

(introductory music)

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MARYN: Welcome to Indie Birth's series of podcasts here on iTunes, *Taking Back Birth*. Hi. Maryn here as always with some reflections today on my own current pregnancy just for fun or maybe it's just for me too to have this preserved memory of this pregnancy, I think, and also just being able to talk about what I'm feeling and what's going on. Maybe some of you are at the same point in pregnancy or sometimes it's just, I think, fun to listen to the different emotions that come up through different stages especially if you work with pregnant women at all. There definitely seem to be some themes, I've found, through the course of a pregnancy. So I'm about 32 weeks, and I'm going to get to what's currently going on and how I'm feeling. But as I think illustration of that I had actually planned to do this podcast a couple of weeks ago when I was about 27ish weeks. So kind of a long time ago really. But I think that's just part of where I'm at that I'll talk about. Not getting things complete at quite the same rate, and I think it's actually cool to see how much things can change in a month or so of pregnancy.

So when I had outlined the podcast or just thought about it even about a month ago, it was more mid pregnancy even though 27 weeks is past the midpoint. Generally referred to as midpregnancy. And what had prompted me to want to do the podcast then was, of course, what I was feeling but feeling also connected to other women at the same point in pregnancy that I know online maybe through Facebook and even some in real life that are close to me. And I think it was really interesting how this just seems to happen at the same time for most everyone really. So what I mean by that is this 27, 28 weekish time being really about fears and, if it's not fears necessarily, it's issues that come up and things to resolve. And so maybe I shouldn't be as aware of that in a sense. Maybe I created that. I don't know.

But I definitely notice when working with pregnant women that, again, it seems to be a theme that the beginning of pregnancy has its own theme. Early pregnancy. And then kind of that later first trimester, early second trimester has kind of a different theme as far as the way you feel or even the way you relate to your body or the baby. And like I'm saying, around 27, 28 weeks I find that there's a lot going on for most of us. Fears come up. Sometimes really specific fears. Sometimes really general fears. Feeling kind of over emotional all of a sudden. So the classic crying for no reason or crying with a reason but kind of going a little bit overboard perhaps from your normal self. Feeling the tug sometimes in relationships is something I've noticed. So I don't know. That may not be the case for you, and it certainly isn't something that you have to project

onto your own pregnancy, if you're not feeling that way. But if you are I'd say join the club. It's very normal to have these things come up. And with fears, I think there's a lot of ways that can look. And I heard other women express these things. So, again, that's where I'm drawing from other than my own experience.

But classic fears of something being wrong with the baby. I know for me that that midpregnancy time—and even now—I definitely can be fearful of things that are legitimately possible, I suppose, right? So preterm birth. Whereas I know that isn't going to happen and all of that. And clinically and factually, I could reason why that's not likely at least. But it's just something that pops into my brain because it is too early for birth even now. And certainly at 27, 28 weeks, it is. So it's the dark side, I'd say, of being pregnant that I don't think everybody has to feel, but I know I certainly have in many pregnancies. Kind of like this catch-22 where you're really excited to be holding life, but it's at this fragile point and that can be scary. Just kind of reckoning with what that means and, of course, I think it's bigger than that. Really what we're reckoning with at any given moment is our lack of control, and I'm no stranger to wrestling with that either. I think pregnancy is probably the biggest test in someone's life of being out of control of really everything. Or not even test. It's the biggest way of showing us that that's actually our life. We're actually not in control.

So those are, again, I think some of the darker things that come up, at least for me, during this time. But I don't think they're uncommon. I do wish I understood maybe more about the physiology of not necessarily the pregnant body but the pregnant mind and the pregnant heart and soul really if there's some definable reason why we might feel this way at different stages. The best I've been able to do so far, at least when working with other people, is that you're at a stage, at this point, where, like I said, you're not ready to have a baby. I mean in any capacity. You're not physically ready. You're not emotionally ready. And so, it kind of makes sense that you're mentally aware of everything, and you're becoming increasingly aware that this baby will have to be birthed. But, again, you're not there. So even hormonally, I think that's probably a great explanation although I don't know for sure that, right? As we get closer, we have good hormones and endorphins to kind of get us through those final weeks, and things take on a different light. At least, they do for me at that point.

