

(introductory music)

DISCLAIMER: *Taking Back Birth* is a production of the Indie Birth Association and indiebirth.com. No material on this podcast should be considered medical advice. Birth is not a medical event.

MARYN: This podcast series on mothering is about my role as mother whether that is sharing about how I raise my nine children with my husband or in sharing the challenges or in pondering the bigger picture like how birth might influence our ability to mother. I created this podcast to share my heart with you and to inspire community and support around raising kids consciously with love and to remind you that the true wisdom of mothering can be found within. Welcome to Indie Birth's series of podcasts, *Taking Back Birth*. Hi. Maryn here from my cozy little office in Sedona, Arizona. Super excited and inspired to offer a new miniseries within this *Taking Back Birth* series. So this little miniseries isn't about birth, but I'm going to explain all the ways I think they overlap beautifully.

Mothering #1, we'll see how many *Mothering* miniepisodes we get or not. Might be a lot. And it might not be. I'm not really sure yet which is kind of a lot of the way how mothering feels. Plans are great, but you got to be able to go with the flow. So I am feeling, like I said, pretty excited and inspired and grateful to be sitting in a quiet space right now. Making a podcast about mothering nine children means that there is virtually no quiet space in my home at all. In fact, my husband was helping me get set up because I have a fancy new mic, and I'm trying to up the quality in general of my podcast which is really fun. But he suggested for a second that I record it at home and granted in a space where the kids don't go. But I said, "No. Thank you. I will be going to my office around the corner," because you just can't trust it especially when you really do need quiet. Doors are slamming. Dogs are barking. So I am very grateful to be sitting in my quiet space where I hope my brain cells can come together to create something of value here. And the noise you do hear is still real life. I don't really edit these or splice them together. And my dog baby is along, so I'm sort of never without another creature. But Henna is here, and you can kind of hear her scratching along the floor sometimes. But otherwise, it should be pretty quiet.

So just a couple things about how this came to be whether you're a new listener. I'm guessing you're not. I think people are very fond of this podcast, which is very exciting always. Thank you. And so you've probably been listening for awhile. And so, that's part of the inspiration for me is to have so many dedicated listeners along the way that have gone through their own pregnancies and births and out the other side and just kind of a bunch of people at the same time asking me, "Well, what about mothering? Why do you never talk about that? We've heard the birth stories. And so what are those children up to now," kind of thing. So if you were one of those folks, thank you very

much for bringing that to my attention because it really has coincided with just other topics that seem to come up a lot especially as I work with pregnant moms.

So anyway, it's something that I live as truth, which is birth and pregnancy are inextricably tied to our mothering. But it wasn't something I had consciously put together in my brain to make an offering. And I think that's pretty funny actually. But also I am in the phase of life now where I'm pretty sure—I guess you can never be 100% sure, at least not until a certain point. But I'm pretty sure that my own pregnancy and birth journeys are over. So I'm really myself diving just headfirst into mothering in a new way. Obviously, I've been mothering despite being pregnant many times over the last 17 years. But it definitely is a different space, and I won't go on about that because there are about 150 podcasts where you can hear me blab about pregnancy and birth.

But it's definitely different when you're in a pregnancy space. I think so. My mothering is different. So I guess I'm relieved in a certain kind of way to have all of that behind me and to focus in this different what that maybe I hadn't considered so much before. So due to that awareness and realization and, again, kind of some suggestions from other people along the way—Henna, do you really have to do that? Hang on a second. I'm not going to stop this whole recording for an animal. Sorry. She is indeed a baby and was taking these very quiet moments to have her own project, which was a bone. So yeah. Just a bunch of factors, and that's nothing new if you listen to my podcast. There's always things that kind of line up.

So yeah. The deeper I find myself walking with women especially during pregnancy the more nonsensical it became to me that mothering isn't talked about as much. And I guess I'll just speak for myself. It hasn't been talked about on this podcast. This podcast was very birth specific and still will be. But, again, we'll see how many miniepisodes we want to do here based on questions and interests and all of that kind of stuff. So I don't know more than that right now. I have an idea of where I want to go today, but I don't have a solid list of topics. I am a little curious honestly where some of you are and what you would benefit from hearing or having me share. I certainly don't have all the answers either, of course. This is probably largely going to be my experience. And that might include my own struggles and my own stories and my own questions.

