

(introductory music)

DISCLAIMER: *Taking Back Birth* is a production of the Indie Birth Association and indiebirth.com. No material on this podcast should be considered medical advice. Birth is not a medical event.

MARYN: You're listening to Indie Birth's *Taking Birth Back* series of podcasts. Today we're going to talk about how to have an Indie Birth. I'm Maryn, and I'm about 23 weeks pregnant right now with my seventh baby. And we've been doing these podcasts since the beginning of this pregnancy. So for quite a few months now. Taking you through a pregnancy from start to finish. That's the goal.

So we've covered all kinds of topics so far that you can go here on iTunes. Everything from what prenatal care is to nutrition as well as testing options. So with each podcasts, I try to mirror where I am in the pregnancy both physically and emotionally and mentally as best I can. So for me, lately, what's been coming up is the fact that birth is getting closer. I've obviously done this quite a few times before. But it doesn't change it really because every pregnancy and baby are so different that it's kind of a new adventure even though I have a vague idea, of course, about what birth is like.

So since I'm half way—actually more than half way through my pregnancy, it's kind of where my brain has been going lately. I can feel my baby really well now. She's kicking all over. And I'm trying to feel her position still kind of challenging for being somewhat small. It seems to me she's breech right now which I've never experienced in my own body. So I think that's propelled me into thinking about birth maybe a little sooner. I don't know. But it's propelled me into thinking about birth just because things pop into your brain. And at the very least, I think, "Oh wow. What would it be like to have a breech birth? I haven't experienced that."

So I think that's one of the reasons I've been thinking about it more. But many of you listening are at about the same point in pregnancy. And even if you're not, it's okay. It's always okay to think about birth. I just realized myself that there are certain periods or timeframes in my pregnancies where the same issues come up each time. So a couple podcasts ago, we talked about fear coming up. And that was at sort of a predictable time for me, and I think a lot of other women. So, again, I think starting to think about birth is really normal. Some of you may not have thought about it yet. And some of you may have been thinking about it for quite some time.

But the reality is it's only a couple months away for me. So that's where my head is today. So coincidentally, but of course not, my birth partner, Margo, and I—she runs Indie Birth with me—we are in the midst of recording our online classes. Now the title of

the class is, "How to Have an Indie Birth". And it's a five-series class. We've been teaching locally here in Arizona, and we've gotten really amazing feedback. Very humbling words from women, who I think it's really helped. So we thought turning it into an online class would be wonderful as well since there are so many people that, obviously, don't live here and live in a place where taking any kind of class really isn't an option.

So I want to share with you today highlights of the class because I think if you're where I am in pregnancy it'll feel right to you. And it may be something you want to investigate further to be on the road to really being confident for your birth in a couple of months. I think it will help you build confidence. Even teaching it, honestly, builds my own confidence about the birth process even though I know these things. Sharing it with other women makes me remember and really kind of imprinted on me as well. So I think whether you're hiring someone to be at your birth in a couple months or you're birthing unassisted hopefully this will give you some much needed confidence that it's all as it is meant to be.

So I don't know if anybody has checked out the site, the Indie Birth site lately. But we have a definition on there that we've kind of come up with. The definition of Indie Birth. So I'm just going to read that quickly, so you know what—how to plan an Indie Birth is, at least partly. So Indie Birth. "A birth experience arising from decisions made in alignment with your individual truth. Making and owning your birth decisions based on your own unique needs, desires, knowledge, and intuition not subject to anyone else's authority. Autonomous and free."

So that's the definition of Indie Birth. The classes, therefore, focus on helping women achieve that goal with their births. Now, of course, we love home birth. We love unassisted birth. But truly, a woman planning a hospital birth can benefit from this information as well. Anybody can. And, in fact, someone planning a home birth maybe more surprised and educated, in a sense, by this information just because homebirths have really taken a turn, I think, for the more medical route in most places in most states.

