

(introductory music)

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**MARYN:** Welcome to Indie Birth's series of podcasts here on iTunes, *Taking Back Birth*. Good afternoon, everyone. Maryn here for the latest podcast installment. Really fun passionate topic for me today as usual. Want to talk about getting our partners on board with home birth. Now I say that a little sarcastically. You'll hear what I mean. You'll also hear me flipping through notes on this podcast. Normally do notes on my computer, but had some very needed offline time this weekend when preparing this podcast. And so you'll hear me flipping through actual paper notes. Wasn't hard to get a ton of notes on this topic though because it's just so common.

So a couple disclaimers for those of you that may be new to listening or maybe not know me so well. I am not anti male or anti medical really. But definitely not anti male. I personally have a really supportive partner/husband that has been supportive my entire journey. And not because he always understood what home birth was or any of these details that we're going to talk about but just because he supported me. And he is really amazing and has grown by leaps and bounds in the last bunch of years. In fact, he even has a free PDF out there on our Indie Birth site. Something about dads and home birth. I don't remember the exact title, but you could just Google it. It's a free PDF that he wrote for other men, who would like to support their partners.

So I'm not anti male by any stretch. And I'm also really lucky. I'll admit that. And also, obviously, not all partners of pregnant women are male. And so hopefully, this bunch of information, suggestions, advice, whatever can be applied really to any partnership that express these dynamics that we're going to talk about. And the dynamics, back to where we started before we got off on that tangent, begin with how do I get my partner on board? And that's kind of in quotes. The on board part because I see that a whole lot. I don't know if you do. Perhaps you see it a lot because you have a lot of friends that are wanting home births, or maybe it's personal. Maybe you want to get your partner on board. You want to convince him that this is the way to go. And today I want to talk about that.

Now really I could just end this podcast right now by saying why are you asking permission. Hmm. But I definitely want to talk more and not assuming that many of you even have that feeling. I think this is actually a really legitimate conversation. And for the sake of discussion, let's talk more even though that's kind of in the back of my mind. I guess I just admitted it. That why are we asking permission. But not everybody thinks about it like that, and that's okay. I think this question about getting our partners on

board is asked pretty innocently. So I'm not trying to be really mean and judgy about it. Most women are asking this because they just want support. Hey, I've been there. And I love that women are asking for support and trying to figure out how to get their family on the same page as them. Really that's great. And who doesn't want their birth choices to be validated?

So that's another disclaimer, I guess. Just that this can be asked really innocently. And I just want to dig a little deeper and see what people are actually asking. And then hopefully, I'll be a little bit helpful and talk about what resources and specifically how we can help partners maybe come around. So is the issue that we are trying to convince anybody? I think that kind of has to be talked about. I already hinted at it. But if it's not just an innocent question, which it very well may be, why do we feel the need to convince anyone? I think that's just a question that we each have to ask ourselves. So specifically, if we're the woman right now that's asking other women, "How do I get my husband on board," just to kind of take a look inward first and see what we're missing here. Are we missing something before we launch into this huge discussion? Maybe it's really simple. Maybe we're missing the point entirely, and we haven't even noticed it yet.

But, of course, I want to take the positive spin on it as much as I can and talk about if we are going to discuss this topic because it's very relevant and women are asking all the time, "What can we do to change this paradigm of birth that we're in," where specifically male and female roles are so different during pregnancy and birth. And what can we do to switch those roles up? What can we do to ascend our roles as well as the birthing woman and help our partners ascend the stereotypical role of needing to be convinced or to be put on board? So there's a lot of levels here, I think. Again, just really basic level before we get into the detail. I think many women aren't listening to their own voice. And, of course, that's the premise for all of these podcasts and a lot of what we do at Indie Birth is just having resources and support for women to say, "You do know." And it's fine to have a friend with you or a partner with you, but you have to be the one that—sure, this is the right thing. You have to listen to that voice inside of you. And you can't engage in fear. And I'll definitely talk more about that.

