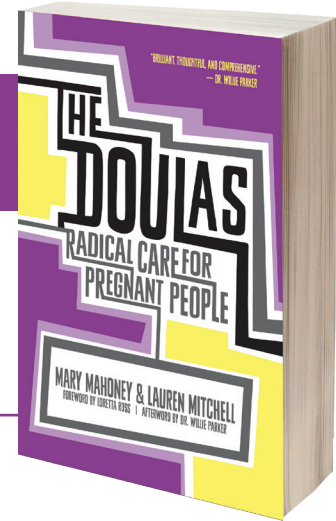


READING GROUP GUIDE

THE DOULAS Radical Care for Pregnant People Mary Mahoney and Lauren Mitchell

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1. The subtitle of the book is “Radical Care for Pregnant People”. What makes full-spectrum doula “radical”? In what ways is it “radical” for individuals to support each other in instances such as reproduction?
2. The authors stress the importance of the “full-spectrum” doula, and recount the pushback against this broadened definition. What are their reasons for expanding beyond birth and abortion care?
3. One of the doulas expresses that she feels “love and vulnerability and tenderness” (p. 135) toward her clients. How do doulas utilize the power of emotions in their activism? What other social movements use empathy as a method? What role do emotions and empathy play in your activism?
4. The authors argue that telling stories is a powerful activist strategy. Do you think storytelling is useful as a tool for social change? What stories have changed your outlook on political issues?
5. The authors highlight a divide between advocacy (i.e. focusing on policy change) and direct care (i.e. focusing on individual actions)? What are issues that can lead to this divide? Are there ways to work across this divide?
6. The mission of the Doula Project is to provide support in situations where many people often don’t receive support. Describe a time when you supported someone. Describe another time when you were supported by another.
7. What are your experiences with support during reproductive processes? Do you think you would appreciate support in the form of a doula? Why, or why not?
8. With regards to the importance of self-care, the authors stress that “you can’t take care of anyone else unless you take care of yourself.” (p. 260) Have you ever felt the need to engage in self-care? What did you do? Was it effective?
9. Did the book change your perception of the reproductive justice movement? Would you ever consider getting involved with doula work? Why, or why not?
10. What about the Doula Project inspired you? What made you hesitate? What about the Doula Project did you find useful or cautionary that all organizers, regardless of social issue, might want to take into account?



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