I would like it to be a place to share. Obviously, I can't help but share personally. But also we can kind of take it as far and wide as we want. Are there other issues that overlap with mothering? What are all of the things that come up in pregnancy? What are the challenges? What are the emotional points that really kind of take us back to the fact that we were likely mothered? And now we have to go into as well. Those are huge things.

Mothering is a mysterious topic. I have found myself shying away from sharing before now and just kind of sitting with that a moment. Honestly, it's not from a place of feeling like I would be judged. Well, perhaps in the mainstream culture, I would be, and I'm aware of that as I think many of you are. But even amongst women that might do the same or make similar choices, I still have always felt this quiet protection around my children, and I think that's also really normal. Around my family. And that might be surprising because I think I've been really open and transparent with birth and birth photos and my birth videos. And all of that has felt really right. But somehow moving beyond that has just—yeah. Been something I haven't want to put out on a mass scale. So this podcast is certainly not a mass scale, and I'm sure the dedicated listeners are in much smaller numbers than many other podcasts.

So I still feel okay about it. I think it's a safe place to share and just get this conversation started. Mothering is probably one of the most complex and talked about roles that our society can manage to discuss. And, again, maybe that's part of my prior hesitation is not wanting to really participate in the mainstream discussion. Not because I think I'm better than that. Just because it doesn't resonate. A lot of the issues that are out there on the mainstream scale about mothering, they just don't feel real to me. They don't feel like things I deal with or things I think about. And so again, that's why we're here.

I'm going to give just a brief intro into my mothering for those of you that are new or maybe you don't know. So many episodes of this podcast but, again, birth focused, so I don't expect people to remember or know about my children in the little ways I have shared. So I'm just going to do that quickly so that you know who I'm talking about. Hmm. So my oldest daughter is 17. That's super exciting as she is recently 17. And so many cool things are happening in her life as she becomes an adult. So I may talk about some of those subjects in general as we get into this. And asking their permission, of course, feels important to me if I'm going to talk about any of them in a more specific way especially as they get older. My son, Egan, is 15, and he actually just rose his bike over here to my office to help me set this microphone up because I realized when I got here I didn't quite know what I was doing. So yay for very helpful and intelligent sons.

My next child is Tolula, and she is 13. And she's got lots of exciting things going on as well like scootering, which I'm sure will enter the conversation if I do this long enough. You'll get to know all of them a little bit. Rune is next, and he is 10. Many of you have read some of these birth stories in our book. And Rune's definitely has a prominent place there. He is an awesome, awesome kid as they all are and has some very unique gifts that I think I'll also get to talking about with his permission later on. Belgium is next. Belgium is 9. She and Rune are the closest in age together. Pretty much everyone else is about 2 years apart with a 3-year exception. But Belgium and Rune are my

twins for lack of a better description. They are about 16 months apart. And I've talked about them, I think, in the spirit babies episode. Belgium is all roses and love and sweetness and just really such a delightful littler person.

Next we have True. And True is 7 and our littlest boy. And there's something really sweet about that to me especially being at the end of the pregnancy journey. There won't be any more boys, and he is the last one at 7. And that's a struggle for him, I think, at times and also what makes him so unique and loving and kind is that he has a bunch of little sisters under him. After True comes Ever. And Ever is 5. And very firm in herself in a way that I haven't seen quite that young. Also such a sweet beautiful child with a very strong will. Recently lost her first two teeth which I also think I'll talk about at some point.

After Ever comes Deva. And Deva has a birth video that millions of people have seen. And she is about almost 3. And very unique in so many ways. I mean they all are. And I keep using that word, and I'm not explaining how they are all so different. But that would take me an entire podcast. They're all so different. Deva is definitely still a baby, and that is okay. I definitely feel differently about that than I did 17 years ago when I had my first daughter, and I wasn't in a rush consciously for her to grow up. But yet, I kind of was. And maybe there was that expectation just that I grew up with even that, "Oh, this happens at this age. And this happens at this age." And really she was like a little adult. I could take Amelia anywhere, and, of course, a lot of that is just personality. But even when she as tiny, 1 or 2, you could take her to restaurants. You could take her anywhere, and she would act like a grown up. So Deva is not that way. Deva is really relishing her baby role, and I think that's great. Time goes too fast anyway, and so we all adore Deva. And she is nearly the baby.

