

Men's Role In Woman's Business

Throughout the ages, where people lived in groups, it is likely that men and women had rituals, traditions and expectations. As we share experiences, it is also likely that those who had birthed before were those called upon to sit with those who found that their time was nigh – for comfort, support and the gained wisdoms.

In today's world, due to many factors, the experiential side of this primal event seems to have been hijacked by deeply held fears; whether rational/founded in reality or not, that are contained within our group consciousness, racial and cellular memories and mythologies. Birthing seems to have become seen as a potentially dangerous life phase that sensible, caring parents can choose to have sanitized and even sidestepped through the intervention of stainless steel and modern medical wonder drugs.

But what of nature's wonder drugs – the immense flooding of Mum's body by the hormones that allow her to go within, exploring her very essence as she transitions from maiden to mother? What of the price that is exacted on all if she doesn't – we only have to glance at the latest woman's magazines to see the results of a pregnant girl wanting to avoid the 'pain of labour' – she swaps the supposed known trauma for another – the likelihood of deep and illogical post natal depressions, as the projected fairy tale erodes into a hell of leaky nipples, sleep deprivation and soggy abdominal tone; the loss of the maiden, stuck in limbo, having whimped out of the mother rites, choosing to go straight to



the apparent prize at the end, without the steps that ensure she is in the space to deal with it.

Birth is a time of death – initiation of the maiden out of girlhood and into maternity; loss of her often pristine figure: reinvention of the couple as their needs and desires are subsumed by a squawking infant (however cute it appears occasionally); the sometimes temporary demise of the lovers who had a responsive, attentive connection; loss of the carefree orderly domestic existence; departure of the man who only had to think of adult pleasures and pursuits and also the end of the carefree existence the fetus had, lounging about in prenatal bliss.

We could choose to reinterpret all of the above – a choice available for those who listen not to the fears and

rationalisations, but to the call of their bodies; the call to grow up into the next life phase. This may appear scary stuff to those who have lived via the modern plastic world – the rawness of primal emotions may have never been experienced – the power of nature, within - mammalian and extreme for those who are living only in their human headspaces.

In amongst all these potential deaths/possible demises it is not necessary to miss out on/lose the titanic bonding that is there gratis – if we let nature unfold without interference. But do we allow nature to orchestrate our lives, or do we as personality and ego know best?

Baby making and baby birthing and baby growing is a body thing.

Regardless of the cultural roles ascribed to those who play it out, we all feel, and around our offspring, we all feel very deeply. Why let the intellectual arguments hold any sway in this part of your life? Mum probably already has glimmers of the mammal within – the primal mother. She may be following the call of nature to birth where the baby started – at home, amongst her parameters of

safety – her nest. Which mammal doesn't? Which mammal chooses to be surrounded by strangeness when faced with an internal challenge that is couched in biological survival of the future generations?

You, as Dad may be following the deeply held and cherished protector role – and may find yourself at odds with her apparently totally illogical feelings and desires. She is pregnant. She is feeling the pull of the wild; she may be seeking the spirit of the inner woman's initiation.

How can you best support her to grow into her new life?

By not keeping her dependent on her head – by allowing her to birth as her body was designed to do – with all of its passion, power and potential outcomes. What price a constantly screaming baby who a highly depressed Mum cares for out of obligation – and a fractured relationship between you as you battle in desperation? What price a mother who privately wishes her baby gone, or grown already – who feels that her very identity has departed; that

she needs to go back to work to feel like herself, and sane again?

You have seen this played out in friends and family lives – is this the price of a 'safe' delivery?



What would you script for your baby? Baby is a mammal. Baby knows body and comfort. Baby needs Mum to be totally focused on it alone for months to come.

How best to achieve the safety and security your baby needs but through ensuring that at every stage, your baby is treated with respectful reverence, its mother is assisted to grow beyond her fears rather than be governed

by them. How best to cement your relationship with your baby's mother than to totally be there, calming her as she grows larger, and through the birthing of all of your new lives together – by intimately responding to her body with your body? How can you relinquish control and allow nature to take over?

There are other modes of pregnancy support than visiting a man in an office who sagely looks at numbers that relate to markers of body chemistry. In which other pre-modern culture would we see women's

business completely taken over by men and rationality through fear? (I would suspect they would die out). In times past, women may have supported each other, but in today's world, we see Dad being chief support; often where he may have no training past his love and affection for her.

Dad has his own fears – in times past, men have watched their beloved bleed out, torn asunder by misplaced/too large infant, exhausted through over-burdening lives on the frontier – and these days

belong in the past. Modern midwives have skills and external support far exceeding that available to their foremothers.

Safe birthing is that which allows the transition of all members within the tableau to arrive intact, ready to begin their life journey together. Not just alive, but cemented and bonded. Not just a medical statistic, but an ecstatic union of two into three.

How can this happen in your life? By you, as Dad, taking charge and following nature by supporting wellness and encouraging Mum to look past



her fears into the call of her body to be present, and for you to be present, as baby becomes present.

Heather Bruce, an acupuncturist and naturopath has left her previous Brisbane Well Mother and Baby clinic to write in the backwaters of her native New Zealand. She has begun her publications with "What Dads Can Do – a manual for partners of pregnant women". This comes as a package "What We Can Do", including 2 instructional DVDs and moxa sticks. She will soon also have "Well Woman's Baby – Birthing the Mother Within" written and out in the New Year. You can visit her website www.heatherbrucebooks.com.au.

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