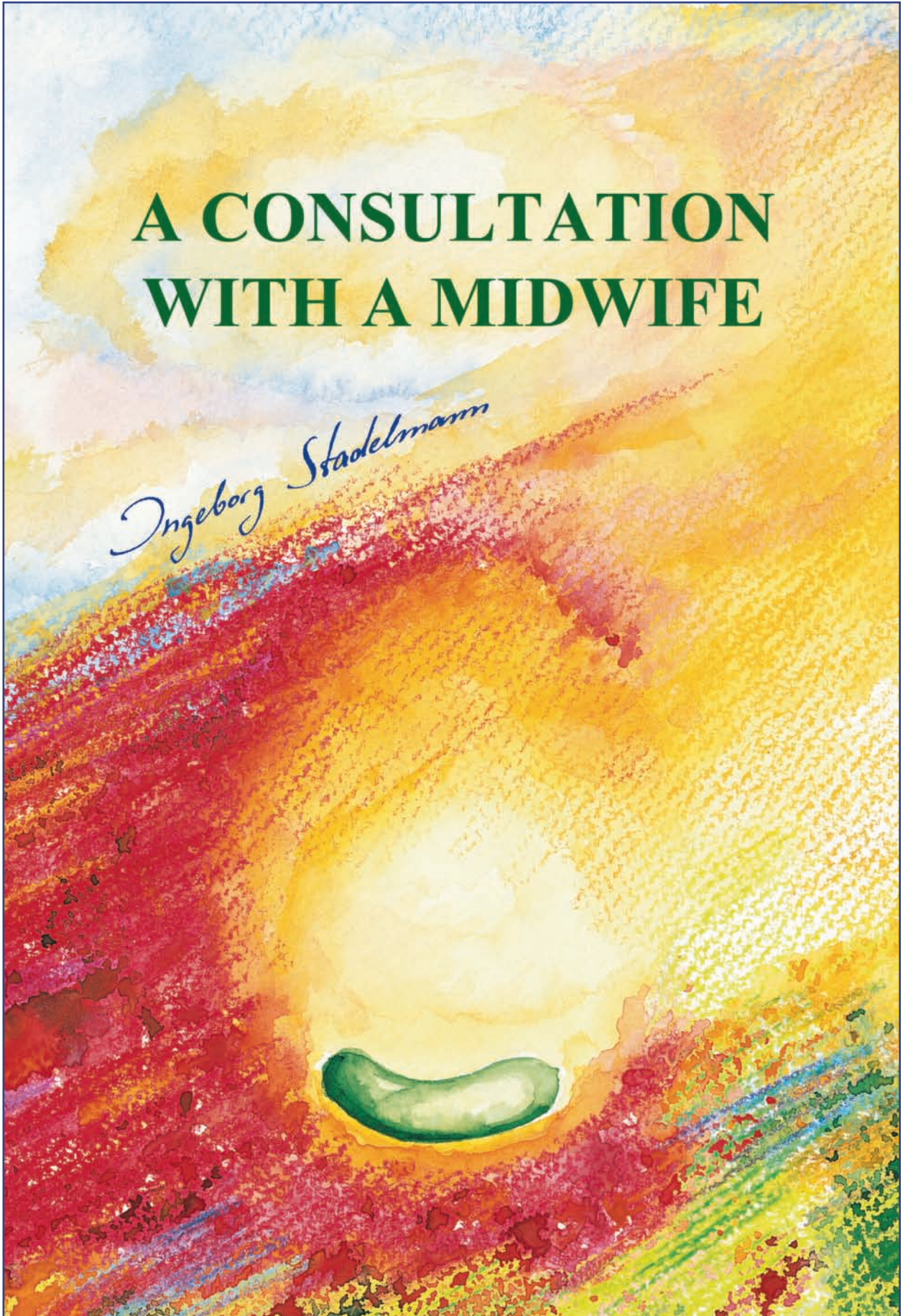


# A CONSULTATION WITH A MIDWIFE

*Ingeborg Stadelmann*





I would like to dedicate this book  
to all the children who are being born  
this very moment,  
and all parents  
who receive their child  
in its own  
way of being.



