

Welcome

Adelaide Elaine

March 1, 2014

9:18 p.m.

6 lbs. 2 ounces

21 inches

Let's go back to the very beginning, the first day we all met, when I told you "I'd love to be your doula", and let me say now, "I loved being your doula." It was such a great honor to be by your side as you welcomed your daughter to the world, and to be part of the team that supported you on that journey.

Just days before Adelaide's birth, we all met with the head midwife, Dinah, to discuss how we would best support you during your birth. It was mentioned several times that you were just going to see how things went, but that you would like our assistance in keeping things as relaxed and low-key as possible. At this point, Dinah looked at your due date and mentioned that it could be 3 more weeks before we all got to meet Adelaide. We also got an update on your blood pressure, which was a little high, but Dinah was going to have you come back in on Friday to confirm that all was well.

Friday night, I received a call from you at 9:24 p.m. that you had begun having contractions that were 20 minutes apart, and were stronger than what you had been experiencing earlier that day, and the day before. I told you I had a feeling your labor might begin because I had been thinking about you earlier that day while shopping. You thought labor might have begun because you had just finished a sewing project earlier that day, and now that it was finished, things were picking up in intensity. I called Rachel to give her a heads up that labor may begin to establish a more regular pattern during the night.

At 6:30 in the morning, I had not received a message, or a call about how you were doing, so I sent a message in case everyone was still sleeping.

"Good morning, I'm checking to see how you are feeling? What can I do to help out?"

You responded that you had had contractions through the night, and after the initial excitement you were able to relax pretty well in between. The contractions were coming in spurts with several averaging 5-7 minutes apart for at least an hour, and then they backed off for a while. I found out later that Adelaide was active during the contractions, and would punch or kick once they were over; perhaps in opposition. You were able to doze in between, but would get up and out of bed during contractions and Josh suspected Cat (the cat) slept better than both of you.

I recommended eating some toast with peanut butter for carbs and protein, and that I could come out, even if only for an hour, to help with positioning or just relaxation.

You responded, “I think it would be good if you wanted to drop by, even if you don’t end up staying. It’ll be nice to have another perspective. Josh is making me peanut butter toast right now.”

I arrived at 7:42, and no one immediately answered the door so I suspected you were in the middle of a contraction. Once Joshua opened the door and greeted me, he confirmed that you were in the middle of a contraction when I first arrived. You had a giant smile on your face when you greeted me.

You had just eaten a clementine for more energy, so I made sure you also had plenty of water for hydration and we talked a bit about what the labor pattern was like, until the next contraction came on and I was able to watch you and Joshua work together during it. You were swaying and rocking while holding onto Joshua. It was apparent he was a very strong support person for you, so I allowed both of you to work together. He also did a little rebozo sifting on your belly to help Adelaide get aligned in your pelvis better, so you wouldn’t feel so much of the contraction in your left hip. Joshua said it was like “panning for gold.”

We started to use cold compresses to help cool you down, and the Spiderman and Batman washcloths were very beneficial, especially after they had been in the freezer for a couple minutes. It brought humor to your labor, and was a much more entertaining way to refer to washcloths.

At 9:15, you described the contractions as more intense, longer, and you were less coherent through them. You began feeling pressure all around, and could feel Adelaide shifting around, and the contractions really pulling up along the sides of your uterus. You had developed a mantra, “Oooooopen” that helped you during the peak of the contraction, and when a contraction would cause you to catch your breath, Josh was right there to remind you to “ooooopen.” He had also started referring to today as Adelaide’s birthday, and it was a nice way to focus your energy knowing that you would be meeting your daughter before the day was over.

I suggested you call the midwife, to give her an update of progress since the contractions had a more regular pattern, though still not entirely predictable. On the phone, you described how your birth team had calculated that contractions were lasting a minute to a minute and 15 seconds, and you had clear to pink bloody show. Josh declared that he had “never been part of a birth team before.” During the phone call you didn’t have any contractions, so the midwife let you know she was prepared, but that you should stay home until the

contractions were more regular. Immediately after hanging up, you had a much stronger contraction than before, and you said it was “as though you had been holding it in while on the phone.”

At 11:14, we suggested you get something else to eat and you said how you really wanted protein. Rachel went to the kitchen to make you some eggs and I got you some string cheese to munch on while you were waiting.

At this point, you were not comfortable on the birth ball, and so you labored kneeling in bed or swaying with Joshua again.

Rachel and I thought it would be a good idea to let Christy, the midwife, know that things were picking up and she stayed on the phone during a contraction, and said she would be ready to meet everyone up there whenever you both decided. We reassured you that you were doing great, and we could stay in your home as long as you wanted.

