

Nurturing Birth Book Review: The AIMS Guide to Your Rights in Pregnancy and Birth

February 1, 2021

Book review by Marius Griffin

The AIMS Guide to Your Rights in Pregnancy and Birth, written for AIMS by Emma Ashworth, is full of valuable, gracefully offered information from the first page to the last. On the first page, in clear and concise language, is the book's fundamental message; that your body is your own. Every page after this supports our understanding of this in the legal, social, and institutional situations that can and do arise around pregnancy and birth. If you only absorb and fully digest this truth, that in every possible way your body is your own, this book is well worth reading.

Fortunately for us, this book has more than one page! In fact, it has just the right number of pages to lay out as complete an explanation and understanding of your rights in pregnancy as needed to support confidence and clarity about your choices.

Written with respect and care, the author draws on a wide range of solid, trustworthy sources as well as her own decades of experience. With a straightforward and honest kindness, she distils for us this vital information, including real-world possibilities, and walks us through examples of how to navigate the challenges and misinformation that can be part of pregnancy. While not a fun or playful read, Emma Ashworth's voice often lifts through the page, warmly reminding us that in body and self we are our own, a message that cannot, in our time, be repeated often enough.

Whether you are pregnant, thinking of becoming pregnant, or work in a realm that touches on pregnancy, birth or human rights, this book is a well laid out and significant resource. Written to be as readable as working information can be, and full of useful online links, this book is well worth your time. From beginning to end every word works to one purpose: Helping us to better understand the value and boundaries of our body/selves and how we should expect that to be respected, supported, and protected by the institutions and individuals around us.

We can only hope for a time when our descendants read this book and shudder at the things we had to make legally explicit, because in the future that they inhabit those things are just daily-lived common decency. For now, we are still, as a species, working it out. Knowing and applying this information in the here and now actually helps to make that better world more possible, one birth at a time. I really cannot give a higher recommendation than that.