So I think the common belief among those that have had homebirths is that they may not need a class or they know what's coming because they've hired a midwife. And they know they're not going to get an epidural. And they're not going to have forceps available at their birth. But what they don't know are a lot of the myths about way birth—about the way birth works even amongst homebirth midwives. Excuse me. I am having a hard time talking today.

So there's myths, and there's also rules and regulations that call a lot of the shots. So our goal is to highlight what we know about birth, what we know to be true based on research and science. And then highlight how we can all achieve the birth that we want based on this information. I think, again, women planning homebirths sometimes don't realize that there is a lot going on in their situations that is complicating their births. So this class is for women planning homebirths or hospital births or unassisted births. And this is for women that possibly aren't even pregnant yet. Maybe have had a traumatic birth experience. This class will give you confidence, and you'll be able to kind of go back and go through your birth story again and possibly see how interventions caused an outcome that wasn't that great or that you didn't like.

And the confidence comes from realizing that our bodies work in most cases. Normal, healthy women with healthy babies. Our bodies work. And when birth doesn't seem to work or there is a ridiculous amount of problems or complications, then we have to look at other circumstances. So that's the point of the class. Even in homebirths, how many women really know about vaginal exams and why they're pointless. Really. Even if they might be asking for them in their own labors at home. They may not after they have this information.

Even in homebirths, why are there time limits on labor? A lot of women planning homebirths don't know that there is a time limit on their labor. And once they understand the way a physiological birth works then that makes no sense either. Or what about being scared about being passed 40 weeks? Or about your waters opening before labor? These are common, common, common issues for normal, healthy women that end up being scared into interventions. So whether or not the interventions are chosen in the end isn't really the point. It's to provide the information here and to build the confidence so that we can all make the choices that are best for us. We can't always know why a woman would choose, say, an elective C-section. But it happens. And I've seen that situation be perfect for some women. They are informed, and that is still what they choose.

So we love homebirth, but we realize there are lots of ways to go. Our goal is to get you the information and, hopefully, some inspiration as well. So before we get into more specifics about the class, we've had a bunch of local classes in the last couple months. And women that have taken it have really had amazing things to say. And, again, I don't know credit necessarily my teaching skills, per se. But what I do credit is, number one, getting women together to talk about birth. And number two, the fact that this is real based in science information. This isn't about—I don't even know what to say. Just lighting a candle and praying that everything will be okay. That might be the way for some women, but I think this information is really, really able to change people and

convince them, for lack of a better word, that they don't need all the help they thought they needed.

So the women that have taken it lately—one woman said the other night to me, "I have never heard anybody talk about birth the way you guys do." She said, "I have never heard anybody say these things that I know. That I realize I know deep down inside of me." And this was a woman that has had a homebirth before. So even she was shocked and was really grateful for some new information as she goes into her second homebirth. Women have said that it has given them confidence to ask for what they want. And that might mean changing attendants, honestly. It might mean making a new plan. We never know where we're going to go with the new information we have.

The concepts of undisturbed birth—something we highlight in our Indie Birth class—and truly there are books. Sarah Buckley writes a whole lot about undisturbed birth. It's certainly not an unknown concept. And it's certainly not one that we've created at all. But getting this information out there, it's always mind boggling that smart, educated women, again, that have possibly had homebirths don't know what undisturbed birth is. They don't know that, for example, when the baby comes out that the touching and the hat on the baby and the blankets and the listening to the baby and the talking to them and handing them a drink and asking them questions, that's just been their experience. And they haven't thought anything of it until now. So that's encouraging.

So in the class, in more detail, we cover what normal, physiological birth looks like, why it works that way, what nature has in mind when nature set up this process. Why you are not likely to get this information from your average care provider and what questions to ask. I think that's really important. And we say, again and again, in this class really it's' about finding the support you need for your birth. So right now in your pregnancy, half way through, you're starting to think about what you do want, how you want it to look. Maybe you haven't sought a care provider or a birth attendant. Maybe you're not going to. But maybe you're looking for some guidance as far as who to choose.