And then the real baby is Cove. Cove is 10—nope. Not 10 months. 9 months. She is walking. She is also trying to be a little adult. But super funny and very much a baby and just a true joy to everyone. So that's the lineup. And my husband, Jason, of course, who is definitely a full on parent with me. So I did want to mention that. Of course, this is my perspective. So I can't talk about being a father, at least, in this life. I can only talk about my own role as mother, but certainly, I am not doing that alone. I am very much doing that with him. He is a wonderful father. And yeah. I couldn't do it alone. So I admire anybody that is in that situation because it would be really hard and would be totally different. So if you have a partner that'll factor in, I'm sure. If you don't, that'll factor in. If you have a really strong community around your parenting, that will factor in. If you don't, that will as well. We're all just, honestly, trying to piece it together. That's the true. And I'll talk more about that in a bit because I don't necessarily think that some of that is a poor approach. It's simply the modern day approach to parenting.

And I'm like everyone else. I have moments where it seems really hard. I mean just getting nine kids fed a bunch of times a day is hard. It seems like they never stop eating, and I never leave the kitchen. So someone else besides a partner like other families to perhaps share that with is in some Utopia that I haven't landed on yet. Educating, allowing our children to learn in the ways that is right for them. That's a whole other topic, but community. That would be great to feel more supported in those kind of choices. So we're all piecing it together because we don't, most of us, have this idyllic community and support set up. We're really just doing it family by family which is truly hard. And I'm not sure that was the way it was meant to be. But that's the way it is, and so, again, doing the best we can.

And our house is amazing and crazy and chaotic and sometimes hilarious and sometimes too much. It's everything you probably could imagine with nine children running around and dogs. It's kind of a circus. And I probably lose that perspective because I'm in it. So I'm brought back often, if we do have people over, which we really don't do very much. We've got plenty going on within the walls of our house. But yes. I am reminded that this is not the typical scenario. And that even something like videos of our daily life would probably be very well received. I'm not going to do that. That is not something I'm interested in doing. This podcast is as close as I will get. But I get the mystic and the intrigue, honestly, around having that many kids and what it looks like and what it feels like and what we talk about and how we do this and how we do that. Because honestly, I've been getting those questions for more than a decade. So here it is. Finally sharing. Finally opening up in that way and hoping that it feels really good and that it can create really awesome discussions that, as I said in my intro, remind people that we all have the instinct. And so it's being supported in that just like birth. It's being reminded that we're not crazy. We're leading from our heart. We're doing what's best for these children that we have graciously been given to raise and not thinking we know anything at all.

So with that, let's begin into a more concrete topic for today. I actually kind of have—I don't know. Two sort of topics to hit upon. I do want to talk about pregnancy and things that come up with mothering because I feel like with episode number 1 even if this doesn't go very far that might be valuable. And it's something that I hear and feel and see a lot specifically amongst women that are pregnant with their first baby. So things come up in pregnancy. I know that I love to support women in exploring their own birth, for example. And most of the time that means talking to, if you're able, your own mother. So getting right in there and acknowledging that taking on the role of mother even the role in pregnancy requires us to inquire, inquire into how we were mothered, how we were born. It's just the natural evolution of things. And I don't know how this was done or not in the past. I'm sure there is generations, for example, that haven't done it. And I think man of us can feel that in either case. Just that our own

generational lines, our own ancestral lines of mothers carry stuff. And we can choose to not feel it. We can choose to ignore it, and that might work for some.

But I tend to work with the women that can feel it and want to go there and want to work that stuff out a little bit so that they can become clear in their own role of mother rather than just taking on whatever was done to them, however they were mothered without questioning it, sort of unconsciously. We pass things down again and again. And many of those things we pass down specifically through our mothers, it's not pretty. There's lots of pain there for most of us in our line. Whether we felt that personally, it doesn't matter. Maybe it was our mom. Maybe it was our grandma, et cetera, et cetera. We may not be able to place where it is. But all kinds of trauma and pain certainly around birth. I mean that's a given. But then also around mothering from losing babies to who knows. Feeling pressure to do things in a certain way that society approves of to feeling unsupported maybe even by a partner in how a child should be mothered. So it's very, very deep.

