

(introductory music)

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MARYN: Welcome to Indie Birth's *Taking Back Birth* series. We have been talking about prenatal care all of these weeks. I think we are on our seventh or eighth podcast now starting at the very beginning of pregnancy. And now today talking about the second trimester. Exciting. So I am, myself, 15 weeks today actually. So I have officially entered the second trimester of pregnancy. And today I just wanted to share with you some things that I've observed, how I'm feeling, what's going on with me just for your own interest. And you can compare and contrast with your own pregnancy because, obviously, they're all different.

The theme really of all of these podcasts have been doing self care, which means looking to the inside, learning how to take care of yourself when you're pregnant. Not in a vacuum. And it doesn't mean you can't go outside and see a midwife or see a doctor. But it means that you take full responsibility for your pregnancy and for eating well and monitoring yourself for any potential problems as best you can instead of looking only to testing and numbers and labs and someone else's hands on your belly to tell you what's going on in your pregnancy in your body with your baby.

So we are anti that. We are all about self sufficient care, and I truly am doing all my own care this pregnancy as I have for the last couple of pregnancies. This one probably isn't too different in that regard other than I'm being very aware and conscious of what I am doing and what I'm not doing so that I can share it with you. Because I think it is a fascinating concept. And for so many of my earlier pregnancies, I did pretty much what everybody does which is go see somebody, get appointments, have prenatal care done by somebody else. And, of course, I took care of myself, I thought, and ate well, but I didn't assume the same kind of responsibility that I have the last couple of times.

And the reason it's so important—and this is said again and again on each podcast is when we take full responsibility for ourselves during our pregnancies and we understand what prenatal care really is and what our options are and how many choices we have then it only makes sense that when it's time for the baby to arrive and we're waiting to go into labor and we do indeed birth our own babies, we are even more fully responsible and capable and confident than we would have been having had a pregnancy where we looked to somebody else for all of the answers.

So that's my motivation in sharing this with you. My last pregnancy and birth was completely self sufficient. And that doesn't mean I didn't have help from loving friends and a partner especially at the birth. But it was a really eye opening experience for me. And so this pregnancy I'm hoping to continue in the same way and birth in a similar way. And that is what I want to share with you. I think as women we all have this knowledge and capability inside of us. And so, especially, being able to share it with each other and hear each other's experiences, we're that much more encouraged to develop our own confidence in this area. And then we can share that, in turn, with other women.

So it's a very pay it forward kind of concept. The more confident you are in doing your own care and possibly your own birth other women will be inspired by this especially when they're encountering typical problems with their care providers, going outside of rules or being overdue or any of the nonsense that goes along with hiring many of the licensed providers. You will be able to inspire women to think for themselves and to know that if they have to or if they want to they're certainly capable of being pregnancy and birthing in their family with their friends, with their family, and without a medical professional if that's what they choose because birth is not medical. At least in almost all circumstances, it is not.

So little digression there. Sorry. We are talking about the second trimester today, but it's always good to kind of review, I feel like, the goal since some people are coming in just random podcasts and not starting at the beginning. So, again, I'm 15 weeks today. This is my eighth pregnancy. I have six wonderful children, and I had one miscarriage a couple years ago. So my eighth pregnancy. And boy, time has flown. I started these podcasts when I was about 5 weeks pregnant, and, obviously, things are different in many ways.

So physically, let's talk about that. It's sort of the most obvious way to talk about pregnancy. And, again, when we're taking full responsibility in pregnancy, we realize that there isn't just the physical aspect, of course, so I will get to the other aspects. But the physical is pretty prominent in pregnancy, for obvious reasons. And I think, at 15 weeks here, it's starting to become more prominent, for obvious reasons.

So physically, I have gained probably more than 10 pounds, at this point. And that's pretty normal for me. I seem to gain about a pound a week no matter what I do. So by the end I've gained 40, 45 pounds. And I won't lie. Sometimes it's tempting to want to get on a scale and see where things are at or if I'm more or if I'm less than previous pregnancies. And I have done that once or twice in this—in the last couple months. But I don't enjoy it. It's not good for my mental health really at all because I feel fine. And I really—I know that I shouldn't be caring about a number.

