

Description

Freebirth Stories by Mavis Kirkham and Nadine Edwards

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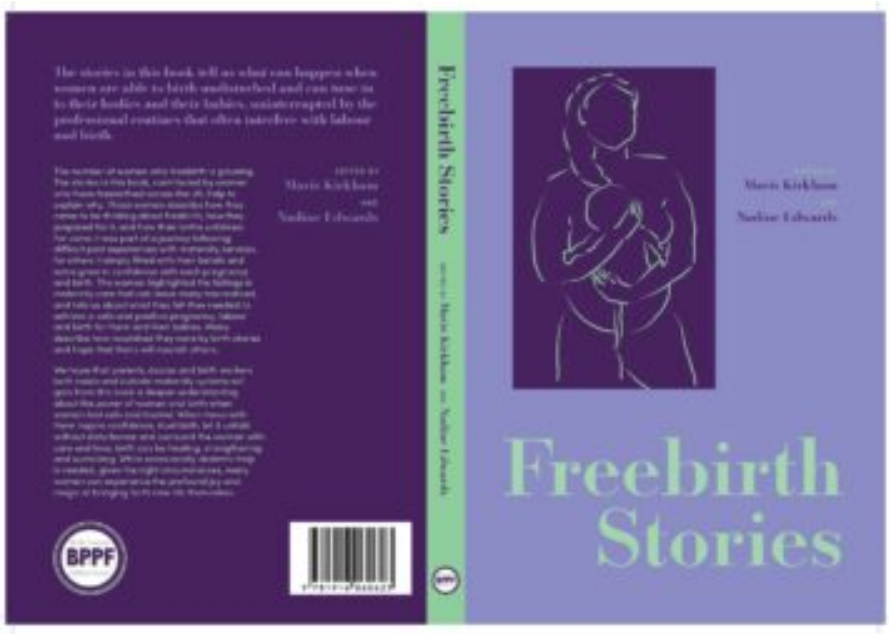

Review by Dr Alys Einion FRCM

Despite all the wonderful work done by midwives, doulas and birthworkers in reminding women and professionals that birth is a natural and social event, this book is so needed. It demystifies and de-sensationalises freebirth, exploring it as an empowered choice, moving away from the mainstream risk and doom-laden language but also recognising the

challenges of the current medicalised system of birthing in the UK and elsewhere. To choose to trust one's reproducing body, one's self, should not be an act of resistance, a radical act, and yet it somehow is an act of self-assertion and defiance of systems of obstetrics and midwifery that do not well serve women, birthing people and their families.

What is so distinctive about this measured, thoughtful and well-grounded book is the accounts that evidence the human nature of the birthing experience, the part of birthing that is too often missed from professional discourses, guidelines and protocols, or else is sensationalised in the media. It is also professionally very well balanced and honest. Interspersing the discussion of the legal and professional parameters of birthing without medical attendance, and the autonomy of the birthing mother, with so many accounts of different types of birth experience, written by those involved, humanises the sharing of experiential knowledge and equalises the value of maternal and parental wisdom with that of midwives and professionals. It also showcases and underlines the real value of doulas within the birthing experience and similarly, provides evidence of the impact and wisdom of these birthworkers as a core part of a humanised, humane and empowered birthing. More books are needed that include and celebrate such knowledge.

This book made me reflect again and again on my life and work as a midwife, and all that needs to be done to create spaces where women feel safe and trusted.

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