

Lotus Olivia was born in water at our home in Millbury, MA on July 13, 2009 at 1:47pm.



The Birth Story of our Lotus flower:

After lots of discussion, a few visits to an OB, a twelve-week Bradley birthing class, and a meeting with Midwife Khadijah Faulkner, we decided to have a homebirth with our first baby. I was overwhelmingly confident and excited about the experience and Jesse was a bit nervous and reserved, but we both knew it was the right decision for our unborn child. We wanted her to come into the world naturally.

July 12, 2009:

Seven days past my due date, on July 12th Jesse and I took a long walk hoping to trigger labor, like everyone suggested. We had several returns to make at the Blackstone Shops, so we loaded up the backpack and walked the entire mall, going in and out of several stores. It was tiring to say the least! But it worked because around 8:30 that evening I felt a pain in my lower belly that I had never felt before. I instantly knew I might be in labor. Taking me by surprise once again, the pain returned about 20 minutes later. I continued on with whatever I was doing, and just waited for other signs of labor. I expected my water to break at any moment.

After sitting down for the evening to watch a little TV together, I felt the same pain in my lower belly, and this time I looked at the clock which read 9:10pm. The pain lasted about 5 seconds and I of course stared at the clock to see if and when another contraction might come on. 8 minutes later I noticed the same pain, again lasting about 5 seconds. This repeated two more times before I let Jesse know that something was happening. Jesse felt nervous and excited and many times repeated the same words, "Should we call Khadijah now?"

I knew I was in labor, but didn't want to get too excited if I was wrong, so I remained very calm. At this point, we both continued to watch the clock and time the contractions, which repeated as they did earlier, roughly 8 minutes apart, lasting about 5 to 10 seconds. At 10:10 we agreed it was time to give Khadijah a call. She seemed enthusiastic that this may be it, but said it was important for us to go straight to bed and call again if things continued to progress during the night. To help me sleep, she suggested I have a glass of wine or some Benadryl, both would be safe. As good as a glass of wine sounded, I wanted to jump right in bed and fall asleep so the morning would come faster. Luckily we fell asleep quickly, but around 2:00 am I woke up feeling stronger contractions. I called Khadijah and she asked if I needed her to come out, but I felt comfortable continuing on without her for a bit. She asked that I try to go back to sleep if I could. She reminded me that I needed to be well rested for the following day.

At this point, the contractions were more intense and lasting longer. I knew I was progressing, but my body told me I could handle things on my own for the time being. I knew it was important for me to sleep, but sleep wasn't an option with the pain that I was experiencing. I got into the shower and lay

down in the tub. The pressure of the warm water on my belly helped me through the contractions. I left Jesse and Khadijah undisturbed because I knew it was very important for my support people to be well rested for the following day. I was sure that I was only at the beginning of labor and could handle the next several hours alone. After about an hour of lying in the tub, I decided to try to get some sleep in bed. After only one contraction, I knew that sleep still wasn't an option and back to the tub I went. I remember nodding off a bit in our tiny bathtub. I thought about the excitement of the upcoming day and somehow a couple hours past me by.

Contractions were getting more intense and lasting longer. They were still in my lower belly extending across my entire stomach just below my waist. At 4:30am I called Khadijah. I knew it was time to schedule her to come out. We agreed that Za'Yn, her assistant, and she would be here at 7:00am. I had to make it another few hours on my own, but I felt strength in me that I could do this. After getting off the phone, I went back into the tub again, this time running the shower in the same way, but allowing the tub to fill with water. I woke Jesse at 6:00am and we headed downstairs together.

It was a beautiful day so we spent the next hour in the sunroom. I could see that Jesse was a little overwhelmed, but he was working hard to seem calm and relaxed for me. I remember lying on my side for most of the next hour. Jesse stayed close to me and suggested I try to breath through the contractions. I began to moan during the contractions and felt they were taking me over. They were hurting so much more. The pain remained in my lower belly, but were now lasting nearly a minute. Jesse reminded me that we would be meeting our baby soon (a little coaching trick he learned in our Bradley class). I felt more excited and making it through each contraction seemed possible. Jesse called his mother and I called my sister, my mom, and a few friends. My phone calls were cut short by the overwhelming contractions. They were taking my breath away and I couldn't speak. I knew it was going to be a hard day, but worth every bit of pain.