So, for me, it's focusing on am I eating really well? And I think, for many of us, in early pregnancy we're not necessarily eating as well or as great as we will once we're feeling good. So that was certainly the case for me where the first couple of weeks, at least, the nausea was pretty decent. And I was able to eat. I've never been a sick pregnant woman. But definitely not paying attention to getting enough greens and that kind of thing. At least early pregnancy. But now my point is I'm at the point where I'm feeling pretty good. The morning sickness or really it's just nausea is pretty much gone except for the evenings sometimes. And I'm able to focus on actually eating great quality which I am trying to do and getting enough quantity, calories as well, and being able to focus on getting my greens a couple times a day. In other words, less cravings, at least for me although I have been craving this really amazing kale salad that they make down the street. So I can certainly indulge those kind of cravings. But other than that, I'm not craving things for nauseous reasons. I pretty much am passed that.

I am getting up to eat occasionally at night in the middle of the night especially if I haven't eaten enough during the day which is pretty easy for me to do sometimes with six kids running around. And then not quite feeling like I want to stuff myself at dinner. So sometimes I'll wake up in the middle of the night. And the way I know, for me, that I need to eat is I just can't sleep. And it just feels different than an insomnia. It's not like a brain insomnia like I can't stop thinking about things or making lists. It's more a physical kind of restlessness. I just can't get comfortable, and I keep waking up.

So, for me, that means get up and eat. And nine times out of ten, I'll get up and practically with my eyes shut have a chunk of cheese or some nuts and fruit. Just something quick. Not a whole lot. Chew it up. Go back to bed, and then I sleep great. So I'm definitely already at that point which, to me, means I need to start eating more during the day. And I know that to be true for myself anyway that as I build up to the maximum blood volume expansion, which is going to happen in the next ten weeks or so, that I do need to increase my calories and protein. So I still am nursing our 14 month old. And, for me, I think that adds the need for calories.

And this is my eighth pregnancy in ten years. So if it's your first pregnancy, chances are you have a greater storage than I do at this point. But if you've had a couple pregnancies even in ten years or you have a very physically demanding job or something like that then you do need to probably look at your calorie intake especially if you're not sleeping well or you're getting really tired during the day which happens to me too. So in other words, I feel like 15 weeks, second trimester, it's kind of the wake up. Honeymoon period is over as far as not really needing to care about exactly what

you're eating or how much because early pregnancy just, for me, doesn't require that amount of caloric intake, at least.

But now it's like my body is getting serious. And I can feel it. And, obviously, I can feel the baby growing. And the baby has developed. But starting now is when the baby is really going to grow. So, again, all the parts are there, but the baby is, obviously, tiny still and in the next 15, 20 weeks is going to have the maximum amount of growth. So, for me, it's a real wake up call. Every pregnancy is like this for me where I kind of eat like a normal person for the first couple months. And I think, "Oh, this isn't so bad." And then I get to where I am now, and I realize, "Oh shoot. I need to eat a lot more because I'm not feeling as well, or I'm not sleeping as well."

And then I just have to go for it. And for me that means getting into eating definitely every two hours. And I might need to eat every hour some days or as I proceed in the pregnancy. So I think for all of us that could be true. Certainly not everybody. Some people just kind of can continue on eating as they did, and they feel great. So you really just have to listen to your body. But listen to the subtle signs because pregnancy is a gradual thing. We don't start 4 weeks and wake up 25 weeks. We have—every day we're a little bit more pregnant. And every day I think our needs change just a little bit.

So listen to your cravings. Listen to how tired you are or how many headaches you're getting. Pay attention to these things because sometimes it's as simple as just needing more. Needing more calories. Needing more protein. It's summer right now in the desert, and hydration is also an issue. So it could be for you too where you are. But the more weight you're gaining anyway the more fluids you're going to need to stay hydrated. So the same amount of liquid that I needed three, four months ago—it has definitely increased as my weight has increased. And, again, that calculation—I think it was on the nutrition podcast was a quart of fluid per 50 pounds of body weight.

So not that you have to weigh yourself for that, but the obvious thing is as you gain weight you'll need more fluids. You need to be attentive to that. So that's my spiel at the current moment on food. Again, I feel like I don't really have the same aversions or nausea at all. And I'm really craving good food, which I'm always grateful for. And I'm grateful I have access to it. So for me, breakfast is a lot of greens. I tend to use a lot of butter especially in pregnancy. So I'll sauté a lot of greens and butter and garlic maybe and have eggs. And maybe some kind of carb related thing. Maybe a piece of gluten free toast or even just an apple. Something like that to balance it out because I just need to for my body. I'll feel that if I don't a couple hours later.