And I guess this is simply to acknowledge that I think those issues are there. They're super important. They're super relevant to not only our birth experience but the mothering. We don't birth just to birth. I don't think. Yes. A great birth is a great birth. Yay. And that's a challenge for many women as we know but really the ultimate goal of working through these things in pregnancy and becoming more conscious and aware and growing up is that we can mother more, all of us, from a place of love rather than trauma or fear. So it's a huge amount of stuff. So much comes up in pregnancy around mothers. Again, maybe it's really concrete. Some women feel completely unsupported by their own mothers in pregnancy, and that could be for so many reasons, right? A lot of the time it's just simply that those mothers, our mothers, had such trauma. Maybe they don't even remember their pregnancies very well or maybe they had something go wrong or maybe they were labeled whatever in their pregnancy. And so it was high risk.

In other words, it wasn't necessarily an enjoyable time for them the way birth has been going, at least here in the U.S. So I think it's normal that there wouldn't be these great cellular memories of that experience, which if you believe in any of this—and you don't have to. But if you do, then those got passed down to us anyway when we were in utero. So we kind of are dealing with double doses of mothering stuff. What we remember as the babies in utero and all the things we felt or heard or experienced, not to mention our births, but now, as adults, being pregnant actually, probably having a mother. Of course, not everybody has a mother that's alive. But even if not, just remembering and feeling and—yeah. Doing kind of that deeper shadow work. So obviously, there's many positive, and there's a lot of light for many women around their mothers. And that's all great too. So I'm not trying to make it sound like total doom and gloom. But even for me having had a pretty normal, typical childhood, a pretty average, I'd say, relationship with my mom, definitely things have come up for me in pregnancy

that I don't even think were mine. I don't even think they were hers, right? I don't know. Could have been my grandma. It could have been six generations before that.

Feelings of worth, for example. Finances and stability are one of the most common issues that women probably feel in pregnancy in one way or another. And, of course, there's many threads to that. Many unique ways that that can go or where it even comes from. But so much of it comes back to our feelings of security as a child. And, again, where did that start. Did that really start when we were first born? Maybe. Did it start in the womb? Maybe. So we're reaching back in pregnancy. And honestly, I think if we were exposed more obviously to the wisdom of our ancestors—and grandmothers is kind of my general term for that. Then we would know this is normal. That it's okay. It's not about fixing necessarily or correcting. It's just the lives of humans specifically women and acknowledging that we all influence one another and allowing that to come through us when we're pregnant even though it can be really emotional and really painful and really hard.

It can also be really healing and really beautiful because, again, pregnancy is taking on that role and kind of passing the torch. So how much clarity do we want before we even become mothers? Is that possible? How much healing do we feel like we want to do from our own mothers? Is that possible? What are our greatest dreams for standing in that role of mother? And how realistic are those, right? Do we have a standard that maybe our moms set that sort of was unconsciously passed down to us? Mothering has changed so much through the decades. I know my grandma never worked. She had 7 children. She was home. Obviously, I wasn't there, so I don't know what their day to day really looked like. But then my mom was hell bent on working and having a career and being away from my sister and I because that was the acceptable way to mother in that generation. So here I am, again, more like my grandmother, right? Just kind of alternating these ways of doing things trying to find a way that works.

And I think the reason we're all struggling with that is just because we live in a culture where it's not matriarchal. We're not running the show here. So it's just a matter of trying things out. And to that, I would say that we do have the answers when we're connected to our heart, and we're really as connected as we can be to raising these babies and then to raising these kids and teenagers. There is no right way for each of us to do the same thing as the next person. There is the right way for each of us to mother from our heart and to inspire all of the things in our children that we think are important. And it's not perfection. This isn't a game of perfection. This isn't a game of numbers. And how will it all turn out? I can't tell you that either. My kids aren't grown and gone. And even if they were, when do we ever sort of have the final say on mothering? I don't know.

