

(introductory music)

DISCLAIMER: Welcome to *Taking Back Birth*, a podcast for women who know the truth about birth and those who want to explore the path of radical birth love. I'm your host, Maryn Green. *Taking Back Birth* celebrates the power you have to make decisions in alignment with your own truth. Decisions not subject to anyone else's authority. Decisions that create experiences that will change your life. *Taking Back Birth* is a production of the Indie Birth Private Contract Association and indiebirth.org. No material on this podcast should be considered medical advice. Birth is not a medical event.

MARYN: On this podcast, I talk with my friend, Christina, about her recent birth of her third baby, Veda, at home. Christina has been featured on another one of my podcasts, *Christina's HBAC*, which we recorded after her second baby's birth. He was her primary home birth after cesarean, and his prenatal story is one of the most fascinating. You can find that podcast in our archives. You can also read that story of hers in our book, *Indie Birth: A Story of Radical Birth Love*. I love and adore this woman for her strength, her humor, and for inspiring and teaching me. Be sure to check out those other resources. They'll give you a more solid sense of Christina and her past history. I hope you enjoy listening.

So I'm here with Christina. I'm so glad we get to do this podcast sitting on the same couch.

CHRISTINA: Me too.

MARYN: Last time we were dealing with weird video things. But so honored to have her here in my little space. And I don't know. We're just going to jump in. She's just going to start where she wants to start, and we're going to see what happens.

CHRISTINA: All right. Let's do it. So this birth story is about my third baby. And this awesome, undisturbed pregnancy that I got to have this time, which I—

MARYN: That's great.

CHRISTINA: Which was totally new for me. And so it kind of begins where I left off with my second born, a home birth at home—after C-section. And that journey of him transforming my ideas of everything really and all these spirit babies that kind of came to me and knowing I was going to have more and being so excited that I would be able to walk with you again pregnant and not have any of those disturbances.

MARYN: Yeah. You had a lot. I mean I'm sure people will review if they don't remember all your second pregnancy. That must have been wild. I wasn't with you for most of it.

CHRISTINA: Yeah. So like where do I begin? So yeah. I planted Shasta's placenta when he turned a year old. And that was really powerful because when I planted his placenta the next morning I was on my moon. And this was the first time that I got to have that relationship with the earth and to have that experience and be reminded how connected we are to the earth. It was super exciting to me, and I was really excited because now I can use my moon. And I can actually intentionally get pregnant and track all of that stuff was so new to me. And so I uploaded some kind of an app, and I was so excited. I had one cycle. And then I got a random text from you actually on one morning where you said you had dreamt that I delivered a baby boy. And I thought, "Oh, that's so wild," because I just had my first probably ovulation. And I checked my app, and I was ovulating that very day. And I thought, "Oh my gosh." I think I'm pregnant. This is just too much of a coincidence to have you—my dear friend but also my midwife telling me you dreaming of that while I'm having my first ovulation since you've known me is wild.

MARYN: That is cool.

CHRISTINA: So on many levels, I knew at that time that I was probably pregnant. I was probably carrying a baby boy, and it was probably going to be an easy labor. All these kind of thoughts came to me, but I just let it go. And this was new to me because usually with pregnancies obviously I would go get an ultrasound. I would want to take multiple tests. I would—but I really went immediately with intuition and relationship that even I have been blessed to have. And I did take a pee test after a few weeks. And it was positive. But I still was in this place of unknowing. And I was so excited to be able to have a pregnancy with you. Like not being guided by the medical system with an ultrasound at eight weeks, 16 weeks, or whatever and just really getting to have a spiritual pregnancy.

MARYN: Yeah. Yeah. For yourself. I know how important it was. And how excited you were to do it that way.

CHRISTINA: Yeah. I was so excited. But it did—it led to a lot of unknowing and not being sure about am I or am I not until I was showing. And that was an important thing I think in this pregnancy. The unknown. And not wanting to put anything on the baby likes as far as gender and names. And I really tried to create a separate world like—and really honor the separate world of the child growing within even though in the back of my mind I still had these assumptions that it's going to be super easy. And it's probably a boy. But whatever. I just—but I really tried to just honor and grow this baby and give it the space. And I think that was kind of an important thing at the time because that was when the whole COVID thing happened. And so we were dealing with this—kind of these new world coming into effect. And these spirits that are choosing to be born right now—it's just a whole new world. So yeah. So not having

any disturbance was pretty cool for me. And it was an easy pregnancy, and it just kept going and going. And eventually, it kept going.

MARYN: Right. So you were due—what did you have? May 1st?

CHRISTINA: I had like somewhere—I knew enough to just generalize the due date. So I just said early May.

MARYN: Right. Okay. I forgot.

CHRISTINA: So yeah. Somewhere between May 1st and May 8th. And for some reason, I thought maybe I was going to go early. I don't know if this is just something that women say to themselves maybe hoping.

MARYN: Yeah. Sometimes.

CHRISTINA: So that was a mistake because I thought, "Oh, probably late April." But my actual due date is probably somewhere in May—early May.

MARYN: Right.

CHRISTINA: But those days came and went. And it just kept kind of dragging on. So an easy, easy pregnancy, but at that very last run, it literally ran on. So I was probably due May—I don't know. 4th. On technical terms—like terminology of whatever you assume your due date is based on my ovulation and all that.

MARYN: Right.

CHRISTINA: And then the birth was the 1st of June. So—

MARYN: That was a long month, I bet, for you.

CHRISTINA: It was a very long month. And it was—that was really the most challenging because not knowing—at the beginning kind of came back to full circle at the end of like, "Wait. Wait. Am I just getting really enormous?" I mean obviously I feel the baby. You're checking on the baby. But at a certain point, it did get very uncomfortable where it was like, "Am I going to deliver this baby?"

MARYN: Yeah. Like ever.

CHRISTINA: Yeah. Those days—they—I mean they're so far away now that she's seven months. But those were really hard. At a certain point, it was like—you wait—it felt like Groundhog Day. Like the movie where you wake up every day, and it's Christmas. But instead it's you wake up every day and you're still pregnant. And that was getting really frustrating. Yeah. You were checking in on me.

