

(introductory music)

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MARYN: Welcome to Indie Birth's series of podcasts, *Taking Back Birth*. Hey, Maryn here with some exciting announcements, and, I hope, a really fun chat today called *Recipe for a Perfect Birth*. Before we get into that, I want to just blab a bit and share some personal stuff just for fun. Yeah. It's so great to be back doing this podcast and just nice to be back in our private little *Taking Back Birth* living room. Many of you know the great Carla Hartley, who used to run the Ancient Art of Midwifery Institute. The school that I graduated from years and years ago. And I'm not sure where Carla is at these days with social media or how she's in the world really. But back in the day when she was in the world and on social media, she used to kind of reprimand people that her page, whatever, her Facebook page was her living room. And that she could have any conversation she wanted there. And if you didn't like it, you probably shouldn't be sitting in her living room.

So that's how I feel about this podcast. And actually, social media too, which I'll get to in a minute. But it's nice to be back to probably our more regular group of listeners. Kind of fun and intimidating to imagine the many, many thousands of downloads there were on the last podcast called *The Honest Truth About Free Birth*. So had lots of people listening to that podcast that aren't normal listeners which is really cool on some level. But, again, being sort of a person that does best one on one I prefer our little living room here. So thanks for coming back. Pull up a chair. Get some tea. And let's go on this chat together today.

A little catch up though about what's going on with me and Indie Birth. We have left social media. So if you're listening to this, probably doesn't matter, does it? Because what is that all about anyway? I actually have a podcast from quite awhile ago. Something about *Haters Gonna Hate: The World of Social Media*. So listen to that if you're curious as to my thoughts on why we would leave. I'm super excited about it. It feels like pretty much the best decision we've made in a long time save for starting our school. So I'm looking forward to 2020 as it comes close and what real connection will mean for us at Indie Birth. Certainly, Margo and I both have plenty of real life connection between our families and our clients. And so that's not a problem, but we are looking, of course, to continue to foster the Indie Birth community globally. And something like social media, of course, has been so helpful in that regard. No lies about it. Social media has been useful to us over the last couple of years as we grew our own community and platform. But the time has come. We're really just not wanting to engage in things that aren't important.

And there's a lot happening there that is contained to that world. Social media could be its own planet. It's really not real life. And so we don't want to anymore, and we're so happy that you're listening. That you're probably on our newsletter list, indiebirth.org, would be the place to sign up for our free newsletter. And you probably have other ways of engaging with us. Our book, *Indie Birth: A Story of Radical Birth Love*, is now on Amazon. So yet another resource that's out there in the world. And we'll continue to do all the things we've been doing probably more of them because we'll just have more time. So continue to check out YouTube, if that's your thing, for videos from Margo and I. And if you are one of our students or our doula students or you would like to be, then definitely keep in touch and know that we do lots of face to face video interaction with those folks over Marco Polo. So that's really been fun getting to see people's faces and getting to know them.

It's more than just words on a screen. And so yep. Moving on. Being bold and radical is what we do best. And coming from a place of heart-centered love, where and how can we make the biggest impact with 2020 coming? And this is what we came up with. We'll continue to offer all of these free things to whoever is resonant but just not willing to engage on the level of social media anymore. And I think a lot of people feel that way. So to be completely honest, I had a friend propel me into that this morning. And he is a he. One of my local friends here who is an acupuncturist and has been a dear friend for many years. And we were just chatting this morning at the gym. And he kind of brought it up and was giving me his perception of the whole thing. And he runs a business as well. And so it's like birth, right? I found myself voicing a belief that wasn't true for me. I found myself saying to him, "I wish we could," meaning I wish we could disengage from social media.

And that felt really lame. Like I'm hard on myself sometimes as many of us are. That's not a good way to live your life. If you don't want to do something, you should not do it. And so what was this excuse I had invented about social media being useful? Again, whether it is or isn't is up for debate. But for me, it's very addictive, and it's become this really strange way of looking for approval or something. And you can feel it when you're on there. Everybody wants to shout the loudest. So anyway, it's on me. It's on us to change those kinds of things. And so we are. So my friend, Adam, this morning—thank you, Adam. You don't know you're being talked about on my podcast, but I adore you. And you made me do it. You kicked my ass. And here we are. So that's kind of how I roll, but it's nice to have friends that really are so conscious and remind me of the important things in life.

