

Description

This wonderful blog post was written as a post on Facebook by Meg Hitchick, who is a talented midwife in Australia. We asked Meg if we could add her words here, as we feel it needs sharing further…..



Photo: Daily Express

So the #RoyalBaby has ventured out, and of course the talk has inevitably turned to Duchess Kate and her glossy good looks in the mere hours after giving birth (because yeah, even after such a profoundly valuable feat such as bringing a baby to life, the humans of Planet Earth still have to decide the worth of a woman in much the same way we would for a particularly competitive show pony. For the moment, I'll play along.) She looks freakin' amazing. Of course she does. On cue: let the funny/painful comparisons with new mums everywhere begin.

Here's the thing, though: not all journeys through birth are created equal. We might not agree on the price, but we can all acknowledge that Kate pays a certain currency for the privilege of being Kate: wobbling out of the Lindo Wing carrying a small VIP – and the weight of the expectation of the western world – on those tiny heels. But what if every woman had the same starting gate as she has? How many more of us would step out into the world of motherhood seeming glorious?

I'm going to make some educated guesses about How Kate Looks So Great. With underlying good health and access to timely, effective, evidence based wellness advice before pregnancy, she got a good jump from the gates. I bet nobody had to have awkward conversations with the duchess about how her severe gingivitis posed a miscarriage risk, or how

smoking those cigarettes might keep her sane while she deals with a chronic health problem, but could compromise His/Her Highnesses oxygen supply in the womb. Nobody mentioned it specifically but I'm guessing Kate didn't get a whole lot of shade for taking time off work to cope with severe hyperemesis, and I'm almost certain that she never had to crawl to a previously unknown health professional to mount her case for a script for expensive medications to get through it (I don't doubt that her appearance on the steps was bolstered by the relieved glow of a woman who has finally kept her breakfast down after months of hormone related spewing). Kate – rightly – has been treated throughout pregnancy as a woman of great importance, whose wishes and preferences are to be explicitly considered and upheld in all decisions. Again, I speculate, but it seems likely that Kate was not spoken to rudely while in labour or told that she could not eat/drink/move/make noise, that she had an existing relationship of trust with her caregivers, and that she was supported by a partner of her choice, that her birth was attended by qualified midwives with a supportive obstetrician and that she had access to evidence-based advice. I assume her care was not subverted by hospital staffing concerns, funding issues, the politics of fear or a belief in the inferiority of females. I would bet a substantial sum that her human rights were never abused. She's ahead of most of the pack by miles, at this point. The rest is cultural conditioning, and good grooming by talented handlers. The result? A brief vision something akin to the Madonna (but I bet she was bloody quick to slip the heels off and adjust her maternity knickers once safely inside the Range Rover. Just sayin').

I have the immense privilege to witness women in the raw moments and hours after giving birth, and here's what I see: I see incredible beauty that no camera could ever capture, and no make up artist or photo retoucher could ever recreate. Sometimes, I'll be attending to the myriad little tasks of caring for a woman post birth and quietly thinking to myself, this woman is a priestess of everything holy in this world – love and sacrifice, valour and compassion. Typically, she doesn't see it – she's too busy trying to dig herself out from under the ruins of the old temple. Oh god, look at my belly, I have raccoon eyes, how did my boobs end up under my arms, I'm leaking, offensive, swollen… But hear me new mum, you too have something of the Kate shine. Your beauty is in the eye of this beholder, so don't be fooled by a nice blow dry. And if we need to bash on about something in the media, then let's have a good conversation about what we need to do to allow all women to give birth like queens. #humanrightsinchildbirth

Category

1. News & Views

Tags

1. childbirth
2. motherhood
3. Royal Birth

Date Created
26th April 2018