AIMS For a better birth...

Book Reviews: Why home birth matters; How to heal a bad birth

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AIMS Journal, 2018, Vol 30, No1

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- How to Heal a Bad Birth: Making sense, making peace and movingreviewed for AIMS by Beth Whitehead

Why Home Birth Matters

1st Edition, 2018, Pinter & Martin
Author: Natalie Meddings
ISBN 978-1780665559
Paperback, 160 pages
Price £5.99



Reviewed by
Shane Ridley, AIMS Trustee

Find this book on Amazon

The next best thing to Natalie Meddings coming to talk to you about staying at home to have your babyis to read her book. It is as though she is sitting beside you, talking you through the options and what will happen – all very matter-of-fact and not at all scary. In this small book, she manages to explain – quite simply – how birthing at home works. To do this, Natalie has gathered together midwives who know about home birth, and the book has plenty of quotes giving useful information from a variety of perspectives.*This book meets the criteria that AIMS has developed for selling and publishing books under the AIMS banner: accessible, short books on topics of key concern to women. It is available to purchase in the AIMS online shop.*

Importantly, Natalie highlights that society in general isn't up-to-date with its thoughts about the safety

of childbirth at home. In the popular imagination, Natalie explains, the 'clinical framing of birth as a linear sequence' has taken the place of thinking about the natural flow of birth, implying that hospital is safer than home, when in fact, research shows how safe and beneficial homebirth is for most women.

Chapter 6 (The Build) is a very poignant reminder that moving into the birthing state is as important as the birth itself. The body is preparing itself for birthing this baby, and the mother needs to feel safe. Natalie encourages us to remember that the last few weeks of pregnancy should be for rest, listening to your body and obeying that nesting instinct. Just as eloquent is the Chapter 7 on the birth itself. Listen to Natalie telling you about the stages of birth – she is a wise woman.

Finally, in the last chapter, there is a wonderful dialogue between a midwife and a mother. If only every midwife and every woman could have this conversation together!

I was so thrilled to read this book. When I finished it, I wanted to be able to give it to every pregnant women I met. So I'm doing the next best thing - I've arranged for AIMS to sell it in our online shop and it has become part of our Book Bundles. Please buy it and pass it to every pregnant woman you know! Whether or not a home birth is for her, there is much support and learning to be had from a quick read of this very accessible book.
Shane Ridley

How to Heal a Bad Birth: Making sense, making peace and moving on

1st Edition, 2016, Birthtalk.org
ISBN 978-0992351601
Paperback, 560 pages
Authors: Melissa Bruijn and Debby Gould
Price £24.95

Reviewed for AIMS by Beth Whitehead

Find this book on Amazon

Even after a straightforward well-supported birth, you can have a mix of emotions. When things didn't go as planned, or care providers were not being supportive, you can come out enmeshed with strong feelings that are not easy to put into words nor explained. And it's not always easy to find people to talk to openly about your birth, without their own emotions, experience and judgments getting in the way.

After my recent medically straightforward but psychologically traumatic birth, my friend recommended this book. It took me months to feel ready to pick it up and to start to confront what had happened. But when I was ready to do so, I found the gentle language very soothing: it was like talking to a sensitive, open minded and understanding friend.

I like the authors' definition of a bad birth, where a woman may feel powerless, confused, fearful, isolated

or abandoned, unacknowledged or unheard, or her innate knowledge about her body and her baby disregarded. It can apply to any mode of delivery. The key is how a woman is treated. Spot on.

Whilst the paperback is fairly chunky, I found the ebook version great to read on the go. The bite size chapters make it an easy book to pick up and find relevant topics. It's a safe way to explore your emotions at your own pace, guided by decades of compassionate expert experience. The ebook version has links between related chapters, so you can jump between them easily. It is great for reading on the go and for marking sections to work on later. The substantial free ebook sample will help you decide if it's for you.

This is the most comprehensive, practical, honest and constructive book I have read on birth trauma. I wished I had started reading it earlier, but it's never too late to take the healing journey and move forward with life, with more understanding and love for ourselves. I would wholeheartedly recommend it to anyone who has had a bad birth, or is supporting someone who has, to make sense of the experience, decide upon a course of action and move on.
Beth Whitehead