Okay. So other than that, not really too many other updates, getting your holiday time. If I release this podcast sometime soon, and yeah. Just getting ready for a new doula enrollment in January 2020, and we will be going through our school applications as well in January 2020. And all of that is really feeling great and exciting, so thank you. If

you're one of those people, and yeah. Just looking forward to some babies being born too. So that's where I'm at. Okay. Enough with the chit chat. Let's dive into this *Recipe for the Perfect Birth*. Okay. I'm just going to come out and say it. There is no recipe for the perfect birth. Hmm, that would have been a really great social media dig, wouldn't it have been? Whole argument about it when people maybe didn't even listen yet. But here I am admitting that that's the name of a podcast, but there is no formula.

And I have this discussion all of the time with moms here especially first time moms. So it's not meant to be judgmental. I would love a recipe for a perfect birth. I would. I would have used it myself, and I would love to pass it out. I think that would be really great, and it would save a lot of people pain and time and suffering and all of the things if we had a way of making birth work out just the way we wanted every single time. Of course, birth does not work this way. And we're going to talk about why. But first time moms especially are looking. They're really interested. Not all of them. Some, and of course there are plenty of people that aren't first time moms. And maybe there are people that are first time to home birth perhaps or who knows. There's all kinds of people out there. But sometimes we just get in our heads that there must be a right way to do this thing, right? There must be.

And to that, first I say there is too much information out there. Now what's too much, right? I don't know. All I know is the Internet is just like social media. A two-edged sword. Is that the expression? Right? So we can be helped perhaps by this idea of support we might feel. Or we might really find some information that feels like gold, and it's so helpful. But all in all, there's too much information out there. And people are literally drowning in it. Not everyone. Again, but especially women that are used to thinking and gathering and, again, wanting to do it right. And it's overwhelming. So I think that's just the first thing to consider. I think this idea of having a recipe for a perfect birth is a real thing for some people. And that's part of the reason why. They're just absolutely drowning in information, and Internet is one source. But certainly many people are overwhelmed from everybody else's ideas and suggestions maybe in their real life. So maybe it's your family. Maybe you have a group of friends, and everyone has had a baby thus far except for you. And so you become pregnant, and everybody has their story. And their recipe, right? "Oh, you have to do this. Oh, you have to eat this. Oh, you have to go here. You have to do it this way."

Again, if it was that simple, we would have the formula. Unfortunately, it's not I would say. It's not a matter of that. Yeah. It would be nice. So one example that came up in conversation lately was the idea of perfect baby position when you're pregnancy, right? So many of you have experience with that. I certainly do. And I did a podcast a couple years ago on this myth of the posterior baby. That's just one position a baby can be in, of course. Because I experienced that. And I really sought to control that element of particularly my third pregnancy because I felt like with my first and second my baby

possibly wasn't in the right position. So that's an example that's out there as information, right? And it's information that can be perfect in the right situation. And it can really help someone. How to get your baby in the right position is what I'm talking about.

And then on the other hand, it can just kind of give people ideas about something. And make a lot of women feel like they're not doing it right, or, "Oh, I didn't know that. I didn't know a baby had to be in this position. And if it's not, then how do I get it in that position? Because I don't want that to,"—you go down the rabbit hole. And I had experienced that, like I said. So that's one of the examples of information that might be helpful but also can make people feel like there is a right way. And I have a bunch more examples later on. But baby position is a great example when it actually comes down to birth because it probably doesn't matter so much is what I think. And I think there are studies to support that at least with posterior babies. Ultimately, babies are going to do what they're going to do. And whether the birth is hard or easy, there is more to consider than the position of the baby. Again, if that was all there was to consider, then I don't know. Maybe somebody would invent some miraculous therapy of baby shifting that would be 100%. But that hasn't happened yet because that's not the only factor that determines whatever you think perfect is.