Ingeborg Stadelmann

# A Consultation with a Midwife

Sensitive, natural guidance  
through pregnancy, childbirth,  
the postnatal period and breastfeeding  
with  
herbal medicine,  
homoeopathy and  
aroma therapy

Nota bene

This book serves the purposes of elucidation, information and self-help. Every reader is called upon to decide on her own whether – and to what extent – she should follow the suggestions for action and make use of the naturopathic applications. This book is not intended, however, to replace professional advice. In cases of doubt or if an illness has already set in, a midwife or doctor must be consulted in order to determine the correct diagnosis and the corresponding treatment.

If used wrongly or in incorrect dosages, naturopathic substances can cause undesirable side effects. It is essential to pay close attention to the pointers and read the book carefully. Remember: “All things are poison and nothing is without poison; only the dosage keeps a thing from being poisonous!” (Paracelsus, alchemist and physician, 1493-1541)

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**Translation by Judith Rosenthal  
English German Language Service**

**Annotation:**

**This copy of the translation »Die Hebammen-Sprechstunde« by Ingeborg Stadelmann is a pre-printed and preliminary version of the proofread work.**

**Please do not hesitate to contact us for any improvements or interests for production or distribution. We are thankful to any ideas of improvement!**

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## THE LAST THREE MONTHS

### Development / Sensory Organs

The last twelve weeks serve the child as a period of preparation for life outside the womb. The child's *development* has been concluded. It will soon be viable; it is now putting on a protective layer of fat and its *sensory organs* are developing into a perfect system. The baby participates actively in the mother's life. With its behaviour, it often communicates to her that it is feeling good or that something is bothering it; often it may be telling her with its powerful kicks: what I'm *hearing* out there is a bit too loud! By being still, it can perhaps signal to the mother – who might be experiencing something exciting – “I won't get involved; that has nothing to do with me!” The child can now perceive sound very clearly; it hears everything, it lives with its mother and her surroundings. It can enjoy music but also be frightened by loud noises. Scientists have proven many times over that, after birth, children recognize music which has been played to them regularly during pregnancy. If the baby has just been sleeping and there are suddenly loud, piercing noises to be heard in the mother's surroundings, it will wake up and announce its aural perception with strong movements. I cite these examples as a way of showing that the mother-child union has become very intense. The child's *sense of smell* is also completely developed and is waiting for its first encounter with air in order to begin using the sensory cells which have already been in place since the seventh week of life; from the moment of its birth it will begin to store all olfactory impressions in its memory. It has likewise been proven that the *sense of sight* already functions in the uterus and the child reacts to light and dark. It is not pitch black in the child's surroundings but slightly crimson in the sunlight – to the extent that the mother can enjoy the sun – since light penetrates our muscles. When the sky is overcast, the light is dim or the mother is indoors, the shade the child perceives is more of a bluish red. Under the blanket it's dark, in the uterus as well. No agreement has yet been reached on the extent to which the central nervous system is capable of processing the sensory stimuli – i.e. the degree to which pain can be perceived. For Frédéric Leboyer and Michel Odent as well as other scientists, however, there is no doubt that pain is perceived, for the necessary brain cells, the neurons, already develop in the fourth week. It is well known that babies can sense displeasure or snuggle cosily in their parents' arms after delivery. What greater proof do we need that the conduction system functions perfectly?

The expectant mother now shares her everyday life with her child in every respect; she talks to it and reacts to its needs. Remarks such as: “Let's rest for a while; I think you need to calm down!” are nothing unusual. On the other hand, the mother often misjudges the boundaries of her new body form. She bumps things with her tummy and spills things on her blouse during meals. It becomes increasingly clear to her that she has a big belly, but that her belly belongs entirely to her child. Women often tell me: “The child has taken over possession of my middle. It's beginning to get uncomfortable.” What they mean is: not their circumference, but the child is beginning to cause them discomfort. With its movements it exerts an influence on the mother – she'll sit down, for example, without actually wanting to. For the child's sake she will take up a sleeping position she is totally unaccustomed to. With its signals, its vigorous movements, kicks in the area of the stomach or the kidneys, the child is capable of letting the mother know that her present pose isn't good for it, that the circulation in the placenta is insufficient, or simply that, if she turns over on her other side, it will have more space in her womb.