MARYN: Yeah. I was thinking this morning I should have gone back and looked at all of our text messages just because you really get in a bubble. Like even as the midwife, you get into a bubble with someone where you have to stay calm. You have to stay grounded and purely looking to you for all of it really. Here's what we can do. We can come check on you. We can reassure you. You are going to have a baby. But always looking to you and like, "Is there something that needs to be addressed?"

CHRISTINA: Right.

MARYN: "Do you want any additional testing? Is this when you're going to opt for that biophysical profile?" I didn't care for me, but I knew it was hard. I mean it was very hard for you. And most women would not have the patience that you did.

CHRISTINA: Right. To not want any of those—like that—and to make sure I'm not being stubborn. To really check in. Am I being stubbornly against doing those because I wanted to have this free pregnancy?

MARYN: Right. Right. The dogma.

CHRISTINA: Yeah. But at the same time, I did check in. And I knew. And every night I would sit outside, and the moon was actually waxing at this point. It was some major super moon. It was growing and growing. And I just—I could feel that energy. And then once it started waning again, I was like, "Wait. I was supposed to have this baby now." So now what? Now I'm checking back in, and like every time at night I would just reset by going outside and grounding myself and looking up at the moon and feeling like we really connected to the baby at those times and really feeling like I was getting the affirmation of it's okay. It's all okay. And I could totally feel the baby moving.

MARYN: Sure.

CHRISTINA: And I knew—I just had this feeling like if anything actually is wrong it's not—it has nothing to do with the fact that I still haven't gone into labor at 42 weeks.

MARYN: Right.

CHRISTINA: And yeah. So I mean did I cry and scream sometimes?

MARYN: Oh god, yeah. I'm sure.

CHRISTINA: Yeah. But yeah. At the end, it was really just being patient and allowing the journey to unfold and trusting that it was all okay. And then—and I didn't—the other thing too was the suggestions that other people would have. So my mother checking in. And that was where—that was kind of an important thing to hit on because my mother's birth experiences—all of our mother's birth experiences come into ours.

MARYN: Totally.

CHRISTINA: And my brother, who is closest in age with me, had a really traumatic birth. And he was born very, very late. And she had undiagnosed gestational diabetes or what—

MARYN: Yeah. Or maybe real diabetes. Yeah.

CHRISTINA: Real diabetes. Definitely. And he was born really large, and she had always kind of wished that she ended up having a C-section. That her doctor checked in. And all of those things because of the way he was born late caused so much trauma at his birth. The doctors tugged on his neck. And by tugging, they broke a vocal cord.

MARYN: Oh wow.

CHRISTINA: And they broke his right shoulder. He wasn't breathing when he was born.

MARYN: Wow.

CHRISTINA: For minutes. So my father and my mother said the Our Father in the room while the doctors were trying to revive him. And they did revive him. That story was a shadow.

MARYN: Sure.

CHRISTINA: And I would pretty good at just throwing it to the side, but it was somewhere, of course.

MARYN: Yeah. And your mom, did she keep telling you it when you were waiting? Like remember?

CHRISTINA: She didn't. No. She brought it up one time, but it didn't matter because I knew it was there. I knew the whole time—

MARYN: It was a conscious—mm-hmm.

CHRISTINA: Yeah. And but she really—actually really has a lot of respect for you and a lot of trust in me and knowing that. My experience is different based on my last birth. So she really backed off, and I'm really grateful for that. But I don't think it matters. I think that that is in my system, in my blood.

MARYN: Totally.

CHRISTINA: And so that's just the way it goes. So there was a part of me at certain points that thought, "Maybe I should go on a bumpy road just to move things a long."

MARYN: Right. Like last time.

CHRISTINA: Yeah. “And maybe I should get those acupuncture spots,” or whatever. Or eat spicy foods. But actually, I still didn’t want to do any of that. I really did just want to have truly the natural experience and allowing the journey to unfold. So yeah. But my waters did break early. And—

MARYN: Before labor. Yeah. But how many weeks were you at that point? Do you think?

CHRISTINA: I think I was 43 weeks. And so we did start having more conversations on, “Well, how do you really feel?” Because ultimately, if I am holding any space of fear, it’s going to affect everything anyway. And you had suggested the chiropractor. And I would have gone to her probably throughout my pregnancy. But because of the distance, I just—I had excuses. But those excuses are still part of me—

MARYN: Sure. Your choice.

CHRISTINA: My choices. Yes. And so I think it’s important too to reflect on the fact that the chiropractor is not—it’s not just the physical. It’s obviously the metaphysical. And there was obviously something blocking. And so whenever somebody suggests a chiropractor, to me, I think of it from a bodily—physical term. But that might have been why I held off and didn’t go before. And then that day, I had been—my waters had been open for—I don’t know. Three or four—maybe four days I think. And that day I decided—yeah. What is wrong? I’ve got to figure this out. I’ve got to maybe work with somebody. I can’t do it myself. When it comes to physical therapy, I usually am very good at dealing with my body because I was in that line of work. So I have an issue with giving over my power in that way to somebody else.

MARYN: Totally. Me too. Yeah.

CHRISTINA: But I had decided that day. And you texted me a card you had pulled.

MARYN: Oh, that’s right.

CHRISTINA: And it was like divine femininity, and it was wisdom over fear.

MARYN: That’s right.

CHRISTINA: It was like all I needed in that moment.

MARYN: Did it have a number or something?

CHRISTINA: And it did. It had 11 on it. And it was this beautiful goddess. And it just made me smile. And I thought, “Yeah. Wisdom over fear.” That’s a good way to start

out this day because I know there's nothing wrong now. So it's just another day. My waters—yes—are open, but we're making sure. I'm not—nothing's going—

MARYN: You knew. You knew how to deal with that.

