

(introductory music)

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MARYN: Welcome to Indie Birth's series of podcasts, *Taking Back Birth*. Hi. I'm Maryn. And I've been doing these podcasts for—wow. Quite awhile now. I think we're up to 30 plus recorded podcasts here on iTunes. And began with early pregnancy about a year ago at this point and took you through a pregnancy and a postpartum. So depending on where you're at in your pregnancy, of course, feel free to go back and listen and kind of catch where you're at or just listen from the beginning. One reason I'm saying that today is I did do a podcast on the sacred postpartum period. And I really recommend you go back and listen to that one just because that subject is so important. It's one of my absolute passions to educate women and families about the time after the baby. So much attention on the pregnancy and the birth and really the trimester that follows the birth, which is sort of a trimester—if we want to have a way to talk about it. It's known as the fourth trimester.

Those three months after the baby is born and so many things are going on. So today I'm going to talk a little bit about that. So, again, go back and listen to how to prepare your home, your heart, your family for a sacred postpartum, so that you can get in on that and enjoy that really special time right after birth. And get a plan for your fourth trimester as far as recovery, emotional, physical, spiritual recovery. As far as just bonding with that new baby in the early period. So, again, go back and hear that one. And then come back to this one, if you haven't done that.

And today, again, we're talking about what that fourth trimester or what those three months after baby might look like. Now I've done a couple podcasts for sure after the birth of my last baby, whose name is Ever. And she's just about three months today actually. Well, in the next couple days, she's three months. So I've done some podcasts with her as a new one in my arms as we were resting in bed and some other subjects. We've definitely been recording since she's been born. But I haven't really talked too much more about this last bit of time called the fourth trimester. So today I feel like I'm talking more about that and then kind of wrapping it up almost. Not wrapping up the podcasts or anything like that. Just wrapping up this segment of time that kind of goes with the pregnancy and birth and postpartum podcasts that have already happened.

So I am at the end of my fourth trimester. That's why it's called the childbearing year is because it truly is a year from conception to recovery. And many of us aren't even fully recovered and that's okay too because recovery comes in lots of shapes and forms.

And Ever is my seventh baby, so there's lots of recovery still going on for me on many levels. So I thought I would just share that today. So what have the last three months looked like for me and little Miss Ever? They've looked a lot of different ways really. In some ways, I can't believe that the three months has passed. And then on other days, it seems like nine months have passed. So I think time has taken on a funny thing, again. Similar to pregnancy. Some weeks go really fast and some months do, and then other parts go really slowly. I suppose that's just life. But there is something about life in this childbearing year that I think has many ebbs and flows. More than normal life, at least for me.

So it's felt that way in the last couple months. Slowness and then lots of speeding up. I feel like our transition to life on the other side of pregnancy and birth has been really beautiful and has been really gentle and really slow, I guess, in the bigger picture. It has been a good kind of slow. I really did respect the postpartum time. And, again, if you listen to that podcast, you'll have some more ideas. But we really did stay in. In our house. And in our room for quite awhile. And in our house for awhile. And just made a really slow transition to life on the outside. I suppose the recommendation in a perfect world would be to honor this fourth trimester—all three months—as much as we honor the first week or two after birth.

But I know, for me, that's not really possible with six other kids and things that are going on. So I feel like I've been really aware that I want to take it slow and that I wasn't quite ready to be fully out in the world yet but balancing that with days where I would have to be out and kind of doing normal things or back to making sure the house is clean and dinner is on the table and that kind of thing. So definitely a balance for me in the last couple months. Wanting to keep her in this little cocoon and myself as much as possible but still trying to get back to life.

So I feel like I've been particularly gentle with my body this time. And I think all of us have a different experience depending on how our birth was, what number baby it is, and even just what our intentions are going into a postpartum period. So with my earlier children—so maybe number one for sure, number two—maybe by number three I started to learn a bit more about the sacred postpartum time and just generally about having more respect for myself and my body as far as the amazing nine months it had just completed. So here I am just having completed number seven, and I feel like I really do treat my body differently in this last trimester than I have in the past. And for me, that's a good thing.

With my first baby, my daughter, I was literally running races less than six weeks after she was born. And I definitely don't recommend that. I didn't know about this postpartum time being special. I didn't have support. I didn't have traditions. And being the first baby, I was able to kind of get up and do that although I don't recommend it.

And I actually injured myself—my knee—pretty badly. That was almost 12 years ago, and my knee still bothers me. So even hormonally, there's lots of good reasons not to get up and start doing all kinds of intense physical stuff. But it took me awhile to learn that. So this time I've been really gentle. I've been walking out in nature and hiking for quite awhile. Probably at about two weeks postpartum. Not every day at that point. But gradual increase since then. And I started by taking Ever with me on these hikes in the morning. They would just be really slow and really gentle. And she would usually sleep.