The unborn child can no longer move like a fish in water; that phase is over. It is continually growing in size and weight. At the beginning of the eighth month (of ten lunar months) it weighs about 1,400 g / 3 lbs., by the beginning of the ninth this number has already increased to 2,100 g / 4 lbs. 10 oz. and by the beginning of the tenth to 3,000 g / 6 lbs. 10 oz. Due to the cramped quarters and its increasing weight and size, the child has greater difficulty turning somersaults. From about the thirty-fourth week of pregnancy on, this type of movement becomes very strenuous for the child and it therefore prefers to content itself with merely turning from one side to the other. At this point in time, nearly (!) all children assume the position which is favourable for childbirth, namely with the head down. The medical term for this is cephalic presentation.

In the final weeks of pregnancy the child is already capable of sucking its thumb inside the womb. It is highly probable that children don't learn this habit but are born with it. It also learns to drink before birth, making sucking movements with its lips very similar to the breathing movements of a fish. The amniotic fluid it swallows often goes down the wrong pipe and the mother feels the child's hiccoughs as a rhythmic knocking

against her abdominal wall. With these sucking and drinking movements, the child is preparing to suckle at its mother's breast.

In these months the mother becomes very tangibly conscious of the fact that a little person is growing there with all its individual characteristics and habits, and already strongly influences its surroundings. The baby is already part of family life; it hears its brothers and sisters talking, singing and shouting. Even the dog's bark is a familiar sound.

## Working Women / Maternity Rights and Benefits

For working women, the reactions of others to her pregnancy play an ever greater role. Colleagues – men and women alike – who have never even given her a nod before now, stop, pat her tummy and greet the child with a cheerful “Good morning! Already up?” Many pregnant women are shocked; others are pleased about this solicitousness. In antenatal classes I point out that perhaps there is still something of a herd instinct, or a protective instinct, in our society.

Unborn children, newborns and toddlers can put the biggest sourpusses into a good mood. Such people open up to the unborn baby with friendliness and love in the knowledge that children can be the most wonderful reason for living and should grow up in a friendly and peaceful environment.

I hope that every pregnant woman is treated with understanding and consideration at her place of work. Any expectant mother who is treated otherwise should inform herself about the laws in effect in her country for the protection of women in her condition. These laws stipulate certain rights, for example concerning breaks for rest. They were enacted in order to provide expectant mothers with social protection. Your health insurance scheme will be able to provide you with the most up-to-date information.

At the beginning of pregnancy, many women think they can work as long as they feel like it, even all the way up until childbirth. They believe: “Pregnancy is not an illness.” That is true, of course, but from about the thirty-second week of pregnancy onward, most pregnant women find themselves longing to go on pregnancy leave.

Every woman has a right to pregnancy leave, which – in Germany – begins six weeks before the estimated due date. At work it becomes more and more difficult for the expectant mother to meet the professional demands placed on her, what with the baby in her womb, her increasing weight and her shortage of breath – an entirely normal “symptom” of late pregnancy. This condition is caused by the fact that the uterus grows all the way up to the costal arch of the ribcage and the maternal lungs have less and less room to breathe. The child fills every centimetre of space it can conquer. And accordingly, it participates everywhere, influencing and restricting its mother in all kinds of situations. The baby plays ping-pong with her bladder, as a consequence of which she is constantly running to the bathroom, interrupting her work to do so, which is bothersome. Due to the fact that the constantly growing child leaves less and less space for her stomach, the mother has to eat smaller and smaller portions all the more frequently, a circumstance not always looked upon kindly by the people she works with. The child inside her succeeds in having the mother distracted by every pram being pushed along by a proud mother outside her office window. A pregnant woman pauses to listen when she hears a small child crying and thinks about how it will be when her own child throws such a temper tantrum in a department store someday. In her thoughts, she sees herself reacting much more sensibly than the mother who was just in her department as a customer and immediately gave in to her child's whims. (In two years, when she's the mother of a hard-headed toddler, she may see things quite differently!)

## Preparation for Childbirth

The expectant mothers who have registered for an antenatal class now find their own situation reflected in the group. They learn that other working pregnant women have the same experiences at their jobs. The women encourage one another to talk to their employers and tell them that certain aspects of their everyday work have become too strenuous. Or they gather the courage to call in sick for a week if the strain becomes too great. In many professions, particularly nursing, pregnant women are simply no longer able to keep up with the physical strains and demands. It is also always nice to see how the atmosphere in the antenatal classes changes from rather reserved at the beginning to cheerful and happy-to-see-one-another-again within a few weeks. Lasting