

(introductory music)

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MARYN: Welcome to Indie Birth's series of podcasts here on iTunes, *Taking Back Birth*. Hi, everyone. Maryn here from an extended absence it seems although certainly not from the birth world. Just from these podcasts. So it's been a whole week since our first international Indie Birth Conference has completed itself. And I wanted to give a little debriefing about how fabulous it was and why and then move on to what came out of that conference that feels really wonderful and special and is something we're offering to anyone. So you don't have to have been at the conference, live stream or there with us live in Sedona, to access the amazing community I want to tell you about today.

But first just a little conference recap although that's really hard after found complete days of eight hours each from intimate groups on prenatal care where we learned to question everything and to share ideas and ways of doing things and why. And this part included experienced midwives, student midwives, doulas, and even some women in the community that wanted to come and learn from this group. So I'd say, in general, the conference was really varied in who attended but definitely a higher level of learning, I think, was desired by all despite experience. It was a really special, special group of speakers that we had. And we're still getting so many compliments on just how nicely everything flowed and how the sessions were all really different but yet complemented each other. So if you didn't attend our conference live or live stream, you will be able to purchase recordings probably in the next month or two.

And I would, of course, recommend that but mostly because this is information and teachings I haven't seen anywhere else. Virtually, none of these people have been at a conference before and have accessible recordings for you to access. So that's going to be really special. And the quality of the recordings is amazing. It looks like whoever is teaching—maybe it was Diane Begis or Dr. Stuart looks like they're in your living room on these recordings. They are that clear. You can see the PowerPoint. You're obviously hearing the lecture. You can hear any questions that were asked and answered by the audience, so I couldn't recommend the recordings enough for those of you that are truly interested in this idea of new paradigm midwifery, new paradigm of birth, changing this world we live in by virtue of educating people about pregnancy and birth and also just combining the science and the sacred which was the theme of this

conference and probably will continue to be the theme of any Indie Birth Conference any time soon. And we do plan to keep this up yearly.

It seems the sacred and the science concept was something that was really easily grasped by everyone. And not only did they just seem to understand it intellectually but they actually felt it. And to me, that was the main difference between this conference and other birth or midwifery conferences I've been to. This wasn't just simply knowledge or facts or PowerPoints. This was true wisdom from each and every one of our teachers. And, again, combining that science element with the sacred that is often so ignored in this culture seemed to really touch people. So, again, couldn't recommend the recordings enough. Check our website, indiebirth.com/conference depending on when you're listening to this just for the latest and greatest as far as what's coming up and who is speaking and all that.

Right now we're just a week past the first conference so we don't have much up yet as far as when or where or anything like that. But we are working hard, once again, to bring unparalleled information, inspiration, wisdom, and teachings to you next year. And of course, tons in between which is what I want to talk about today. So what I want to tell you about today came out of this conference. And this conference obviously really wasn't just a weekend. For us, it's been many, many months of every day, every minute, not just who do we want where, or logistically how to make it work or this or that. But a really deep knitting together of our passions and our ideals and what we wanted people to walk away with. So that's not something you can really do just in a day. It takes lots of time.

And I know going into the conference Margo and I both were really excited to, of course, see how it went, what people's reactions were, but we were pretty positive people were going to leave with their lives changed. And there are so many women there that said exactly that. That their lives had been transformed by this conference. Now that's no joke. So taking that very seriously—and, again, knowing really that that would be what would come out of it for many people, we wanted to continue this tradition of knowledge, of community between the women and people that were there, the people that attended by live stream, and we're inviting you in. Anybody listening that wanted to be there and couldn't or just believes in what we do and wants to be part of this really tight knit community all year. So our idea was to basically keep the energy of the conference going all year.

It's so great to attend a weekend, an intense action, knowledge-packed weekend with amazing women and people. But the truth is when it's over it can be sort of depressing. It's like Christmas. How you feel the day after. Or any big event that you plan for. And

then there is that let down of, “Okay. Well, now what? I mean that was really great, but what do I do with it? And how do I go back to my community and make changes? How do I keep in touch with all these amazing, inspirational people? I want that energy all year.” And we all do because it always hard to be hard inspiration and really that high intensity creative spirit and high vibration energy which is what getting a group of people together like that does. So everybody wants that to continue because it feels so good.

