

My First Birth in the United States – Final Chapter by Christine Holefelder B.S., L.M.T.

So, here we are with this beautiful baby girl, Brain Scored and treated at birth and beyond the way it was meant to be done, and still she seems uncomfortable. While she is alert, curious and often happy, her parents were still concerned. Her cycle had maintained levels over 100 seconds throughout, yet sleep was still a challenge, spitting up had increased, and she had frequent hiccups. At the height of her unwindings she would thrash her head back and forth like someone fervently trying to get their head through a turtle neck three sizes too small. Her little precious hands would reach for her forehead and grasp at the invisible turtleneck trying desperately to free herself from the oppressive forces pulling down on her. Alais and I were puzzled, her parents were exhausted.

Barry always says, “Get out of your head, get into your heart.” Following his words, we proposed to the parents to start doubling up on sessions so we could see her treatment through. We offered them two sessions a week until she was “done” on a pay-what-you-will basis to be determined when everyone was satisfied with the results. Amazingly, Mom and Dad agreed, having never lost faith in the potential of therapy or us as her therapists. For that we are eternally grateful! This was the turning point. During the dozen or so treatments that followed, Alais and I felt M’s strain patterns as they bounced through her body from hips to ribs, shoulders, and all the way back to points in the mouth and palate. She flipped, arched, tucked, spun, and screamed session after session. At one point, we all sat in amazement at the density of this tiny onion. Torticollis or not, how could her unwindings continue to be so fervent and intense after all of this therapy, starting so immediately after her first breath?

We pressed on, observing M having breakthroughs and regressions. Her best sleep usually came after she would become exhausted by high energy sessions. Hiccups persisted, but slowly her volume of spit up started to lessen. Most helpful for me was really watching the patterns of her body movements when she would get to the height of therapeutic distress. Through communicating with her parents, we discovered that her positions in therapy mimicked her physical process of trying to get to sleep. Along with the head thrashing, her arms would either drop down and internally rotate behind her back, or swing behind her head as though she were initiating an abdominal crunch. What more proof of tissue memory does anyone need? This wise little baby knew what had to be done before her body could be at peace. Effective treatment at this stage meant exaggerating and deepening these patterns, as opposed to attempting to eliminate them. Restriction in her body was actually blocking her ability to complete these patterns forcing them to repeat over and over again. We needed only follow and assist her to the resolution; we could not lead her there.

Finally, Mom and Dad could report that her patterns were starting to be broken. Bed time no longer looked like a battle between baby and the too-small turtle neck. Spitting up reduced to minimal, hiccups occasional. While they were able to say all the while that she was a happy, alert and active little baby girl, they now had a sense that she was comfortable in her body. How many of us would have benefitted from that at M's age?

Truly staying in the heart and out of the head means detaching from the outcome. How much or how long to treat was not up to us. Trying to "figure it out" will not bring sessions to where they need to be. In fact, *figuring* prevents *feeling*. Trust in the work as well as the innate body wisdom we are born with is what defines the path to healing. The beauty of this work is the learning that each client brings to us with each session. Each client is our teacher. Each session, another lesson. Thank you for your wisdom, Baby M! Thank you for your trust, Mom and Dad. Above all, thank you Barry for....everything. There are no adequate words....