CHRISTINA: Yes. And yeah. So I was like—it was like a new day. I went, and I sat outside, starting chomping on ice, felt like an enormous circus freak that's been pregnant forever wondering what the neighbors are thinking. And then contractions finally started. And I was super excited. And I had yelled out to my eight-year-old son and let him know that this is happening finally. And my husband is at work. But I know these things can take time, so I didn't want to rush. I gave you a heads up, so that you know that, "Hey, something is finally happening," because my waters have been open for days. I'm 43 weeks pregnant, but I feel like I'm like 56 weeks pregnant. And finally, yay.

MARYN: Totally.

CHRISTINA: Something is happening.

MARYN: I felt like at that day with that card even. It was like—it felt like today is the day.

CHRISTINA: Yeah. Yeah. It's really cool because that day the numerology did end up—or was it—yeah. The numerology is 11 for that birth day.

MARYN: Yeah. That's so cool.

CHRISTINA: So that's really awesome.

MARYN: That's so cool. Well, we didn't know how fast it would be either. I mean you never know. But Shasta's birth was pretty fast for a primary VBAC. So I think we were all a little like on edge too wanting to make sure we made it there with you.

CHRISTINA: Yes. And yeah. I don't know where these ideas come from because obviously any—every birth is different.

MARYN: Right.

CHRISTINA: But I totally thought, "Yeah. This baby is,"—but at this point because of my journey in that last month of pregnancy, which was almost—felt like an extra month of pregnancy.

MARYN: A whole trimester.

CHRISTINA: Yeah. It felt like my lesson was just anything is possible at this point, so yes. I think I'm going to have a fast one, but it might not be a fast labor at all. And so I

did let you know so that we could have—like kind of just like, “Yay. Something is finally happening, but I don’t want you to rush over here. And but I mean I think when I tested you, it was only a few hours later that I was actually in active labor.

MARYN: Yeah. I mean it kind of was fast, if I remember. I mean not from—not that you have to agree from your perspective. But I feel like year. All of a sudden, you were like, “Oh my god. I nursed Shasta, and now it’s real.” And I have had that happen in my labors too. Nurse a toddler, and suddenly, you’re in active labor.

CHRISTINA: That’s a good—yes. Yeah. It was super sweet because I knew I’m going to have this baby soon. And I’ve been waiting I felt like longer than anybody.

MARYN: Anybody ever has.

CHRISTINA: And then yeah. I nursed my two year old one last time knowing that he was going to be the baby of the family. And I took a quick snapshot of the boys eating lunch together.

MARYN: Sweet.

CHRISTINA: And we folded clothes. My labor, at that point, it was intense, but it was enough to work through. And it was a sweet memory that I get to keep of me just—my husband is at work. And you guys aren’t there yet. And it’s just me with my boys. And it was really special.

MARYN: That’s so cool.

CHRISTINA: And my oldest son, he is no pro, but he was there for the last home birth. So he set up—I call it the pregnancy cat walk with all of the pet pads everywhere. And he took out all these precious stones from the tent—from the women’s ceremonies we have. And he put them in my space. And it was really special. But things got intense very fast. And yeah. As soon as I nurse Shasta, it was on. And I called my husband, and he was—I kept telling him to take his time coming home. But then by—I think it was 4:30 in the afternoon, I said yeah. It’s time.

MARYN: Well, and he texted me, and he was like—I don’t even remember what he said. But I trusted him. And I was like, “Oh gosh. Now no one’s there.” He’s rushing from work. So I remember being on the phone and being like, “Okay. Well, I got to go right now. Bye.”

CHRISTINA: Yeah. And Bodie too was like, “Well, what’s going to happen? Am I going to catch the placenta?” He was way—he was super concerned with the placenta for some reason.

MARYN: That’s funny.

CHRISTINA: Like more than the baby. But I just needed somebody really home at that point to help me with the toddler. And yeah. And you guys, I think, Wayne got home, took Shasta off of me, and then just let me do my thing. And you were there probably an hour later. And—

MARYN: You were just doing your thing.

CHRISTINA: I was just doing it. And the way that I labor so far is just going into my space in my bathroom, and I like it very dark. And I don't really even want my husband there. He comes in, and it feels good when he brings me water or he's checking on me. But in this new arrangement of having also a toddler, I just didn't really want Shasta around because he is a lot of clinginess, and I just needed to focus. I mean it's just a lot of inward stuff. And then once you guys were there, I felt kind of guilty because I was able to kind of talk through some—in between contractions, which I didn't have with Shasta. And I thought, "Oh no. You guys are going to be like waiting around." I was nervous that you would be—

MARYN: I know. That's the worst.

CHRISTINA: Like yeah.

MARYN: I don't like feeling that way either. I always feel bad when people feel that way. But I mean there's nothing—we know that you're going to have a baby soon, so we didn't care.

CHRISTINA: Well, that was the thing. I was surprised by how far along I was when you got there because I thought it—I think my water broke. And I looked up, and Ashley was in the room. And I thought, "Oh." I don't know. It just felt so good that—I love—I just love you guys so much. And it's just so awesome because you get to have your experience and know your—somebody is there witnessing you. But they're not in your space. And just like my water broke, and somebody got to witness that.

MARYN: Like for real broke because it had been leaking. Yeah.

CHRISTINA: For real. Yeah. Exactly. It, for real, broke. And it's just every contraction knowing I'm—I mean it's so intense and such hard work. But I'm getting there. And every once in awhile to look up and see those—that support around you was just—it's just so awesome. But yeah.

MARYN: You were so beautiful. I just remember you being in your bedroom and kind of leaning up against your bed and just being so graceful and knowing that it was getting hard.

CHRISTINA: Yeah. Yeah. You know the harder it's getting the closer—the closer you are. And just really riding those waves. And then eventually, yeah. I couldn't believe how quickly the sat—I like I could tell from my sounding and from my body that the pushing phase is coming. And that was really weird too. Like, "Oh my god. I'm already there."

MARYN: I know.

CHRISTINA: And yeah. And then the head came out. And then the head just came out.

MARYN: And then the head came out.

CHRISTINA: Yeah.

MARYN: That's where the really good part of the story starts.

