

Learning at the Midwifery Today Conference

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Walking up to the church, I was not sure what to expect. I was excited to attend my first conference, but I was also nervous—I was attending a midwifery conference, but I had just turned 20, had no children, and was studying public health. I had also recently started my internship with the film *GIVE LIGHT: Stories From Indigenous Midwives*, which highlights midwifery around the world and explains how it could be used to address many of the poor birthing outcomes associated with the medical model of birthing. So, while I had some knowledge about birth and midwifery, I knew that everyone else at the conference would have a lot more experience and

knowledge about the subjects than I did. However, the moment I got to the Midwifery Today conference, I was welcomed with warmth.

The conference was much smaller and more intimate than I was expecting, but looking back, I do really appreciate it. It gave me the chance to learn more about the others at the conference and the wisdom that each of them had. It was certainly still overwhelming, from trying to learn everyone's names and backgrounds at the beginning of the conference to trying to absorb all of the knowledge being shared at each of the sessions. I already had a sense of the importance of midwifery going into the conference, but hearing about it firsthand and in such depth at the conference hit it home for me. It was inspiring to witness the passion that the conference attendees had for midwifery and the wellbeing of pregnant people and their babies. Just a few of the topics I learned about while at the conference include different techniques midwives use to ensure the pregnant person and their baby are healthy, the struggles that midwives deal with on a regular basis just to provide high-quality care to their clients, and the differences between the medical and midwifery models of care. Perhaps most importantly, I also learned about the global need for midwifery and the concept of choice in birthing: the ability to choose where, when, and how a pregnant person gives birth. I can only imagine how much more I would have learned if the conference had lasted even a day longer.

One of the many things I was introduced to at the conference was the Birth Revolution—birthing changing for the good of birthing people and their babies. I believe that, by amplifying the voices and work of some of the dedicated, inspiring midwives and doulas around the world, Give Light will help raise awareness of this revolution. Because the general public's knowledge of the true power of midwifery is often so limited, I hope that Give Light will be able to introduce, in an accessible manner, why midwifery is so important to every community, whether that be on a local level or a global one, and that more birthing people and their families will soon have both the choice and the resources to have happy and healthy births. My ultimate hope is that *Give Light* will be able to inspire others in the same way it, along with the Midwifery Today conference, has inspired me.

To learn more about the film, partner with us, or schedule a virtual screening, please visit givelight.info.