I think a lot of the reaction—and it's not a response, which would be more positive. But the reaction that many women are met with by their partners when talking about home birth is that of fear. And I think as the birthing woman who is trying to find her own voice, who knows she has a voice, who knows what she believes that we can't engage in fear. And we have to realize that at the end of the day we are the only ones that can stand up for ourselves, our bodies, and our babies. And even well meaning partners can't do that for us.

So with that in mind, what's actually going on when women ask this question? So, again, the question is, "How do I get my partner on board, on the same page? How do I convince him that because I want a home birth that's the way we should go?" So let's talk through a couple things. Definitely not a black and white topic although I'm going to try to just simplify it a bit. But I think there is lots of possibilities here, and sometimes it's a combination of things going on. So, again, if this applies to you, you'll figure out maybe which one of these things it is or maybe none of them. Maybe it's something else entirely that I'm not going to talk about.

So when women ask this question, I think it's conditioning. That's my number one note that I wrote with my little pen this weekend. I think it's conditioning on both sides of the coin. And I talked just briefly about that. Our roles and our stereotypical ways to behave in birth. And I think many women are just drawing upon that. It's just what's expected. It's just what's culturally imprinted on us. So, again, it goes both ways that we need to ask permission that men know more somehow about this process. And then on the other hand, I think when men aren't open to the idea of home birth that it's their cultural conditioning. And I see this all of the time. If you're a lucky one like me who just has always had a supportive partner regardless of what he intellectually knows about birth, then that's awesome. But I think most or many women are out there, and their husbands are so traumatized. And gosh. That's a huge topic, isn't it? I mean why are men traumatized? Well, there are a number of reasons for that I think.

But they're specifically brought up to suppress emotions. And in the case of men who have been part of a birth process, many of them are traumatized by that. So most often they've witnessed their wives in medical birth. They've witnessed trauma. They've been traumatized, and they don't talk about it. And, again, I've seen this personally so many times with women now planning home births. And they've worked through a lot to get to that point perhaps, and they've done intellectual learning as well. And their partner is kind of behind meaning maybe he hasn't even acknowledged how afraid he was, how traumatizing it was for him to be a part of that experience. And then I think worst of all is the not acknowledging it. Not being socially acceptable for him to talk about it, for him to even know. Sometimes it's just subconscious birth trauma. And so now this man is back in another situation. His wife is pregnant again. And he's just not going to do anything but give this control over to someone else.

And that's just what he's seen. That's what we all hear. That's what we've all been taught since we were born practically that we should have a trust in medicine. That they can save us. And, again, I think for men this is just a really strong pull because they're not the ones having the babies. They're the ones observing. And when it does appear to be so out of control, yet managed perhaps in a medical situation, right? So one intervention leads to another to another to another their brains just cannot fathom being outside of that system. Because after all, even though that system inflicted the

trauma—and, again, that might not be known to them consciously, it's also the system that probably saved the situation, the birth. Mom and baby.

So there's so much there, and I don't mean to gloss over it or belittle it or anything like that. It's just an enormous topic. The birth trauma that is inflicted on men and women and babies every single day. So even though that is really complex, it's often just a really simple reason why a man would need to be brought on board because he is so not on board. It is so outside of everything he feels and knows. And, again, a lot of it is subconscious. So the second reason is a lot simpler, at least to talk about. It's just pure lack of knowledge. And, again, it's not said with any judgment. My husband certainly didn't know very much about the birth process in our early years of having babies. He now knows more than most people. But most men out there unless they were really lucky to maybe witness their own mother give birth at home—and I've talked to a few women who have husbands like that. And it's so cool because it's so rare it seems.

But unless they're kind of the rare bird, most men just don't have any knowledge of how birth actually works. Again, they're so removed from the process. And just witnessing it whether it's on TV or hearing stories from other people at work maybe, they just don't have the knowledge. So it might go without saying that many women don't have this knowledge either. And, of course, we're trying to change that here. But women want home births because their experience was often not what they desired. Maybe the first or second time. Of course, there are women desiring home births that have never given birth before. And both of those situations, I think, are so promising and awesome. And I love that women are looking into home birth at all. I'm just saying the way we've all been brought up and not really educated about the way birth works many women don't know either.