And yeah. I kind of proceed through the day like that. I seem to be on the two lunch schedule. And that means, for me, a lunch kind of meal probably around 11:00 and

then maybe again around 1:00. So yeah. That's what I'm up to. Maybe snacking in between especially between the second lunch, the 1:00, and maybe a 5:00 dinner. For sure. Some kind of snack in there. Maybe just a handful of nuts or something like that. And hard boiled eggs are going to make a reappearance I'm sure. I haven't quite gotten there yet. Last pregnancy it got to be a really common snack. Just because I could cook them all so easily at once, and then they are so easy to eat. And that's a great middle of the night snack too. So that becomes a thing for me. I don't know. I'm just one of those people that needs a lot of calories constantly through pregnancy, so I've learned.

But, again, it's just about listening to yourself. So encouragement to do that and keep feeling great because second trimester, if you haven't been this way already, generally heralds a period of feeling really good. So we all know about the first trimester and how icky and tired that can make some people feel. And then sometimes the third trimester—sometimes it's like that especially close to labor and birth where you're just feeling heavier and tired and whatever. But the honeymoon period, even though I said it was earlier, is actually now. It's actually the second trimester because the weight isn't there. You're still able to pretty much function physically as you did possibly nonpregnant although it's definitely different.

And yeah. Most women are feeling pretty good. They aren't as tired. Their appetites have increased, and some are really hungry. And that feels good too. So it's a really fun time, which is why this was a fun thing to talk about today. So physically, I'm pretty much back to being physically active. And I think, for me, that doesn't mean working out at a gym. And if it means that for you, not that you can't continue that, but just be aware of the strain that those kind of exercise activities can have on your body during pregnancy.

And that has nothing to do with cardiovascular health or anything. It's simply alignment and ligaments and that kind of thing. And definitely check out Katy Bowman. And that's Katy Bowman. She has a blog and a company, I guess you could say, called Aligned and Well. And her blog is excellent. If you just searched the blog for pregnancy blog posts, you would learn a lot. And you may not be as keen to go to the gym for your exercise during pregnancy. Walking is great. It's great for all of us when pregnant especially because it gets us out in the air breathing fresh air, getting sunshine, having our heart pumping. Obviously, you can walk as fast or slow as you need to. And a couple hours a day conceivably if you could manage.

And I'm kind of back to doing that. Of course, I'm back in a place where that's really fun to do. And I'm feeling good, and I'm able to get up early. I don't need to go bed at 6:00

in the evening anymore. So I'm back to hiking a couple hours a day and just taking my dogs and being somewhat relaxed about it. But it sure does feel good, I think, especially when pregnant because I'm not going to do anything more complicated or high impact at this point. So keep up your exercise. Or if you haven't already, it's a great time to start walking, and that's, again, walking and stretching. Two of the greatest things you can do during pregnancy. It doesn't need to be anything more complicated. You don't need any more gear. It can be as simple as just taking your kids out for a walk or your dog or whatever. But it's a great time now to get in that habit, so that you can keep it up through the pregnancy and feel good and energetic and able to move your body until the end. So that is a good suggestion I think.

Physically, again, we're still on that. Hair and skin generally gets—well, skin is kind of up in the air I think for some of us. I feel like hair—when you're pregnant definitely gets nicer and thicker and shinier. That's been my experience. And I think that's a pretty general thing to say. How many times do you see a pregnant woman, and she's literally glowing? And I think part of that glow comes from the way your—our hair just starts to get really nice as the hormones kick in and kind of everything is growing. The skin, I guess, is definitely up in the air, at least for me. For me, I've noticed that when I'm pregnant with a boy, and I've—and I don't find out before. But if I think I'm pregnant with a boy and then in hindsight I can kind of confirm my theory that I do get a lot of face breakouts. And I'm just guessing that it's hormonal and the testosterone or whatever going through my system. And then it's the opposite for me when I'm pregnant with a girl that I feel like my skin is really clear and great and glowing. So it's just one of those changes that can happen or not.

And that may be a first trimester change as well. But I find, for me, in the second trimester that that kind of thing smooths out. It's feeling good. For most of us, our breasts—we do have breast changes in pregnancy. Mine aren't huge changes, to be honest. But I always notice the darkened areola around the nipple. And I think that's kind of a cool thing because it's not something that happens really pregnancy. So even if you're looking up on the Internet signs of pregnancy, the signs of pregnancy when you're missing your period are kind of different than they are now which I think is really cool.