CHRISTINA: Yeah. So the head was just there for a very long time. So I could feel the baby moving. And that my body was doing what it needed to do. But then all of a sudden, everything just kind of stopped. And time just stood still but like really didn't. I mean it was five to seven minutes. And the baby's head was there. And in that space and time, I thought about one of the birthing videos that you have on Indie Birth with one of the mamas in our community. And I—from that video, I learned a valuable thing that that can happen. The head can be stuck. And everything can be okay.

MARYN: Yeah. Because it's actually not stuck. It's just a baby that hasn't rotated yet.

CHRISTINA: Right.

MARYN: So a head can be out, but everything is fine.

CHRISTINA: Right.

MARYN: And we're not panicking. We're just waiting. So that's what you were thinking.

CHRISTINA: Yeah. No one was panicking. And I don't know. Maybe if I hadn't seen that video maybe I would have been like, "Oh my god. There's a head just hanging out of me and no contraction following." And then as time was ticking, I think that's when you had asked, "Do you want help," because it became obvious after many positions—

MARYN: Yeah. I was going to say. I was rewatching it this morning. And even though it's dark, you were so intuitive. And you were just moving like you knew you needed to move. There was no other way to describe it. All kinds of ways with your hips and

positions. You knew she needed you to do something. So we weren't all just like watching you sit in one position.

CHRISTINA: No. No. There was like the runner's pose. There was squatting. There was standing up, holding the door. Yeah. I was really just trying to help her. But there was no contractions too which was really confusing to me because of probably my first birth where they were telling me to push when I wasn't in a—didn't have any contractions. So that—I don't know. Maybe I should have pushed in those—I don't—that's the only question I think—when I look at the videos, and I think about it. Is like was I supposed to push more? Could I have pushed harder to get her out? But she was stuck.

MARYN: Yeah. Well, and you ended up pushing without contractions just because you needed to. And why they stopped, I mean I don't have the answer. I think your body is really smart. And I think whatever was—whatever communication was going on between you and Veda—but I have the same question. I'm like, "Oh, maybe we should have done a better job stimulating more contractions." But yeah. She wasn't coming. And you were doing all the things that just in a normal simple birth you wouldn't even have to do. Babies come even when moms are perfectly still.

CHRISTINA: Right. Right. That's—yeah. I'm definitely aware of that. If you're in a coma, you still deliver a—

MARYN: Yeah. The baby makes the rotation.

CHRISTINA: I trusted that. I trusted—definitely trusted. But yeah. And then when you asked, I knew—well, if you're asking—and you're looking. You're seeing. And I could kind of feel too because the—her head—she was really trying to get out. And then I could kind of feel her stop trying to get out. And that was probably when you asked. "Do you want help?" And, of course, in that moment, I'm like, "Definitely." Whatever we need to do right now needs to happen. And even when you went in to help get her out, it took a lot longer. I remember in that—that was the one spot where I probably actually had kind of a little bit of fear because I was like—I just kind of those you would be able to kind of get her out fast.

MARYN: Right.

CHRISTINA: But the finesse or whatever it was to rotate, right? Because it was her arm.

MARYN: Yeah. Yeah. It was her shoulder. Yeah. So to add, I guess, my memory is yeah. You working pretty hard, being intuitive, but not a lot of change happening. But the whole while, we're watching her color and what not. And she was looking fine. So

in my mind, it was like, “Okay. There’s no need to panic. there’s no need to jump in there and stick hands up places. Christina is going to do it.” And I think I kept saying to you, “Okay. Her should is going to come. It’s coming. It’s going to come on. Come on. Like come on, baby.” And then I went behind you because I had—you had moved. And the head was out behind you. And I wish we had that on video, but we don’t because Ashley kind of stayed in front of you. But I went behind you, and I had the flashlight. And she was looking good. And you did some more positions. And then she wasn’t. And it was like literally just like that. And there was no question in my mind. It wasn’t even like an intellectual—like it was just connection I think with you and your baby and being like, “Okay. Now’s the time.” We were all so perfectly patient. You did everything you could have done. And then she was asking, I think.

CHRISTINA: I think so too.

MARYN: She was like, “Okay. Now help. Now help me.”

CHRISTINA: Yeah. Totally. And yeah. And then when you were—then when she was out. And you said, “Okay. Grab your baby.” I just remember for some reason I brought her to the right side. She was kind of coming up the right side. And she was so floppy.

MARYN: She was very. Very floppy.

CHRISTINA: And she was not—she was not in her body.

MARYN: Nope.

CHRISTINA: In any way. And I mean I think at that time we all kind of exited our—like I feel like we were either in a protective bubble in that space and time with the three of us. Well, four of us. And—or we all just transported out of our bodies. We all were not in our bodies. I don’t know how to describe it. But it was like maybe just what happens when your baby isn’t—I mean she was technically alive because you listened to her heart. But she wasn’t in her body. Her spirit. I could feel—but, again, there was no fear, I think. I didn’t have any fear in that space because I could feel her presence. I could feel her spirit, and it was there. So I knew it was okay. And yeah. And then you calmly gave me some instructions on how to resuscitate her. And I gave her a breath. And there was still not much going on. And then a few more. A little bit more going on. And then Ashley had said—I know she had a similar experience.

MARYN: Right.

CHRISTINA: And so she said, “Give more breath than you think you need to.”

MARYN: Right.

CHRISTINA: And when she said that, I finally got back into my body of like, “Okay. I really got to—I got to get into this.” And I went to the depths of myself. I went to the depths of my soul, and I literally breathed in—I breathed my soul into her. And she—

MARYN: You’re going to make me cry.

CHRISTINA: I know.

MARYN: Oh, and I mean I know being there with you—and that’s where I feel like I don’t even have words. It’s not my story. But because I was part of it, I had an experience too. And I don’t have words for what it felt like. And even watching the video, it’s like we could talk about this happened at this time. And this is when she was born and all of the technical notes. But just being there with you and feeling like how grounded you were even though you say maybe you left your body—and maybe you left to go get her. But once you were—you had claimed her, you were so calm. And it felt like it was all right. We were just watching you call her in.

CHRISTINA: To me, I mean I obviously did end up having the exact birth that my mother had with my brother.

MARYN: So not weird. Right?