So if a woman doesn't know that maybe it's fine. She has her intuition. Maybe she's not somebody that really has to understand the process. But honestly, stereotypically the way the male brain works—and sometimes it's not even male. It's just someone outside of the experience. So anyone watching something might intellectually want to know more. I think knowing about birth is just so vital. So when we come in contact with these sorts of situations here whether it's on the phone, in a consult, or here locally, that's my first recommendation for just kind of the run of the mill, "I want to get my husband on board." It's not really rocket science. It's just he doesn't know anything. And what I love about undisturbed birth or physiological birth, which is of course what we teach here and our classes are based on, is that it's science. It's not just mumbo jumbo. It's not just intuition. It's not oh, birth works. There's nothing else you need to know. It's really based on science and the hormones and what our bodies were made to do and the ideal situation in which our bodies can do this.

And for many men, it's absolutely life changing. It's eye opening. We've had several couples locally and many more couples really all over the world take our class, and they're almost always women that have had babies before. So their main motivation in taking the class is so that their husband can listen alongside them at their own house, at their own pace. And that's how they get the support they need. Again, it's not a huge deal. Really it's just he doesn't know anything. And, again, I think this sort of information really meets a lot of people where they're at because it is science based. And it's really common sense.

So that's kind of one of the easy answers. How do I get my husband on board is simply educate him. Educate yourself. Figure out the ideal scenario for birth working really without anybody needing to help, and chances are if he's even somewhat open he'll see that your ideas of home birth make a lot of sense because he'll see how interventions are just creating problems. And most of the time there is not really a problem in birth. It's just problems are being created.

So that was definitely it for me way back when. Now I had had a couple of midwife-attended births. And to be honest, my husband is not the cheering on type or wanting to receive the baby. He's very quiet. He can do whatever I ask of him. But there is a part of him that is—let's see. How do I phrase it? Hesitant perhaps. So I don't know what it's like to be on that side as a male witnessing your own baby come into the world but to not be the one doing it. I don't know what that feels like. So I think it's probably a mix of fear and all kinds of emotions. And he's very good at not showing that. But anyway, our midwife-attended births left me with desiring something else even though I was and am a midwife. But when it came time to press the issue with him to have a free birth, I was met with a similar reaction that a lot of you get. It wasn't quite, "Convince me," because that's just not his personality. His response was, "Well, why can't we just have someone there just in case?" Pretty common reaction.

And it was him learning about the way birth works through the works of Sarah Buckley, for example, and understanding that my body would work best in that scenario and having seen me birth before with other people around I think he could really see it. And I think he could really feel it. That that would make a big difference for me. So that's one reason or two reasons there. Another reason, I think, is just it's a lack of focus, right? So probably not a big deal. Not a big issue. This woman just got pregnant like yesterday, and she's super excited about planning a home birth and wants to know the best resources to give her husband. But he just hasn't got around to it yet. He barely knows she's pregnant, and his brain hasn't even processed that yet. So that's really simple. Just a lack of focus and probably will come around soon to wanting to hear about it. And then you're kind of back at the education, I think.

The last reason I could come up with—and this is a thing or is an issue. And this, to me, is definitely the most serious. So the ones I mention, I think, kind of are all fixable, if that's a word. And, again, I don't think that's convincing someone. I think that's just offering them knowledge and resources, and then, hopefully, they're the ones saying, "Oh, yeah. Totally. I totally get why you want to do this. And I'm open to it." But this last one is a deal breaker for me as a midwife. And, of course, a lot of this perspective is mine as a midwife not just as a woman. And that is what I call a relationship problem meaning this woman isn't necessarily newly pregnant. There isn't some great story behind why she might need to get her husband on board. It's just a relationship problem. And not being a counselor or a relationship expert, I don't really know what else to say about it except that it's a big deal because it's not really about birth unfortunately.