Maybe that's a home birth. Maybe that's a hospital birth. Maybe that's just not having a cesarean. Maybe that's a free birth. Who knows? So when I have this conversation with first time moms, I don't have judgment on all of these questions. I really don't. So they want to talk about baby position and what that means. Well, we have a conversation. And, of course, it doesn't mean that the conversation is actually called recipe for a perfect birth because I don't know that that's what people think they're trying to do. They're just simply looking for information to try to make this right, to try to do the right thing, and to get all their ducks in a row, and to do due diligence, which is really awesome too because if we can try to kind of control something or influence it then why not? I think the million dollar question is what are the things that we actually can influence and how much mental and emotional energy do we spend on things that perhaps don't matter. And I don't know the answer because I think that's up to each of us.

So my job as a midwife when we talk about these kinds of things is to offer the information I have and hold space for all of it and ask really good questions. So something like baby position. It's maybe helpful to say, "Where did you come across that information? What do you think that means for you? What do you have questions about? Do you feel like this might be relevant to you? Is this something you'd like to try?" And then I think always coming back to, "How do you feel about it?" Because just because we found information or someone gave it to us, maybe with or without our consent, doesn't mean that it's something we have to consider. And I remember feeling

all of these things in absolutely every one of my pregnancies. I think it's a natural and normal thing to want to control what we can and to figure out what we can control and what we can't because—I don't know. It just seems to be the normal way. In this day and age anyway. And maybe part of it is just instinctual wanting to protect our babies and all of that. So no judgment. All kinds of things come up. And sometimes people might feel silly almost saying what they've heard like myths or otherwise. Maybe they are truths. "I heard this. is this true? Will this help me have an easier birth," or whatever it is. And that list is really, really long. And so there it is.

Recipes. Let's see. Birth plans are a little like recipes in a sense although I think lots of the deeper conversations are probably being had in pregnancy only because you're not up against the birth at that moment. You have time to plan. And so again, it's more of a reflection usually. It's not that women think there necessarily is a recipe, but it's like weighing their choices. "Oh, I could try this thing. Or maybe that thing." But birth plans pretty much they're about the birth and maybe a little bit after. And so yeah. I don't know that that's a recipe actually, but it's a sense of wanting to control what is. And even people planning home births often will make a birth plan for the home birth or the hospital. And, again, nothing wrong with doing that especially if it sparks conversation, and it sparks the pregnant woman to ask herself, "What do I actually want? Oh, I didn't know those were options. What do I want?" And so some of those truly might be ingredients in what we would call a perfect birth. So it just depends how you look at it.

The term perfect birth, of course, is just something that came to mind. And we could discuss that and have lots of back and forth. And language is important. I totally agree. But I don't have what I think a perfect birth even means honestly in my head. I have what I think it could mean for me. And for my last birth, perfect just meant seamless and without needing intervention or help, confidence, and ease. These are all words that were in my consciousness with my last birth. But certainly, there is no right, perfect birth. And as I said in the beginning, it can simply be I want a home birth. That's all I care about. I don't want to wind up at the hospital, so that's my perfect birth. And, again, women in different situations might just want a baby that lives. That's a legitimate perfect birth based on our own experiences. So it means different things for different people, and so does the recipe.

But I think there are threads in common no matter what your definition of perfect is. It's a list you can make of things to do, things to think, things to work on, people to work on, people—or people to work with. Sorry. Location, care provider. There are all of these things that can fall under recipe that we really each have to individually weigh and assess. So yeah. As far as perfect meaning perfectly safe meaning that everything goes to plan as far as just working out, there are other podcasts I have on safety and those kind of thought forms that are out there. So if you're interested, go find that podcast on *Is Homebirth Safe and Other Stupid Questions You Shouldn't Be Asking*.

Because yeah. There is a lot around that word safe. So if perfect means safe to you, then yeah. That's my suggestion. Look into what safe means and what that means to you because—yeah. You would come up with probably different plans and a different recipe.

So there is not a universal perfect birth. And actually, that might just be like a unicorn. Is there such a thing as a perfect birth? I don't know. Has there been for you? I've certainly felt both ways. I felt that all of my births were perfect kind of in the existential sense of the word meaning meant to happen the way they did, right? And then I guess there's just desirable perfect. Like if you could have all the things you wanted, that kind of perfect. And I feel like my last birth did fit into that. So all kinds of ways of looking at that. And yeah. That's not even the point. The point is kind of focusing on each of the criteria that you think you need to have the experience you want.

