



## **Father to be needs doula-support**

### **Wintertime 1989**

There was a time I was working with pregnant women almost every evening.

This one event I remember clearly.

During one of the evenings where the partners came along to hear how they can support their wife or girlfriend during labor this father to be came up to me during the break. “Do you also support fathers during labor?” “Of course, I said but why this question?” “My girlfriend wants to give birth at home and I’m terrified of the thought being alone with her al that time!”

We talked about his request of me being present when his girlfriend would go into labor. She didn’t mind at all. Although she was not anxious at all about giving birth, but if her friend could relax more when I would be there, she was fine with it.

Three weeks later contractions started and on a cold evening at 17:30 I arrived at their cosy home. Dimm light, woman in bed taking a nap. All was calm and peacefull. The father to be was hungry an so was I. He drove to a Chinese restaurant and we ate a Chinese take away dinner. It didn’t bother his girlfriend, what I found extraordinary special. The smell of food during labor can make women go frantic! This was not the case and I was happy for her and for us, we could face the long hours to come on a full stomach.

Contractions came closer together and were more intens. She was doing great. Being fully into her oxytocinbubble. The only thing she wanted was pressure on her back during contractions and her friend was helping her

calmly and with confidence. His fear was totaly gone. They were doing great together!

When the midwife came to check upon the situation, she was surprised what she found. Two calm supporters and the woman, 9 cm dilated and doing great. She stayed and we waited for the last centimetre to dilate. She asked me who I was, if I had experience with supporting woman during childbirth. When I explained where I came from and why I was there, she was content with the whole situation and complimented me on my role as supporter for this couple. For me it didn't feel as a very special thing, but now, 25 years later I realize that my present might have helped to stage the whole labor. What might have happened if the father to be had lost his nerves? The oixitocyn would probably have not flown that easily.....

A beautiful, healthy boy was born after  $\frac{3}{4}$  hour pushing and again the father helped and actually enjoyed his active role during this stage. The placenta came after 5 minutes, very easily. Father releaved and very happy after this great experience and so happy with his little boy and....ever so proud and in love with his girlfriend.

So glad to have been able to be of help for especially the father. He thanked me for my presents....because much more than that was not necessary during this beautiful, serene birth.. Just being there was enough.

That night I drove home in my own oxytocinbubble at 04:00 in the morning. What a beautiful experience, what a privilige to be invited to be present. Thank you for the trust!

More deliveries would follow.....but at that moment I was not aware of that!