And it's more about the fact that this woman doesn't really have respect for herself, and she doesn't maybe trust herself. She doesn't think she's worth it which is huge. And, again, to me a much bigger, deeper issue than where are we going to have this baby. So this man has no respect for her, no respect for her desire, doesn't want to hear it. It's just really a bad situation. And it may even be abusive physically or emotionally. So this definitely isn't something that I am taking lightly. I am just saying that especially when you're coming in contact with women that want home births that occasionally this is a huge reason. And it's like the elephant in the room, honestly, when you have a friend like this or maybe a woman that wants your help because, to me, there is nothing to be done on the outside. In other words, as a midwife, there is nothing I can do. I wish there was. I wish I could help this woman. I wish I could help her confidence. I wish I could make this the kind of relationship where it was a give and take. But I can't. It's not my business at all actually.

And it's a really big red flag. And I, personally, just won't get involved in situations like this. I don't ever want to be the one to convince anybody and certainly wouldn't convince any woman to have her baby at home, if that's not where she wanted to be. And I won't convince men. And I won't convince partners of any kind. I'm simply there to help her realize what she sees as far as this birth goes. But I can't be in the middle of something that, again, really has nothing to do with birth. So, again, it's pretty huge. These kind of things definitely come between a couple, come between a family. But, again, in my estimation, it's not really the birth. It's a relationship problem. So that's kind of the big ugly reason there. But it definitely does probably apply to more people than we realize. And it's sad.

So here is a fact, in case you did not know. I'll just be really bold here. Men do not give birth. They do not. Not on this planet. That's hard because everybody has got their opinion. And, "Oh, well, it's his baby, and he should be this way or that way." Well, yes. Definitely. He should be supportive, and he can contribute to decision making when it

makes sense for him to do so. And when he has a level of knowledge that makes it acceptable for him to contribute. Now that might sound really obnoxious, but I've just come in contact with too many couples where this guy, in particular, knows nothing about birth but wants to tell her where, when, and how. And I just think that's really sad for the bigger picture. Not only is that woman kind of suffering and not able to live her truth. But this baby—this baby deserve a chance at the best birth experience possible. And I think coming from this place of fear is just not acceptable. So that's kind of the worst part. I'm sure, again, this is so individual in a way. There are so many reasons why someone would feel like their husband needed to be on board or so many reasons why the partner would not be on board.

But in the end, it just seems like a whole lot of fear to me because it's coming from a place of the mind and, again, this cultural conditioning. So to me, and I haven't seen this that much, but let's just say that the husband or partner wasn't really coming from fear. Maybe they were really in touch with their own truth and their own intuition. And what if that partner were to say to this woman about home birth, "I just don't feel that that's the right choice. I really feel like we need to consider this," I think there are loving, kind ways to express an opinion. And, again, when you're not coming from a place of fear, then it's a discussion. It's not a how do I get him on board. It's more just working these things out as people, not even male or female or mother or father. It's just working these things out. And I have total respect for that. It doesn't mean every family will choose to birth at home nor should they. I just think, again, the reasons I've stated are so much—so heavily fear based and lack of knowledge of base. And I think that's a really poor way to make a decision.

So if you were going to allow someone to control your decisions in a pregnancy or about a birth, I think you will have regrets of some kind because when you're not following your own voice and you're allowing someone else to weigh so heavily on something that's important to you, you have a lot of work to do whether it's now or later. So that's just the way I feel. I'm sure there are people that don't agree or feel differently. But, again, men do not give birth, and they do not know more or better than we do. Than you do. Again, unless it's coming from a place of love with just, honestly, wanting to offer his perspective and maybe his intuitive knowledge. Just simply, "No. You can't do that. It's not safe," that's not good enough. And it's not good enough for us. And it's not good enough for our babies.