Powerful birth. And maybe some other terms that you might come up with, right? So maybe you wouldn't use perfect at all. What would you use? What would you use to describe the birth you want? I think that's a great invitation, and one I often invite people to accept. And one I wish I had accepted with some of my earlier births. Really inviting myself to think about what I wanted. And if I thought there was a way to get that or not. So yes. This is going to get a little existential, but that's what I do when I start to really think about things and feel into them. So this idea that things matter as far as how our birth pans out. You got to kind of figure out where you are on that spectrum from day to day, from birth to birth, maybe just life, spiritual views.

but the way I see it is we can kind of have a very close up view. Kind of like the microcosm. And then we can increasingly have a wider view of things, kind of a macro view. So this is a lot like the conversations happening about birth. Kind of everywhere about everything. There's this microcosmic view. Like us. Our experience. Like the little details of it all. Like where we live or who we hire, what we put in our mouths. And then there is the macro view where nothing matters, right? It's kind of like life. So does everything matter, or does nothing matter? And you get what you get. These are the relationships that we have with this kind of topic just to be in it and be a human, being pregnant in this life.

So micro view. Let's talk about some of the things that might matter. And then you decide if they matter. Then I'll talk a little more. So like nutrition. Obviously, I have days where I think it matters, and the types of the foods, and the amounts of foods. It all matters. Matters, matters, matters. And we see the best outcomes from this. Blah, blah, blah. And then sometimes it's a day. Sometimes it's myself personally. Sometimes it's a client I'm working with. It just feels like it doesn't matter at all. Nutrition is just one little piece of the puzzle. And certainly, there is a lot of other things that could matter or should matter, right? So it's really personal. And, again, might be

dependent on literally the day. But they're things to consider. So for people, again, sort of wanting this formula then they're things to consider. Nutrition probably is important in the bigger scheme of things.

The next similar kind of thing would be how we move our bodies, how we use our bodies, alternative practices, right? Like chiropractic or acupuncture. These are things that have been proven perhaps in studies to improve pregnancy outcomes. And certainly, many women will report they feel better. They can move their bodies easier when they're walking or working out or getting massages or chiropractic. They feel better. So I mean they're totally legitimate things. And for each of these micro view things, you will meet women that say absolutely. That was the key. That was my recipe to having the birth I wanted. Other things that come up emotional health. Same kind of thing. Our fears. How much do they matter? How much do we have to process them? How far do we have to get? Do we have fear in birth? Do we not have fear in birth?

It's like a crazy conversation when it all gets thrown together because nobody actually knows. That's the goal for this podcast episode. Nobody knows anything except you for you probably. One more thing that came into mind for this micro view of how do we get perhaps this experience we want. Our relationships in general. So maybe with our care provider whether we have a midwife or a doctor or a lack of provider. The lack of that relationship might be the key. The partner that we have, if we have one. And again, those things kind of go both ways. Does it matter? Does a horrible relationship with your partner mean that your birth will be harder? I don't know. I've seen that. And I've not seen that? So you just start to question everything I guess which is something I love doing as many of you know.

So this also gets mirrored, I'll tell you, on the side of the midwife as I just expressed, right? So a new pregnant woman comes into working with me and I have a list kind of like this in my head and one we talk about and one that we have lots of educational materials on in our *13 Moons* for the people we work with. So we are saying they matter. But again, to what degree they matter I can't say. And I wish I could say, "If you do all these things, everything will go the way you want it to." And, of course, I can't. So we just do the best we can, and we focus in with each woman and see where it seems like she needs support or what things might matter more. Obviously, right? Someone that's having lots of structural problems with their body, lots of back pain, chiropractic might be genius. Might be the thing that really makes them turn the corner. And in turn could really influence their birth process.

So the mattering, the microcosmic view, may be really valid. And I need to remind myself too that it also cannot matter at all. And I don't mean as a midwife to over control. And that's been a lesson of maturing, I think, as a midwife. Certainly, in my younger days of being a midwife, I felt more—what's the word? Overzealous. Almost

like religious at times about, "You must have this kind of diet. You must follow the Brewer Diet. You must do these things. Clearing your emotional fears and all of that." And, again, it's not that I'm saying they're not important. I'm just saying I have learned to surrender as well. It's humbling to realize that I don't know necessarily. I only have ideas. And sometimes we just have to trust. Something that comes up for me around that is working with people late in pregnancy. So much so that I think that will be another podcast.

