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Sisters On A Journey: 10 Best Ways To Ensure The Midwifery Profession Continues To Struggle

By Yvonne Lapp Cryns

Sisters on a Journey: 10 Best Ways to ensure the midwifery profession continues to struggle or
How to Self-Destruct While Providing Entertainment for the Medical Community

1) Do not make students feel welcome - Being a student midwife is particularly difficult in states that do not embrace out of hospital birth. Ensure that the dinky group of practicing midwives remains miniscule and ineffective by alienating as many new recruits as possible. Whenever students are present at educational meetings, discount whatever comments they may add to the conversation, after all, they are merely midwives-to-be and couldn't possibly know more about a topic than you. And if a student expresses an opinion different than yours - she's wrong.

2) Allow clients to not pay you - turns your business into an expensive hobby and ensures that future clients are treated in a discriminatory manner if they pay you.

3) Criticize and belittle - whenever possible, particularly with a public audience, discuss how another midwife handles renatal care, labors, births, postpartum care wrong - meaning - she does it differently than you do it. Consumers who are privy to a number of these shred fests, come to believe no midwife knows how to do anything properly. Point Fingers & Wag Tongues - Each time some poor midwife ends up with her name plastered in the media, tell the media "this" would not occur if only there were licensing. Never mind that consumers don't "get it" because they know bad things happen with licensed professionals and everybody knows someone whose physician or nurse made an error.

4) Create exclusive organizations - Ah, what better way to snip the growth of midwifery in the bud than to slam the doors of membership shut on those who are not your clones. Of course, it's ok to reverre foreign midwives, particularly those from 3rd world countries because they have preserved customs.

5) Permanently entrench a select few in national and state professional organizations - A puppet board is the best way to be sure that no change will occur. Keeping control to only those sharing a narrow view keeps the midwifery "race" pure and myopic.

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6) Adopt ever more invasive technology as the standard of care - Midwifery is heavy duty science and must incorporate all the latest devices and lab tests in order to provide the best care for women. Or does it? Are all those tests producing healthier moms, babies? Whose best interests are really considered — yours or mom's?

7) Talk out of both sides of your mouth - Be a passionate supporter of the rights of competent adult women to make their own childbirth choices but deny those women a lawful opportunity to experience those choices by encouraging licensure that criminalizes those midwives who provide the particular care those uppity pregnant women want.

8) Join a gossipy discussion group - talk a lot, do nothing productive -This little enterprise is about as productive as those advertised "stuff envelopes from home" and make a ton of money jobs. It's a great time-waster and generally produces nothing of value. Permits a handful of those with lots of time and hot air to spew their view of the world. If only those who log on would donate a nickel each time,

midwifery causes would be well-funded.

9) Do not support a midwife fighting the State - At all costs, make the midwife caught in the cross-hairs of the state stand alone, lest her bad luck may rub off on you. Never mind that any midwife could be in her shoes because of faulty logic and greedy aspirations of political State's or District Attorneys. Proclaim her a heretic who deserves what she is getting, just because.

Discourage others from providing emotional, financial and physical support by announcing her conduct to be unorthodox, peculiar or without any standards. Engage in gossip speculating on the unknown details and embellishing on those released by the prosecution to the media. Under no circumstances open your wallet for a midwife in need, especially if she needs money to defend her practice from the state. Rationalize that you can't be sure she did everything "right", whine about how poor you are, how broke because ... but then fly to a conference, stay in a hotel, hold hands in a circle of midwives and sing about the sisterhood. Buy stuff.

10) Be a Judas midwife: Agree to be a witness against a midwife - There's no surer way to destroy midwifery than to hold yourself up as the savior of women and proper midwifery because your way is the only way and the best way. Ignore the fact that unexpected bad outcomes occur without any fault. You can be especially effective if you lack any experience dealing with the specific problem. For example, if it is a breech birth or shoulder dystocia under scrutiny and you have no experience as a primary midwife attending a breech or shoulder dystocia, you can criticize away because your record is pristine.

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Home Birth Is A No-Brainer

By Yvonne Lapp Cryns

Home birth with a midwife is a no-brainer — government statistics since statistical compilation began a century ago show the superiority of non-medical midwife-attended home birth. Yet, a government license does not ensure competence or safety - licensure is about limiting and controlling who can give health care information. For example, the hypocrisy of this licensure myth is obvious in the choice of "expert witness" chosen by the Lake County Illinois State's Attorney for a recent home birth midwife case. *Tabora v. Gottlieb Mem. Hosp.*, No. 92 C 8179, 1996 WL 563709 (N.D. Ill.) (explaining that a woman died from a hemorrhage following a cesarean section because her obstetrician refused to acknowledge her desperate condition due to his prejudice against the Asian anesthesiologist). The "expert" continued as an instructor for medical students and his Illinois license is pristine. State licensure encourages a false sense of security and denies the public necessary information about the true qualifications of practitioners.

ACOG's (American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists) Wisconsin position paper and urgings claiming home birth to be unsafe, are more fodder for a gullible public led to believe only non-physicians are quacks and charlatans. When the Florida legislature was considering a non-nurse midwifery licensure bill, the state medical society claimed midwives were unsafe. However, when pressed to bring forth its proof, nothing was produced. Sadly, Certified Nurse-Midwifery organizations, themselves marginalized by their medical brothers, promote themselves as superior to non-nurse midwives in order to keep the midwifery turf for themselves.

The brains of pregnant women continue to function throughout their pregnancy, even during labor. Instead of legislators paternalistically "protecting" competent adult women from health care choices, states could ensure all women access to the full spectrum of childbearing alternatives and demand unbiased medical back-up for the women's decisions. Full disclosure of alternatives ensures that an individual's childbirth choices are wisely made. Legislator's efforts to diminish our nation's sorry birth statistics - we are chronically among the worst of industrialized nations - would be better directed at increasing opportunities for educating the public about the benefits of good nutrition, judicious use of technology, and providing access to a wide variety of child birth attendants.

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