

Description

By Hollie Johnstone



My name is Hollie, I'm 23, and I'm about to qualify as a midwife! After four years of hard work, sacrifices and perseverance, I've now done my last ever shift as a student. How exciting and terrifying is that…..

Midwifery wasn't a clear cut path for me despite the fact I had thought about it since school and chosen my A-levels so that I would have the requirements for midwifery. You see… I HATED college! I hated college with a passion and this, coupled with a huge lack of self confidence, meant that I dropped out after my AS levels giving up any sort of hope of becoming a midwife. In my mind, surely someone like me wasn't meant to go to university anyway? I decided that I was better off going to do an apprenticeship as 'at least I'll be earning money and getting a qualification' and so I became a hairdresser because I was a creative and artistic type and I thought I would enjoy it *(hint: I didn't!).*

I worked as a hairdresser for a few years and although I'd been told I was very good at it, it was just a job to me. It gave me some of the creative outlet I needed but that was it. I remember clients asking me what I would do if I wasn't a hairdresser, and instantly I would reply 'Oh I would be a midwife!' After answering this same question for the tenth time, I decided to get my butt in gear and actually do something about it. Oh, and by do something about it I mean that a big lack of self confidence cause me to muse over it for months before, finally, a conversation with my sister-in-law (who is a nurse) resulted in me searching the internet for ways to follow my dream.



The answer was an access course, two days a week at the local college, which allowed me to work around it (this time at Greggs, as the salon I worked at didn't support my new career path… I have no idea why?!). So I did it, gaining a rekindled love for studying in the process and at the end of the year, I was fortunate enough to have landed myself a place at Kingston & St George's.

I adored placement. I loved being there to support birthing people in all parts of their journey into parenthood and I really thrived within the hospital and community where I could provide care concurrent with the true meaning of midwifery. However, I struggled a lot in the first and second year with some aspects of the degree. A combination of homesickness, crippling self doubt/lack of any sort of confidence and then bullying from a mentor in second year caused me to nearly quit the course… TWICE! Nevertheless, after some tough love from my Mum (who I am now ever indebted to! Love you mum!) and some incredible support from my fiancé, new found friends at uni and the midwives at the Trust I was training at, I began to really enjoy the whole journey I was on.

Now, did I mention that I am a ‘creative type’? I make placenta key rings and I paint birthing women and I write poetry.



By Hollie Johnstone

So, in my first year, when a woman I knew (I didn’t care for her during her journey) experienced horrific obstetric violence leaving her with PTSD and depression, I was prompted to go home and write a poem about her experience. I don’t know why, it just seemed that at that moment in time… I needed to reflect on what she had told me and the only way I could do that was to write a poem. (It may have had something to do with one of our lecturers showing us Hollie McNish’s ‘Embarrassed’, and then me going on to discover Kati Edward’s amazing work. Total legends). From this, I wrote multiple poems when I experienced positive or negative aspects of midwifery, it became my way to reflect on practice, and an enjoyable creative outlet for me. Once I started writing the spoken word poetry, I became more confident and had less self doubt, and was truly able to enjoy my training as I was no longer too scared to speak out about things or celebrate openly when things went well! I struggled to reflect traditionally on paper… so I put it into

poetry instead!

Towards the end of my second year and into third year is where I truly began to feel like midwifery was a gift that I could share with others. So, in February 2018 when I had the opportunity to share my poetry at a conference to raise awareness of obstetric violence, I did! (Of course old habits die hard and I initially said no because I was too scared to speak for myself in front of hundreds of people… an old mentor changed my mind!). I was so overwhelmed with the reaction and the incredible support I had received I wrote a poem to say thank you. Specifically, to the midwives to stopped me from quitting in my second year, but openly to every midwife who has guided me along my journey to being nearly qualified.

I shared my poem, “Mentor…” at my maternity services celebrations for International Day of the Midwife, and have gone on to share it with prospective students at open days for my university and online with the midwifery community. It gives a real account of midwifery and conveys an important message… to ask for help and to say thank you. Discover the people who can help you when it’s needed and then celebrate with you when you succeed. For me… these people were mentors, but for others it may be your link lecturers, CPF, friends, colleagues or online community. Anything is possible when you access the support you need, and teamwork makes the dream work… literally!

#Inittogether

Hollie has secured a post as a midwife, her dream job, at Epsom and St Helier Hospitals NHS Trust

Twitter @HJstone94

Category

1. Student Midwife Blog

Tags

1. birth trauma
2. mentorship
3. spoken word

Date Created
6th September 2018