But working with people that are at the tail end of their pregnancies if I choose to work with them and if they want to work with me, there's a lot of just humbling around this recipe. We don't have time. We're not talking about nutrition really because she's going to have a baby any day, et cetera. So we also, as midwives, can have boundaries around these topics and say, "No. We really think that matters. And if you're not willing to eat anything but—I don't know. Pick something silly, right? Pears then I don't think I'm the midwife for you." I mean it's all valid. It's all up for discussion. So does everything matter? Does nothing matter? What degree of control do we think we have over any of it? And, again, each pregnant woman needs to answer this for herself as honestly as she can. And midwives too. We need to keep it in check and feel into it. And yes. Thinking but more feeling into what does this person need. What can I let go with—let go of as another human that thinks they might have a recipe?

And I say the same thing to people right here. That not only is there not really a recipe for them to follow there's not really a recipe for me to follow. I can't assure anyone of any kind of experience. And I think that's just the honest truth. So some of the micro cosmic stuff—I mean how did it get there? How did it get in the list? Well, there are things like studies. And there are things like anecdotal experience and just experience whether you're a mom. Maybe you've had 12 kids, and you do know what works for you. Yes. So valid. So helpful. And on the side of midwife too, we see, in general, that people that eat well seem to have better outcomes. But, again, there are so many things to look at. I don't know. But it's nice to have an idea of positive suggestions on the other hand.

So when working with women and you may know if you're one of them is some people want all of the things. They're going to do it all. They're going to try and eat as perfectly as they can. And they're going to go to their chiropractic visits. They're going to work on their emotional health. All of it. They want all of it. They're going to do all of it. And that's it. And then some really don't want the influence of what someone else thinks. And they're really going to tune in to what might matter to them. And, of course, there's a huge spectrum of choices in between. So that's kind of the microcosmic. And as we back up, we kind of get more distance, and we're kind of looking down on the situation. Things start to matter a little less. And we realize control can be released if we accept

that view. It's possible that you back up so much to the macro view that we believe we get the birth we are meant to have.

I was listening to Nahko this morning. Many of you are fans of Medicine for the People. And his one album with the song, *It Is Written*, right? So just that idea that it is written. It has already happened in some other time and place, and there is nothing to do. There is nothing to change it. There is nothing to control. Right. The existential wheel. So you know volleying in between is really normal too. We try to control a little bit. And then we back up, and we say, "Does that matter? Maybe nothing matters." Or maybe just conscious decision making matters, right? It's not so much about the thing that we're doing. One thing though to be bold about addressing in ourselves is that sometimes we take the macro view when we don't really want to face what we need to, right? So you can use it as an excuse as well. Just nothing matters, right? We don't have control over anything. So why bother?

And that's normal too. But we can only know for ourselves especially with big decisions or big choices. Are we doing that? Or are we running away from a feeling that we have? So guilt, blame, all of those things can factor in to trying to control or not trying to control. Again, there is really no right answer. And on that note, I can think of so many examples of when stories that kind of don't make sense when you continue to view birth as just a result of things we've been doing, right? Again, back to that recipe idea. So I think of a mom—geez. This was probably 15 years ago. First baby. Lived on a farm. Ate impeccably. Her own raw milk from her own cows. Her own eggs from her own chickens. Just really wonderful, whole foods, organic diet. About as perfect, right? As you could possibly eat in pregnancy, at least to some. And she wound up developing preeclampsia at 28 weeks and requiring a preterm C-section. I was a student at the time, and I was actually due to have one of my babies. So I remember it really well. It was a very emotional thing because I was friends with this woman. And it didn't make any sense, right?