Khadijah and Za'Yn arrived on the dot of 7:00am. Jesse and I breathed a sigh of relief as they walked in the front door. They immediately began to set up the tub in our kitchen. Khadijah came to visit me on the porch and said, "You look like a woman in labor." That's when things became very real. Khadijah noticed that I was having some difficulty lying down through my contractions and suggested we go for a walk. The thought in my head at that moment was, "Are you crazy, a walk, now, I'm in terrible pain!" I knew it was important to stay active to help progress the labor, so we got right up and headed to our backyard. We did laps around the yard and every 4 to 5 minutes I would lean my body against the side of the pool and work my way through 45 to 60 second contractions. Things were changing at this point and it was becoming obvious that we were truly getting closer to the birth of Lotus. We both became very excited about this idea and between contractions we held hands, gave each other kisses, and smiled.

2 more hours past and Khadijah let us know the tub was full and almost ready for me to get in. They said our hot water held out the entire time, but that the water was reading 106 degrees. They started dumping ice into the water to cool it down to 100. It then became obvious that it wasn't the water that was off, but the frog thermometer they were using to measure it. Luckily Lotus was given a turtle thermometer for bath time and it read a perfect 100 degrees. Ah...it was time for me to enter the water. I couldn't believe the relief in my belly the moment I sunk into the water. I knew we had made the right decision. Shortly after getting into the tub I told Jesse that I don't think I could have handled labor without water.



My memory of the next three hours is very blurred. Shortly after entering the tub, I invited (*demanded*) Jesse to come in to help me through my newest contractions that were now extending to my lower back. The pain was intense to say the least. The first time it happened with Jesse outside the tub, I yelled for him to push as hard as he could on my lower back, the entire length of the contraction. Noticing that he couldn't really do this affectively from outside the tub, I asked that he get his bathing suit on and hop in quickly! He didn't flinch. It seemed he was in the tub with me within seconds. Each contraction was very difficult and Jesse did his best to push on my back where I showed him to push. It felt like he needed to readjust his hands for every contraction.



The next few hours passed by surprisingly quickly and most of the time Jesse and I were alone in the room. Khadijah and Za'Yn sat on our deck in the backyard. It was the most beautiful day, no humidity, and the temperature was about 75 degrees I would guess. I knew Khadijah had left us alone so that we wouldn't feel watched and needing to perform. I was right. Moments after thinking that, Za'Yn came in to explain that they didn't want us to feel watched and let us know that they could hear every sound I was making.

We were relaxed as could be, listened to the birds when we could, and looked at the flowers in our yard. I didn't speak a word during this time. I remember apologizing to Jesse for my lack of words, but sitting quietly felt most comfortable for me. Jesse encouraged me to do what felt right. Khadijah gave me lots of water and Recharge to drink and we checked the baby's heartbeat often. I loved that I was in charge of locating the baby's heart so that we could all listen to her heartbeat. Each time I would say, "Is her heartbeat good?" Only once it was a little fast. I admit I was nervous, but Khadijah just thought it was due to me being a bit behind on my water and Recharge intake, so I worked harder to drink as much and as often as I could. Thank goodness for straws. Khadijah would often put the water right in front of me and I would suck it right down to the bottom of the glass. I didn't want anything to interfere with our homebirth so I kept myself very hydrated.



Several times throughout laboring I would ask Khadijah what stage I was in or if she thought I would deliver soon. Every time she gave me an answer without an answer. I appreciated this. She wasn't committing to anything and therefore there would be no disappointments.