So, again, that was our idea just to continue. Find a way to continue this all year. To allow people a way to keep connecting, to keep sharing, to keep encouraging each other, sharing stories, talking about their own inner work, talking about maybe births they’ve been at, how to handle this, how to handle that. And the whole while continuing to learn, right? Because we never stop learn. Or we never should. That’s my thoughts on the matter. No matter what the topic is. And I have tons of topics, obviously, on these podcasts. Like postpartum hemorrhage or newborn transition. And they’re just little bits of information, and it’s my perspective. It’s certainly not all there is to learn and the best way we can keep expanding ourselves and being able to serve women is to constantly be learning and hearing different thoughts and opinions or hearing the same thoughts and opinions even from different people. It’s all good. And it’s all experience, and it all allows us to grow and change and, again, continue to serve.

So we came up with this idea called The Wise Woman Circle. Now I’m probably going to have to back up a little bit and say that we wanted to find a way to coin the term or idea that went along with this conference without still calling it a conference because it’s really not that. We’re all in our separate communities now. We’re all home. You’re in your car right now or your kitchen listening to this. So we’re all separate physically for the most part. How do we create this community? Well, online is obviously a huge tool that we have right now in 2016. And although many of us wish that that wasn’t the most prominent way that we were able to keep in touch, it’s very relevant. And I know with this conference that’s really how we got people here was just using the Internet, using social media, of course, these podcast, and all the other information we have online was able to draw the right people in.

So The Wise Woman Circle is ideally people all over the globe and so far so good on that. There are women all over the place involved in this. And the idea is to connect them online so that they can continue these conversations and continue to learn. So we were really excited to ask all of the teachers that had taught last weekend at our conference. Dr. Stuart Fischbein, of course, being the most well known, I think, although they were all absolutely fabulous. Rochelle Garcia-Saliga, who I did a podcast with, Lisa Gillespie, who I did another podcast with on alignment and natural movement. Margo presented a really awesome presentation on blood pressure. Diana Begis told

us about bodywork from traditional midwives. And so there were so many different sessions and ways of teaching and different personalities. So most exciting, I think, was that all of these teachers have agreed to teach us—meaning you, me, whoever—whoever joins this Wise Woman Circle all throughout the year. So each of them have agreed to teach an hour or maybe more throughout the year. And so we're structuring just monthly phone calls that will be informal. I mean certainly not conference ready presentations. But more like information chats where you'll be able to ask these people questions. They will present on a topic of their choice, and it will just be another way for us to keep in touch and to learn and, hopefully, to get to see some of these teachers or presenters live or live stream again next year as we would love to have almost all of them back, if they're able to. And all will probably not be able to, which is why I put it that way. But everybody had such an amazing thing to offer, and we are thrilled to offer their wisdom throughout the year.

So what is the wise woman tradition? I think that's really a relevant thing to talk about. And if you're thinking about joining this Wise Woman Circle, you might be interested to know where the name came from. So I'm going to look some stuff up here while I talk. But I learned about the wise woman tradition from Susun Weed, who is an herbalist. And she certainly didn't invent this tradition, and I'm sure she would say the same. But she does outline it in one of her books called *Healing Wise*. And it's just outlined so well and is so clear. And when I read it years ago, hit such a part in my soul that I never forgot it. And I realize that the way I approach midwifery and birth and pregnancy is exactly this tradition. It is 100% the wise woman tradition.

And so Margo and I both just really feel that this is the thing that describes our work the best and how we will describe continuing on in this circle. And we actually use this idea of the wise woman tradition quite a lot. So we do teach a full day workshop on prenatal skills, and we taught a similar one just last weekend during the conference. But part of that is based on wise woman tradition, and we like to do the same thing. Talk about what it is and how it applies to birth because I think it's really great to see if everybody is on the same page. And of course, not everybody has to be. But I think giving a name or sort of a category to what we're thinking expands our thinking because it's not exactly what you would think. And even in our class last weekend—excuse me while I kind of move myself around here. Even in our class last weekend on prenatal skills, there were some people in the group that didn't agree. And that's fine. It's just a matter of getting clearer on what we are talking about.

So you can Google or read Susun Weed's book, *Healing Wise*, or you can just kind of look up the wise woman tradition. So the wise woman tradition is one of three traditions of healing that she identifies. The other two being called scientific and heroic. And we

made a little PDF about these three traditions as they relate to birth. So if you're a member of this group, this is one of the documents in our files both on Facebook and in our private group on our Indie Birth site. And you probably would really love to see how these traditions compare to each other in birth. So the three traditions really can be used to describe ways of thinking or ways of being in any area of life. So there's the wise woman tradition when it comes just to general health or politics even or schooling our children. Pretty much every little segment of life that we could have a philosophy about could be seen in this way.

