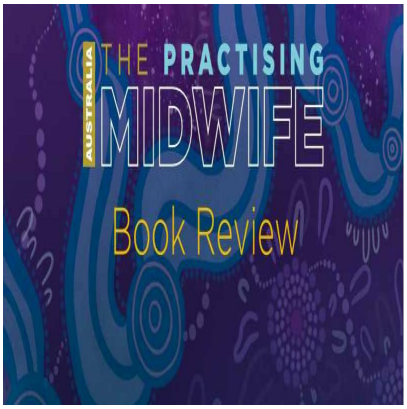


Description

Book Review: Mobile Midwives Transforming Birth Options A Memoir by Marge Foley

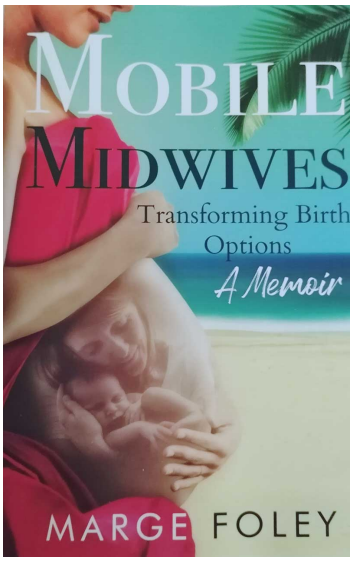
Review by: Shelley Macmillan – Midwife and lecturer

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As an avid audiobook listener on my two-hour commute, I was looking forward to actually reading this memoir during a week of leave. Mobile Midwives proved a perfect companion and I took a journey through inspiring stories that depicted a long career focused on the needs of women and their families. The author, Marge Foley, describes her personal and professional career, promoting change in an outdated maternity system, which she found to be based on little evidence and embedded in a patriarchal medicalised model of care. Foley strives for respect as a clinician and birthing woman during her own pregnancies and births.

Growing up on a working sheep farm in rural Tasmania, Foley was encouraged into nursing by her mother, who had

wanted to train as a nurse herself. Juggling the competing demands of family and career, she later trained as a midwife. The story reflects many challenges and triumphs, detailing relationships and birth stories shared along the way. Memories and experiences are recounted in such detail that the positive impact is clear for both Foley and the families with whom she collaborated.

Later in her career, Foley and her collaboration with the Mobile Midwives were at the forefront of a movement for change in Northern Territory maternity care, advancing attitudes and creating more options for women. Mobile Midwives reminded me of another beautiful group of midwives, The Yorkshire Storks. The Storks cared for me during my second pregnancy and birth in the UK, working tirelessly to give women choice, a voice and control of their births.

This memoir left me feeling inspired and nostalgic despite my nursing and midwifery training being separated by 40 years from that of Foley. Frustration around the politics of birth continues, along with ongoing evidence of physical and emotional damage to women and families. There is much work still to do and reading this book has revived my enthusiasm to continue to promote.

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1. Australia - TPMA
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1. 2023
2. midwifery
3. reflection

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