You had a few more contractions that were really beginning to require all your energy and focus, and decided you would like to go to the birth center so you could make use of their shower or tub for relaxation. Joshua called Christy back at 12:15 to let her know you had decided to head that way. We got all your bags ready, placed by the door, grabbed them as we headed out.

We arrived at the birth center close to 12:50 and walked back to the blue room. Christy arrived soon after, and said she would like to check to see your progress. While she was checking, Rachel began to fill the tub so all I could hear was Christy say “big, bulgy bag”, that she could feel the baby’s head, and something about slight cervix to the side, but that you were “very close” and she would be calling the 2nd midwife in. I found out later, that when she spoke with that midwife, she told her to come quickly because things had progressed so quickly thus far, you were already at 9 cm, and Christy was worried the second midwife wouldn’t make it in time for the birth. Adelaide had different plans however.

At 1:20, the midwives checked Adelaide’s heart tones, and she was doing wonderfully (in the 150 range). You were laboring beautifully in the tub going from hands and knees during contractions to back on your bottom in between. At one point, you said to Joshua who was situated behind you “I hear you, I feel you, I just can’t see you” which showed how much his presence and support meant to you. You began to feel a lot of pressure with contractions and you responded, “I don’t like this”. In contrast, in between contractions, you were extremely calm and quiet and even commented that your fingers were “SO wrinkled.” You

really seemed to be in a birth daze, and we suspected that you would be meeting your daughter soon. You and Joshua decided to a prayer at this point.

Your contractions began to get even stronger around 1:57 and Rachel and I took turns applying cold Spiderman/Batman washcloths to your neck and forehead to keep you as comfortable as possible during this phase.

The midwives listened to Adelaide's heart tones, and I suggested that you get out of the tub to go to the bathroom at 2:10 thinking that your full bladder might be preventing Adelaide from moving down. You labored on the toilet for a while, and then moved to the ball. While sitting on the ball, we started to hear you making much lower tones which we thought were from the pressure of Adelaide moving down now that your bladder was empty.

You moved to the bed at 3:00 and had your blood pressure taken. It was a bit high, but at this stage, that was normal and to be expected. The midwives left the room at this point, so you didn't feel as many eyes on you. You labored for a bit in bed on your side, and we suggested moving to the toilet again because you had seemed to enjoying sitting there and could really relax. Around 3:43, you began to make sounds much more synonymous with pushing, and I went ahead and let the midwives know.

When they came in at 3:43, Joshua had just asked you "How are you doing?" to which you replied "pretty good" and then immediately you gave a really good push. Joshua smiled so wide at this point, as well as everyone in the room, because you had started to feel the sensation to push. Joshua's phone went off from a text, and you said "Who's texting you?" After a long pause, he replied very casually "LOTS of people."

You continued pushing on the toilet for quite some time, and each time, with each contraction would give more little grunts and then a push. You told Joshua that it "feels right, but it's difficult." The midwives commented that you were easing Adelaide down beautifully, and it was a peaceful descent. They stated that you could have been the poster child for natural birth at that point, with how well you were doing. Particularly amazing was that at the peak of a contraction, you would say "Oh yes" and completely allow your body to relax into the contraction.

You told Joshua "I feel her there" and how it was "crazy, (that) after all this we get to keep her", and he responded, "You wouldn't want to do this for free." You continued walking, swaying, and stomping to encourage her to move down. We used the rebozo a bit, and you moved around so frequently we tied it to your waist like a warrior belt. At 4:31, amidst all this movement, you said "She's so low" and someone replied "She's going to be even lower".

A little while later, at 4:50, the midwife offered to do an exam in order to give you an update on your progress and Adelaide's progress. She told you that you were now completely dilated, no cervix at all, with a bulging bag of water, and Adelaide was at +1 station during the contraction. At this time, you and Joshua took a moment to pray again.

Shortly after, all the midwives left the room, and it was just you and your doulas. We thought sitting on the ball would allow your pelvis to open up more and bring Adelaide down and encourage your water to break. While on the ball, Joshua continued to offer encouragement and letting you know you could "scream it out". We also encouraged you to rest in between contractions, and to lie down since you hadn't had a chance to rest in several hours. Rachel and I took turns massaging your hip and thigh when contractions would begin. The intensity picked up and you began saying "Oh Farge!" as a way to cope.