So onward with the noisy notes here. Some things that begin to occur in men as they begin to learn about birth and home birth—and, again, these are my own observations based on years of experience. And some of these are really cool. It gets me excited actually. It gets me excited that, I think, together men, women, mothers, fathers—we can change the system. And this is the way we do it is we educate people of all kinds. And people of all kinds realize that allowing birth is really our heritage. Okay. So men

as they begin to learn about birth and home birth, they realize they're challenging the system which is big and scary for a lot of men and a lot of people, in general, right? But the system as we know it—and, again, it's not a judgment. It's not bad or good. But the system is male. The system is a patriarchal system. And it has been for a long time. So pretty much everything a man ever learned about his role, about what's true in the world becomes to be questioned. And that's really cool. And, again, there's lots of men and partners out there that are totally ready and willing and wanting to question. So that is fabulous. And if this podcast gets more men and partners on board with that kind of questioning, it's totally worth it.

So another thing that occurs is men begin to question their own value and their own worth. Whoa. That's big, right? But you know as a pregnant woman or just a woman in general or a birthing woman that this is what we go through all the time. My journey into pregnancy, birth, and motherhood has been transformative. And I think it can be for sure for many of us. So how many times have I questioned who am I? Where am I going? What do I offer to the world? Why am I here? Does birth work? Does birth need someone to work? Does birth work without people? The fact that we know nothing very often comes up in birth whether we're midwives or mothers. Just that we're absolutely humbled by the experience of birth. And so, men get this opportunity. And, again, it's not a negative thing at all. It's a beautiful, positive thing for those that are ready for it.

Now, of course, for men that aren't ready for it, well, perhaps this will get them a little further on their journey. And they'll be ready in a couple years. Maybe for the next baby. Or it's just an illuminating fact that perhaps the partner or husband that you're with isn't there. You are. And they're not. And that's pretty huge too. So men questioning their value and worth. How often do you think that goes on past the really intellectual questioning? So jobs and work and salary. Those are the kind of questioning that stereotypically most males do on a daily basis. But how about being really humbled by learning about birth or seeing this woman they love so much in her absolute truth and power and bringing another human being into the world. It's absolutely humbling and/or it can be threatening to a certain type of person. And that's actually male or female. The power of a woman birthing or even making her own choices in pregnancy can absolutely be a threat to people.

So this is, again, above and beyond birth choices. This is just finding our own truth and power and how making these choices brings this up. So that's pretty huge, huh? For your husband or your partner to be shown that light. What is their truth? Are they living it? Are they living their passion? Are they really following their voice? So another thing that occurs is men begin to question their role in birth. So hmm. That's really interesting. Again, especially for men that have seen medicalized birth and hospitals with male doctors, they have this sense of control. And that the experience was altered

or fixed, the baby needed to be saved, and the doctor was able to fix that situation. And then suddenly, they learn about birth or they're investigating home birth, and that is all turned on its head. They begin to question what their role is. Are they there any more to defend you? I know that's the role my husband had at our very first birth, which was a hospital birth. He was the defender as many men are and are instructed to be because many women feel like they need that. They need someone to come in and fight for them because they haven't made the choices that go along with their truth. And so they're in situations where they need to fight for the kind of birth they want.

So for men that have experienced birth that way, again, this is life changing. And here's where it gets really individual as you would guess. Men at a home birth. Are they needed? Some are. Some aren't. Some want to be involved. Some don't. And if they are involved, they're involved in maybe a really different way than they ever thought. There is nothing for them to do. They can't fix it. They can't make it better. They can't make it faster. They just have to be. And I think that can be really hard. Also that birth can't be controlled. And, again, back to men that have seen birth be controlled and then they have that artificial thought that that's how it needs to be to be safe. They suddenly realize that birth is big. Birth and death are related. That it's not black and white. And no human is God. Questions of spirituality come into play. And many men are really—again, I think the word humbled is great. I think we're all humbled by these questions. Do women need to be saved? That's a whole other topic. Again, for men that have seen that, asking that question once they learn about birth and are in it. Do women need to be saved? Is this a situation that we need to have that attitude about?

Another thing that occurs, their way of thinking and decision making is absolutely changed. So stereotypical once again but their linear mental way of thinking is challenged because anybody that's birthed a baby knows that that's not how you birth a baby. Not in your head. Not with a textbook. Not with a clock. Not with a chart. That's not how we do it. And that's not how we do it best just across the board. So for me to experience that really raw, natural, untamed process is humbling. There's that word again. But also I think really affects the way they bond with their baby and the way they ultimately parent. So if I had a quarter for men who were going to do things like circumcise or vaccinate their babies before birth and then who went through an actual pregnancy and birth experience and came out the other side and said, "I absolutely cannot do that to this baby," then I would have a good deal of money actually. And I think that's wonderful.