Sure, you still missed a period. But at this point, your body is well engaged in the process. And if you look really closely, if you're interested in that kind of thing, there are those kind of changes that are different. They're second trimester changes. And the darkened areola is one of them. And I always find that kind of cool because breasts, at least, don't look like that to me when someone isn't pregnant. So it's one of those cool things that your body does. Stretch marks can start to appear for some, and that's not a

thing for me, per se. But varicosities—veins—bulging kind of veins in the legs especially that is something I have to deal with. So it's kind of like everybody has something. Maybe not. Perhaps if it's your first or second pregnancy. But by your seventh or eighth, there's definitely things you notice about your body that are the same every time and sort of pop up at the same time every pregnancy.

And in a way, it's reassuring. If it's not causing you pain or stress or anything like that, it's like this is just what my body does when I'm pregnant. So I am an expert on myself for sure as you are on yourself. Occasional ligament pain is another second trimester physical kind of manifestation. And ligament pain—so if you're kind of like feeling your hip bones with your hands. In between, you'd find your uterus, and we'll talk about that in a minute. But sort of the borders of your uterus kind of around where your hip bones are on either side, there are ligaments there. And as your uterus grows and comes forward and gets bigger and gets heavier, sometimes those ligaments kind of spaz out. And that can happen in early pregnancy as well, and it can definitely happen in third trimester. But second trimester is when I start to notice them the most, and I think the obvious reason is just the growth is becoming more.

So I don't find them necessarily painful. But sometimes getting out of bed or getting out of the car really fast, it'll just kind of, "Oh." Catch you off guard. So another good sign of pregnancy. It means the uterus is growing. So yeah. I feel pretty good during second trimester. I think my body enjoys the progesterone of pregnancy. And so the first trimester has its moments of feeling rough. But by now, I'm feeling pretty even as far as that goes. And having some headaches occasionally. But better than normal. Better than not being pregnant for sure.

A good part of the physical description in pregnancy is obviously our uterus. And from the outside, people looking it's just our belly or whatever they want to call it. People can't really see our uterus at this point although our—it may be sort of pushing out by now. And at 15 weeks, let's see. The textbook definition of where your uterus should be—like the top of it. So you use your hands to find the borders. And the top of it at about 15, 16 weeks is half way in—excuse me. In between the belly button and the top of the pubic bone. So the uterus grows kind of up and out. 7, 8 weeks you're not able to feel anything abdominally, for most women. 9, 10, 11, 12 weeks you can certainly start to feel it. And even more so if you've had babies before.

So 15 weeks, for me—I'm pretty pregnant. I'm not—I'm able to feel it pretty well when I'm laying down. And I definitely look pregnant from the outside just to passersby, which is neither bad nor good because, of course, the ab muscles are not quite as strong anymore. So for some women, 15 weeks they don't look like anything much from the

outside. They don't look that pregnant at all. And it's not because their uterus isn't normal because pretty much we're all going to have a similar size uterus at 15 weeks if we're all carrying one single baby.

But we're definitely all looking different from the outside. And abdominal strength is definitely one factor that will make one woman look way more pregnant over another. Not to mention body size and proportions and body fat percentage and all that kind of stuff. So one thing I want to impart to you today is feeling your own uterus because it's really super fun. And I mentioned it way back when probably on the nine-week podcast because I personally can feel my uterus at nine weeks. But, again, it's because I've had a bunch of babies, and I know what I'm feeling for. So it might not be something that you're able to feel on yourself but certainly, by now at 15 weeks, you can.

And so it astounds me when I meet women that have never put their hands on their own belly. And they have no idea what's in there. I don't know. They're afraid to touch it, or they think there's nothing to feel maybe. Again, because some women aren't looking that pregnant yet. They think there's nothing to feel. But there is because your uterus is what's growing as well as the baby. So you lay down on your bed on your back. And just feel around your belly. You have a pubic bone. And that should be pretty obvious because it's hard like bone down in your pelvic area. And then kind of feel up from your pubic bone towards your belly button.

And you're going to feel all kinds of things, if you've never done this before. Your intestines have moved around to accommodate the growing uterus. So at first, you might be kind of confused. What am I feeling? Is this me? Is this baby? But the more you do it, and, literally, it's something you could do every day if you wanted to because the uterus—it all does grow that miraculously. Literally every day I feel like I can feel a change on myself. So putting your hands on your own belly every day is perfectly acceptable especially for learning purposes. So you're just feeling what is it in there? The firmness. That definitely isn't you and is your baby or maybe a placenta.