We will talk lots more about parental care in the class. One entire class. And each class is about two hours. So I've spoken a lot about parental care on these podcasts, but the first class alone, of this series, will give you more information than I've done, probably, in all of these podcasts. Focusing more on what we call the wise woman tradition of birth and prenatal care and a little bit of time—more than I've spent here—on making an informed choice and what goes into that. We've definitely covered a little bit about that here.

Then we get into labor and birth for a couple classes and cover all kinds of myths. I mean really when you think about how many myths and misinformation is out there

about common things, about waters breaking, about when you get to 10 centimeters that's when you push, about needing to push. We don't need to push. A big topic that comes up in classes locally is how to prevent tears. So we spend a lot of time on, again, how birth works and how our bodies work and what to expect. We spend a lot of time on the fourth trimester, which is the final class.

And the fourth trimester, of course, is the postpartum, and that's a couple hours. And it probably could be a lot longer because it's so involved. The last—the fourth trimester—is the rest of our lives really. I think Robin Lim has that as a quote in her book. That you're pregnant for nine months. You're postpartum for the rest of your life.

So there is tons to cover there as far as mom and baby and what's normal as well as placenta options and traditions. Breastfeeding, cosleeping, all kinds of things. We're also looking at a few videos having critiques. Listening to stories. And, again, supporting this by research and good, solid information, so you don't think we're just making any of it up. Of course, we wouldn't anyway. But just so you know.

So I hope that highlights a little bit for you. And, again, possibly you're at the point in your pregnancy where that's sounding like the stuff you want to get into now. I mean gone is the morning sickness and things like that. So if your brain and your heart have shifted gears and you're starting to think about birth, then this class would be awesome for you. It, again, is a five-series class. Now the best thing about it, we think, and at least I think having a lot of kids and having a tight calendar is that there is no end date. There is no start date. You may start whenever you want and go at your own pace. You may listen to this at 2:00 in the morning when you can't sleep, or you can listen to this when you're driving around in the car.

So there's five classes to listen to. And then there is a really good workbook for each week with all of the notes. Pretty much everything we've covered in the audio plus more. And then additional hand outs. So a long with that, Margo and I both, are available by email for questions, concerns, whatever topics you might want to know more about, or you might have specific questions about your situation. We're also setting up a Facebook group to kind of connect the women that are taking this online course, so that you can feel support and ask them questions and share stories.

All in all I think it's going to be an awesome class. Again, just being able to do it at your own speed. And, honestly, having this depth of information available is something I wish I had had in my first couple of pregnancies because I took a lot of birth classes. I've taken the hypnosis classes, and I've taken Bradley classes. I mean I've taken a lot of classes myself. And I've taught a lot of classes, but they've all been just really traditional childbirth classes about the cervix opening to ten. And that's labor. And what

does it feel like? And not to poo poo any of that. Sometimes that information is really helpful. I just think this class is out of the box, and it's going to inspire you no matter what your plans are.

So the perfect time to do this is now. You have plenty of time to let things sink in, build your confidence, do your inner work, do more reading, make changes, ask questions. That's the time in pregnancy, I think that I'm at right now, where I feel like I can take that on. I can take that on now. And I can be done. I can be done with all that work for the most part by the time the baby is ready. So we want you to own your birth. That's kind of our little slogan. But it's very sincere. And as podcast listeners, you've already started down that path. So what better thing than to round out your knowledge?

Heck, even if you aren't having a baby in the next couple months, this information you can use if you're helping other women, if you just have friends that are pregnant. I really think you'll get an amazing value out of these five classes. So that's today, How to have an Indie Birth. Check it out on our site. You can register right there and get started immediately. And always available for questions and concerns. So never hesitate to do that.

And thanks for listening. We will see you back here shortly.

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