

(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 today wanting to dedicate this podcast, first of all, to a dear friend, who has left this earth way too soon. Many of you have seen the posts already, but many of you do only listen to podcasts. So I wanted to start by dedicating this podcast to my good friend, Sarah. Sarah was a personal friend of many years. She was a sister to me. She was really, really important to Indie Birth. Sarah was responsible last year for so much at our first conference. And like any event just couldn't have been pulled off without the work of our team and, specifically, Sarah's work and Sarah's love and Sarah's way of just providing for everybody in this mothering kind of way that only she could do. Sarah was a committed unassisted birther, and I tried so many times to get Sarah on this podcast. But she was somewhat private about her birth stories although we do have her on video at our conference last year telling the story of her sixth baby's birth, which was a surprise breech and, she said, was the easiest of her births.

So she wasn't always shy about telling her birth stories. But boy, do I wish I had a podcast with her now to reflect back on. Grateful for the video, however, and, of course, the memories that I have. So when I was writing the notes for this podcast, like I always say, it always happens serendipitously. I think of a topic or, in this case, this topic was suggested by a dear client. And I started working on anxiety in pregnancy and how that can look and just some of my own humble ideas how we deal with those things. And then I get the news about Sarah having died suddenly and unexpectedly at the age of 36 leaving behind 7 children including a baby. And talk about anxiety, right? There's nothing quite like death really to make you fearful, to bring up your own worst stuff, to make you question everything you do. And so working through that myself, I thought this was particularly timely because I've been consulting many of my own suggestions lately in the last couple of days to, of course, find peace and honor Sarah but also to deal with my own fears that have come up.

And, again, I think that's part of our experience as humans. And when we're in the birth world, in particular, I do think we hear maybe more than our fair share—whatever our fair share is I don't know. But our fair share of tragic events. Birth and death are wound together. And although Sarah didn't die from a birth complication, it is believed to have been a pulmonary embolism, which is a postpartum complication that is really not preventable, if it's going in that direction. And it happens really fast and sudden. So then, anxiety, again. There you have it. Just when something happens, it's so out of

our control and really there was nothing anyone could have done then it's normal. I know that too. To just feel like, "Wow. I am upset about that." And really never want to hear about such an event ever again in my life. Never do I want to.

But in the meantime, dealing with anxiety in pregnancy or really at any point, I'm going to talk about some simple ways today. I'm not a psychotherapist. I'm not a counselor. I'm not a healer specializing in any kind of particular technique. So what I'm going to offer you, again, is just my humble thoughts on how we can deal with feeling scared. Pregnancy, of course, is a sensitive time, so we may feel more than it feels like it should make sense to feel, if that makes sense. I think it does. Our feelings can be out of proportion even to our own eyes as to what's actually happened or what's going on. Pregnancy is also a spiritual time. Now that could be another podcast, but I think it's safe to say that aside from religious beliefs or including religious beliefs really, for most women—very high percentage—pregnancy is spiritual in one way or another. And that may just mean that she questions her place in the world more wondering who we are and why we're here is a facet of spirituality.

And, again, I think in pregnancy, it's something that comes up a lot. What am I here for? What is this all about? What am I doing? So all of these ideas may help you a little bit. Some may help. None may help. But it's good to put them out there and maybe something will help bring you some peace, if you're experiencing anxiety. So excuse the rain noise, if you hear it. This isn't a glamorous lifestyle. I'm actually recording this podcast in my car, and it never rains in Arizona. Well, it does sometimes but very rarely. But it is actually really raining right now. But I'm loving it and enjoying it and hoping it's not too distracting.

So when we're feeling anxiety, I think we need to ask ourselves some questions. And this is with our rational mind, again. So it's kind of—it's not directly compatible, I guess I should say, with anxiety because anxiety doesn't often make sense. So to ask ourselves questions about where it's coming from may not be helpful. But the questions I'm offering are just are these newer fears. Are you feeling anxious about something that just came up in life like Sarah's death? Is it circumstantial? Or does it feel circumstantial? Are the fears specific? So, again, maybe it's a fear now of a pulmonary embolism. Is that something that I feel anxious about? Some situations in pregnancy and we could make a list a mile long are just going to lend themselves to feeling more anxious. And, again, when I go into the suggestions, I'll say, again, maybe it's more about finding peace where we are than actually trying to fix anything.

