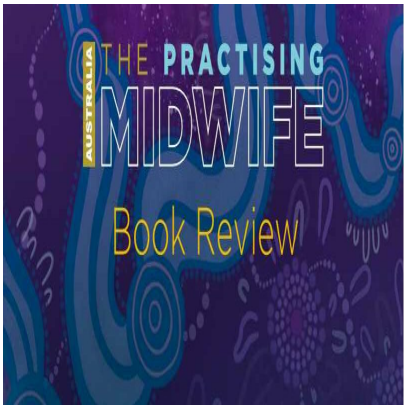


Description

Book Review: Scars of Gold By Sharon Stoliar

Review by: Melanie Howells – Childbirth Educator and Birth Support Professional

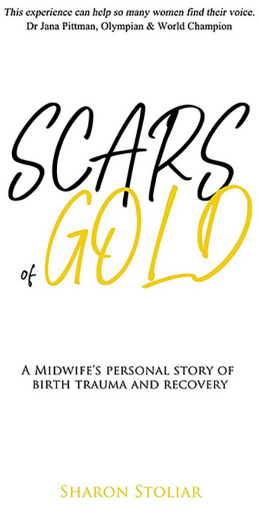
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Scars of Gold is Sharon Stoliar's heart-wrenching birth story, documenting a life-changing diagnosis and transition to motherhood filled with immeasurable pain and grief, and her transformation from birth trauma victim to an activist for change.

Stories like Sharon's should be a rarity, yet the research reflects a difficult truth. In Australia, approximately one third of women describe their birth experience as traumatic.

Sharon's postpartum recovery was marred by negligence. Repeated concerns about her excruciating pain went ignored, despite staff knowing that she herself was a skilled and knowledgeable clinician. These dismissals resulted in a delayed diagnosis of acute compartment syndrome.

The author shares her traumatic transition into motherhood and details her arduous journey to resolution. Her determination and resilience speaks to the challenges women face when speaking up. If someone with 'inside knowledge' of the system encounters so many barriers, how difficult is it for others to have their voices heard? How many give up without finding their peace? The book concludes with a powerful open letter to maternity care providers, and gives recommendations for change.

This is a must-read for anyone working within the birth space. It is a frank account of our flawed, fragmented system. It will open your eyes to the hidden facet of birth trauma – the human behind the 'clinical case' who lives with this every day.

When women are not listened to, the cost is severe. That cost is birth trauma. Trauma is all-consuming, encompassing every aspect of people's lives. Sharon's traumatic birth experience became her identity.

We need to give women's voices more power to drive change. We need to do the inner work and reflect on our own practice. We need to challenge toxic workplace culture. Birth trauma is a silent public health emergency. We owe it to every birthing woman to do better. **TPM**

All4Maternity members can read Sharon Stoliar's article "Sharing my Scars to Advocate for Change" from the May issue of The Practising Midwife Australia – here

Category

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1. 2023
2. birth experience
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