At 5:50, we suggested that you go to the bathroom again, and Christy suggested a pelvic tilt to aid in bringing Adelaide lower, and possibly allowing your water to break. Joshua continued to be your source of comfort and encouragement, and we could hear him say proudly "you did it again!" while you were coming down from an intense contraction.

After having several contractions on the toilet, at 6:07, Christy suggested that she could break your bag of water. You replied, "Let's get this over with". When Christy went to check you she said Adelaide was lower than she was at the last check and the other midwife had to aim the Doppler downward from your belly to get a reading of her heartbeat. Christy really struggled at this point to break your bag of waters because Adelaide had moved down, and she wasn't able to hook it. Once she did break it she reported that your fluid was clear, it was a tough bag, and baby was at nearly +2 station with the contraction. You immediately declared that it felt better, but different now.

After only 5 minutes, the contractions were stronger and you began making more pushing sounds. You even began pushing a bit. You exclaimed "oh baby" and felt more pressure right away. At the same time you said "Oh goodness. Better to push". In only ten minutes, at 6:24, you were feeling that you were getting somewhere. Joshua said, "We should have done that three hours ago" in response to breaking your waters, and the midwife said "three hours ago you weren't complete."

An ice cream truck parked right outside the birth center, playing the "Happy Birthday" melody. It was a really exciting moment, and you were really focused on your daughter at this point. You began talking to Adelaide telling her to "come down, we're ready to meet you."

At 7:15, you began bearing down with every contraction. Joshua was lying right beside you in bed and would whisper “you are amazing” after a contraction was finished. In only 15 minutes you were feeling constant pressure even when not pushing. You also started to get very warm again, so we brought back the cold compresses for your neck and forehead. Christy suggested that she could provide pressure, so you would know where to direct your push, during your contractions. You were able to feel a difference in pressure during this time, and you felt trickles from your broken bag of water as Adelaide moved; you later said this was positive affirmation that she was moving down.

Around 7:37, “Fudge, Oh Fudge” crept back into your vocabulary since everything was intensifying even more so than previously.

At 8:25, the midwife encouraged you to go to a more hands and knees position so that Adelaide could move lower and come down under your pelvic bone. Joshua was right by your side, and whispered to you, “You are amazing” and “Just about there.” We also heard the car lock beep from your mom’s rental car, and knew she would be there to help welcome Adelaide immediately after the birth.

You were willing to try any position to help move Adelaide down, so you also tried lunging on one side, and then on the other side, and at 8:55 had decided to squat at the edge of the bed. In this position, Adelaide moved down much quicker. In only 14 minutes squatting, she was almost crowning and her head was still visible between contractions. We kept waiting for her to crown, and then suddenly she was just here!

She came out so fast, once her head crowned, Christy barely had time to catch her. She was born at 9:18 p.m. The midwives encouraged you to sit back on the bed now that she was here to give your legs a chance to rest. At this point, they also realized that you were losing more blood than what was expected. Christy mentioned that she could feel the cord tearing from the placenta and would need to intervene in order to remove the placenta, so that you did not lose any more blood. The assistant midwife was also giving you shots of Pitocin and herbal tinctures orally to help your uterus contract down.

They worked very quickly while you and Joshua were focused on your brand new daughter, and by 9:40, when they checked your blood pressure, your levels were exactly as they should be. Rachel and I made sure you were comfortable at this point so that you could look at Adelaide and encourage her to find the breast. We helped you move so you were completely lying in bed, with lots of pillows behind you to support your back.

It was such a wonderful moment to see both of you holding Adelaide, after waiting for her for so long. She was much smaller than we imagined she would be and your mom said that she looked very much like Charlotte. Neither of you could get enough of looking at her, talking to her, and holding her.

Adelaide had found the ideal spot to snuggle up into on your chest, and Joshua was really enjoying the moment and his family. Rachel and I left the room for a bit, so you could appreciate the first moments as a new family of three, or four if we're counting Cat.

Once your mom had returned with your protein packed dinner, Joshua got a chance to hold Adelaide while you were eating your burger. She was so small in his arms, and he seemed so content to cuddle her. It actually didn't seem like he would give her back to you which was very endearing. Rachel and I excused ourselves so you could spend more precious time with the newest member of your family, Adelaide.

When I saw you three days later, your mom was telling me all about you as a child and started by saying "You know what's really amazing about Mary" and Joshua quietly responded "Everything!" I don't know whether you even heard him, but it was obvious to all of us that were able to participate in Adelaide's birth, that you really are amazing. It was an absolute honor to be by your side during your labor, and help welcome Adelaide to this world. I loved being your doula!

With Much Admiration,

Taylor Rhodes-Estrada and Rachel Gabsi