

In memoriam Stan Maes

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To my “scientific father”, I will always remember the first time Stan used the expression “scientific father”. It took me 5 years (a long PhD) to fully understand and appreciate what it really meant. Stan Maes was my PhD supervisor and mentor in Leiden University, I met him when I was doing my MSc in Health Psychology and he was a visiting professor in Portugal. After a brief chat about my ideas for the MSc research thesis, Stan accepted to supervise it under the condition I would then apply for a PhD in Leiden. From day one he believed in my capabilities to learn, grow and become an internationally recognized health psychologist. As a student in a southern European country where international recognition and research options were (and still are) limited, this was the encouragement and support I needed to put all of my efforts into pursuing a meaningful research and academic career.

Stan was an exceptional mentor, supervisor, teacher and friend. He was genuinely curious about my ideas and he would support them all the way through (also strongly disagreeing and saying no many times!). He supported students and researchers from many different European countries, with all the challenges that brings. I remember him saying “If you come all the way from Portugal to do a PhD, then I know you must be really motivated to do it and have some good resilience skills!”.

I was one of his last PhD students, and I think I still remember most words of his speech during my public defense, it was very emotional, beautiful and incredible encouraging. His words are a source

of energy and a boost of confidence when I need.

Stan shaped my thinking as a researcher, mentor, teacher, and as a health psychologist, reminding me that we are “interventionists” above all, “developing ways to help patients and people live better and healthier lives”. I share and I am proud of this mission! Stan was a proud co-founder of the EHPS. It was his passion talking about the EHPS and his activism that got me involved in the activities of the EHPS, and I now share the same passion for the society mission and people.

This year, I am receiving the EHPS Early Career Researcher Award, now named “Stan Maes” award. I couldn’t be more honored and happier to be one of the first recipients of this award.

Stan was passionate about culture, food, languages, and travelling. During my PhD we not only had long work meetings, but we also had many social and cultural moments, amazing meals talking about many interesting topics that had nothing to do with work (a lot of football conversations!). One was a very special dinner in Cape Town where we were attending a conference. It was me, Stan, Veronique (his wife and my incredible co-supervisor), my partner and Howard and Elaine Leventhal. I was so happy that evening, listening to all of their amazing work and life stories (including how the common-sense model started), accompanied by amazing food and wine.

Last but not least, Stan used to say “You should be where your heart is. Family and friends are the foundations for being motivated to work... be where the sun is”. Stan often reminded me that “work and a job” aren’t everything, and that I should pursue my research and life dreams where

and with whom I would be happier. We, early career researchers know how hard it is to achieve this... but this learning echoes when I need to make professional and life choices. I am writing this piece 21 weeks pregnant, and I now understand how our personal lives (whatever choices we make) can really be foundations for our willingness to use our knowledge and skills to benefit others and help build a better world.

Thank you Stan for being my scientific father, for all your inspirational advice, and for your invaluable contribution to the EHPS and health psychology.

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