

More Than a Midwife: A Man's Journey Through Birth, Loss and Fatherhood

(By Jeremiah Parkstone)



Breaking Barriers in a Female-Dominated Profession

Qualifying as a midwife was one of the proudest achievements of my life, but the journey was far from easy. As a man entering a profession traditionally associated with women, I faced challenges that went beyond academic study and clinical training. I had to prove my abilities, challenge

stereotypes and learn to navigate people's assumptions about what it means to be a midwife. Even family gatherings could be amusing. Telling relatives that I was training to become a midwife often raised eyebrows, followed by jokes and questions.

For some, the idea of a male midwife was unusual. For others, it was difficult to understand. However, I remained determined to follow my calling. I knew that caring for mothers and babies was not defined by gender, but by compassion, knowledge, skill and dedication. Eventually, I qualified, proud to wear the professional title I had worked so hard to earn.

At Work, a Midwife; at Home, a Husband and Father

My life has two equally important identities. At work, I am a midwife entrusted with supporting women and families through one of life's most significant experiences. At home, I am a loving husband and a devoted father.

These roles may seem different, but they are deeply connected. Both require patience, understanding, emotional strength and the ability to be present when someone needs you most. Being a father has given me a personal appreciation of the hopes, fears and uncertainties that families experience during pregnancy and childbirth. It has also reminded me that behind every clinical situation is a family with dreams, expectations and a future they are waiting to embrace.

The Joy of Birth and the Pain of Loss

Midwifery allows me to witness the extraordinary moment when new life enters the world. Hearing a newborn's first cry and seeing parents meet

their baby for the first time are experiences that make the challenges of the profession worthwhile. Yet not every birth has a happy ending. Sometimes, despite the dedication and efforts of healthcare professionals, we are unable to deliver a baby alive. These moments are profoundly distressing. As a midwife, I must remain professional and supportive while helping families navigate unimaginable grief. However, professionalism does not mean being without emotion.

There are moments when the weight of these experiences follows me home. I have learned that acknowledging emotional distress is not a sign of weakness. Seeking therapy outside work has helped me process difficult experiences, manage the emotional burden and continue providing compassionate care.

When Our Own Family Needed the NHS

My understanding of the NHS became even more personal when my wife and I welcomed our two children. One of them was born prematurely, and the experience was incredibly difficult for our family. Suddenly, I was not simply a healthcare professional supporting someone else's family. I was a father facing uncertainty, fear and the vulnerability that comes with having a child who needs additional care.

My wife, my rock and soulmate, stood beside me throughout our journey, more than my support for the mother that carried the baby for nine months. I felt like I had failed both my wife and our child. Her love and support have been invaluable, reminding me that even those who care for others sometimes need care themselves.

During those difficult days, the NHS was there for us. The dedication, expertise and compassion of its healthcare professionals helped us navigate a deeply challenging time. I will always be grateful for that support.

A Promise to Keep Caring

My journey has taught me that midwifery is more than a profession. It is a commitment to life, dignity, compassion and families during their most vulnerable moments. I am a midwife, a husband and a father. Each role has shaped the person I am today. My experiences of birth, loss, fatherhood have strengthened my determination to serve others with empathy and respect.

I dedicate myself to my work because I understand how much it matters. Every family deserves to feel supported, every mother deserves compassionate care, and every baby deserves the best possible chance. **I may be a midwife at work, but I am also a husband and dad at heart. And it is the love I have for my own family that continues to inspire the care I give to others.**