So situations like pregnancy after loss, that's a big one. But really, I think every pregnant woman probably has a really good reason why she might experience anxiety at one point or another. Maybe it's just stress about other kids or family or money or partner or being tired or feeling overworked or who knows? But are the fears specific or

not? So I think the opposite of that is if things aren't new and circumstantial feeling where we can't really put our finger on what it might be then they're generally of the older variety. The kind of issues that kind of ebb and flow throughout our lives, that pop up when we are feeling down, or pop up at a time like pregnancy, again, when we're feeling really sensitive.

So those issues, the long standing issues, of course, can be harder to deal with and perhaps that sort of anxiety and even depression is not really going to be changed too much by simple techniques although why not try, right? Even if you have some more serious ideas to help yourself or someone else, there's no reason why we can't just think about some of these simple things because I do think most of them come back to the same principles, which I'll try and highlight.

So the very first thing I could come up with that does help me release anxiety or at least just be with it a little bit better is being alone. It sounds silly. Many of you that have many children, for example, just as I do we snicker at that sometimes. Ha, ha. How can we ever get time alone? And, of course, if I had time alone, I'd be fine. Well, it's just a reminder to make that time. Five minutes. Ten minutes. Before bed. Lock yourself in the bathroom, if you have to, before bedtime. Instead of taking a shower, just sit and breathe in the bathroom. I've certainly done it. I probably locked myself in the car like this before. So there's really limitless ideas when you're committed to having some quiet. Now I think the catch-22 is often when we're feeling anxious or depressed we don't want to be alone. That's hard. You have to be with yourself. You have to be with your thoughts. But ultimately, I can almost promise you that if that's not a technique you employ that your mind does quiet down. That it does take training. It does take maybe attention to some of these other things. But eventually being with yourself helps.

I did a podcast—let's see. I want to say last year with a woman named Anne. And that was on sound therapy. And just how she works with pregnant women, in particular, and vocalizing and making sounds and how that can be a way to release anxiety and stress. So you can check out that podcast, if it feels right to you. Something she said in the podcast I'll never forget because I hadn't thought of it in those terms, but I totally agreed which is the babies that we're carrying or baby, babies, whatever it is, have their own vibration. And so it's not to say that the baby's vibration is making us feel anxiety or stress. That's not the intention. But because the baby is probably of a much higher vibration than we are, we just feel like the dissonance of that. So we're kind of down in the dumps perhaps, feeling anxious, and it feels weird to have this baby that is trying to raise our vibration. So if you're in to that kind of stuff, definitely listen to Anne's podcast. And it's just a thought.

My next idea is, again, very simple. Journal. Journal your thoughts. Journal for so long that you don't even know what you're writing anymore. You're just stream of consciousness. Just getting it out there. And that's even what I do with some of these podcasts, like this one. I try to not get on my computer sometimes. There's just something really grounding about putting a pen to paper and writing. And especially when it's only for your eyes to see, you really can say anything. And that might be another sort of scary realization just like being alone. Actually reading your thoughts on paper. But it's very revealing and can help you realize sometimes what you're anxious about or even when you reread journals—those of you that do keep journals. I'm sure you know. You go back and read them at different stressful points in your life, and you're like, "Wow. I did that. I got over it. I got through it. It was all okay." And there's just peace in self reflection.

The next way is not as simple, but it's something I've really come to love and recommend. This technique is actually a technique. And it's called the emotional freedom technique, EFT. So you can Google that. Have some fun with that. Lots of free resources out there. I have an app that I downloaded and plenty of free websites. So it's not hard. This is also known as tapping. So I was exposed to tapping years ago. I didn't really understand how it worked, but I remember it working when I was working with a different practitioner. But lately, like I said, I've gotten into it for myself, which means I wanted to know more. So just doing basic research. It's really an amazing technique that stimulates the meridians on your body just the acupuncture would. But it's something you can totally do yourself. You don't need a tool. You don't need another person. You don't need a training.