And just feeling the borders. So what does the uterus feel like? At this point, it's a pretty good grapefruit kind of size like you can get it all in your hand. And I think that's just really fun because it's going to grow. Obviously, the uterus—the height—is going to increase. And the width is going to increase, and then the baby itself is going to grow inside the uterus. So there's lots to feel. And at this point, you definitely can't feel parts of the baby or anything like that. So the baby just kind of feels like a hard little lump. And that's just how it is right now because the baby is pretty small.

So for me, again, the fundus, which is the top of the uterus, at about 15 weeks, for me and for most people, is about half way in between the belly button and the pubic bone.

And every week—literally, every week it grows a little bit more. So by the time you get to 20 weeks, you're at about your belly button with the top of your uterus. And, of course, the baby is growing too. So it's a really fun thing even if you're not going to do it every day. Every week lay down, feel your belly. And that's one of the most informative things I think you can do. So how many times somebody will call and say, "I'm having twins. I think I'm having twins." And not to say, they're wrong or right. But if they haven't been feeling their belly, then those kind of things come more off of possibly intuition. But also I think a lot of moms might feel that way when it's not their first pregnancy. Just if something feels different or they're way hungrier or whatever.

But the truth is—my point is—we all have thoughts like this even, "Maybe it's twins," or, "Are my dates right," or, "Is everything okay? Is my baby growing?" And my point is we have our own tools to assess this. I certainly have had years and years of midwifery training, so I realize that not everybody is at the same point. But putting your own hands on your belly is not hard. And sort of taking a picture with your brain and your hands. Take a picture with how your hands feel on your belly and what you feel. You can even draw it on a piece of paper. How big the mass that you feel is. Or how—like what the circumference is of the circle that you feel. Your uterus. And you can even draw it on a piece of paper. And you will see from week to week that it is getting bigger. So in other words, back to the twins things, when people say stuff like that, sometimes they want reassurance from someone like me to say, "Oh no." But how do I know that? It's not because I can see in their belly. And certainly, sometimes, I'm wrong too. But my point is that a 15-week uterus feels like a 15-week uterus unless there is more than one baby, unless the dates are off, or something else.

But in all normal, typical circumstances, there are certain measurements and a certain way things feel at certain points. So it's fun to learn those and to keep feeling your own belly, and that provides your own reassurance. That's my point. So your own reassurance is right below your finger tips because you have all the answers. And this goes for connecting with a baby too. And I'm not quite there either, honestly. Maybe you are. Maybe you aren't. At 15 weeks, I'm not quite connected yet. I mean I feel pregnant. I know the baby is in there. Pretty sure the baby is thriving and fine because my uterus is growing totally appropriately for my dates. I can feel the baby getting bigger. I'm not feeling a whole lot as far as movement goes yet, but that's pretty normal at 15 weeks.

I think occasionally I feel a flutter. Sort of like a—almost like gas like feeling. But nothing too definitive. Nothing that I'd put money on. And I've tried to hear with my fetoscope. And only today, actually, did I think I maybe heard a heartbeat for just a second. And I wouldn't have put money on that either. I mean I know there is a

heartbeat, but I just wouldn't have put money on that I heard it because there's lots of gurgling going on if you listen with a fetoscope. It's a real skill, and it's one worthy of obtaining. But it is a skill. And it's hard frankly at 15 weeks. They say that the best time to listen with a fetoscope and expect to hear something clearly is when you're feeling kicks from the outside.

So for me, that's not 15 weeks. That's more like 19 weeks. So I know I have another month, about, before I feel a real solid movement from the outside. And at that same point, I'll be able to hear the baby's heartbeat pretty easily with a fetoscope. So that doesn't stop me from trying. Every couple days, I admit it. I just am anxious to hear this baby. I feel like everything is fine. And like I said, the baby is growing. But it is sometimes a really fun confirmation to hear, especially with the fetoscope, because you're hearing the real heartbeat. You're not hearing an echo like you get from the Doppler. So nothing yet on my end as far as that goes. I'm hoping I'll be able to report differently in about a month.