So I'm going to read a little bit from Susun Weed's website and see what comes up. I mean there's a lot here. I'll just kind of read what comes to me to give you a better idea. So I'm not going to go into great detail about the scientific traditions or the heroic traditions but to say that we don't identify with those traditions in our own lives but definitely as far as birth goes. So the scientific tradition is what you would sort of imagine as western, mainstream medicine that it's not about the individual. It's about the system. It's about the one in charge who, of course, is not the person that's requiring healing. It's about tests and technology and looking outside of yourself basically, so you can read a lot more about that.

Then we move on to the heroic tradition. And she says that it is kind of a collection of traditions. And I definitely see that. Now she says the symbol for this tradition, the heroic tradition, is a circle. And I can see that as well. So when I think of the heroic tradition, I tend to think of naturopathic medicine. And I appreciate naturopathic medicine but just the way that it's still constructed around the idea of—and these are here words—“purification, punishment, sickness is negative. It's all about cleansing and perfection.” And there's obviously a lot more detail there. But I think there is a lot of midwifery practices nowadays and birth practices that fall into the heroic tradition. And it's a little confusing. I think people don't see it. We see the scientific tradition. We know mainstream birth and what that looks like. But what is this heroic tradition in birth? To me, it's that tradition that looks like it may be holistic or addressing the whole person. But in the end, it's still about control. It's still about looking outside of yourself. And to me—again, you can look at this in a lot more detail. To me, the heroic tradition is very much occupying most of midwifery today.

So in my mind, it's like 98% of what we think of as midwifery in this country which is really medical midwifery. That's just the truth. If you're—if a midwife is practicing under rules and regulations, she is practicing medical midwifery. That's just a fact. And that is very much the heroic tradition. So onwards to the focus of this whole podcast, which is what is the wise woman tradition and how is it different. Again, some of Susun's words here. “The world's oldest healing tradition.” You could also say to yourself, “The world's

oldest birthing tradition.” “Its symbol is the spiral. The whole is greater than the sum of its parts. Life is a spiraling, ever changing completeness. Spirit, thought, feeling, substance are inseparable and intertwined.”

And gosh. You could read so much about this, and it's so exhilarating, I think. When I came across it, it was just exactly what I meant. Exactly what is in my heart. But even by what I just said, although it's not a ton, hopefully you can feel it. It's exactly what I talk about all the time. Pregnancy and birth are not just physical. They're mental. They're spiritual. They're emotional. It is ever changing. It's not perfect. There is mystery. We don't ever know it all. We haven't ever felt it all. Half the time we don't know what we're doing or where we're going. And that is about all we can say sometimes about the mysteries of birth is that we know nothing. And that is very much, as funny as it sounds, a part of this tradition. So I think in this circle it's more about questioning. It's not just throwing our hands up and saying, “Oh, we have no idea.” It's this very insistent kind of questioning and research and inner connection and inspiring other women to do the same because there is no one way to find an answer in this tradition.

And at our conference, actually, we had a risk panel. I sat on the panel as sort of the traditional midwife along with my friend, Diane, who is a CNM, and then, of course, Dr. Stu, who is an OB. And we thought that would be really fun to give those three perspectives on risk. But those three perspectives are probably present as well in these traditions. And it really changes the conversation when you talk about something—anything. Risk just being one of those things. So the wise woman tradition to go a little further is ever changing, woman centered, compassionate. It's simple. It's invisible. And it's all about nourishment of the whole person. So can you think of any more perfect way to describe the way we can see pregnancy and birth? The most important thing about the wise woman tradition is that we, as the birthing woman, we are the center of it. So I love coming together in the circle with so many amazing women already. And we probably have 50 to 60 members already. And it's been fascinating because we are all the center of this wheel.

We've all had experiences where we had to look within ourselves, and we want to keep doing that. But yet, many of us are serving women maybe as doulas or maybe student midwives or as midwives. And we want to be in this same way of thinking and tradition with the woman as the focus. And, of course, that's what we say. I mean that's what I say all the time, but it's nice to have support in doing that and really take a close look at how you're learning and what you're thinking and how it's coming into manifestation in this world. Is that really what you're doing? Are you really serving the woman? Are you really serving this tradition? So, again, I would very much recommend if this idea

intrigues you to learn more about the wise woman tradition. You'll also learn more just in this group. Again, we have some PDFs up to kind of explain this for those that are interested. If nothing else, it's a great way to describe prenatal care to people whether you're a midwife or a woman doing her own prenatal care. It's also a great educational tool, if you believe the same things, to bring this concept of the wise woman tradition to your community and talk about it as it applies to birth. It really is intriguing, and the right people just feel it. I tell ya. They just feel it, and they'll come. And they understand, and they want to learn.