So those are some big things I've been feeling into. Always looking for more ways to support especially pregnant women in these thoughts and feelings. Mainly, again, just expressing them. I think they're really normal. And that's where the work is. No one can tell you how to heal things with your mom or how to make a list of all the ways that you want to be a better mother. It's not even about that. It's just finding those places of pain, I think, around our own experiences and going there. Going there and feeling it and receiving the wisdom and thereby healing that generations forward.

So that's the hope. I think it's so cool and important that we are women and that many of us are mothers and that we have this capacity to influence. It's so cool. Let's see. So the more concrete, for lack of a better word, topic for today with this *Mothering #1* is just this idea of balance. I found that coming in really strong when I was even brainstorming this podcast. And I did brainstorm a bunch of other topics. Those will be perhaps for another day. You never know. The kind of things I think people want to hear about and that will be fun to talk about. But kind of before we even begin with those, it felt important to talk about just these ideas we have around doing all of it or—yeah. I mean I get asked all the time by people, "How do you do all of it? How do you have 9 kids?" And don't get me wrong. I am so grateful. I truly, truly am. And I really do try to remember that when people comment that I'm so lucky. They are the coolest kids in the world and just seeing them grow into their unique gifts and purpose is the biggest gift. It's so joyful.

So they're the best things that ever happened to me and having 9 kids wasn't something we planned as in pre kid saying, "We'd like X number." No. We didn't really know. But then when we got going with it, it made sense. So yeah. That question is a little bit like funny. And I totally get that mainly it's just unusual to have 9 children. So I get that people are kind of like not beyond their amazement at that which is really cool. I know people probably think that's crazy or impossible. But yet, I meet so many women that whether they're older—and sometimes younger but mainly older say something like, "I wish I had. I wish I had been supported in having more children," or something along those lines. Certainly, not everyone. I mean it's not for everyone. I completely know that. And I don't mean that even in a judgmental way. I just—I don't. I think there are people that are not meant to have 9 kids for whatever reason just like I wasn't meant to have 1.

I don't know all the factors that go into that. One thing I find interesting is in my astrology chart—whatever the house is that has—that's responsible for kids—I'm not an astrologist obviously. My house has always been full. That's just an area where I was destined, I guess you could say. And I think there's nothing good or bad about that. It just is. And I'm grateful. And I think there is an element of ease there for me that I didn't create. So if you think I have a formula or I read a certain book, no. I think it's just luck, and that's how it turned out.

So balance. How did I get off on that tangent? Balance. Everybody is all about balance. Balance, balance, balance. Balance in motherhood. And I just have been sitting with that. What does that mean? Motherhood can be all consuming, right? You know that, if you have children. You know that whether you have 1 or 10. It can be all consuming. So it's totally easy for me to spend an entire day, 2 entire days, an entire week and never leave home and never do anything else and just purely be there and be with them. That is totally possible. So in that case, I guess what is balance? Where does that come from? And I think we all have maybe different categories that we want balance in. So being a mother is a fabulous role, and I love it. But that's not my only role. So balance is probably created by having other roles that feel important to us, or maybe role is the wrong word. But other areas, right?

So to name some, partnership. Are you in a partnership? Because that's certainly going to have to balance out all the mothering. I mean it's funny because none of these things happen alone. So I guess I could just jump to the fact that it feels like a really male concept to me to imagine that there are these perfect ratios in perfect proportion all of the time, and that's our goal. No. If you're going to have 9 kids at least, that's never going to happen. And life is messy. And it's literally, I feel like, day by day. But then, of course, I do agree day by day adds up to week by week and month by month and year by year. And balance, I think, implies that we're feeling good. We're feeling healthy.

So that would be my definition of balance in motherhood is a feeling. A feeling of wellness. A feeling that you are able to engage in the parts of your life that feel good because being a mother is just one of those parts. So back to the list, partnership could be one. Spiritual life, religious life. And, again, these are so sanctioned off when, of course, they overlap. What about your own physical body? What about that, right? Things need to be paid attention to to keep yourself up and running. Maybe you're in a school right now, and you're learning something. I mean we're always learning something. But maybe there's some structure around something you're pursuing. So duh. I mean I don't need to keep going. But there is so many things that all of us always have going on.

