

Description

The Fearless Birth Book by Emma Armstrong a.k.a The Naked Doula

Review by: Karen Henry – Lecturer in Midwifery, University of Suffolk

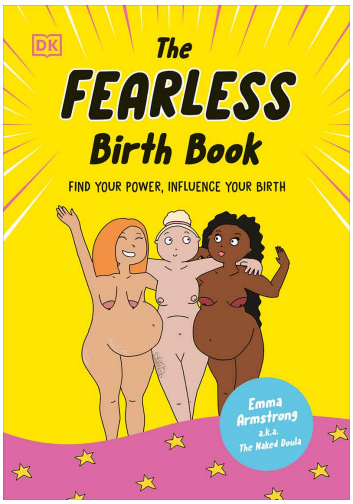
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The Fearless Birth Book is written by Emma Armstrong who is also known on social media as The Naked Doula. The book is directed towards women with the aim of demystifying pregnancy, labour, birth and the postnatal period. The book is colourful with beautiful pictures on every page and small amounts of text which makes it easy to pick up and read.

The book starts with a little of Emma's story and how she developed body dysmorphia as a child. This is an honest addition to the book as it somehow takes the book away from being an idolised view of life which, for many, would be

comforting. By telling her story and revealing vulnerability, Emma is demonstrating how the strategies presented worked for her. I wasn't too sure that emotional trauma and childhood experiences could be addressed in a couple of pages without going into depth, however body confidence and the examples brought it together nicely. The real-life examples were great for birth preparation during pregnancy.

The book is divided into four main sections: Brain, Body, Birth, Baby and Beyond. I liked the brain-body connection explanation – it was clear and easy to understand. When I started to read, I was dubious as to how anatomy and physiology could be simplified without losing the important information but this was executed well with easily understandable content. Each section ended with a summary to provide useful prompts to look back on when needed. The final section Baby and Beyond contains an honest rendition of life after birth which contains information women don't always share. I felt this chapter was a good ending to the book and would support women throughout the entire perinatal period, not simply birth as the title suggests.

At times, it was hard to read the book without my midwifery lens because some advice was in opposition to some acclaimed midwifery writers. This said, I feel the book would be useful to any student or midwife as it contains a vast amount of information to promote physiology in the birth room, with some novel ideas included! **TPM**

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