

Reflection

From student to eligible midwife - a reflective journey

Katherine Green



I started my Bachelor of Midwifery at Griffith University in 2010, the first year that the program was offered. I had completed half of another degree before then, but decided it wasn't for me, so I headed overseas in search of an answer and embraced the idea of becoming

a midwife. During my first year, I learnt that being a midwife wasn't just about delivering babies like in the movies, but so much more. My very passionate lecturers mentored me, inspired me, and instilled a passion that has enabled me to strive to achieve and learn. One of the best things I learned was to provide holistic, woman-centred care to the women and their families that I am lucky enough to work with.

I remember the first birth I ever saw during my first year at University, which was also my first experience of providing continuity of care to a woman. I received the phone call one evening from her informing me she was in labour. I drove to the hospital with excitement pumping through me. Being faced with my first experience of supporting a woman in labour left me feeling as most partners must feel; like I had no idea what to do or how to help, yet I was completely awestruck at how amazing this woman was. As this wasn't her first child, she knew what she had to do, what she needed me to do, and where I needed to be. I watched as she went into herself and no longer seemed aware of those around her. The midwife and I exchanged glances and I knew that I was about to witness something truly incredible. Since then, I have helped over 200 women birth their babies and have witnessed many more. Each birth is unique and I feel a euphoric wave of amazement at the strength of mothers at every birth.

After graduation, a fellow student and I headed north to Rockhampton in Central Queensland in search of adventure, experience, and work as a midwife. Moving from being a student in a low risk facility to being a 'real' midwife in an all risk referral centre was terrifying. Thank goodness I could count on the other new graduates for a shoulder to cry on or a chat over coffee. The supportive midwives who mentored us, took us under their wings, and showed us where equipment was stored and how to navigate the hospital were our lifesavers in those first few months.

In August of my second year as a midwife, the Midwifery Group Practice (MGP) started in Rockhampton and I was given the opportunity to work where my heart lay, in continuity of care. I was finally able to work to my full



scope of practice and develop meaningful, professional relationships with women and their families. At that time, midwives had just begun to expand their scope of practice to include prescribing and ordering diagnostic tests, and I decided I would like to do that too so I enrolled in a course to learn about this. The course was fascinating and pushed my limits, and not even my appendix bursting could stop me from wanting to learn more and finish it!

My next goal was to achieve my eligibility and prescribing notation, and to complete the Australian College of Midwives Midwifery Practice Review (MPR) program. At first, the review process seemed daunting but once I started, I realised that it wasn't anything I hadn't done before, as I had been reflecting and keeping my outcome statistics since I was at University. The whole process became a personal reflective journey over my development from student to midwife to continuity of care midwife. I gained useful feedback from my reviewers, which again had me reflecting on my practice and my midwifery philosophy.

Then all I had to do was wait out my 3 years of experience before I could apply to AHPRA to gain my eligibility. In the meantime, to keep busy and to fulfil my desire to challenge myself and never stop learning, I enrolled in a Masters of Primary Maternity Care. Studying my Masters has meant I am constantly learning and reinforcing my skills and knowledge while being surrounded by likeminded people. My aim in completing my masters is to keep my practice evidence based and current while allowing me to continue to question the 'why'. I hope that it will help to open doors for me throughout my career; maybe even in private practice. But mostly I want to be able to work clinically with students to support them and hopefully inspire them, like my mentors inspired me.

One of the greatest moments of my life was the day I received my letter from AHPRA informing me of my success in gaining not only my eligibility but also my prescribing notation. I will frame the letter and hang it next to my testamur. I was also excited to find out that I was the first of the Griffith University Bachelor of Midwifery graduates to achieve this. I believe anyone can gain their eligibility and prescribing notation no matter how long you have been a midwife, or how you trained to be a midwife. I believe having these skills enables a greater level of woman-centred care and continuity of midwifery care. My next goal is to finish my Masters and to then advocate for more employers recognising midwives' full scope of practice and the value of midwife prescribing by allowing them to incorporate that skill and knowledge in the workplace.

Since that trip overseas and embracing that idea of becoming a midwife, I've lived and breathed the following five principles. I share them with you in the hope that you too embrace your ideas and achieve your goals:

- never stop learning
- challenge the 'Why?'
- find a mentor who inspires you (and don't let go)
- believe in yourself, and
- don't stop or give up. ■

ACM Staff Profile

Kirsty Warren

Events Manager

ACM Sydney Office



Hello! I handle all aspects of ACM events from concept through to execution. I spend most of my time supporting our amazing branches execute their events or planning our national events. I am always available to assist with registrations and event related enquiries.

Your typical work day?

Most days I start by answering emails and catching up on enquiries while answering any incoming phone calls. I then start at the top of my to do list and work my way down. No 2 days ever end up the same!

Best bits of the job?

I love hearing the stories from the midwives that share a passion and drive for their jobs that is beyond anything I have ever dealt with.

What would you be doing if you weren't in your current job?

Travelling the world.

Night out or night in?

Night in with friends. A good movie, a glass of wine and lots of laughs.

How would your friends describe you?

Hyperactive. I am never in the same place for long.

Next holiday on your wish-list?

Tanzania. I want to hike Mt Kilimanjaro and then explore the national parks for chimpanzees.

Sunday mornings are...?

Best spent with my puppy and a cup of tea.

Your personal motto?

If a cup of tea can't fix it, it's a serious problem. ■