And it's nothing I did. It's probably nothing the woman did. It's just this man was open to receiving the gifts of an undisturbed birth. And he was changed by the oxytocin and by what he saw and witnessed and felt. Not what he thought. But what he felt. And was, again, humble enough to take that and say he was wrong or say, "This really changed me. There's no way I could go back to thinking about birth or parenting the

way I was.” So these qualities, I think, just the stereotypical ones and the not so stereotypical ones aren’t bad or wrong. They just are. Just the way you are the way you are and I am the way I am. But when we’re talking about male and female qualities, they have to be balanced. So that’s the wisdom. That’s the wisdom of birth. That’s the wisdom, I think, of the earth, of the universe is that everything is in balance.

And feminine wisdom is a huge part of birth. And for people that are really hard core about unassisted birth and physiological birth such as myself, there is always that actually very heavy way on the feminine wisdom. And I am saying that I think, in my case, it’s definitely balancing that with the male aspect of things as well and not going overboard the other way. I think there is a balance in all of these qualities. But the world at large definitely is weighed more heavily in the male perspective of birth and parenting. And so that’s why we’re talking about these things to remember that the way we feel, the way we see birth, the way we want our babies to come into this world is, of course, super powerful and relevant. And we have to have these discussions with our partners. We’re not trying to get them on board. We’re not trying to convince them. We’re just showing them what they probably already know because I think this truth is in everyone. Babies that were born violently—which was most of us honestly especially 30 years ago, 40 years ago. We were, essentially, born into violence. And so when that is your code, when that’s what you were imprinted with at birth, then you do have to make a special effort to get out of your own and to realize that what you’ve been conditioned to think isn’t necessarily what you really believe. And I think men need extra help, frankly, with that.

So yeah. That seems to me to be the issue is that women are delivering babies. And, of course, that’s said with some sarcasm. I don’t think babies should be delivered by anyone. I think women should birth their own babies. But women are delivering babies for the most part, and they’re doing this because it’s a one-sided approach. They’re not allowing their feminine wisdom to be part of this equation. Again, they’re thinking they need to convince someone and sort of have this lopsided maybe support but not really. And that throws the whole thing off. So we can’t be afraid. We have to be aware that we need these things in birth. We need our partnerships. We need our support. We need our family. And we also need the freedom to make our own choices. And, again, who will do this if we don’t? That’s my concern.

Wow. I still have a whole lot of notes. Let’s see what I’ve got here. Yeah. Standing strong in our unique perspective. If the husband is truly focused on fear and technology and testing and complications and emergencies—and it totally sounds like I’m making fun of that. I guess I am in a little way just because I hear it all the time. It’s just so stereotypical that it almost hurts. But I think sometimes men feel like they have to be the ones to ask those questions. The big, scary, what if something goes wrong question. And that’s just maybe part of the process. And, again, a lot of these men are

coming around, so it's okay to have these questions. But if someone is truly focused, like almost obsessively about these things, then I think as women when we're the partner of someone like that, we have to ask ourselves, "What are we feeling?" I think that's really valid. And I hope that that will be heard in the right way and not as an attack on anyone.

But our partners reflect us. And we reflect them. That's just the nature of any sort of relationship. It's often painful to see or admit. Sometimes it's great to see that we do reflect each other. So again, this happens a lot in my experience that a woman will come and have her set of questions that are pretty typical as well. And then the husband has all these scary questions. And it turns out that she is just as scared as he is. And she kind of needs him whether she knows it or not to make the excuse for her and make the excuse for her fear. And that's sad to me as well because there is nothing wrong with working through fears. But, again, some people are ready for home birth. Some are not. We're not going to convince anybody. So if a woman isn't ready, if she is really fearful and all she can think about are emergencies and complications, then the same goes for her. What we already covered. Education. Knowledge. And if that doesn't work, then she's not ready.