So for people that are feeling overwhelmed, again, maybe it's just with one child. I guess my question would be what is your expectation of how many things you can be doing especially if your child is young. And how do you feel? What's balance to you? Because truly, some days balance is being with the children. Today we kind of did our school day. We do that a couple times a week. So that was balance today. And tomorrow it might be not being home very much either with or without them. Some days I'm out all day doing appointments without any children, and that feels really good. And to me—for me to feel balanced in being a mother, I also need that.

So it's something that each of us has to piece together ourselves. But I'm offering maybe that perspective for people that aren't feeling quite together which is sometimes part of the balance honestly. Sometimes there is a day or there is even a week or whatever that just feels off, and you kind of can't get it together. And whatever isn't working. The schedules are a mess, or your kids just kind of are off. And you're having a hard time even relating to them. This is all part of the balance. It really, really, truly is. So I guess an extreme version is being in a more constant state of overwhelm. Completely overwhelm by your kid, by your children, unable to feel good in other areas of your life or—heck. Maybe you don't even think you have other areas of your life. You feel anxious. You feel depressed. This is stuff I feel like I hear a lot. And it's not that I don't have moments, but that's not been my big picture view.

So I think that whole thing comes down to—well, we already talked about these deeper mothering issues and what we think this role means. I think that's huge. Is it self sacrifice? And I know that's harsh because sometimes people don't want to see that. They don't want to zoom out, and it's not my job to say that to anyone whether they're a friend or a client. But self sacrificing in motherhood is not balance. And it's truly back to that old analogy of putting on the oxygen mask before you can help anyone. It really, truly is. And I wish—I almost wish that wasn't an analogy because it's so flippantly said. And I really wish women would feel into that more particularly when they are feeling overwhelmed and their balance is just off. It's like if you're not helping yourself you absolutely won't have balance. You absolutely won't. And there will be nothing. There will be no checklist. There will be no podcast. There will be no book that can put it back into balance when you're overlooking yourself.

I think that is the Holy Grail of motherhood. And I feel like more and more women are hearing that but yet, there is some deeper stuff underneath that we all have to work on. So something that came up when I was just jotting down notes is this idea of us—and by us, I mean my children and I. Not so much partners or dads in this case. But me and my baby. That's us. Me and my kids. That's us versus me. Like just me. And again, all these podcasts about birth, and I did one recently on breastfeeding and attachment. And those are days and moments and years, honestly, of us. There isn't a whole lot of me there. And that's the design, right? That's the design even when we don't go overboard or under board with it. The design is for mom and baby to be attached, to not be separate. That may be a whole other podcast. I mean attachment parenting and what that means and kind of the dogma and stigma around that. That's not really what I'm talking about.

I'm talking about just the truly biological need for a baby to be with their mom. But of course, that changes, right? And sometimes we get so attached in the role of us that we don't even see the opportunities to be me. So, again, you have a newborn. Not a whole lot of me there. And that's how it probably should be. But even amongst that,

even amongst newborn days, there is still the opportunity. There is. And so I'll be that voice. There's still the opportunity for getting a shower alone or 10 minutes. 10 minutes to just breathe by yourself in a quiet room. And I feel like I can say these things because I've been there. I'm not asking—or not asking—I'm not suggesting that these things are impossible because I know they're not. But the rate at which that happens is truly personal. There is no one that should be doing any of it for any other reason other than what their internal voice and their internal mothering instinct is telling them. That is another podcast. That whole topic of instinct and where that might come from.

But just in a typical situation, what is the definition or where is the definition I mean to say of our own selves and how it interlocks with a baby? And then the same thing with a toddler? And then older kid? And the obvious answer is that we start to achieve a more solid definition between us and me. But yet, there can be such depth still to an emotional connection and a spiritual connection. So it can be sort of physical. The world is so physical. I mean I've spent hours and hours talking about that on the birth podcast, and it's no different here. So even if we need to take time from our child, we—we're going to take an hour. We're going to sit and meditate, whatever. We're going to go to a yoga class, or we're just going to sit in the car and do nothing. Yeah. That's a physical separation. But the intention of the bond that you have with your child means a lot. And self sacrificing your physical form all of the time for them because you don't think they can go to anyone else, you don't think they can do that really ends up hurting. It really ends up hurting, I think, ourselves.