But if she needed to nurse, I could take her out of the carrier and just sit down on a rock and nurse. So pretty relaxed. But I'm still pretty relaxed three months out. I think my brain would like to be more active or my body would like to be in better shape. But I've tried to just be really respectful that she's only three months. That it's only been three months since I've given birth and just increasing the hikes and the daily walks and, occasionally, getting in some other strength related exercises and stretching when I feel up to it. But the truth is I don't feel up to it still a lot of days just because I am back to taking care of everything else, and I don't want to wear myself out.

So the same goes with weight loss at least it has for me. I think in the past I've lost the weight from the baby pretty fast. And then this time I don't feel like it's coming off as fast, and that's okay. About a pound a week, I'd say, is what I'm looking at. And I'm trying to not pay too much attention to that. Just trying to pay attention to how I'm eating and if I'm getting out to move and hike every day that's really great. And then, again, really paying attention and almost babying myself with sleep and rest. Just really being aware of how tired I am. Really being sort of religious about when I go to bed. Trying to get enough sleep during the night. Trying to nap during the day once in awhile. That's once in a great while I suppose, at this point. Maybe once a week or not. And just being really, really gentle with myself.

Because the transition is a big one. And just because you have a few kids already certainly doesn't make it easier. I think in a lot of ways it makes it harder because there's just so much to take care of. It's not like I just get to take care of myself all day and a baby. There's so many more people and things going on. So I personally advise that if you're able to swing it and if that feels right to you just, in these three months, to not rush back. You will get there. I will get there. I don't think I'm quite there yet either on most days. But as far as, again, exercise or just feeling really normal energy wise, I don't yet. I think some days I feel more energetic than others. But in general, I'd say that I'm still sort of in rest and recovery mode. So I want my body to follow. I don't want to stress my body out by trying to lose too much weight or exercising too much or anything like that because I can feel that everything I do either takes away or adds to my energy which I suppose is obvious. But it feels very obvious here in this postpartum time.

Hair loss is something that comes up a lot. And I know, for me, it's usually at about three months that that starts to happen. Now it hasn't happened—started to happen yet, but I'm just at about three months. So I'm kind of expecting that to happen. For some women, it doesn't, or it doesn't happen as much. But really the reasoning, I think, is pretty clear. Excessive hair loss, which that might vary from person to person—because it can seem excessive. If you've really put on a lot of extra hair during pregnancy, which many of us do, then often it sort of does have to be released at about this time. So you kind of have to decide if it's excessive or if it's just putting you back at your normal hair amount. I know some people, if they are going to lose hair, it might be a little bit later. Maybe at five months. So in other words, just kind of coming into a new period here. Again, where the—obviously, the baby is out, and it's been a little bit. But you're still, to me, kind of in between worlds. You're just still getting back to normal.

So I had a pretty rigid sort of routine postpartum. And by that, I mean a whole line of supplements and essential oils and things I would do every day. We had lots of frozen meals, and I froze lots of bone broth. That was a really big piece of my recovery and feeling good. And I'm not doing all those things as much anymore. I think just naturally I'm starting to do less. But it's a good reminder even as I'm doing this podcast that broth, for example, does feel really good. It gives you lots of energy, I think, just from a mineral standpoint. And then I could probably replace some of my own supplements here. I was doing lots of B vitamins, and I have run out in the last couple weeks. So it's a good reminder to kind of get back on that for me.

I still feel like I have a routine. It's just not quite as rigid as it was. And the reason my routine was sort of on the rigid side was just my experience having had seven babies. And what I know feels good to me in the postpartum period. So, again, nutrition is really important. I like to do lots of high fat—really good fat—kind of food. So lots of coconut and avocado. And, again, minerally replenish with the bone broth and some other things. Chinese herbs. And an essential oil routine. And that is for—yes, replenishing but also hormonal balance. There's lots of good essential oils for hormonal balance and just supporting things like the adrenals and the thyroid, which I know, for me, just feel tired after birth. I don't think it's any huge deal. I don't think there's anything really wrong but just supporting those systems in my body because I feel it.

