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Book Review: The Positive Breastfeeding Book: Everything you need to feed your baby with confidence, by Amy Brown

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AIMS Journal, 2018, Vol 30, No 3

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Published by Pinter and Martin Ltd 2018

ISBN 978-1-78066-460-6

400 pages



Publisher's recommended price: £14.99

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It was an absolute pleasure to read The Positive Breastfeeding Book by Professor Amy Brown. Not only did it deliver on its promise of being 'everything you need to feed your baby with confidence', it was an entertaining and informative read. This publication reflects the aims of the Positive Birth Movement, sharing stories, expertise and positivity. It also nicely complements The Positive Birth Book by Milli Hill, with a similar style and layout.

This book is both highly suitable and very useful for anyone interested in breastfeeding, whether an expectant or new mum, or mums already nursing a toddler or an older child, and their partners and family members too, as well as people involved in the world of breastfeeding support. It is full of information, presented in a very easy-to-read and engaging format.

Amy builds a wonderful rapport with her readers, with her friendly style and excellent sense of humour throughout, and TOTALLY knows her stuff when it comes to breastfeeding. Right from the introduction, you get a good sense of Amy's style:

> *'Pregnancy and having a new baby is a strange time. You'll probably already know that total strangers appear to think you need to hear their deep wisdom on your body and your baby when you've just popped out for a loaf of bread. This won't stop anytime soon, but you can work on*

> *perfecting a Paddington Bear Hard Stare.*
>
> *Breastfeeding is one of those things that people love to give odd advice about, from the inaccurate to the downright bizarre. From how often you should feed your baby, to what's in your milk, to where your baby should sleep. Lots of people seem to have a strange distrust of breastfeeding, possibly because on one level it does all seem a bit like magic – you attach a baby to your nipple and over time they grow bigger and bigger. But the human race has survived this way for millennia. Why wouldn't it be possible? Why wouldn't you be able to? Many, many women have gone before you, breastfeeding in the most diverse circumstances. And you can follow them'*

Amy tackles a wide range of questions and scenarios, and does a great job of countering multiple popular myths about breastfeeding (and babies more generally). She educates and informs not only about breastfeeding, but touches on associated topics such as co-sleeping, babywearing, the fourth trimester and 'normal baby behaviour' too. Whilst clearly passionate about breastfeeding, Amy does a brilliant job of communicating a non-judgemental attitude and seeking to help others reach their own personal breastfeeding goals, whatever they may be. This book, and indeed the language used by Amy, is all about educating and empowering her readers.

Included throughout the book are lively and informative contributions from a wide variety of individuals, including midwives, doulas, breastfeeding counsellors, IBCLCs (International Board Certified Lactation Consultants), paediatricians and more, most (if not all) of whom have first-hand breastfeeding experience. I particularly liked, too, the final chapter which is full of words of encouragement from breastfeeding mums. In bringing in these additional voices, Amy presents succinct information from multiple other experts and their respective fields. Their contributions add to the reader's knowledge, and also – I feel – endorse the book overall. The quotes from breastfeeding mums are wonderful – in bringing a smile to your face, in 'normalising' what the reader may be feeling or experiencing, and adding to the sense of empowerment.

The book is very up to date, with good references to social media issues and LGBTQ+ considerations for example. It also usefully contains a wealth of trustworthy resources and suggestions for further reading. Signposting the reader to reliable information sources is so helpful, to help save us all from the perils of internet search engines that bring up all manner of mis-information. Not only are further information sources mentioned at appropriate junctures throughout the book, there is also a handy section at the back with this information organised by topic. There is also a useful page right at the front of the book setting out contacts for breastfeeding support and information: this is a perfect location for bleary-eyed mums who may be struggling. I would encourage anyone to reach out to these sources of support without hesitation – sometimes a friendly voice and some reassurance can make a world of difference – so I was delighted to see them in such a prominent position in this new book.

Breastfeeding can be tricky – in fact, really challenging at times for some mums – and this book acknowledges this. I am confident that the combination of factual information plus the positivity that exudes from Amy – and other contributors to this book – will help many a mum and her baby on their

breastfeeding journey, well into toddlerhood and the pre-school years for some. Just as it says on the banner on the cover: 'You can do it!'

I will absolutely be gifting copies of this publication to some of my mummy and mum-to-be friends and recommending it to others also. It is a lively, fresh and easy-to-read text and ideal for the current generation. My perception is that this book may have a broader appeal than some other popular breastfeeding publications, and I would have no hesitation in widely recommending it. A heartfelt thank-you, Amy, for writing such a marvellous book.

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