

Review of New Parenting Can Change Your World

By Karlton Terry

Review by Stephanie Cloutman, RN, BSN, CPN, CLC

New Parenting Can Change Your World powerfully advocates for babies' well-being and healthy development. The book proclaims that birth is an extremely impactful experience that shapes humans in significant ways and thus shapes culture. One of the principal goals of the book is to help parents and others who spend time with babies or are considering having a baby "understand how to support their babies to heal from many (normal) challenges of prenatal life and birth" (Terry, 2022, p. 8). Terry guides the reader through understanding this significance through examples and provides information about how to relate with babies and the myriad of challenging experiences of their prenatal life and birth, which they seek to express.

"Psychological consequences from prenatal life and birth are powerful, persistent, and pervasive. Our belief systems, behavior patterns, our relationship to power, food, money, and intimacy, and even our self-esteem are primarily imprinted during these times" (Terry, 2022, p. 6).

The practice of relating taught in this book helps babies process, heal, and grow beyond the traumatic experiences that otherwise can define or impact their development and lives going forward. Babies often have unrecognized emotional needs that caregivers can meet through learning attuned ways of relating with them. One of many ways Terry teaches caregivers to relate with babies is through what he calls accurate empathy.

Accurate empathy means developing consciousness to recognize the true sources of a baby's unexplained crying and movements. Accurate empathy includes heartfelt presence and compassion, mirroring your baby's experience, and giving them support and space to express their needs and release pain. Accurate empathy is seeing your baby for who he is and not trying to make your baby a certain way. (Terry, 2022, p. 6)

When caregivers learn to understand babies' communication and truly respond, it is a great achievement. In the immediate sense, it yields short-term benefits for both baby and caregiver, for example, solving perpetual crying or colic. From a cultural perspective, tending to babies so they feel safe and supported may allow them to grow older and be well, positively impacting society. This book is filled with examples of how birth and prenatal life challenges show up in the baby's behavior and development and what to do about it. One of the ways babies express themselves is through crying, and once all the physical needs are met, Terry names and describes different types of crying, what each means, and what to do about it. This book gives permission to be real, along with ideas about supporting both self and baby through challenges.

Even though your baby is crying like crazy, take a breath and feel into your own body. Scan for areas of your body that are holding the tension, then let yourself relax, knowing that you are doing everything your baby needs at the moment: listening emphatically and finding your own grounded center. If you can't relax, it is absolutely OK to "lose it" yourself in a moment like this. If you start crying because you can't stand it anymore, it is a truthful moment. You actually release your frustrated, pent-up feelings, and this drains the collective frustration pool you are in with your baby. (Terry, 2022, p. 82)

A valuable contribution of this book is information about how to identify different types of body language and cries, meanings, and how to listen to identify what is being expressed.

The book addresses an important gap in how we care for babies at home and in medical settings. By taking a strong stand for the experience of babies, which is too often not considered, it teaches us how to help babies heal when they go through experiences that are too overwhelming for them to process on their own. Medical professionals have a responsibility to develop their skills to support babies in the best possible way. In the inevitable event of unintentional harm, medical professionals need to use their relational skills to support repair in any way possible. Terry's advice can help caregivers learn to come into a grounded presence with babies, simply witnessing their experience and offering accurate empathy.

In the medical setting, one challenge is having enough patience and time to allow the baby's timeline with their processing. It is essential to stop trying to make it better and move into more effective support with respect for the emotional experience of the baby. "The experience of having our feelings seen and validated and accepted and addressed is all about mirroring, and it is critical for brain development, psychological stability, and emotional balance" (Terry, 2022, p. 71). This is potentially a more valuable teacher for babies on how to be human and move through emotion as they grow older than invalidating or making their emotions wrong.

Karnton Terry is a pioneer and a world-renowned expert in prenatal and perinatal psychology through his work as a baby therapist. He is the recipient of the 2022 David Chamberlain Award for the Baby Pioneer Dedicated to the Safety, Health, and Well-being of the Unborn and Born Child. Terry's experience learning from babies over decades lends itself to a book filled with illustrious examples. The author clearly explains how to relate to self and others by listening to and responding to babies in ways that not only deeply foster babies' sense of safety but also meet their emotional and physical needs, which are often misunderstood, overlooked, or ignored.

The book is organized into four parts. Part One includes chapters about being with baby, which includes teaching the adult caregiver relational skills to identify and meet baby's needs as they seek to process their experiences. Part Two of the book is titled "Crying is Communication" and focuses on explaining the different types of crying and alleviating crying through the relational skills of the caregiver. Part Three focuses on healing baby challenges, including resolving sleep and bonding problems, and offers perspective on how birth experiences impact crawling, walking, and dressing and how to support repair when needed. Part Four is about expectations, gender, and the impact of IVF and C-Section birth on babies. Lastly, Part Five is for grandparents and all who love babies.

This work is an engaging read and a powerful contribution to the prenatal and perinatal psychology field. It brings the baby's emotional needs out of the shadow by naming what is often unseen and unnamed in modern culture. Terry also brings language to new ideas that help one understand self and others in new ways, with new language creating a pathway for expansion on these ideas. He goes further by naming the perceived benefits of caregivers implementing these ways of being for both the individual and their future and the collective.

New Parenting Can Change Your World is a valuable handbook for those preparing to have or care for babies, those currently raising or caring for babies, and arguably also for those on their healing journey interested in learning and reparenting their own very young parts. As a pediatric nurse, I highly recommend this book to anyone working in or interested in the fields of prenatal and perinatal psychology and health.

Terry, K. (2022). *New parenting can change your world: More wisdom - less stress - including the cure for colic*. Independently Published. ISBN-978-0-578-31613-0; ISBN-13: 979-8842589128