And you just basically focus on what you're afraid of actually which I found really refreshing. I'm aware of all the positive thinking and New Age techniques. And I've used a lot of them myself. But what I love about the EFT is that you actually name your fear. And there has been something so helpful about that no matter what fear that crops up for me. To say my fear out loud. And then you go through this tapping. And the tapping allegedly releases the negative emotions. But there is something about just saying your fear out loud that's really refreshing. I know for me I've kind of heard it, and some place in myself I've thought, "Wow. You are really afraid of that." Not in a judgment kind of way. In a more loving way, I thought, "That's ridiculous." So give EFT a try or at least a Google search and see what you think. Again, I found it to be really effective. It's really simple. It's totally cheap. It's easy. Anybody can do it. You can teach your kids to do it. My one daughter, in particular, I taught how to do it. And if she is feeling afraid especially before bed time which is kind of her thing, then she's old enough to tap and name her own fear. And I don't even have to get involved. She can just kind of do that privately. She feels like it really helps. So that's one of the more concrete tools that I think is quite amazing.

The next idea I have is a lot like spending time alone but more specific. Get out. Get outside. Get outside on the land. Put your feet in the dirt or the sand or whatever it is. Touch a tree. Breathe in some air. Have quiet whatever that means wherever you are. And just connect. It might feel really strange at first, if that's not something you're used to doing. Or perhaps you live in a really metro area where it's going to be really hard for you to find, but I really think you can even in a metro area. You're going to wind up at a park probably. But just find a quiet corner alone where there aren't people and connect with the earth. The earth is so wise and has been here way longer than us. So I find that you don't have to over think it really. You just have to be. Just have to be in a place where nature supports you which nature supports us all of the time. We're just so caught up in life and business and cars and all that that we forget. But nature is always there. Nature is stable and sturdy and reliable and foundational. And that's just something that helps me a lot.

Of course, I live in a place where I can get out every morning and literally sit on a rock or whatever it is. But, again, I think in our own ways each of us can find a way to connect more with the root of things or one of the roots of things. And put in a more religious or spiritual perspective, the earth is really important. So I think no matter what belief system you're coming from you can find peace and connection with whatever you feel is bigger than you out on the land.

The next suggestion is another more concrete tool. And I think I've done a podcast about flower essences. I really like flower essences. I was teaching an intro to midwifery course for a school. And every week we were going through a different alternative therapy. So herbs, homeopathy, and I love that stuff too. But I realized I could share about flower essences, and that was great. Most of the students had never heard of them. And they're just so simple really. So a flower essence is made from a flower as it sounds. But there is no smell or taste to a flower essence. You can Google instructions to make your own flower essence. Not that you're probably actually going to make one but just so you see how simple it is. Literally flowers in water out in the sun or out under the moon. Whatever energy you prefer. And that makes an essence. So it bottles the qualities of the flower that you are—that you've harvested. Whatever the qualities of that flower may be.

And if you're not into all that, making it, and harvesting, I understand. But you can buy them. And, of course, the most famous flower essences are the Bach remedies. I think there's 37 Bach remedies. And they're quiet old. It's not a new concept. Don't quote me on the year that Dr. Bach developed them. But he was a doctor, and he realized that, in his practice, everything came back to emotional health. And not just in his practice, he believes that—or believed that in general. But he was experimenting in his practice. So everything comes back to emotional health. Every physical ailment, every complaint. So he developed these flower essences from local flowers. And he was in

England, so the flowers are still local to there. But the Bach remedies are quite famous. You can buy them really at any natural store. And you pick them specifically for what you're dealing with.

So if you have a specific fear, I think it's mimulus. Don't quote me on that either. But there are specific flowers for specific feelings. So trauma or feeling unworthy or being too tired. It's really fun to go online and read about all the Bach essences. And I'm sure you'll find at least a handful that you're like, "Oh, I could use those." So if you're like me, you have a big kit, and you can kind of put them together. But if you don't, that's fine too. You can just go buy the one you want and just try it. Just do a couple drops in water here or there. And you'll just have to see if it works for you. The idea is that it's an energetic medicine, so it does change kind of how you're seeing things. And honestly, we don't really even know how they work. That's the truth. There's a lot of mystery involved in the healing with plants. But many people across the world find them effective and powerful. And, again, just super safe and easy, safe for kids and pets and pregnant women.

And you could live in an area where people make flower essences unique to your local plants. So here in Arizona, they do. In fact, I was just at the tiny little health food store—one of them—that we have. And there was a new company—like a new local company—that had their flower essences up front. I didn't try them. But there's lots to try. Lots to experiment with. And I find specifically with anxiety that flower essences have been really helpful.

