

PRENATAL BONDING (BINDUNGSANALYSE BY RAFFAI)*-AN INTRODUCTION

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ABSTRACT: Prenatal Bonding (Bindungsanalyse by Raffai) provides the possibility of creating an intense bonding between mother and fetus, of being witness to the development of the fetus in the womb and realizing the early growth of the personality. The same way any prenatal dysfunctions can be recognized including the capacity for immediate healing. In this respect the method is at the same time an instrument of pre- and perinatal research, an empowerment of bonding between mother and fetus and a great help for giving birth much more easily. After birth the baby has a remarkable degree of self-esteem and full access to its personal potential.

KEY WORDS: Prenatal Bonding (Bindungsanalyse by Raffai), dialogue with the fetus, results of Prenatal Bonding (BA), caesarean section, postpartum depression.

THE INCEPTION OF PRENATAL BONDING (BA)

Prenatal Bonding (BA) had its origin in the early 1990s, when Jenő Raffai, Hungary did psychoanalytic basic research with young psychiatric in-patients. During his treatments he observed a special psychodynamic constellation, namely a lack of inner boundaries between patients and their mothers in early childhood, creating later in life a confusion about reality. Jenő Raffai subsequently assumed that schizophrenia has roots in gestation, if inner boundaries between mother and fetus are not well established. Raffai subsequently developed a preventive method which instructed mothers to set and experience inner boundaries between themselves and their unborn babies. Raffai on his own has provided more than 2000 women with Prenatal Bonding (BA) in Hungary and carefully documented the outcomes by observation. He found that the method has a profound effect on pregnancy and childbirth in general and on the development of the child's personality. Raffai noted that Prenatal Bonding (BA) is intended primarily as a facilitating process.

*In the following manuscript the abbreviation: Prenatal Bonding (BA) is used equivalently to the term Prenatal Bonding (Bindungsanalyse by Raffai) - This article is an updated excerpt, taken of APPPAH Journal Fall 2010

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THE METHOD OF PRENATAL BONDING (BA)

Prenatal Bonding (BA) starts at about the 20th week of pregnancy. The following setting is required: The pregnant woman lies on a comfortable mattress in a relaxed position with the intention to focus on her inner perceptions. Sessions start with centering on awareness of breathing, body feelings and emotions. By focussing on her awareness the facilitator helps the woman to come into contact with more and more inner images, as we know from our dreams. Images are seen to be symbolizations of words, body feelings and emotions. Gradually the images become more frequent, creating a flow of information and communication between the mother and the unborn and this creates the "umbilical cord of both souls". Mothers find out how their babies are developing, what they are feeling and needing, even about things that might be threatening or dangerous. It is much easier and more impressive for mothers, as well as less expensive, less invasive and less dangerous for babies to gain information this way, as compared to ultrasound or medical tests. The most powerful effect: Prenatal Bonding (BA) enables an inner dialogue in images with the unborn.

IMPROVEMENTS IN THE PREGNANCY

Raffai recommends that the pregnancy and the development of the baby has a better outcome if a inner separation between the pregnant woman and her own mother has taken place, which concerns the growth of the pregnant woman from the role of the "daughter of her mother" to the "mother of her baby". Prior to birth a second process of separation is facilitated by a number of explicit steps. For example, the unborn is invited to say goodbye to the intrauterine world of his mother. Or the mother and baby speak separately about their recollections during the pregnancy. The story, the mother tells, is partly or sometimes completely different to the story, the baby tells. This substantiates that the baby has its own mind, perceptions and experiences and makes its own decisions. At the end giving birth itself is simulated in a "final rehearsal" as a mental training. The mother-to-be is invited to let go and open herself for a new step in her life, to explore inner obstacles to that new family constellation. So inner hindrances that could have evoked a somatic tenseness during giving birth can be eliminated a long time in advance. This relates to a procedure of simulating birth with the babies, as advocated by Dr. William Emerson. Depending on the starting point about 20 sessions are needed for the whole process.

EFFECTS ON THE BABY

Babies who are communicated with Prenatal Bonding (BA) feel themselves to be seen and heard at a deep level. This makes them feel respected as they are and for their unique personality and situation. In addition, the reflections of the baby's feelings and perceptions by the mother build a safe container for the fetus to expand and express itself, so a profound self-esteem can grow. The development of the brain is intensely stimulated and the interest and trust of the baby in the outside world are empowered.

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE FATHER

The important role the father has in the process of Prenatal Bonding (BA) should be emphasized. The research of Prenatal Bonding (BA) has proven that the unborn is aware of the father and significant others as well. So the father also has the chance for an early bonding with the unborn. He is important to the unborn baby right from the beginning and his role is to provide a "social womb" for his pregnant wife. This means creating a safe space for the pregnancy, allowing the mother to encounter the extensive changes in her womb and body and widespread changes in her life.

12 COMMON RESULTS OF PRENATAL BONDING (BA)

1. The mother's inner perceptions are well attuned to her pregnancy and the unborn. She has access to her own as well as to her baby's wisdom.
2. Her natural female capabilities are empowered by Prenatal Bonding (BA) and create greater assertiveness and security during childbirth.
3. Mother and baby become a good team and experience less anxiety and pain.
4. There is less effort in giving birth and fewer complications.
5. The need for obstetrical interventions goes down significantly.
6. Caesarean sections were decreased in Hungary by Prenatal Bonding (BA) to about 6%, as compared to the norm of 30% and more. Thus birth is safer and less costly.
7. Of 2000 pregnancies treated by Raffai premature birth rates were less than 0,2 percent - as compared to an average of more than 8%.
8. Birth trauma is of low degree as indicated by natural, round shaped heads and little crying after birth (mostly less than 20 minutes per day).
9. The babies are curious about the world, emotionally stable, socially mature and have complete access to their personal potential.
10. There is less sleeping during daytime, but longer and deeper sleep at night, with few awakenings, so parents suffer less from sleeping disorders.
11. Babies and children are easy to communicate and dealing with them becomes completely intuitive. Babies have a lot of self-awareness and self-esteem. They are patient and understanding of their parent's intentions and needs, as well as their own.
12. Postpartum depression is expected to become a thing of the past, as in Raffai's sample of 2000 facilitated pregnancies none postpartum depression was reported. On average about 15% of mothers experience postpartum depression for several month and about 5% exhibit first-time postpartum PTSD after birth.

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