan had a gander and I was already 6cms dilated! *The man* and I high fived, I'd done most of the work at home. Well, sort of!

If you been in a birthing suite before, either as a participant or spectator you know the rest of the story, and if you haven't then trust me you don't want to know.

We'd arrived at hospital at 6:30pm and at 8:49pm our amazing Eleanor Grace was born. And yes, that is a labour PB for me.

So here you go second born:

I am still on a massive high from your birth. It was an amazing, natural experience and exactly what I wanted. As I kept saying to *The Man* afterwards "I DID IT!, I DID IT". I feel super lucky to have got the pregnancy and labour that I did. If I had to describe the experience as eBay feedback then this one was A++ would do again!!

I've been trying really hard to be more relaxed this time around. Of course life has to throw challenges at us, like a surprise staph infection for you and a nasty bout of mastitis for me. We both ended up back in Albury hospital on IV antibiotics when you were 9 days old.

Being *positive* though it was a good opportunity to compare hospital food, Wodonga has much better food than Albury. Just so you know.

Since getting home things have just got better and better. We cannot imagine life without you, really we can't – it feels like you've been here forever instead of just 6 weeks. Your brother absolutely adores you, constantly asks to hold you (well just for a minute and then he tries to shove you off his lap), and if you're unsettled he's always going in to give you a pat and say "its orright Ollie".

Your first bath was a total disaster, you did not like the inflatable duck bath at ALL! The midwife commented in 20 years she'd never seen a baby scream so much. But just quietly I think the water might have been a tad cold.. sorry.

Since then you've had baths with your Dad and your brother and you love it, and they do too.

So to there you go, my wonderful second born. You have a lovely, gentle and happy personality – I can tell already! So please don't turn out to be a serial killer and have my words bite me in the arse.

- Mum