And then we kind of have opposite stories. People that are in really rough relationships. I can think of another woman—and, again, it's this long ago, probably—yeah. 14 years ago. Another student experience I had where this woman was really being abused by her partner. And I don't remember exactly how that looked. But I remember her. And I remember the partner. And so it was not what you would call a good recipe for a successful birth. Often, we see that women in those situations really have trouble opening their bodies when their partner is around and et cetera, et cetera, et cetera. And this woman had the most blissful—at least from the outside—beautiful and easy birth I had ever seen up to that point. I remember getting there, and I was there first as the student. And first baby. And I think I was there minutes before she just effortlessly birthed the head, and she's in the pool.

So there is just so many humbling moments both as a midwife and, certainly, as a mom to where it doesn't make any sense. It doesn't make any rational sense why things wind up the way they do sometimes. One more example just because sharing stories is fun. And I think this was also that long ago. I try to not tell super recent stories anyway just in case anybody would feel like I was talking about them. And this one was also about 14 years ago. Again, I was a student. And we were taught, as students—and I think this is a find thing to teach which is if a woman has experienced an abortion or just a miscarriage or any kind of loss that she might be affected by it in her next pregnancy. And she might have a tough time. Her body might have a tough time, et cetera. So I remember sitting with this woman, who actually I still am acquainted with in a positive way up to this day. And I just love how straight forward she is and how blunt she is. And truthfully, she also is a kind of a person that does her own work, her own deep inner work.

So I remember being the student handling her care and very gingerly bringing up this idea that she had had an abortion. And did she want to talk about it? Or did she feel like she needed counseling? I kind of overdid it to be what I thought was respectful. And she just looked at me, and she was like, "I'm over it." I'm fine. That doesn't really matter to me anymore. I did my work. I did my processing. And I'm fine. That's not something that's going to affect me. So, again, just humbling. But it's not bad, right? If we're midwife students especially or if we're first time moms and we're—we do. We want to maybe know. What have other women experienced that was helpful, right? That's what we're going for. Or what have other women experienced that was hard. How can I avoid that? I think that's the natural human inclination to kind of not want to experience something hard especially when you hear someone else has.

So it all makes total sense. But it really brings me to a state of just complete surrender especially talking about it like this. It's like what does it matter. I mean it does, and it doesn't. But where is the line. And who knows? There is no formula, but then there are things that are helpful. And there is no formula. And then there are things maybe you could have looked at or not. So it's a very odd collection of thoughts and feelings, I think. But I think there are definitely bigger questions to consider as we perhaps choose to take the macrocosmic, at least in a given moment, and I don't think anybody will be surprised by these. But you may not believe the same. So you have things like, "Well, do our beliefs shape our birth?" And I have a whole podcast on how my beliefs shaped my birth. So, obviously, that was a thing for me in that birth, and I would stand by that. Is it always a thing? No.

And even getting into beliefs, what does that mean? Just because we say something is a belief, does that make it so? No. That's another podcast to come is beliefs shaping birth. But not for today. So beliefs shaping birth is kind of one way to go about it. Manifestation. Very New Age but not kind of concept that we really create our own

realities. Again, is that what you're doing in your birth? I don't know. I really don't know. I was blabbing about this podcast last night to my husband. And actually a song came on, and it was a song from 11 years ago right before I birthed my fourth baby, which if you've read our baby—and, again, you can go find it on Amazon. My fourth baby had a transport after birth. He was born pretty lifeless. And so he was helicoptered to the closest hospital. And so 11 years. Not that much really. I still reflect on, "Did I manifest that situation? Or was that his path?" What mattered? What did I have control over?

And I certainly don't feel guilt anymore about any of it. And I don't know if it—if manifestation is even the right word. Did I know? Sometimes do we get a heads up about what will happen? Or is it that we create it? Who knows? But in the case of his birth, there were lots of signs prebirth and in the pregnancy that—I don't know. You could make up whatever you wanted. I could make up that they pointed to my own fears. Or I could make up that they were giving me warning that this birth would be strange. Either way. Don't know. But those are things.

Karma and soul contracts are another thing as we look down at the big picture. So that's the we don't need to do anything. There's nothing we can do. That this baby soul entering has his or her needs. Their own story that needs to be played out. If you believe in past lives, then we have agreements we've made in other lives, and we're simply going for balance. So that could look a million different ways. Perhaps in another life your baby was your mother, right? So whoa. Whoa, whoa, whoa. That's where you can arrive. And I think that's great. I think all of it's great. I think arriving in a place where you feel peace, whatever that is. You feel peace about what you're about to enter into. And you can stay present is a really awesome place to be.

