



ILCA Print and Multimedia Reviews **February 2011 – Available at www.ILCA.org**

An Introduction the Biological Nurturing: New Angles on Breastfeeding

Suzanne Colson, RM, PhD

Hale Publishing, 2010

135 pages, black-and-white photographs, references, index, softcover, US\$19.95

Orders: Hale Publishing, LP, 1712 N. Forest Street, Amarillo, TX 79106 USA

Tel: 806-376-9900; toll free: 800-378-1317; fax: 806-376-9901

E-mail: books@halepublishing.com; URL: www.iBreastfeeding.com

This book relates the work Colson did for her PhD thesis on biological nurturing. The author describes the process that led to the development of her theories drawn from 17 years working with mothers and babies combined with the influence of the works of Lennart Righard, Michel Odent, and Nils Bergman among others.

The first chapter describes how we moved away from what Colson believes is the “age old art” of breastfeeding, starting with the advent of men’s discourse into the world of baby care in 1748. From there, with research supporting all of her steps, she describes birth as “one of the most dangerous times during one’s life span” (p. 29). She discusses both the maternal and infant transitions – the mother from a full to empty womb, the infant from foetal to neonatal status, the infant’s metabolic adaptation, maternal oxytocin levels, and milk production.

Dr. Colson defines Biological Nurturing as “restoring the balance between nature and nurture” (p. 19). She believes that there are both learned and innate behaviors involved. She wants to “de-medicalize breastfeeding” (p. 18) while establishing give and take of the nursing couple. She looks at breastfeeding from the perspective of enjoyment – not feeding – and emphasizes the developing relationship between mother and child. Supported by the literature, she further argues that there are states and positions of both mother and baby that release spontaneous behaviors to facilitate breastfeeding. She describes some current teachings, though well-meaning, that create barriers to breastfeeding. Biological nurturing draws upon theories of early behavior and biological research. She shares insights into species-specific feeding positions, such as a comparison between a polar bear mother and a human mother.

Two things I believe would improve this book are enlarging the photographs and illustrations to better show what the text describes, and darkening the footnotes to be more easily read.

This book should be in every lactation consultant’s shelf. It will stimulate lactation professionals to provide even better services to the mothers and babies they serve.

Patricia Drazin, RLC, IBCLC, CST
Wilmette, Illinois USA