# Tom – Dad’s Story

When my wife Hannah first said to me that she wanted to try hypnobirthing during our pregnancy and labour, I openly admit it was one of those “yeh, whatever you like” moments, without really looking up from dinner. Partly thinking it wouldn’t be something that we would actually try, and partly not having any idea what it was, therefore not paying too much attention to the request.

However, I soon realised that it was something that she really wanted to do, I got stuck into exactly what it involved, tried to clue myself up as best I could, and booked in with Leanne.

I’m not going to pretend that I had mastered the art before we had our sessions, or that I fully understood what my role in the whole thing would be. For me though, knowing that it was something that Hannah wanted to do and she thought it would help is enough because at the end of the day, she is the one pushing a person out of her!

During the sessions I think one of the simplest yet most helpful things we did was to just list all of our fears, however big or small, about any aspect of the pregnancy. For me, that was simply wanting to be useful. I had lots of Dad’s saying to me that there was nothing I could do and that you are just a spare part, and that was something that I firstly didn’t believe had to be true, and secondly really didn’t want to happen. I like to think that I have a positive effect on Hannah and can help her in whatever situation it may be, and I felt the same about this. So after highlighting this as a worry from my side to Leanne, we spent a bit of time talking over exactly what my role could be and I can honestly say that not only did I feel so much better after this, but the plan that we set out in terms of my role worked incredibly well. Without going into the detail that Leanne would with the actual sessions, I was effectively the leader of the room. Every breath during the contractions I was not just saying “breathe”, but breathing with her which sounds so simple but it allowed Hannah to focus on me a follow rather than thinking about the pain. Any interaction with the midwife was done by me, making sure the room was set out exactly how we wanted it, controlling the use of language to help with the environment, reading scripts, positive talking and just basically anything that I thought would make Hannah be as relaxed as possible.

We unfortunately had complications during our birth, which initially might make you think that the calm, relaxed environment that we wanted went out of the window. However, we were still able to use the techniques that we had learnt to make the situation as close to what we wanted as possible, even during a very stressful time. Some of the things may seem obvious and fairly simple, but when you actually commit to doing them in that environment they help so much.

I think the key message I took from the sessions that we had were that not only can the Dads have a key role in the process, but they can actively change the entire situation for the better. And that even if hynobirthing is not something that you are 100% in tune with, if your partner is, and it’s something that they believe will help, then that is more than enough because that in itself will have a positive impact on their mindset and feelings.