And I won't lie. I'm very anxious to get there whether that's just me or this pregnancy or having had a loss before, I think, is definitely playing into some of the things I'm feeling. I'm just anxious to get to the point of birth or to be eligible, frankly, for birth. So that's my not very scientific explanation for why this phase can be really uncomfortable. And, again, when I'm working with people, it's a great time—or maybe it's a great time kind of slightly after this point because most women will be working through this as I did personally. And then I feel like perhaps working with a midwife or someone else a couple weeks after is beneficial. And I call it the cobweb clearing phase or session.

And I like to do that with people and their partners. And by that, I mean talking openly about expectations of the birth, talking openly fears of the birth. It is one visit where if we haven't talked about such things as this darker side of pregnancy and birth, like death, that we at least talk briefly and bring that into the room as this full picture of the life experience of birth.

So I like to do that with some questions that they work on alone and then a conversation where we talk together about those things. So, again, what are your fears? Are there any lingering fears? Most people, if they're being honest, have some. And the partner may have completely different fears. So from my perspective, it's not as much solving their problems. Telling them their fears are irrational. It's not about that. It's more just holding space for this phase. This phase where fears come up and things feel unsettled and holding that space for people to acknowledge their fears and expectations because most people work very nicely through all of that. And I think that's probably built into the physiology as well meaning most people don't hang on to fears right up until the moment of birth although that's not necessarily abnormal either. Most people work through them or at least have them lessen.

So bringing them out into the open, I feel, can be helpful. I know it's certainly helpful to me as a midwife to hear kind of what's going on. And, again, just hoping that people are honest with where they're at because, again, I would reassure most people that this is pretty normal. Again, that it's just one of the humps kind of of pregnancy. And like I said, perhaps it's not that way for everybody. And everybody is different. So perhaps this experience of this gestation isn't that way for you. Maybe you felt more that way at 20 weeks. Maybe there was something that came up that you really had to work through or maybe just didn't have that happen at all. And you were able to clear fears as you went. Or maybe it didn't happen until the end. So definitely not saying there's one way that it looks. If there were, that would be easy for all of us really to plan for and prepare for and to deal with. But I think it's more of a general thing. And it could be even something like when you've had babies before. Things like this are more noticeable or more prevalent to you because you perhaps act the same way in each pregnancy.

So it's really hard to say especially for people that haven't birthed yet what they'll experience. I'm not trying to put it any projections on that. Just simply talking about my experience and what I've noticed. So let's see. I'm not quite to my present moment. I had a little bit more to say about that 27, 28-week gestation. I know, for me, that that has often been—excuse me—the time period that the baby has had the personality come through more. Now, again, that's not everybody. That's not every pregnancy. I certainly could cite some of my children that I didn't feel that way about. In fact, my fourth baby really didn't come into his body until after birth. And that's been the only one like that that I've experienced personally but just saying that. Of course, it can

happen any time. And that's if you even believe that or have similar beliefs about when the soul enters the body or et cetera, et cetera.

So for me, with what I believe, that can really happen at any time. It definitely, for me, seems to happen later. And not necessarily at the moment of conception or anything although I believe that's possible. But even if it did, I feel like I don't know that I'm connected enough to feel all that early on. And, again, I think that's just the evolution of a pregnancy. The way it's timed, how long we gestate. I think there are things that are sort of meant to feel right at certain times. So feeling the baby's personality or soul enter, however you want to put it, becomes something that I think can be noticeable, at least for me. And I felt that way this pregnancy too. That this is about the time that a— it's so hard to talk about really or it's hard to put words to. More of a presence of who this person is feels noticeable. And, again, I think different people would describe it different ways. More of an energetic feeling. Of course, you're feeling more, in general, physically. So the baby is kicking more. Oh, baby just wanted to kick me right for that second.

So obviously, you're feeling more physically. So maybe that's just the simplest way of explaining it. We're able to connect more energetically when we're feeling more physically perhaps. I don't know. But I do think that it can differ and does differ, and so if you're into that kind of thing and you're pregnant, just finding ways to notice when you feel that or what it feels like or what you notice. And journal it, or document it somehow and see if that personality type or whatever you want to call it matches up with who this person is eventually. This baby, my baby to me, feels really, really kind of focused, and she feels really firey but in a focused way. So not—such a funny way to talk about it. Not like a fragmented excited kind of way. But a focused energetic way. And there's probably some other ways I could describe her, but that's the simplest way right now.