So the next idea is along those lines. Another alternative therapy, so to speak. Essential oils. Now I'm not going to go into what an essential oil is and all that. I'm sure I have podcasts somewhere on those things. But definitely more potent, more powerful, more concentrated than a flower essence. Essential oils, a lot of controversy about the use of essential oils especially in pregnancy. So, again, I'm not going to go there today. But I just can say, personally, that I've benefitted from using essential oils in an emotional way. So we think about using them for sore throats or whatever it is. But essential oils can be used for emotional clearing. Excuse me. So just something to put out there, if you are interested in that.

So what I like, myself, personally, about some of these ideas is that it comes back to a lot of the same ideas. So getting back to the earth, connecting with the plants, and finding the wisdom that is there, that humans just have lost along the way. Again, because we are so in our minds. We're so busy. And we've forgotten our true nature. So if you agree with that there's lots of ways that you can reconnect. And really for me, that's what anxiety is is a disconnect. It's a disconnect between what I really am, whatever your belief system is around that, and how I am sort of looking and the real world. How I'm dealing with being a human on this planet. There's that disconnect that

I'm not aware enough of how sacred everything is and how perfect everything is. So anything you can do, I think, to get you back to feeling that way even for an instant takes away anxiety.

So the next idea, get a sister. And you may not have a biological sister. I don't even mean that. I certainly do have an amazing biological sister that's my best friend. But we don't live close. So sometimes it doesn't matter. We're on the phone a couple times a day. And just that is enough some days to deal with anxieties or fears. Speaking them out loud to people that you trust or just talking about other things and realizing that your anxiety and fears just don't need that much attention. Whatever it is. And by sister, I mean really anyone regardless of gender. Anybody that is super closer to you that know your heart that can be there for you. I think in pregnancy we just don't have enough of that. We don't do enough of that. We don't ask enough of that. We just live in a culture where we've forgotten that women are our sisters. And it's easier said than done. I know so many women. And I'm one of them that would love more of a community where I live. And many of us, including myself, are feeling that loss all of the time.

So it's not said lightly. I don't know that many women have tons of women to call on. I'm talking about just one person maybe that you can call up on the phone or that you can go see or just hang out with and just remember what it feels like to connect with someone that understands. Not someone that's going to fix you. You don't need that I don't think. Not at this moment anyway. You don't need a therapist. You don't need somebody that's going to tell you how it should be or what you need to do. Just somebody that's there reflecting to you how powerful you are, and that whatever you're feeling, you can get through it. You can do it.

Another idea, I'm good friends, as many of you know, with an acupuncturist. One of my best friends here. She's been an acupuncturist for a really long time. So I would never pretend to have half the knowledge that she does or even a quarter of the knowledge she does. But definitely, a lot of her wisdom has rubbed off on me for which I'm grateful. And something that I've learned from her that just makes me fall even more in love with Chinese medicine is that feelings, emotions, something like anxiety is not separate from a physical state. Now if you don't know a lot about Chinese medicine, it gives you another area of interest to research. But it is an ancient healing system. I'd say probably one of the oldest. And, again, there is this connection between body, mind, and spirit. So I can just say, for me, that when I've been feeling overly anxious, for example, or disconnected or pick some kind of emotion that isn't feeling that great. When I've gone to see her, she can make sense of it for me or help me with it.

So instead of just, "Oh, you're feeling anxious. I don't know why," she'll feel my pulses. She'll look at my tongue. She'll do the acupuncture needles, and she'll have some kind

of reason really why. So perhaps the spleen as a body system is weak or whatever it is. But in her mind because she's an expert in Chinese medicine, the body isn't separate from the mind. So when the mind is feeling anxious, it's usually because there is a weakness in the body. Now what came first? Chicken or the egg? I don't know. But if you're able to do something like acupuncture, that does balance the body, then often your mind can be balanced because they're so connected.

Let's see. What is my next idea? This one is a little vague on my paper. What was I saying? What was I saying? Something about when issues aren't feeling as surfacy. So we all have issues that we've carried from our childhood. And I think I was just trying to write down on paper that in pregnancy it can be aggravated whatever these issues. And I think we just each uniquely on our own have to decide is this the time that I want to delve into that. Do I want to do that self work? Or is it not? And I don't have an answer for you. I have certainly done both in different pregnancies. Some pregnancies felt like, yes, it was time to do that. Other pregnancies felt like really no, it was not time to get involved in all that. So it's just something you have to decide. There's lots of great resources if you are wanting to do some digging and look into childhood issues, for example. One of my favorite books is called *The Presence Process* by Michael Brown. And I'll just leave it there because that book is way too monumental to really get an explanation out of me. It's an amazing book, and I've gone through his program many, many times in the last couple of years. And it's always life changing.