But, again, I just see that. Women are sort of disguising their husband's fears or—no. I mean they're disguising their own fears kind of through their husband. And it's actually stuff that they're really scared of. And they're not ready. So I think that's important to say even if no one else is going to say it. Stop blaming things on your husband. Stop saying that he says this or he says that or he says whatever. It's not safe, or he has some negative story or whatever. Accept it, if it's yours. And either work through it or don't. But a lot does get blamed on partners. I really think so. So it started all about how to get the partner on board, but for a lot of cases, it's actually the woman herself is not there.

So ideally, what's the best recipe? Just what we've already said. Be open to learning in whatever form whether that's you, the partner, both of you, whatever. Be open to being supported, and he needs to be open to supporting you because support is important. And as much as sometimes I would like to be black and white about it and say, "If your husband is—if it's a relationship problem and he doesn't let you, well just go do it anyway." Well, that's not a real answer for women that are in these relationships. Everybody wants support. So what's the best way to work through this? And, again, sometimes it's simple. Sometimes it's not. Sometimes it's really deep.

Everybody needs to be open to all of this as a transformative process. So, again, how do I get my husband on board? You don't. You don't. You provide the tools and whatever he is open to receiving—and, again, he has to be open and let it do its work. Let the magic kind of take hold. What I always say too to couples that come and they're

not quite there yet—maybe one of them, maybe both of them—is that it’s a journey. And if you’re just open to learning and finding out what you need and learning about yourself and your partner, then often you do transform. And when you’re sitting there at eight weeks pregnant and you think, “I’m not ready to have a home birth, or he’s not ready to have a home birth,” often those couples that early—if they’re both willing to be open and support each other and learning, they do often do it. And they have a great birth. And on the other side, they say, “I get it now. I see it. I see how that was a process. I see how I didn’t need to be ready for that home birth at eight weeks because I had all those months. And I needed to go through that journey.”

So I think that’s less scary for both the woman and her partner to not feel like anybody needs to get on board. I mean the only reason you’d need somebody on board would be if you were 40 weeks and you decided today that you wanted to have a home birth. I guess. But, again, most people are thinking about this a little bit earlier, and nobody needs to get on board. It’s just a journey. Are you willing to take the journey? Is your partner willing to take the journey? Because you can always back out really. I mean until you have the baby, until you go into labor. If it really wasn’t working out, which I have seen—rarely. But it does happen. Then you don’t. Then you go where it’s best for you, and you choose the person perhaps that’s best for you. So no one said you had to sign in blood on the dotted line at eight weeks to have a home birth and neither does your husband. Everybody is open—or needs to be open to taking that journey.

So, again, we covered a little of this, but I think there are definitely some red flags here when you’re talking about getting support from your partner. And, again, they’re probably relationship problems. But let’s just talk about them anyway. So a partner that just says, “No way. Nuh-uh. Not going to do it. Baby will die,” or any other awful thing like that and does not want to hear you, does not want to compromise, this sounds really extreme. But I’ve even heard about partners who say, “If you do that, I will take you to the hospital. I will drag you to the hospital.” Now, obviously, that’s abusive really, and that’s a relationship thing. But yeah. These are just really big, red, waving flags.

So yeah. Making no effort to learn despite all the chances. And I’ve definitely encountered men like that. Partners like that. So this woman appears to be working really hard to listen to our classes and to have questions, and every single time we see him he either doesn’t show up to the appointment with her or he has a list of excuse as to why he couldn’t listen to the class or whatever, whatever. And as a midwife, it’s my choice to sort of accept that or not. And I think it’s only acceptable for a very short amount of time because she does need that support. And, again, it’s back to me being the convincer, and I won’t do it. I won’t convince my own husband, and I won’t convince yours. It’s just not what I think I should be doing.

