

After hearing horror stories about labour, Brigitte Colombo, 34, decided on an alternative course. . .

My friends had lots of stories about painful births,' says Brigitte, an IT consultant from Docklands, London. 'So when a woman in my antenatal class told me about HypnoBirthing, I thought it was worth a try – especially as I was keen to have a natural birth.'

HypnoBirthing was developed in the US 15 years ago as a way of helping women have a drug-free, natural birth. Teacher Suzanne Austen explains, 'When a woman is really anxious in labour, it causes the muscles of her uterus to tighten and slow down the birth, making it more painful.'

Suzanne adds that contractions are controlled by the hormone oxytocin, but fear causes the body to release adrenalin, which works against it. 'This means that when you're frightened, your labour stops,' says Suzanne.

'That's why women are often sent home from hospital several times before they finally give birth.'

When she was seven months pregnant, Brigitte enrolled

'I was aware of everything, but relaxed'

on a weekend course, along with husband Charles. The couple were taught breathing techniques and self-hypnosis to help Brigitte through her planned home birth.

'I was shown how to visualise myself "opening like a flower", to help me dilate,' she recalls.

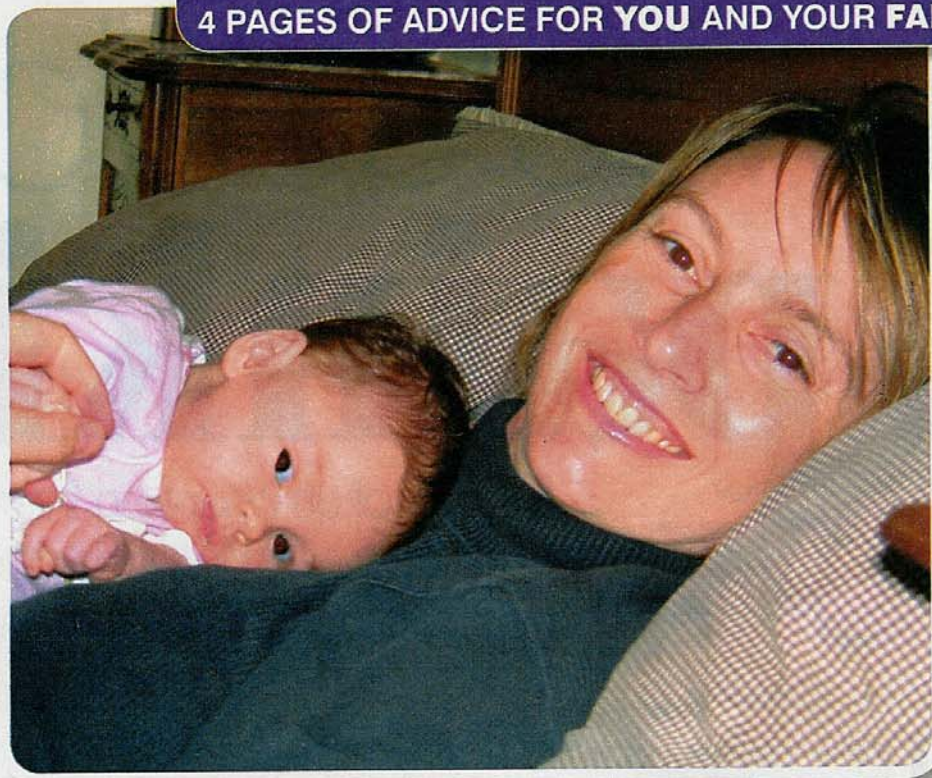
'I listened to a self-hypnosis CD almost every night after that and played it throughout the birth. I

was still aware of everything around me, but felt very relaxed.

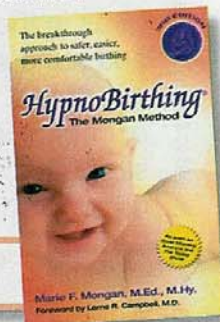
'My labour lasted 12 hours, but at no point did I feel I couldn't handle the pain.

'Afterwards, I had a shower, made something to eat and went straight on the Internet to send emails to friends and family.'

*** Visit www.hypnobirthing.me.uk for further information.**



I was hypnotised to give birth!



The *HypnoBirthing* book with CD is available at www.amazon.co.uk, at £10.03.