And I don't know that I've ever been in that space. And, again, not good or bad. Probably because my husband has always been supportive. So I do feel for women in less supportive situations, women that are alone, women that don't have a partner, or a partner that is never home or works or whatever it is because I get it. You do become the only physical source for this child. You do. You absolutely do. And so I can feel people kind of getting triggered about this because it's like, "What am I supposed to do?" So yeah. These are the plights of motherhood, but I think we're in them. And we're sitting with this issue and all of these kind of issues. And we're just feeling them maybe. Maybe that's all you can do is like, "Oh, okay. I get it. I get it. I mean I have to want to take time for myself. I can't be a martyr. I can't think my kid can't spend an hour with so and so when I know they're safe." That's overstretching. That's overdoing. That's making my role as mother over inflated. And a mother is so important. Obviously. This whole podcast series, right? Mothers are so important. But we don't want to become the only resource, and I think that starts real young.

So, again, it seems to be first time moms more, and Margo has been talking more openly about this on our Instagram, if you're interested. We've been doing a little miniseries video wise on Instagram called *Keeping Your Shit Together*. Maybe it's just that time of year. Holiday time. Everybody is sort of like going to go crazy if they don't

have something to focus on or whatever it is. But Margo has been talking more openly about how it was so different for her with her first child and kind of being that martyr, that one that had to do it all for all these other reasons, the internal reasons. Not so much the child's wellbeing. But, again, what does that come back to? It comes back to how we were mothered and what our wounds are and—et cetera, et cetera.

So just a little bit more about this idea of us and me. I think it's just really important to frame the question. I don't have the answer for anyone. And, again, I would say, "Oh, your baby is this month—this many months, you should be able to leave him." No. I mean there is no way we can make this outside judgment, this outside recommendation about what this mother baby pair needs. But as a mother, I can see in another mother when she is really struggling, and she is really hurting. And her balance is just so completely off that she's like—she can't find her way back. So I think it is this over blurring of the lines. We don't make any time for ourselves. Again, 10 minutes.

And I know that can be hard. I feel like there are many days when even with the help that I have I can't find 10 minutes. But I know that's ridiculous. And I tell myself that. And that's not to beat myself up over it. Okay. You didn't find 10 minutes. You didn't want to find 10 minutes today, and that's okay too. You're so tired. Sometimes when you're just over exhausted you don't even really have the drive to find those minutes for yourself. And if you did, you'd probably sleep, but that's not going to happen. So there's all kinds of challenges. But I guess can we always try to bring it back to a place where we really do love ourselves? Of course, we love our kids. But can we love ourselves? Can we love ourselves first? And does that sound awful to you? Does that sound selfish? Because that is a lot of the programming that our mothers and grandmothers have been carrying. The self sacrifice and the guilt. And I think it's time to change that.

So I am going to, I think, end this podcast and just leave with those thoughts. Again, I don't have a solution. I know many women all over the world are in these boats and struggling with the same things. So you're not alone. None of us are alone in just finding the me back in the us and creating balance even at the tiniest, tiniest, tiniest, tiniest little level. Like if it was an earthquake, like no. You can't even feel it yet. It is just a tiny, tiny, little shift under one foot that no one else can feel. That's what you're going for because I feel like that's the only way to set the foundation for this podcast and for talking about other topics. How are we going to talk about how we help our kids learn? Or the way we support our children in rites of passage if we don't really have our own two feet solid on the ground?

So this is my love and inspiration to you to find those 10 minutes today or maybe it's just this week and to build up slowly and know that you're worth it. And that all the big issues that creep in and come in emotionally, spiritually, mentally, they're all really normal. And you're not the only one going through them, and they're there for you to

work through them. So leaving you with a quote by Jia John, who I adore and follow on Instagram. "Finally, she learned to put herself first. Peace and wellness arrived at last." So thanks for listening to this very exciting *Mothering #1*. I would absolutely love to hear your thoughts, your questions, your concerns, all of it by email, so that I have plenty of interesting things to talk about. Maryn@indiebirth.org is the address, and I hope you have a great day.

(closing music)