But in the meantime, buy yourself a fetoscope. You can get economy ones even on Amazon. They have long tubing. You want one with a long tubing, or you're not gonna be able to reach your own belly. The shorter tubing ones are easier, I think. But your partner or friend can use that. You can't use it on your own belly. So get a fetoscope. Start practicing. Start feeling your own belly. Make notes if you have to. And you will see that your belly is growing. Your baby is growing. And, heaven forbid, there is something to pay attention to then you're the first to know because you are paying attention to what your body is saying.

So that was a lot of physical. We still have a little bit more just because pregnancy is not physical entirely, obviously. And I don't want to just act like it is because I certainly don't act like that in my life. That's the hardest work, I think, of doing an unassisted pregnancy or whatever you want to call it. Self-sufficient pregnancy. Is covering all your bases. Taking care of yourself in all areas, not just physically. Because the outside world, the mainstream world, really only wants to acknowledge your physical presence during pregnancy. And that's why there are these doctor visits, for example, and lab tests. No one is asking about your spiritual wellbeing or how you're feeling emotionally. It's simply a physical event.

So let's not be those people. Let's move on from the physical and talk about mental a little bit. Mentally, I feel pretty adapted to pregnancy at this point. It's a new experience, in a sense, because it's a different pregnancy. And it's always new because it's different baby and a different time in my life, et cetera. But I feel the repetitiveness too and not in a bad way, just, "Oh, okay. This is familiar." I feel like there is so much worry in the

world, at least at certain times, and concerns that I engage that sometimes with my own pregnancy. I think that's normal, honestly. When we're pregnant, things come up for other people or in our own lives that make us scared or—and it may or may not have anything to do with pregnancy. It's just something about being more open. And I guess that's more emotional than mental. But being more emotionally sensitive and open to tragedy and negative thoughts and bad things happening, I'm definitely—I definitely get influenced by that as well.

But I feel like I'm at a point in the pregnancy where I feel pretty good. And some of those fears have left, for the most part, as I get to feel more comfortable and I get to know this baby, which I'm excited about doing. So like all of us at 15 weeks, we're not close enough to birth yet hopefully. We're quite a ways from birth, and I feel that very real each time. So I feel like when I'm supporting women there are different sort of landmarks in a pregnancy as far as mental and emotional growth go. So where I am at 15 weeks, I feel like is pretty typical. That I may or may not have sort of some desires and fears about the birth which seems way far off. But it's just way far off right now. So I don't have anything super pressing. It's not like maybe at 28 weeks when I'm feeling super emotional and maybe really fearful about one particular issue. And I'm feeling more urgency to resolve it because the birth is closer.

At this point, I'm just excited about the birth. I have thought like really long and hard yet about how it will go or who will be there or anything like that. I'm just not there yet. And I think 15 weeks is—that's a pretty typical place to be. So yeah. Everybody is different, but it seems to be—many women follow sort of a similar roadmap as far as that goes. But yeah. I'm definitely beginning to think especially because I've birthed before. Just little things. I don't feel emotionally attached yet in a sort of later pregnancy way. But just the beginnings of what would I like to be different possibly about this birth or what hopes do I have. And they're pretty cerebral at this point. Like I said, I'm not feeling that emotional connection yet. But I think that's appropriate for 15 weeks. I'm just feeling okay. Mentally, I know I have to birth this baby, and I want to birth this baby and in whatever it is 25 weeks. But I'm not there yet.

So little things creep in here and there that I might want to think about or write down or process but nothing super huge yet for me. Emotionally, though, yes. I think I'm very emotional, and you probably are too. And some women are that way the entire pregnancy from the moment there is a positive pregnancy test until the very end. And for some, it ebbs and flows. And I feel like that's my pattern. I feel like it'll get more—like I'll be pulled more into emotional circumstances possibly later. But right now everything feels really real to me. And I don't know if that's a very good explanation.

It's kind of like life when I'm pregnant, at this point, and feeling good and positive is just more colorful. So I'm not feeling like super dramatic like I have the possibility of feeling later. Or too caught up physically in the first trimester. Because to me, the first trimester is so physical. And sometimes I can't get out of my physical body. So I'm just starting to really get out of that physicalness of pregnancy a little bit. And I'm realizing how colorful life is and how deeply I love my children. And it just varies by the moment. So definitely emotional.

And I think that's normal and self protective, honestly, when we're pregnant. There's just—we become these sort of super moms. Not in the sense of accomplishments but just emotion and connection to those we love. So patience for me. Some days it's there. Some days it's not. I'm pretty even at this point. And, again, for me later in pregnancy, that's not always the case. But right now I just feel pretty even although, again, I must eat and rest. For me, that's really important. And, again, that wakeup call. Eat and rest. Must do those things all the time, and then I'm good.

