

## **Dear Expectant Partners,**

If you're reading this, it's because the mother of your child is interested in getting a doula to help with the birth process.

First question is...what the heck a doula?

Well, the definition is "a person who provides emotional and physical support during pregnancy and childbirth"...but that doesn't entirely summarize our experience with our doula.

I'll start off by saying I was VERY skeptical about our need to get a doula.

Billions of people had babies before us...so did we really need to PAY someone to help us?

It was a valid question at the time...and I'm glad to say I now have a clear understanding of WHY a doula was so helpful.

But in order to relate it to you, I need to use an analogy from my childhood.

I grew up in Wyoming and one of our favorite things to do there was to go fishing.

My dad and I would regularly pack up our gear and head to the nearest lake or river and throw some lines in the water for a few hours.

We'd get a bite every once in a while and eventually catch a fish or two and I'd think everything went perfectly.

But then one day we went fishing with my dad's friend, Don.

Don was an expert fisherman who went 4x a week since he was ten years old.

We caught more fish in the first ten minutes with Don than I had caught in my entire life (that is NOT hyperbole).

The reason for our success is because Don had so much more knowledge of the environment we were operating in.

- He knew WHERE the fish were
- He knew WHAT they wanted to eat
- He knew WHY it was the right time to fish
- He knew HOW we should approach them

It was all this extra information that turned our fishing experience from our typical lackluster outing into one I'll never forget.

On that day I learned a very important lesson:

Anyone can go fishing...but it takes a whole lot of effort and information to consistently catch fish.

So to get back to the reason you're reading this (talking about doulas), I want you to think of your doula as a guide.

The mother of your child has a vision of what she wants her childbirth experience to be like (probably something like "healthy mom, healthy baby").

Do you think you, a childbirth amateur, can help her obtain that experience all by yourself?

How about after 24 hours with little to no sleep?

How about when the medical staff comes in and starts telling you things that you don't entirely understand?

How about when there's talk about potentially needing to look at surgery?

These are all real things that happened to my wife and I during our experience...and if I'd tried fishing all by myself, I doubt the result would have turned out the way we wanted.

But thankfully, we hired a doula, Taylor, to help us navigate the waters of childbirth.

She gave us all of her knowledge and experience from having four children of her own as well as being a part of dozens of births to help us understand what success really looked like.

She helped us understand the process was going exactly to plan even when we felt stuck...and told us when we needed to push to keep our dream of a natural birth on course.

I cannot express how grateful I am to have had the opportunity to work with Taylor for our daughter's birth and can promise you we'll be seeking her out again for future children.

I highly encourage you to hire a doula to guide you on your journey...and if she has availability, I recommend you hire Taylor.

Congrats on the baby and best of luck,

**John Belcher**