So that's where I am. I still have days—to be perfectly honest—where I would love to lay in bed all day. And if I can do that, even for half an hour, I certainly will. I've tried to keep connecting with my little baby, Ever, that way. I know—and I think most babies are like this—I know that she loved that skin to skin time. She loved me laying in bed with her every day. I think that's part of the reason that she is just such a centered, calm, grounded baby. She just got the time I think she needed. But she still likes that. Who wouldn't, right? To lay in bed with somebody warm and cozy all day. At least on certain days. So I try to connect like that with her at least once a day. And to be

honest, again, it's not something I do get to do every day. Sometimes the day just flies by. But if I get even 15 minutes to lay beside her and nurse her and just pet her little head and have us be all alone for a couple minutes, I certainly will because I still feel like that's needed. And it will be less needed as she grows here.

But she's still quite young. I mean three months isn't very old. And she has changed a lot. So let's talk a little bit about how the babies change. Of course, very individual. Very unique every single one of them are so different. And I see babies her age out and about or even on Facebook. People I know that had babies at the same time. And, of course, they're hugely different even in pictures. I feel like Ever, to me, certainly has grown a whole lot. She was about 8 pounds when she was born. And she's probably about 12, 12 ½ now. So she's gained a decent amount of weight. But she certainly isn't enormous.

And so, to me, in pictures, she still looks really young especially compared to some other babies. Now, of course, she's able to hold her head up at least for a little while. And she's smiling and laughing and very much a different being than she was three months ago which, when you think of it like that, three months isn't that long. And to have a little human being start to connect with the world in only that amount of time—about 90 days—is really quite miraculous and quite amazing that three months ago she was still in utero. And here she is now laughing and smiling and wanting to make eye contact and wanting to hear your voice and wanting to hear a song or be carried or whatever it is. So very much coming into her own little person.

But she is just so sweet and calm. Probably one of the—I hate to say easy. I don't like those words when describing babies or kids. But she is. She's very easy to be around. She's easy if I want to go out. She's easy if I don't want to go out. She's easy sleeping at night. So everything about her—for whatever reason—funny. What Ever reason. Ha, ha. Is just simple. She's just happy being in her baby body. And I certainly have had babies different from her as they're all different. And my last one before Ever—Mr. True—is a super amazing, sweet, little, happy almost two year old. But, honestly, as a baby, I felt like he struggled a little bit. That it just seemed uncomfortable to him to be in this baby body. His skin was difficult. Just personality wise. It seemed like he was a little bit frustrated. And so this trimester for him, I feel like was probably a little less enjoyable for both of us.

But, again, Ever—for whatever reason—is not that way. And I think we've had a really pleasant last trimester just getting to know each other. And, again, just being very gentle with ourselves. But it is amazing how the personality of the baby does shape any or all of these things. So I do feel like her personality and whatever it is that she kind of needs and wants has shaped this postpartum being sort of slower and gentler. We're not in a rush to get out of it because we're happy, and everybody is good.

So hormonal adjustment is something else that comes up. And I guess I said a little bit about that already. But for me, it's using essential oils. Something as simple as geranium. What a great hormone balancer geranium is. And I literally craved geranium after the birth and into the first couple weeks and continue to use geranium. And there are a bunch of others. Young Living, in particular, makes a couple of hormonal blends. And I have a few in the mail actually on the way to me just today because I feel like I'm hormonally entering a different phase. I mean, obviously, I'm not pregnant. Obviously, I'm not brand new postpartum. I mean milk supply is regulated. There's lots of things that are just back to quote on quote normal. But I feel myself just feeling very in between. So not that that's necessarily something that needs to be fixed. I do think part of it is just being in this space of neither here nor there.

But, again, I did get some hormone balance blends from Young Living. Sclaressence is the one that I ordered, and I'm just going to try them out and see how they feel. It has lots of good hormone balancing with the oils in the blends. So clary sage is one. I would have to look the other ones up. But in other words, there's lots of ways to support our bodies in this time. For me, that's essential oils. Other people might do herbs or Chinese medicine or with acupuncture or homeopathics or nothing. There's lots of women that either don't want to or don't need to or don't really notice. But, again, for me, it's been so many times that I've been through this that I feel hyper aware, in a sense, of not being quite myself yet. So that's one of the things I'm looking to do is to just kind of get back to feeling totally like myself in the next couple of weeks and months.

And I'm just starting to get there. I'm just starting to want to be there. Yeah. It would be nice to feel completely like myself again whatever that means. And even with my own personal things that I do—such as birth work or essential oils—I feel like I'm just now getting to the point where I want to get into them again at my own pace. Obviously recording these podcasts has been somewhat consistent. But lots of other projects that I personally want to take on or have already started. And I just haven't felt the energy to really dive into those again. So, again, I'm not quite there. I'm not diving in again here at exactly three months postpartum. But I'm starting to think about it. And I think if you have had a baby recently give yourself permission or allow this to be your permission, if you feel like you need someone else to say it. Sometimes that's nice.