So it is a conundrum. And this is a riddle. This whole podcast is a riddle because do we have control or no? Or don't we? Do the choices we make matter? Are our choices out of our control? Which ones are? Which ones aren't? Plenty of people have different beliefs. And something that I feel like can be valid for some is that we don't control every aspect of our lives. We don't control every little thing that happens. But kind of at crucial moments, our choices do direct us or redirect us or whatever. So I think that's something to consider even though this is all getting a little confusing.

So a little bit more about this phrase perfect birth, and then I'm going to sign off. Again, whether or not that is the right phrase for you to consider doesn't matter so much to me. It's just encouraging you to come up with your view on these things because it will influence your pregnancy. It will influence if you spend your time on the Internet and going to people and getting things and doing things. That might be right for you. Or it might be completely unconscious, right? And the other side as well. Maybe you think there's nothing to do. You're just going to ride it out. You're not going to learn anything.

You're just going to follow your body. And that might be the completely right thing. Or are you hiding from things, right? I don't know.

So those are some things to consider. But how could we redream this idea of perfect birth. I think the real goal here when we find ourselves wanting to control birth, which I would say in a big scheme of things we can't. In the biggest picture. That's why things do come up in birth. It's just not something you can always predict or control. So what do we do with that? Can we change our relationship to the outcome? Yeah. Birth is awesome and important. But just be in your pregnancy if you can. And rather than doing, what can we feel? So the brain is kind of responsible for our doing and what is right, right? Whatever we think is right? And can we follow our hearts and intuition more? So get out of our heads and into our hearts and feel what that feels like.

And I've talked about this on another podcast about intuition and fear. So just a quick minute about that, but where are we feeling the sensations in our bodies that each choice brings? I think most people can be so quickly good at that even if you don't know that you are. So think of a choice like the baby positioning. Think of this idea that there is a way for it to be right beforehand. And how does that make you feel? Where do you feel it? Do you feel like centered and firm that, "Yes. I want that information. That is for me. I'm going to do that"? Or do you feel it somewhere else? Do you feel more anxious? Do you feel kind of fluttering and ungrounded and like your adrenalin kicks in and you feel more like, "Hmm. What I feel about it, no. That's not for me. That feels like not—wouldn't be helpful. Would just be noise. Would just be distraction."

So that, I think, is ultimately the goal. Every choice that's brought our way in pregnancy and honestly beyond in birth, in mothering, in life, if we work that way, of course. Which I totally honor that not everybody does. So these are kind of basic suggestions, if there is someone that is wondering how do I know. I do have my list, right? And I'm such a good student, and I want to do the best I can for this birth. So what do I do with all these ideas? How do I know which one is right for me? Well, feel it.

Another suggestion I have is to disengage. So take our lead. Disengage from social media. Don't read the stories, positive or negative. Don't listen to the stories, positive or negative. Don't. Just choose to be in your body, in your experience, and see what comes in. Again, I'm as guilty as anyone else. It's amazing how things like social media actually influence our chemistry. Do you feel it? I feel it, obviously. So hearing a birth story, especially the negative ones, of course, or just having someone make a comment, a fearful comment, can be enough to have you kind of spiral out especially in pregnancy. So we have to be responsible for our own emotional wellbeing and health because really no one else cares more than you do. And social media, other people's stories, comments, they're all ways that we choose to give power to someone else when we really need every last ounce of emotional energy for ourselves.

And then finally, again, this isn't for everyone, but a prayer. Just a simple prayer for clarity of mind and spirit. Prayer for clarity of mind and spirit. A prayer for love in your birth experience. All of the things that you would like to feel. Offer up words. Offer up a blessing for yourself. That's okay. You can do that. You can offer a blessing for yourself to be guided in the right direction. And so thanks for listening to me today. As always, check out indiebirth.org. And now more than ever since you won't be finding us on social media, indiebirthmidwiferyschool.org is our midwifery school. And we are just so glad and honored to have your support. And Margo and I are sending lots of love to everybody through the holiday season and beyond.

(closing music)