CHRISTINA: Right. But it wasn’t—it was like this in and out. It wasn’t in a hospital. It was in my home. And you guys were holding the space. My mother and my father saying their Our Father. You guys were just holding the space with your positive light and energy. And I was—instead of the doctor, I was resuscitating my baby. I was bringing her in the way it—I mean I feel like I cleared this karmatic thing that—I mean I didn’t—Veda did. She came here to do that. And, of course, I looked—peaked at her in her little yoni for a second. But not until I knew she was—for the longest time, she was just a baby. A floppy baby. My floppy baby. And then to see that she was this little baby girl after finally she was in her body. And I was like, “Oh, of course. Us women. We have to clear.” I don’t know I mean I’m sure men do this too. And boys are sent here to do some crazy work to. But for me, this was daughter I really wanted so badly for so long. I mean I love all my children so much. But the daughter I didn’t really think I was going to have.

MARYN: I know.

CHRISTINA: And here she is. And this is her journey. And I mean—yeah. And my lesson too is that sometimes things don’t work out easy. And sometimes you aren’t as blessed as I was.

MARYN: Totally.

CHRISTINA: In that space. And I do feel like she is everything good that I've ever done. And I was blessed to be able to bring her back in because just—she is literally every prayer, every mantra, every—everything good I've ever done.

MARYN: Yeah. She's so beautiful. And seriously, that was—witnessing you and being in that space with you was just one of the most amazing things I've ever seen. And I wish—I don't wish necessarily resuscitation on anyone. I don't mean that. But to have that blessing as a midwife to see you in your power strengthens my trust in birth and in women and just makes me love you so much. And just reminds me that there is a bigger picture at work. That we all do what we can to help, but you, as the mother, were the one that needed to do.

CHRISTINA: Mm-hmm.

MARYN: And even if you had been alone, you would have figured out—you would have known what to do. But you had to be the one to call her in.

CHRISTINA: Yeah. I definitely feel like that—yeah. There could have maybe—it could have went a different way even. Sometimes I think that. Our energy is so powerful. And the choices we make are so powerful. And yeah. I mean sometimes the outcomes just don't happen the way you want them to. But it doesn't really matter. It's like the after fact rewiring it in whatever way you need to so that it actually isn't—you're not a victim.

MARYN: Totally.

CHRISTINA: You're never a victim of any of the circumstances.

MARYN: Totally.

CHRISTINA: And I think this is just an example. And every experience in our day-to-day life we're supposed to kind of do that.

MARYN: Totally.

CHRISTINA: I've had people say, "Oh my gosh. That sounds so traumatic. Her birth." And I'm like, "What do you mean?" I don't see it as traumatic at all. In a negative way. I don't. It was powerful.

MARYN: It was intense.

CHRISTINA: It was intense. And I feel so blessed. I would never want it to be any other way. And it's just like—it's just a matter of perspective maybe. Some people, "Whoa." They couldn't have handled that maybe. And that's why that didn't happen to them.

MARYN: Right. Yeah. I mean gosh. There's so many great discussions there. I think trauma is one of them. And just our perspective and how we see our role in difficult things that happen in life. But also your birth I feel like totally—not only taught me so much but also prepared me for my own birth for real because watching you in your power in a situation where a lot of people would have been like, “Oh man. That would have sucked,” feels a lot like my birth where I had to also find—you find your power in difficult moments. And you still claim it as yours because you realize it doesn't matter. It doesn't matter where you are. It doesn't matter what clinical story someone wants to tell about it. You owned it. You completely owned every second.

CHRISTINA: It's true. I feel like during your—the birth—it's—you are an open portal to your higher consciousness. And whatever you choose, you are right. It's you. It's you, your body, your baby. And whatever you choose. So yes.

MARYN: Well, when you're not—I think, and I think this is part of it is like you're not looking to anyone to save you. And like that's never been our relationship. And I'm so grateful. And I feel like I don't really work with people that do feel that way. But you had us there as support and guidance. And yes, experience. But you weren't looking for anyone to do anything for you. And I think that is really amazing.

CHRISTINA: Yeah. Well, that's what your whole—like *13 Moons* prepares you for, right? That's the whole—

MARYN: Yeah. But in that moment, it's hard. And I think we both know that. I felt that way even a tiny bit. My own birth being like, “Oh my god. Can't someone save me from this awful thing that's happening,” even though it's like no. There's actually not. This is my path. And it's a solitary path even with your best women sisters with you.

CHRISTINA: It really is. Mm-hmm. I know. I'm amazed by some women that can have birthing parties and stuff. I don't know.

MARYN: Like a lot of people.

CHRISTINA: And they can successfully deliver a baby. And it feels good to them. But yeah. For me, no. It is. It's all in me. And I know that. And I feel very blessed that I get to have the support. I mean there was a woman I met recently who was like, “Oh, you were 43 weeks. Oh my gosh.” And I said, “Well, yeah.” I mean maybe that's not technically normal, but we don't really know what's normal because it's only what's allowed.

MARYN: Right. Exactly.

CHRISTINA: And I feel that's where I am super blessed to have you as my midwife because I don't—I don't have anybody standing over me and saying, “Well, your

time,”—I mean obviously if there was something wrong that you knew or that I was missing, you might bring it up in a way that, “Hey, you might want to get this looked at.” I trust your clinical and scientific skills. So that’s just a separate side note. But ultimately, it’s about just walking the path so that other women can know that there is no real normal.

MARYN: Right.

CHRISTINA: So when it comes to 43 weeks or waters open, I mean—

MARYN: It’s the unknown. It’s the unknown. And I think the way midwives often get into kind of domineering the situation is because women don’t often trust themselves as much as you do. And sometimes there’s not even the relationship between the two women that makes it all something to understand. Like I wouldn’t have dreamed of telling you, “Go do this thing.” It was just these things are your options. If you’re feeling like you want anything, then I’m going to support you in that. And if you’re not—and I certainly didn’t have the feeling anything was wrong. But it was strange for you because you’ve had—Shasta came around the date you had. And I know Bodie did. So it was like just uncharted territory. What do you do with that?