Essential oils are always part of my life. And when I'm feeling maybe off balance emotionally or just extra hormonal then I'll kind of employ those or flower essences and just sort of get back on track. But, again, nothing major for me at this point. And not to say you couldn't. I mean there are plenty of women that—especially with a previous traumatic birth, pretty much spend their whole pregnancy reliving the trauma and being fearful and trying to resolve these really intense emotions. So this is just me this pregnancy. I have certainly had other pregnancies that were more anxious and more fearful, for sure, for various reasons. So nothing—not one thing is normal. It's just recognizing that when you're doing your own care these are the different facets of things you can pay attention to. That's really all.

Emotionally, too, I really enjoy the connection with other women that are pregnant or not really. I like to feel like there is women I can talk to because I'm very used to taking care of other people. And if you're a mom already or you care for somebody in your family or friends intensely, then you know what it is to be a caregiver. And it's very draining sometimes. So no matter who we are, no matter how many times we've been pregnant, I think it's really beneficial to know that there is a person or two people or three people that you can pour your heart out to. That you can call crying if you need to. Or have take your kids if you just need a few minutes alone.

And that kind of stuff is hard for me to do as well. But I find, in pregnancy, that I want to reach out more and make those connections. And, again, that's the appeal of a midwife, and I'm certainly not advocating not hiring a midwife. There are some amazing midwives out there. And I, myself, am honored to be able to connect with women in that

way when they want me. So definitely not hiring a midwife is not what I mean at all. It's just getting that connection can come from any woman really that you feel comfortable with and close to. So if it's your midwife, that's great. If it's a friend or your partner, then that's great too. There isn't like one person that has to be your sounding board especially when pregnant. It can be good to have a couple.

So the last little blurb here before we go is just the spiritual development in the second trimester which is different for everybody. So I'm just sharing my experience with you. Some of us start to have more connection with the baby or not. It just depends on you and your baby. I have definitely had pregnancies where I did not feel the soul of the baby come in until almost near birth. That was the latest. My one son. Yeah. It was just a strange pregnancy. I didn't feel super connected, and I could feel he was there. And he was fine, but he just kind of wasn't committed yet to this body that he was being given. So every baby, every soul is different. And when they choose to sort of enter in is up for grabs. And that may or may depend on your own beliefs as well.

But it's definitely different, I think, for everybody. So, again, I'm not feeling anything super strong yet. I know this soul is there and growing. I feel connection to her, and I think it's a her currently in dream time. So sometimes I'll go to sleep, and I'll ask to dream about her or to meet her or to see what she has to say. And I've had some really nice birth dreams that way. And they are always kind of the same, so I guess we'll see how that turns out. To be honest, I've had some really scary dreams too. And I have consulted my own wise ones and women friends when I felt that that was a lot for me to handle because it—scary dreams during pregnancy, especially about pregnancy or the baby, can be really disconcerting. And I've been on the other side of that too and had women tell me.

It's just a place where you want to be able to listen to them and say, "Our bodies, our minds, our souls work things out in dream time, and we don't always know if they're really going to manifest as truth or not." But more likely, they are just our fears playing out. So for me, that's where I'm at. I feel like I've been—I'm being given these opportunities to tune in. And having dreams sort of scary or good ones, positive birth dreams, are giving me the opportunity to tune in and ask this baby, ask this baby questions, or ask myself questions even if it's in a dream space. Are these fears? Or is this real? So these are the crazy levels of pregnancy I feel like no one talks about.

And, again, it's really personal. This may not be your experience at all. Yours may be completely different. But it's valid. Everybody's is completely valid. And no matter what religious or cultural path we walk, I think we all have an an experience of starting to connect with this other. That is in our body and whatever that means for us.

So on that note, we end this podcast. And I thank you so much for listening to the second trimester. Again, please subscribe to iTunes—Indie Birth on iTunes if you want to get notification. Please pass and share these free podcasts. And also our website and information. We are always available for consultations for Indie Birth members. So if you want to know more about membership, just get a hold of one of us. Email is probably the best. And yeah. We provide consultations for women in pregnancy. Any woman in pregnancy wanting to discuss a certain topic or work something out and support in labor and birth as well for women that desire that or need that or request that.

So check out our website. Pass it on. And do your best to take birth back. Thanks so much. Bye.

(closing music)