So I think processing a pregnancy at that gestation, 27, 28 weeks, and even now after loss has been a different experience for me. And I'm not going to talk about that a whole lot today because I really feel that I am not on the other side yet honestly. There's definitely things I could observe and notice that are different for me because of what happened. But yeah. I don't think I quite have the perspective and wisdom yet to really feel that, and I think there's definitely a part of me that's not even willing to go there yet. I need and want and hope with all of my being that this birth is wonderful and lovely, and this baby stays with us. And I think if that happens or whatever on the other side I'll be more prepared to talk openly about pregnancy after loss. But like I said, at the moment, I don't feel like I have anything that anybody would benefit from to be honest. So I'll save that.

So on to the present day, so I was talking about doing this podcast about a month ago, and I'm almost 32 weeks now. And I have to say maybe it's cool to have combined kind

of these podcasts because I feel different already, in a more positive way. I feel like the cobweb clearing was really tough. And, again, maybe it was the after loss thing. Who knows? There's a million reasons why that period can be hard for anyone. I felt like I did deal with a lot of fears specific and general coming up. And I still do even on a daily basis. But already, I feel myself clearing some of that and becoming more internal. Not that fears aren't internal, but fears are often largely external. And that's something I noticed too in the last month is that the fears that were coming up for me were being precipitated almost by something outside of myself. And I think that's another subject I'll talk a lot about perhaps when this pregnancy is through just because I don't feel like it's a complete picture yet.

But just—it's very classic. Again, feeling fearful because of something someone said or something you heard or having some run in with technology as minor or as major as it might be and having that add a shadow of doubt to you when you didn't have one. I still feel vulnerable like that, to be honest. But I don't feel as much that way as I did last month. So getting more internal, caring less about the outside world. I am finding that to be a challenge, to be honest. If I wanted to compare challenges, I think it's still less than perhaps last month. But I'm not ready to have a baby now either. I still have two months left. And I can acknowledge that I want to be internal and turn inward, but we all know how hard that is in the world and in our families and in our culture. So, again, this is just really a transparent kind of podcast. I don't know what to do with that right now. I'm just kind of managing it each day. So I don't want to be doing a lot of the stuff I'm doing with the outside world. But then there are things I do want to do, so I'm not completely convinced myself.

We had a really large free workshop here a couple days ago. And I was looking forward to that. And I did enjoy that. And that did feel good although I could very clearly feel that that would be the last workshop, and it is—on the calendar, of course. The last thing like that I would do for awhile. So it's just a strange in between time. And, again, maybe I'm babbling about it so that I remember some day. I was looking at my podcast archives, and I guess I did one last pregnancy. Something about the last ten weeks. So I didn't listen to my own podcast although I could. I'm kind of curious what I said last time when I had ten weeks left. And now that I have eight weeks left. So I don't know. I'm feeling a lot more emotional this time. I have a feeling maybe last time with ten weeks left I was a little more happy go lucky than I probably am feeling this time. Again, I'm just feeling this real conflict between being internal and still having to essentially produce—which sounds awful—but anybody with kids knows what I mean. So you still have to live life, right? And you're still cooking and cleaning and doing everything. And I'm just really not feeling like it, so it's all feeling like a struggle.

And I don't feel like birth is close enough that I am on the other side of the fence where I'm prepping and planning and having those nesting surges where I'm getting things

ready. I haven't done anything yet. And I don't really feel like doing anything yet. I have a lot of plans in my head about what I want for the postpartum and that kind of thing or the birth. But it's almost like I can't go there yet. It's just too early. So yeah. It feels like a unique place, and I'm trying to enjoy it. I don't think trying to enjoy is probably the best way to go about it. And, again, I think listening to this one day years from now will probably make me laugh because we all know how fast it goes, right? Eight weeks, ten weeks. Whatever it is. I mean life moves fast. So I think this phase can feel really eternal, and that's definitely some ways what I feel. Just that it's a long day. And it's a long week. And how could eight weeks still be left? But in the big picture, of course, I know it's not that long. And I am looking forward to hitting a different point and being excited about prepping birth supplies and the postpartum.