Oh, this is probably my favorite one, and this comes up so often. And I don't know that people see this as a red flag, so I wanted to talk about it. But men, partners, but really specifically men in particular, have another excuse as to why they don't want a home birth. So they say all the other right things like, "Oh, no. I'd be open to learning," not that they actually have yet. But, "Oh, okay. Yeah. Whatever. I'll do that," and, "Oh, but wait. How much does it cost? Oh no. Cash? Oh no. Our insurance doesn't cover that. We can't do that." Or—I'm trying to think of another one. Well, in my case, it's, "Oh, yeah. That's all great and—oh wait. What? Oh she doesn't work with a hospital?" And they completely—again, it's a lack of knowledge at the simplest level, of course. Not at the most complex level.

But at the simplest level, well, no. I don't work with a hospital. This isn't medical birth. And hospitals are for emergencies, and hospitals are for when birth has to become medical. And so really obvious big points that they completely don't seem to get. For me as the midwife means uh-uh. Nope. I'm not the right person for you. But as that woman, I really feel her. I really feel her frustration probably because we're supposed to not ask questions when someone gives a reason like that, right? "Oh, no. Too expensive." And stereotypically, of course, if the man is the one with the job and making money and the woman is home with the kids, then when he says, "No. That's too much money. Our insurance doesn't cover it," that's the end of the story for her. And that's just really, really sad.

Again, so many reasons for that. Maybe he really believes that to be true because he hasn't open to what we're actually talking about. Maybe it's actually her fear. Again, I couldn't say that enough because I think it comes up a lot. So she's getting a little fearful about home birth. She's not quite sure that she wants to hire someone that doesn't carry Pitocin. So instead of being honest about those concerns and wanting to learn, it's more, "Oh, no. My husband said we can't afford that, or we can only work with someone that takes insurance." And, again, for me, it's—a better match can be made. Let's put it that way because it's not that simple to me. If you are that concerned with emergencies and technology and insurance, then you probably have a view that birth is medical, and you're probably really afraid. So unless you're willing to work with that, well, yeah. Wrong situation.

So to me, those aren't just like throw them out the window things that shouldn't be a big deal like, "Oh, I really couldn't have a home birth because my husband said we didn't have the money." And I know that makes a lot of people angry, but I'm telling you I've worked with hundreds and hundreds of couples. And I just don't buy it. I don't think it's ever about the money. It's about fear, and it's about the fact that people don't want to look at these real issues. And, again, in the end maybe it's just not for them. So this isn't about convincing anybody, like I've said a million times. And it's certainly not about thinking that everybody at this point in time should have a home birth. It's simply

shining the light on these things people say and do that kind of don't go along with what they say they believe.

So those issues really end the conversation for a lot of women unfortunately. I don't really know what my advice there is. Again, if it's more of a relationship issue because he just can't hear, he just can't even think about spending money on you having a baby, then there's deeper work to be done there. But to end on a positive note, like I've said before, I think that so many partners and men are waking up. They're totally getting it. Their past experiences have taught them already. Maybe they haven't had any past experiences, and they're just completely open to this baby being born in love and trust and all those wonderful things at home. And they trust their partners. I think that's a huge part.

So yes. Education. Yes to all those things. But sometimes men are people too, and they're just really trusting of their relationship that they're in. They're trusting of their partners. They trust their baby, and they're just really open. And they want to learn. And they see or feel, again as I've said before, how this child will be affected by their decisions. And they're willing to follow. They're willing to let the mom and baby lead. And I think that's what anyone of us should do when we're not the one birthing is we don't lead. We follow. And, again, it doesn't mean that they're also super comfortable or super knowledgeable about the idea. But they're willing to follow, and they're okay with not being in control. And I think those two things are really, really key.

So as the ones that birth, as the women that are bringing these new souls into the world, I just this was worth talking about today for sure since ideally all women are supported by partners or family or both. And we don't always see eye to eye. And there's lots of education to be done to get the people we love on the same page. So one last time, don't convince anybody. Don't try to get anyone on board with your plan. Just live your own truth. Learn what you can. Be the light, and that will guide those around you.

So thanks so much for listening. Be sure to check out our Indie Birth site as usual for classes and webinars. And thanks so much for listening.

(closing music)