

Description

Book Review: Birthing by Davina McCall with Midwife Marley Henry



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Birthing is a generous and deeply woman-centred celebration of pregnancy and birth. The tone is set from the opening dedication to Pam Wilde, the midwife who cared for Davina through all three of her births. It is a tender acknowledgement that honours the continuity and impact of midwifery support. The book is clearly laid out and thoughtfully structured. It reads like a pregnancy journey, unfolding stage by stage with information, reassurance and grounding. It strikes a strong balance between being informative and accessible, supporting readers without overwhelming them.

Davina writes with honesty, humour and a refreshing sense of instinctive power. Her descriptions of birth as primal and liberating champion the right for women to feel strong, capable and in control of their bodies. Choice and autonomy run throughout, making this a rallying cry for women’s voices in maternity care, while still offering reassurance to anyone navigating pregnancy.

A standout moment is the inclusion of Harry Baker's poem Trying. Tender and deeply moving, it honours the emotional complexity of the path to parenthood and acknowledges longing, vulnerability and hope alongside joy and strength.

Expert contributions from psychology to nutrition enrich the content, and the inclusion of Five X More and signposting to Maternity and Neonatal Voice Partnerships demonstrates a welcome commitment to equity, representation and co-production. While the book centres women and midwifery voices, an obstetric perspective grounded in physiological birth could have offered added balance, reflecting colleagues who support natural processes and intervene only when necessary.

There are moments where current National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) guidance could be reflected more closely, such as booking by 9+6, but this sits quietly in the background of a book whose purpose is empowerment and reassurance. Ultimately, Birthing provides an uplifting, informative roadmap to pregnancy and birth, leaving readers feeling seen, supported and ready to advocate for the experience they deserve. **TPM**

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