This can be your permission to say, "Yes. We are at the three month mark, but we don't have to completely act like it was a million years ago. It wasn't. It was only three months. And I can take the time I need to still get back into my life and watch my baby grow." Because the babies grow so fast. And like we said, three months is such a different from—so different from three days that in the next month, two, three, Ever is really going to be changing. She's going to be getting teeth and wanting to get down and do stuff and crawl and even that blows my mind. That feels like a whole new

adventure even though I've done it many times. So, again, just personally, I feel like I'm getting back to looking at some goals and projects of my own. But still pretty focused on Ever and where she's at and what she needs.

I still bring her pretty much everywhere with me although she has some consistencies in her schedule such as a nap in the morning. And it's usually a pretty long nap. So if I'm able to run out and leave her home with my husband, I certainly will. No need to bring her out unnecessarily. And I know she'll be fine because she really does sleep during that time. But other than that, if I'm not sure what she's up to, it's still like I'm getting to know her. So if she's up and I need to go out, then she comes with me because I don't want her to need milk when I'm not here. I don't want her to cry or miss me or want that and not have me around. It still feels so new. And maybe you know. Maybe you don't. Maybe you haven't had a baby yet. But there is something about this unit we call mother baby. So when we're pregnant, it's pretty obvious. Well, to me, anyway, that we're one. There is a baby inside a mother, but we're one. We're one being.

And after birth, it's understanding that so that we can respect the immediate time after birth. That means we don't let anyone touch our baby or take our baby or even talk to us if we can help it. And then that flows into that early postpartum time where we're still one. We're still mother baby. But, obviously, with every day that passes with our babies and our children, that separation becomes more. And that's really sad especially with all the hormones still shifting. I have to say. I find that pretty emotional to say out loud here today. Just that the separation is becoming more and that's normal and natural. And I think in the culture we live in everybody wants to shorten that. In fact, I think most people have no idea what mother baby is or what this means. But even three months out, I feel like we're still connected. I don't want to leave her. I want her on me. I want her close to me. I want to hold her. I want to carry her. I still don't really let many people other than my husband or one of my kids hold the baby. There's no need. She still needs me. And she's still part of me. And for what it's worth, she has no idea she's separate.

So it's not until about 18 monthsish, I think, that a kid starts to realize, "Oh, you're my mom. But you're not me." That's a whole other subject. But, again, here at three months, there is no reason to create more of a separation than is necessary. Now, of course, some women and families have it set up where the mom might have to go back to work. And so there is a literal separation between mom and baby. And, of course, that's not ideal but in some situations needs to happen. But for me—thank goodness—that isn't something that needs to happen. So, again, I take her everywhere. If I have an appointment or someone to see, she comes with me. If we have a birth to go to, she comes with me. Everywhere I go, she goes because we are still so connected. And, again, every day that may be becoming less. But I want to savor every last second of it and just enjoy that sort of invisible umbilical cord that still connects us both because we

still need each other very much. And I think that's a reason that there is this period of time after birth.

I think nature is really smart and really gentle really and has created this period of time where mother and baby still need each other and are still neither here nor there and are still adjusting and creating this relationship. Hmm. Lots to think about, isn't there? So that's my wrap up of my own personal experience here of this fourth trimester of this first three months after birth. Still learning and growing each time for me with every baby. And in every day of this particular time. Happy to share it with you. Hoping that you are able to consider some of these things and concepts. And this time, with your little soul, that either is about to come into the world or maybe you're still enjoying in pregnancy. But consider this whole time line. Not just pregnancy. But the whole timeline. Birth and postpartum. And, of course, as Robin Lim says something like—hopefully I don't butcher this. You're pregnancy for nine months. You're postpartum for the rest of your life. So this is just the first little chapter for my little Ever and for myself after her birth. And I encourage you to approach your own with as much sacredness and as much grace and as much real liveness as you can. And enjoy it.

So thanks so much for listening. All of our podcasts are feature on iTunes. And, again, they start in early pregnancy, so you can go and catch up with whatever feels right to you. We do offer quite a bit of education at Indie Birth. We offer free consults on Monday, so you just sign up for a time. And either Margo or I will call you. Talk about anything pregnancy, birth, postpartum related that you want. We do offer a five-week online course that is wonderful and will prepare you for your birth and your postpartum period and can be done all at your own pace online. So How to Have an Indie Birth is the name of that course. And you can find it on our site, indiebirth.com.

Thanks again. I appreciate you listening and will catch you next time.

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