

Description

Book Review: Flourish – A Practical and Emotional Guidebook to Thriving in Midwifery by Kate Greenstock

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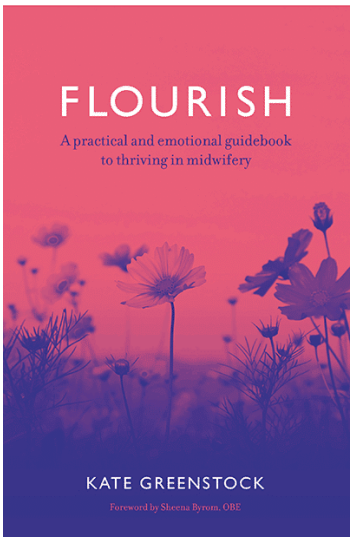

Flourish is a truly provocative and inspiring read. At first look, the overwhelm and helplessness experienced by talented midwives working in the current climate of the NHS could be likened to a woman whose vitals are spiralling into DIC. Part one of Flourish invites us into the world of, let's be honest, heart-breaking lived experience of many midwives as they manage (battle), the oxygen-starved air at the peaks of the 'mega mountains' of trauma exposure, compassion fatigue and moral injury.

There are so many aspects I can personally relate to – especially the silent grief when our version of ‘with woman’ is disrupted by systemic and institutional needs of the ‘service’. As I read there is almost a release as this silent grief is acknowledged and exposed. Kate shines a bright light on the emotional landscape of midwifery, but the reader is able to pause for moments of reflection and hope. The text is interspersed with ‘what if?’ moments to help re-envision ‘the way we work’.

Part two offers midwives a chance to unpack personal values, motivations, strengths, sense of self and voice, asking ‘who am I, really, in all of this?’. It then offers a toolkit (more a lifeline actually) of playful and challenging exercises to move the body, the breath and the mind, to help us sustain ourselves. Whether you remain in clinical practice, have moved into other areas or have taken the heavy decision to leave the profession, Flourish challenges narratives of individual resilience and encourages us to agitate together for change in difficult times. As a guidebook overall, and a toolkit in part two, Flourish is a marvellous and insightful piece of work, that enables us to pick up the broken pieces and reimagine the journey to that place where we once entered midwifery and first fell in love. **TPM**

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