

can then focus their attention on other matters, but for children who currently are growing up with limited adult connections on which to rely for nurturing and guidance. The authors also discuss mothers as social activists.

Most important, *Mothers and Children* gives voice to mothers. Jeannine O. Howitz, for example, who considers herself a feminist mother, provides the reader with a compelling message: mothers' work is work. Through her narrative, we glimpse the struggles of a mother who is trying to make sense of (and survive) the social constructions of motherhood that contradict her views and experience. This book is inspiring and educational at a deep level.

The New Midwifery: Science and Sensitivity in Practice

Page, Lesley Ann, ed.
Edinburgh: Churchill Livingstone, 2000.

Reviewed by Christine Brook

This outstanding book builds on Lesley Page's previous contributions in the fields of continuity of care, evidence based practice, and the humanization of maternity services. Written for midwives and midwifery students, the book addresses issues which will enable midwives to develop woman-centred practice and to practice with increased autonomy, in keeping with changes to maternity services being demanded by childbearing women in many parts of the industrialized world.

The book contains three sections: effective and appropriate care; transition to parenting; and adaptation and growth in pregnancy, birth and early life. The first section covers evidence based practice in the context of sensitive midwifery practice. The marrying of the humanization of midwifery practice with the scientific evidence for practice creates a wonderful juncture of the art and science of midwifery practice, contextualizing the professional need for scientific reasoning within the context of humanistic care. The second section focuses on the transition to parenting, in particular the social and emotional experiences of childbearing women and their families, and midwifery practices that can support and promote healthy adaptation. The third section focuses on the physiology of childbearing and midwifery practices to support early parenting.

Throughout the book the primacy of the relationship between childbearing women and their midwives is recognized. This relationship can contribute towards enabling women to meet their needs and have a satisfactory, indeed life enhancing experience of childbearing and maternity care. A good relationship is not sufficient on its own, however, and the professional responsibility of midwives to maintain their scientific knowledge base is emphasized at all times.

It is also recognized that midwives require knowledge related to the social, cultural, psychological, and emotional experiences of childbearing women and their families, in addition to knowledge of the physical sciences and midwifery practice.

It is refreshing to see the physical aspects of childbearing presented at the end rather than the beginning of the book. The book commences with an emphasis on the woman-midwife relationship and midwifery practice. The contribution of political and organizational factors in affecting or mitigating against changes in maternity services is also discussed.

All chapters are written concisely and present up-to-date knowledge, usually accompanied by an historical overview and suggestions for practice. The chapters written by midwives often include anecdotes from practice, which validate both midwifery practice and childbearing women's experiences, reinforce the usefulness of combining anecdotal evidence with scientifically validated research, and make for delightful reading.

This book would make a worthwhile contribution to the library of any midwife or midwifery student.

***Baby Catcher:
Chronicles of a Modern Midwife.***

Vincent, Peggy.
New York: Scribner, 2002.

Reviewed by Michelle Moravec

With her background in obstetrical nursing, natural childbirth education, and birth centre administration, Peggy Vincent's decision to become a licensed midwife with a specialization in home births seems almost expected; however, as *Baby Catcher: Chronicles of a Modern Midwife* aptly illustrates, Vincent's experiences as a midwife were anything but the expected.

As a young nursing student at Duke University, Vincent became disillusioned with traditional obstetric practices that gave labouring women no control over their experience of childbirth. The occasional pregnant women who "thrived on the challenge and the passion" of birth and refused to submit to the drugs and procedures considered necessary by the medical establishment showed Vincent that women could make their own decisions about what was best for their delivery.

Inspired by the sweeping changes wrought by the various social movements of the 1960s, Vincent set out to transform women's experiences of childbirth. In Berkeley, California in the early 1970s, Vincent began working as a labour and delivery nurse just as the Lamaze movement gained popularity. However, her own labour and delivery convinced her that a formulaic approach to natural childbirth did not empower women anymore than the stuffy practices