And I'm okay with not being there yet too as disgruntled as I sound. I know that it's not time. And I know that it is all orchestrated perfectly. So it's just a matter of patient, I think, right now. And some days staying distracted and busy. And some days trying to wipe everything off my plate. I don't quite have the formula down because, honestly, I don't think there is a formula. I think I'm just in the phase of going with the flow. And how long that lasts, I don't know. Some people I'm sure spend a lot longer in that phase than a couple weeks. So physically, I feel like this pregnancy is more of a challenge than my other ones have been. And the only thing I've been able to chalk that up to really is just the loss, again, that occurred last year.

Really I was pregnant for awhile with that even when the baby was no longer living. And then I only really had a couple of months in between where I wasn't pregnant. So that's my rational explanation that I've just kind of been pregnant for a long, long time. I could even say that oh, I'm older. I'll be 40 in a couple of months. And pregnancy just definitely feels different. It definitely doesn't feel like when I was 25 even just where you hold the weight or the belly shape. It's definitely changed for me. So I'll admit, again, it's hard to be patient with some of these things. My midwife brain can look down and say, "Hey, that's really normal. And I think that makes sense for you." And I find comfort in that. And I certainly have close midwife friends, who can actually say those words to me which is really awesome. But we all know too the reality of just being in your own body and having it feel uncomfortable.

So heart burn has been kind of a thing for me earlier than normal. I have had heart burn in other pregnancies specifically my girl pregnancies. So I would be really surprised if that weren't the case with this one, but we'll see. And I've tried everything for heart burn. The best I can do which I'm happy to share—certainly not my prescription or really anybody's. I don't know who came up with it. But chia seeds. Chia seeds have been really helpful for heart burn at night which is the only time I get it. So it's mostly when I just lay down at night and just chewing up some chia seeds and taking a gulp of water has helped immensely. It doesn't work 100% of the time. But I'd

say it works about 80 to 90% of the time which is a huge improvement. If you've never had heart burn, I don't wish it on you. My first couple of pregnancies I didn't. And as a midwife when people would complain, I always look back now and feel silly with the suggestions that I would give. It was really only the suggestions that I knew to give. It wasn't something I had experienced.

But it's pretty awful, I think. Heart burn really makes you not be able to sleep. And it's really a disgusting feeling. So try the chia seeds, if you're in a similar boat and see what you think. Other than that, I've tried vinegar. I've tried digestive enzymes. I've tried baking soda. I've tried essential oils. Gosh, I'm sure I've tried some other things too that I can't even recall. But anyway, the chia seeds seem to work great. Definitely not sleeping that well. Part of it really was the heart burn. So I guess I'm actually sleeping better. See? I can use my own podcast to be positive for myself. That I am sleeping better than I was about a month ago. Still not great. But I should probably just write that off. Getting up to pee. Getting up to eat. Getting up to shift position is pretty normal at this point. So if you are sleeping and you're this pregnant, good for you. I think you should enjoy it for as long as you possibly can. I know for me I definitely feel like having a baby will be easier in a lot of ways. I won't have to get up and down as many times.

And practice contractions. I think I'll do a podcast on that eventually. I want to compile some more research. And, again, I think mentally and emotionally I will need to be on the other side of this pregnancy before I want to talk about certain things. But I definitely have had more practice contractions this time. It has been concerning a couple of times. But in the end, I don't think it's abnormal. I think there's so much variation with what we experience with our uterus especially when we've had multiple pregnancies back to back. I do think our emotional state influences that immensely as well as just plain old physical factors like weight and maybe not drinking enough or getting enough calories. So I have been experiencing that. But I am just trying to concentrate on all the things I know to do and trust that my body will do what it is supposed to do until the very end of this pregnancy like it has every other time.

So let's talk about the baby for a minute just because I feel like I've been kind of a whiner today, but that's okay, right? You can either not listen or you can laugh along with me. But the baby has been amazing and not something I've really worried about too much beyond the normal, I think, fears like I discussed earlier. But in general, I get a really solid sense of being from this being, and this baby is super, super active even as we speak. It's just always something going on and different sides of the belly and really just a lot of action. So that's been an amazing gift really. And I'm grateful to this baby for communicating really well when I've needed it. And I've been pretty open with her about needing it. Again, I think it's the pregnancy after loss thing and just needing

reassurance from this baby that everything seems to be fine and that she is happy and healthy.