Another really cool part about the wise woman tradition just to maybe shock you, I don't know. Is the wise woman tradition is not about—well, I said before. There isn't one answer. There isn't one way to do things. So actually, in 2016, it was very much science and sacred when we view this tradition because when women are really powerful, when they know—they know deep, deep down what they know then they can intelligently and compassionately and consciously choose from all of the options especially during pregnancy and birth. So again, it came up in our class. Is getting blood work or an ultrasound holistic? Well, that's to be argued maybe depending on your definition of holistic although holistic really does mean the whole picture, the whole person, so I would still say yes. But very much so in this wise woman tradition do we include everything. We don't throw out anything out because it's up to the woman. It's up to her consulting herself first and using everybody else as peripheral support.

So who are we to say that ultrasound is never needed? As Dr. Stu said at the conference, he doesn't like to use those words. Never. Always. It doesn't really serve anyone. The wise woman tradition is always changing, and we have to trust ourselves. And we have to trust these women that we serve that they will know best. And, of course, again, 2016, I think that's why education is such a huge focus. That's why this group is going to be amazing because we're going to keep learning. And we're going to be able to keep educating other women. And we do need that. We do need that in addition to the connection we have deep within ourselves. We just don't have that knowledge at surface level right now for whatever reason. I think centuries and centuries ago we did. Women certainly weren't listening to podcasts or studying about birth. They just knew because they saw it. And they experienced it, and they lived it in their communities.

So because we don't have that very vital element of the wise woman tradition, we need to recreate it. And because we're in 2016, this is how we're recreating it. We are talking. We are communing. We are connecting. And most of it is virtual, and that's really exciting. My hope is that most or many of these woman, including you, that are part of this wise woman circle will show up here in Sedona next year. And I think we are

on track to creating something really cool. So we really hope you'll join us. I think it's amazing. Indiebirth.com/circle. You can read more about the Circle, the teachers we have scheduled. I wanted to add, as well, that what do you get in this Wise Woman Circle? Well, everything I've talked about. And some resources. So the resources are posted actually on a private part of the site. But then also in a secret Facebook group.

And Margo or I can add you to the secret Facebook group once you're part of this Wise Woman Circle. And, of course, that's where a lot of the conversation is happening. Resources such as we talked about this client history document while people were here during pre conference, and so we posted that. Basically, anything that had come up—excuse me—during the pre or post conference or main conference that could exist as a document has become one or we're working on it. And we're open to whatever else people want there for resources. And that's a huge topic. So that's going to keep growing. This isn't something that's just happening right now this month. This is hopefully going to continue for years and years and, obviously, the resources and the community are going to keep growing.

So beyond that—although that's a ton, right? Just having that community and connection and being able to learn all of the time. All of the calls will be recorded, so they'll kind of be like listening to this but different people talking. So if you missed one of the teaching calls as a member, no worries. It will be archived. You can access it at any time. And then finally, this is our core group. This is our Indie Birth Wise Woman Circle. These are the women that have come forward, again, here live in Sedona. Maybe they listened by live stream and, again, maybe it's you listening. You weren't able to do either of those things, but you're one of these women. You're in this group. Or you know you should be. That's the core group. This is the community that has stepped forward, has created this amazing group. And as a reward for lack of a better word, this group will be the first to know about conference happenings, about upcoming workshops here and elsewhere, and, most likely, get discounted prices on all of those things.

So I think it'll definitely more than pay for itself to be a member of the Wise Woman Circle. I think you will enjoy your year or years as part of this community. And I urge you to check it out, see what you're missing, and pass it on to friends that might want to join with you. Excuse me. Okay. So indiebirth.com/circle. Everything you need to know there. Indiebirth.com/conference for the newest information. And, of course, just the site in general for our five-week class. We do do free and paid consults every week. And you can sign up for either or both. Talk to Margo and I and just keep checking back

the site. There's always new podcasts, new blog posts, and everything else. So thanks so much for your support. I hope to see you in the Wise Woman Circle.

(closing music)