CHRISTINA: Yeah.

MARYN: And you don’t want to be one of those people—I think you kind of said this. Just trust because you decided you were going to trust. And god forbid, you ask for help because—

CHRISTINA: Right. It’s hard to navigate that.

MARYN: It is. It’s the hardest.

CHRISTINA: That’s why you’re—your births were so inspiring in that way because it really is hard to know—wait. Again, is this a different kind of ego thing? It’s like diving deeper into your truth is really a challenging thing. I mean—

MARYN: Why do I want this thing?

CHRISTINA: Right.

MARYN: Is it so I look a certain way? It’s so I don’t disappoint other people? Or am I just freaking scared to go ask for help? Because I think that’s a lot of women. If they were 43 weeks, they’re like, “Oh god. I’m not going to go there,” because they’re just going to dream up something to keep me there.

CHRISTINA: Right. Well, it’s funny because it is—both birth journeys that I have had recently because Bodie’s was awhile ago. But they—it does end up becoming about—I

realize how pathetic it is to care what other people think. And how much that impacts everything but especially birth because there is this life on the line kind of thing. Well, you're responsible for this life. And you are. But it's no one else's business.

MARYN: Right.

CHRISTINA: It really isn't.

MARYN: Right. And no one else is responsible in that way.

CHRISTINA: Right. But it is still, "Oh my gosh." What do I care that my neighbors think I'm some kind of a circus freak because I'm—they thought I was having a baby a couple weeks ago? And I barely even know them. But I'm just concerned with what they think. And of course, family. Yeah. That's a ton of pressure because it just automatically is. It's there in the sidelines. And it affects everything. It's hard to clear that, but it's important to do that.

MARYN: Yeah. Yeah. It's so important to clear. And then I think there are things that can only be cleared in the way that you experience them too, don't you think?

CHRISTINA: Yeah.

MARYN: Like with you needing to clear that for your family through actual experience.

CHRISTINA: Mm-hmm. Yeah. I feel definitely. I mean I feel the journey—the birthing journey is just—it's like I'm so honored to be able to have these experiences. And yeah. They are just profound.

MARYN: Yeah.

CHRISTINA: And walking the uncharted too is some—like I kind of joked like, "Well, if I ever do it again, this whole pregnancy and having a baby thing again, I hope I—there's no more—any—just—I want a boring story."

MARYN: No more funny business.

CHRISTINA: Yes. But then do I really? I have—I don't know. Because I feel like—

MARYN: I love that.

CHRISTINA: It's a blessing to get to dive deeper into my evolution. It's awesome.

MARYN: And honestly, you sharing your stories like Shasta's is equally as powerful in a different way. So again, if people haven't heard that, just what you went through in his pregnancy always blows my mind. And I share it all the time because I'm always like, "This was the most amazing woman I ever met." I remember meeting you and just

being like, “How has she put up with this? And how is this going to go?” I had so many just admirations for you.

CHRISTINA: I’m just a stubborn Italian.

MARYN: Well, me too. So that makes two of us.

CHRISTINA: Yeah. I don’t know. I mean I—like yeah.

MARYN: Yeah. But there are some women too like you said. This isn’t everyone’s story. Lots of people—most people do just kind of have uneventful births. But—well, and I’m not going to speak for you. I want to hear you talk about it. But if you believe too that birth is a spiritual experience and it’s more than this physical and it’s doing all these amazing things and putting you in touch with your ancestral line, it’s like—it could be boring. But then the stories that are more complicated seem like they just belong.

CHRISTINA: Yeah. They have to be. It’s also clearing the ancestral karma, but it’s also your legacy. I know that now Veda has my birth story in her.

MARYN: That is so cool.

CHRISTINA: And not even her. All of our sisters, all of our blood sisters, all of us. When I plant her placenta, I truly believe that has that information—

MARYN: I believe that too.

CHRISTINA: That I’m giving to the earth. And then the earth recycles it back to the next generation. And so we kind of—we have to have these experiences for all of us. It’s a collective really. And yeah. I guess in a way it is—the whole idea of being a birth warrior. It truly is what we get to be. And yeah. An uneventful birth in that moment would be great. But I wouldn’t be here seven months later still glowing from it. And my connection with her is really awesome and definitely unique. And I mean that’s—I don’t know. It’s just—

MARYN: Yeah. It’s what it needed to be.

CHRISTINA: Mm-hmm. Yeah.

MARYN: Well, not to end on a boring note, but I wanted to add a couple of clinical notes because people had had some questions prior when I said we were going to talk about this, just about shoulder dystocia.

CHRISTINA: Mm-hmm.

MARYN: Where to start with that? Well, I want to keep it brief. But you can't really anticipate that. And she wasn't a huge baby, so that's sometimes a myth people have. They're like, "Oh, I'm scared of that because I had a big baby." And your mother did.

CHRISTINA: Right. She did.

MARYN: And you were, I think, right? You were concerned like, "Oh gosh. I hope I don't have a huge baby because I'm 43 weeks."

CHRISTINA: Yeah. I had that somewhere. Definitely. Yeah. I guess I forget about that. But there was a—yeah. There was a time where I was like, "Oh, maybe this is an enormous baby." But no. I knew she—yeah.

MARYN: But she was bigger than the boys. She was like a poundish bigger, right?

CHRISTINA: She was actually a lot bigger than Shasta. She was seven pounds 14 ounces or something like that.

MARYN: Yeah. I thought so too.

CHRISTINA: She was almost eight pounds.

MARYN: Eight pounds. Yeah. So for you, that was bigger than you had experienced for sure.

CHRISTINA: Yes. Yeah.

MARYN: But not in an 11 pounder or anything.

CHRISTINA: It's just an interesting—it's another kind of interesting thing between her connection and Shasta's because Shasta—there was so much stress over him being too small.

MARYN: Right. Right. So you had that theme too that you like obliterated.

CHRISTINA: And the medical world, they say an eight-pound baby is the normal, the average. So it's funny that she's like my big baby, and she's the normal one.

