



# Diary of a Midwife: The Power of Positive Childbearing

*Juliana van Olphen-Fehr*

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Despite our country's affluence and high-tech advances in neonatal intensive care, in 1994 the U.S. ranked twenty-first in infant mortality rates among developed countries with populations over 2.5 million. Women with low-risk pregnancies are frequently failed by the traditional obstetrical system, either because they cannot afford proper prenatal care—and therefore often give birth to babies who need to be assisted by expensive neonatal intensive care—or because the system fosters an attitude of dependency on doctors, surgery and drugs, rather than a sense of empowerment during the birth process. This enlightening book demonstrates with conviction that childbirth can and should be a process of empowerment, and that midwifery should be the standard of care for women with low-risk pregnancies.

*Diary of a Midwife*, written by a certified nurse-midwife and the founder of the first nurse-midwifery graduate education program in Virginia, is based on the author's 13 years delivering babies in rural Virginia. Through the author's experiences as a midwife, mother of three, and veteran of training as a labor and delivery nurse in a busy hospital's maternity ward, the midwife care alternative is revealed to be the best way for healthy women to be collaborators in their own care. Midwives encourage women to develop their inner power for the birth process by providing teaching, support, and comfort. Adequate prenatal care reduces the number of premature and low-birth weight babies, and costly, traumatic medical interventions such as Cesarean and forceps deliveries, episiotomies and routine anesthesia are often avoided. Author Juliana van Olphen-Fehr movingly shows that midwifery is an art and that it can do much to create mothers who are able to greet their newborns with dignified, loving, and strong arms. \_

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