So it's not for the faint of heart. And, again, it just might not be time during a pregnancy to go through that. But just a resource, if you're feeling like wow. Some of these anxieties are not circumstantial. These things are deep, and they're cropping up from who knows when and whatever. So just an idea. I do have a page I wanted to read out of another book that I really enjoy. Eckhart Tolle, who of course is a pretty mainstream New Age writer. I do like his stuff. I know some, like my mom, just—she does not like his books at all. I do. Right now the *Practicing the Power of Now* is what I'm reading, so it's like a little manual. And, again, I was preparing this podcast. I received this awful stunning news of my friend, and I was feeling majorly anxious. And I picked up this book, and this is the page I turned to. So I wanted to share it with you because I think no matter what you're feeling anxious about perhaps this will give you some hope as well.

So Eckhart Tolle says, "The psychological condition of fear is divorced from any concrete and true immediate danger. It comes in many forms. Unease. Worry. Anxiety. Nervousness. Tension. Dread. Phobia and so on. This kind of psychological fear is always of something that might happen. Not of something that is happening now. You are in the here and now while your mind is in the future. This creates an anxiety gap. And if you are identified with your mind and have lost touch with the power

and simplicity of the now, that anxiety gap will be your constant companion. You can always cope with the present moment. But you cannot cope with something that is only a mind projection. You cannot cope with the future.”

So that’s just a paragraph. This book is awesome, and it’s the kind of book that I want to read like 3 million times just everyday to remind me that I at least think that’s true. It’s one of the hardest parts of being a human is, I think, realizing that now is the only thing actually happening. That if we cannot get wrapped up in what has already happened or what might happen then we might be able to releases ourselves of any anxiety and fear and truly find joy. So isn’t that the goal all the time?

So last, but not least, my last suggestion for releasing anxiety or at least diminishing anxiety is very basic. So we’ve come full circle here. Remember self care. When you’re feeling anxious or, for that matter, exhausted or depleted, any kind of extreme just remember that the basics are where to start. And sometimes we forget. We get so wrapped up in our own experience. But by basics, I mean basics of care. Are you eating? Are you drinking? Are you sleeping? And when we’re pregnant, that’s even more important. We can’t skip meals. We cannot be hydrated. And although that feels like anxiety sometimes in and of itself, it’s pressure to eat the right foods. We do the best we can. We release the anxieties around those issues, and we simply say, “I’m taking care of myself. And if I don’t take care of myself, I’m a mess.” And then everything is horrible, and life seems awful. And I’m anxious all the time. So it’s just a simple reminder to take care of yourself, to figure out what you need to eat, to not judge yourself for feeling like you’re eating the wrong thing, or whatever it is. Just eat. Just eat regularly. Just drink regularly. Try your best with sleep.

Of course, anxiety and sleep or lack of sleep, I should say, can often go hand in hand. And I don’t have any magic kind of thing to say about that other than working on any or all of these techniques, perhaps meditating before bedtime or just, again, finding that quiet time to journal or connect can certainly help you sleep better especially in pregnancy.

So I hope this has been helpful to you. Thank you for listening and letting me release some of my own feelings of the last few days. I do ask your help in donating to Sarah’s campaign. They have raised quite a bit of money for her family already meaning her husband and seven children. But really, how can you even put a price on any of this? I know more money would obviously be more helpful. It would allow her husband to take more time off of work and deal with the trauma and these young children that are now shockingly left without a mother. The best way to find her campaign would be to go to the Indie Birth site and find the blog post I wrote called *Remembering Sarah*. And if you can’t find it, just go to Google. Put in Indie Birth Remember Sarah, and you can find the link that her church has made to accept donations. This has nothing to do with Indie

Birth. We're not taking any money for her. Her church is doing a fabulous job of that, so we'll let them handle it.

What I can offer you is if you do donate to Sarah's fund in any capacity, just forward me your receipt at maryn@indiebirth.com. And we can give you whatever digital product of ours you would like. That is our way of being as—not as—as only a smidge as graceful and as gracious as Sarah was. That's the least we can do by you helping her family out. So, again, Remembering Sarah. Check the Indie Birth site for all kinds of other upcoming events. And have a great day.

(closing music)