MARYN: The normal one. Yeah. So she wasn't huge. She was just a nice size baby. And so right. You can't really anticipate that although when I was rewatching the video it seemed like—or maybe I was trying to remember, so I could be wrong. Just that maybe she did crown kind of slowly. But it was so dark, and my memory isn't the best for that many months ago because the video starts when her head is out. So her head was out for quite a while. But we talked about there wasn't a lot of change. And then when she wasn't looking, it was like six minutes in, I think. And yeah. Her shoulder was stuck presumably. I mean we don't know exactly where I guess. On your public bone.

So you were on hands and knees. And then I released her posterior shoulder from where there is kind of space in there—in your sacrum area. Just kind of had to go in and press it down without hurting her enough to give room to then remove the arm. So I think it took 30 seconds. Like you said, it wasn't just like, "Oh, she's right there." But I mean that makes sense because something was holding her up.

CHRISTINA: Right. That's how I—and that too makes me very grateful that I'm not a free birther. To use those kind of terms, but because I feel like I was glad that you were there to do that. I don't know honestly if I could have gone in there and stuck my hand in. I don't—

MARYN: No. It's the one thing. And not to make this a lecture on shoulder dystocia, I think for people that are like really wanting to learn. Go to midwifery school. So we're just kind of covering the basics. But that was actually one of the questions that someone had asked in anticipation of this about free birth. And anything is possible, right? And I'd love to think kind of that image of a mom lifting a car to save her kid, right? We come up with weird ways of moving our bodies and doing stuff if we needed to. However, shoulder dystocia to be resolved by the mother herself is near impossible.

CHRISTINA: Wow. Yeah.

MARYN: I mean, right? How could any of us over a pregnant belly—I don't know. I mean you'd follow your instinct. But there are situations and there have been for sure, like anything, where babies don't get out because there is no one—and so I'm not saying that to make myself a hero. I mean whatever. It's just you can't resolve that yourself.

CHRISTINA: No. But that is a thought that I have had. Yeah. I don't know how I—I don't know. Because I didn't at all think of doing a free birth with this pregnancy. But with Shasta, it was my only other option because I—before I had met you, I thought I wanted a vaginal birth. And the medical world was giving me a hard time on it. And so I'm just going to go home and do it myself.

MARYN: Totally.

CHRISTINA: There's so many women that do that.

MARYN: I know.

CHRISTINA: And I have never been the person to look at my cervix and—so who am I—how am I going to deliver my own baby really? I mean there's so much more than just being intuitive and trusting your body when things don't go right.

MARYN: Yeah. I mean I think in a situation that's a true shoulder dystocia there is just pure mechanics at play. So yeah. I think the spiritual story is the most important especially with you. That makes a perfect sense. The most perfect sense. But if we're just talking about purely logistics, you couldn't anticipate that you would be one of the rare people where your baby would get wedged in there in just the right spot. My baby got wedged in there in just a weird spot too. Different picture. So anyway, I don't know. It is. To me, it's—it is one of the freakiest things to consider when being on your own completely for birth. And, again, so rare.

CHRISTINA: What would a woman do? If she was just call, would you have to be transported if you were by yourself? I mean would you call 9-1-1? What would you recommend?

MARYN: Yeah. I don't know. I mean hopefully you'd have help of some kind like a husband or somebody. And I mean I do think there are things to know because you could also seriously damage a baby like your brother was.

CHRISTINA: Right. Right.

MARYN: Which maybe that kind of damage is still preferable if you get a live baby out of it. So somebody could just go in there and—I don't know. It sounds terrible to think of, but you want to be gentle. And you want to know what you're feeling for. And you want to know what to do. So unless you have that kind of training, I think it would be really hard. And different babies have different time limits with what they can withstand. And she was kind of—I think we agree we gave her the max of patience before she was compromised. And obviously, she was at least a tiny bit or—and/or she was sort in shock. I think resuscitation—yeah. Can sometimes just be the result of a baby that is just shocked by the experience and had their blood supply to their heads and all that kind of limited from an impaction like a true impaction. But yeah. Anyway, not to babble on.

CHRISTINA: Or she's just a Gemini.

MARYN: Or she's just a Gemini. Totally. I love that. It's a great way to end it. Any last thoughts or themes you want to share? It's such a great story.

CHRISTINA: I don't know. I think I hit it all from my geeky notes. Just about choice, I think, really and trust. And yeah. With home births, in general, just being—I don't know. Doing the work during your pregnancy, I think, is truly important. And I did that.

MARYN: I know you did.

CHRISTINA: Like totally geeked out on it and love it. And I just love the journey of being pregnant. And I think that's why I've gotten to have these great birth stories as

well. And yeah. They're not the easiest. But to me, they're amazing. And I'm so blessed. So thank you.

MARYN: You are. You are. And they're so inspiring, which is why you're like a famous guest on my podcast. Twice now. There's not many people that have been on twice.

CHRISTINA: At one of the workshops, I did sign for some woman. She asked if I could sign. I was so excited.

MARYN: So cool.

CHRISTINA: I was like that's so funny. But yeah.

MARYN: Yeah. I mean you're—

CHRISTINA: I'm so inspired by just this Indie Birth and the community. And I mean what you're doing is—it's changed my life. And it's changing everybody's life that I know. You've got the ripple effect going in my own world, and I'm not a virtual reality person. So it's in my actual, physical life.

MARYN: Oh, that's so cool. And yeah. I'm just so grateful to you. I am so glad you're in my life. Your births have taught me so much and pushed me to trust even more in all the ways that I think we're both talking about that serve women and serve the highest good. Not some false ideal of perfection.

CHRISTINA: Right.

MARYN: The depths of the journey, being present—I don't know. I feel like there's so many other things one day that we'll maybe record and talk about because they're all there. And I know you're going to have more experiences at some point. I feel like you will even if it's—I don't know. I don't know. Have more babies or if you'll be in birth stuff, but I feel like that's coming your way.

CHRISTINA: It is. It's definitely coming my way. The birth. The whole world of it. There's nothing more important in my mind. I mean I'm always on the brink of birth and palliative care. Those two things are just—that's what we're—I mean what else is there?