Around noon, I suddenly had an urge to push. Khadijah said I didn't look like I needed to push, but there was definitely something different happening with my body. I loved that these changes helped me to know that I was progressing. Never did Khadijah check to see if I was dilated or effaced. She felt the information was unhelpful to her and us. We understood that my body would give us signs of progression. Because of my sudden urge to push, my midwives suggested I might try going to the bathroom, so I left the tub for the first time. When I sat down on the toilet, the same urge to push came over me and I thought about Khadijah telling me to listen to my body and push if I needed to push. My body sort of jolted up as a contraction forced my body to push and suddenly my water broke, spraying out in front of me and right on the floor. The pain of the force of the push took me by surprise and I yelled through it. Khadijah quickly came to the bathroom and I invited her in. She was very excited for me that my water had broke and helped me back into the tub before another contraction came on.

When I hopped back into the tub, I suddenly felt a burst of energy and freedom from any pain at all. I realized that I was beyond transition and ready to push out our baby out. What I didn't realize was just how uncomfortable the next two hours would be and how the clock would suddenly slow down. During each contraction my body would force me to push 2 to 3 times. I felt Lotus moving further down. Za'Yn commented on how much smaller my belly looked. Pushing contractions were so uncomfortable because my back labor was even worse than before. I tried several positions, squatting, getting on my hands and knees, and sitting on Jesse's legs as I pulled my legs back.

I kept getting a cramp in the back of my knees and it affected how hard I pushed. We started noticing the length between contractions was getting longer at times. Khadijah explained that my body was allowing me more rest time because the next couple of pushes would be very affective in moving Lotus down. Lotus needed to move under my pelvic bone, but this didn't seem possible. Khadijah told us the back labor would go away as soon as this happened. To keep me encouraged, Khadijah asked me to feel inside for her head so I knew just how close she was.



During contractions I felt as though my entire neighborhood could hear me. I was yelling, mostly just noises, but sometimes, I would yell, “Khadijah, how much longer? I can’t do this. It hurts. When will she be here?” I was exhausted and feeling like little Lotus would never present herself. After more than an hour of this, I decided I really needed to focus and push as hard as I could. I needed to see Lotus and knew it was up to me. I couldn’t take the pain from the contractions, with the added back labor, for much longer and then we heard Khadijah say she could see lots of dark hair. I reached down to feel her soft hair and knew we’d be holding her soon.

With each set of pushes she’d move out further and then back in. This was normal, but felt a little discouraging to have her go in the opposite direction. Finally, after about a 5-minute rest between contractions, I told myself I was going to push my very hardest. Za’Yn was now in front of me holding my hands, Jesse was behind me holding me by the waist, and Khadijah was getting the video camera started. Khadijah warned Jesse that if he was worried about getting a little queasy, he may want to get out of the tub within in a few seconds of the birth of Lotus.

With a lot of yelling, moaning, and body movements I could feel her head coming out. Khadijah tried to calm me by telling me the pain is just my body stretching and doing what it’s supposed to do. Moments later, at 1:47pm, I pushed Lotus’ head out all the way out and seconds later her body popped out. I looked in amazement at our little baby under the water. Instinctively I reached down to get her and Khadijah asked me to wait a moment. The umbilical cord was wrapped around her neck. Very gently, while still under water, Khadijah unwound the cord, then brought Lotus out of the water and placed her on my chest. She made one little noise and with her big blue eyes she looked at us right in our eyes. I was elated for two reasons, the obvious, seeing our little girl for the first time and being beyond the pain. It was the most surreal moment of our entire lives. Jesse wept and I joyfully smiled. We held our baby so close for what seemed to be a very long time. Moments later I pushed and pulled the placenta from my body. Jesse got out of the tub and sat in a chair. Jesse held Lotus in his arms and the placenta was placed in a bowl on his lap while they attended to me.

We’re very proud of ourselves for bringing Lotus into this world drug free. Shortly after getting out of the tub, I lay down on the bed in the sunroom and I breastfed Lotus for the first time. While breastfeeding our baby, Jesse cut the umbilical cord. From the moment she was born, we couldn’t imagine our lives without her. We are so blessed to have the family we have always wanted. We love you, Lotus Olivia!