And so her movement and her growth, again, have been very reassuring. And in the end, I don't think anybody really knows anything about how things are going to wind up. But in the moment, I feel confident about her. And, again, that's a really nice feeling for whatever it's worth or whatever it means. So spiritually, I think there is a lot going on that I'm not even aware of. I think if I was sleeping better and having more clear dreams—I don't know. Maybe I would feel more clear on some of that. But, again, that's not really happening. So I am having dreams, but nothing that feels really profound or interesting. But I do think there's a lot to be gained with the spiritual connection. I think the dilemma is sort of finding the time and space for that when you're feeling tired or you're feeling just blah or disconnected. But I'm just trusting as well that it's all unfolding as it needs to unfold. And like I would tell anyone if they asked, there's nothing you need to do really. You'll know if there is something. But in the meantime, it's really more about being present and feeling everything. Kind of like labor.

So those are the messages I'm giving myself just to be easy on myself, to be gentle, to know that each pregnancy is different, and it's okay to feel any of these ways or the opposite of anything I've said. It's really all okay. I do feel supported, and I think that's important. I think it makes it that much harder when you don't have support, so I'm grateful for that. And I know that the next eight weeks will probably go really fast.

So a couple more things. I think mentally—well, maybe this is the whole last part of pregnancy. Maybe this is the entire pregnancy for some people, and maybe this is the whole pregnancy and postpartum for some people. But mentally, right? We all joke about pregnancy brain. It's not really a joke. And I joke about it too, but I think there is a lot of truth to that. And, again, I think it varies in phases of pregnancy. So maybe the physiological reasons for that early in pregnancy are different than now. Right now, again at about 32 weeks, I feel like it's just a lack of focus. And it's not being able to focus on things that seem unimportant. Surfacey kind of things or external things. So our brains just don't hold onto much because we're working so hard to do everything else. So even with this podcast, I really didn't write anything down. And I normally do have some kind of outline. But this one was very sparse because it was just hard for me to (a) even do it as you know. It took me quite awhile. And (b) to get down anything really profound our concrete just was eluding me completely. So I've just been kind of babbling which apparently I needed. So that's another thing to keep in mind if you're supporting women especially at this gestation. Or any gestation where they feel like they just want to get it out. It really does help. It really does feel good. So thanks for listening.

And I think that's about it. I guess my mental focus is dwindling even more, and that's probably about as much as I have. So we'll try and record more podcasts before this pregnancy is over I'm sure. I'd really like to get to 100 podcasts soon. That would be cool. And in the meantime, just doing all the work as many of you are and holding the vision for a smooth birth, and that's really all I can do right now. I honestly can't think very far past that at all. I forget even what came up today with—I think my sister. We were talking about something. And it was something months into the future, and I just can't. All my energy is focused on being in the rest of this pregnancy. And then occasionally, for sure, picturing the birth and this beautiful baby that will arrive. But past that, I just can't. And so I wish that was better communicated kind of in our culture. Maybe I wish I was better at communicating that to people in my life like my husband. But I think that's not completely abnormal either. Just being short on words and kind of that same wanting to be in a cave or go internal mentality where you don't want to have to do a lot of explaining. But yet, it is hard I'm sure for people on the outside to know. I mean unless they read minds, right? It's really hard to know what you're feeling.

So that's, I think, a challenge of just life. But certainly in pregnancy comes up for me where there's a lot going on for me. And I'm not the best at communicating it funny enough even though I'm here blabbing to the stratosphere about it. It's harder to talk about in real life because it's not very concrete. It's kind of all over the place. So you don't expect a lot of people to understand, if they haven't been through it especially. So on that note, thanks for listening. Holding that vision for me and with me would be appreciated as I journey through the next couple of months and beyond. And thanks for your support as always. You can find the complete list of podcasts at indiebirth.com/podcastarchives. And the next event we have coming up is the Indie Birth conference here in Sedona. And that's indiebirthconference.com. Thanks so much. Have a great day.

(closing music)