MARYN: The initiations.

CHRISTINA: Mm-hmm.

MARYN: The depths of—yeah. All those experiences.

CHRISTINA: Yeah. So yeah. And with Veda, she kind of got to have both of those because she was not—it was a true death to rebirth to death to rebirth. It was—

MARYN: Yeah. Gosh. I mean I agree. I have—Rune’s birth was similar in him entering without his soul in his body. And on one hand, it’s like I don’t wish that on anyone. It’s really scary to see your own baby like floppy and white.

CHRISTINA: I hope my stomach isn’t recorded on here.

MARYN: We’re getting near lunch time. Anyway, yeah.

CHRISTINA: Yeah. That’s—it’s different. It’s just different. I feel like too my brother—the one that had the similar birth—grew up to be quite amazing too. So I think that there is—it’s something kind of special. Obviously, it’s not something we want our babies to experience. But I think it’s kind of special. For me, it was an eye opener of like the fact that we are an avatar. Our bodies are just not really us.

MARYN: Sure. Yeah. Right. Watching her spirit come in. Yeah. That’s what struck me when I rewatched it this morning because it had been a long time. Again, being in it was different. But even watching it and seeing how slowly—and she was coming in. And I had made some notes of, “At this minute, she was doing this. And at this minute, she was doing this.” But she was definitely coming in. And at one point, I said to you, “She just needs time.” And I feel like that’s even just a cool thing to reflect on. Why did she need that time? And how beautiful and patient you were as her mother to give her that time? Because you could have panicked. And you could have looked to us and been like, “Oh my god. Help my baby.”

CHRISTINA: I know.

MARYN: Or whatever that could have looked like where you just didn’t allow her process. And I think—

CHRISTINA: Mm-hmm. I think I had just one moment of, “What do I—what should I do?” And yeah. And that was when you said, “Just give her time.” And that was—and I knew that anyway. But yeah. It was like I have to give her—

MARYN: And I felt that from you. You were there.

CHRISTINA: It’s that femininity too that kept coming up during her—trying to really embrace your true femininity is acceptance in a way. I don’t know if some people might be annoyed by that thought of femininity as acceptance. But I mean by it more of the yin versus the yang. The stillness and calmness.

MARYN: Versus the force.

CHRISTINA: Yeah. And I feel like birth—the labor is really so much energy you’re using that at that point you’re in your full yin mother, soft, sweet space. So it was easy,

and it's intuitively natural to hold that space of allowing her in. And all of those other feelings of anxiety are just probably part of cultural damage really.

MARYN: Yeah. I mean that's so beautiful. And it even makes me think of the medical influence on something like resuscitation. So I bet there are people listening that maybe want to know more or maybe have a critique of it. And I think that's something I don't really want to get into. Karen Strange is a midwife genius in our world. And we all love her. And she teaches resuscitation all around the country, all around the world. She's an excellent teacher. There's so much to thank Karen for, even just little sayings of hers get in my brain. Honestly, I had her voice in my brain for Veda's birth because she says things like, "A little more breath for a little more time." Just little things that's like, "Oh yeah." When you're in the heat of the moment and you're in one way panicking, you have to find what is actually happening here. What do we need?

CHRISTINA: Right.

MARYN: But anyway, I guess what I'm trying to say is it wasn't this picture perfect resuscitation that we're taught where you take the baby, and they're positioned perfectly on the tray. And we're using the bag and mask. And I'm not going to get into the people that would critique that. I think I want to say that we have to trust mothers more than we do. And training is great, and I'm so grateful to Karen and all of the people that teach that kind of stuff. But also, I think midwives have to be trusting women more and imparting that knowledge even in the moment and not kind of fall back on this medicalized version of there being a right way. You didn't hold her in a position that was right even. Her airway—if you looked at it a certain way, it's like, "Oh." But you know what? It worked because you did it. And you had everything. You had everything that was needed. So if that wasn't working, of course, you're not going to let—let—let a mom just not help her baby effectively, if maybe she is panicking or maybe she's not very grounded. I'm not saying that. There is a time to maybe swoop in and be like, "This is how it's done," because this baby really needs it. But I think that's an element of midwifery, at least, that—yeah. It doesn't feel very explored to me. It feels like we can get into that medical paradigm and let that confuse us, and then we save the day. And we don't put it on the mother to be like this your baby. Call her in. We're going to help you. And we'll give her a breath if we need to, but we're not going to—I don't know. It's just not my mode, I guess, to revert back to the medicalization of a process like that that is so highly spiritually and that you've taken responsibility for. So that's the end of my blab.

CHRISTINA: I loved it. I loved your blab.

MARYN: Well, it's—I don't know. It just is so important. I have never heard of another mother resuscitating her baby other than Ashley, who also did. Ashley is my beautiful

friend—our beautiful friend and student. Anyway, it's just like a funny thing people don't talk about because I think they're afraid of being criticized. But you did it. And you did it better than any professional ever could have done in all the ways that your daughter needed you.

CHRISTINA: Right.

MARYN: And that is where you are just my heroine.

CHRISTINA: No.

MARYN: Yes. You are.

CHRISTINA: You're mine.

MARYN: You are. I love you so much. And I'm so blessed to know you and know your family. Your family. All of your kids are just so special. So—

CHRISTINA: Yours too.

MARYN: You get to take the last word, if you want it. If not, we're going to get our own babies to nurse here.

CHRISTINA: I know.

MARYN: Mine is probably not very happy.

CHRISTINA: I just feel honored to be able to share this story. And honored that the great spirit brought us together probably again. And yeah. So thank you.

MARYN: Yeah. Thank you. Thanks for listening, everybody. Remember to check out our *13 Moons*. It's still pay what you will for a little while. I don't know how long. indiebirth.org/13moons. The number 13. And last but not least, please get on our email list at indiebirth.org with all the censorship that's going on on nearly every platform it's pretty much the only way that you'll be able to find out what we're doing should certain things go down. So not preparing for the worst but always loving to have your email so we can let you know what's going on. All right. Thanks for listening, everybody. Have a great day.

(closing music)