

Badass Business Coaching for Birthworkers #4: Exploring How to Combine the Doula and Apprentice Midwife Roles with Lindsey

Actually is a podcast about re-imagining the way we approach the entirety of the birthing year. Margo's goal is to combine her radical imagination with her knack for strategizing to bolster the birth revolution and a larger global revolution of feminine consciousness. Actually is a production of the Indie Birth association and Indie Birth dot org.

No material on this podcast should be considered medical advice. Birth is not a medical event now here's your host, midwife and teacher Margo Blackstone. Hello everybody. And welcome to today's episode of actually a podcast by me, Margo Blackstone here at the Indie Birth association. And today I will be talking with another lovely guest named Lindsay, and we will be talking about birth businessy stuff.

As part of a series I've been doing recently exploring sort of the world of birth business and all the many facets and variations that exist. So true to form, we have another sort of unique situation, we're gonna be talking about and talking through gonna be offering some questions and thoughts and insight as much as possible to assist Lindsay here in figuring out some stuff with her birth, business and birth work.

This is a really neglected area out in the birth world. A lot of doulas and midwives are just really scraping by and don't have a lot of strategy in terms of how they approach this work. And I'm trying to help correct that by putting out some of these podcasts and then also doing some birth business and leadership consulting here at Indie Birth, which will have more info about soon.

Or at this point, if you're listening in the future, maybe it's already there on our website. So you can go check that out at Indie Birth dot org, but I without further

ado would love to welcome Lindsay to the podcast today and ask her to just give you a little peek into who she is and what she's bringing to the world of birth.

Thanks Margo. So yeah, my name's Lindsay, I am currently a doula and an apprentice midwife, and I also host monthly women circles in my community and teach prenatal yoga. , I am trying to dive into my midwifery apprenticeship while also continuing to have doula clients and trying to figure out that balance as well as trying to attract clients that fit, the mold of who I'm looking to work with, I'm really interested in mostly working with home birth families and, yeah, that's a little bit about me.

Cool. So that I think is such a unique place to find yourself in. And I haven't talked with anyone on this series yet, who is in your shoes of both apping to become a midwife and wanting to also attend versus a doula? I have certainly I have personal experience with that as well as working with my own apprentice over the last few years, who also was doing that.

So hopefully I'll have some. Insight to share. And I bet there are people listening who also are finding themselves in a similar spot. So I guess tell me a little bit because I don't actually know where you're at in terms of the apprenticeship, have you started it already or is it starting soon or what does that look like?

We've attended one birth together. And so it's officially started, it feels like I'm attending prenats every Saturday and going to home visits and we have six births between now and the end of April. And I feel like that's when it's really going to pick up or feel more like a real apprenticeship

Yes, it's very beginning stages. Working on learning things like taking blood pressure and the basics of. Prenatal care as we work towards attending more birth together. Awesome. And so tell me a little bit about how you envision the doula work fitting in right now. Like how are you thinking about it?

I think you had mentioned to me that you're approaching it as a way to continue, like making money while also apping, is that accurate? Yeah. I love birth and I love working with families. I love the intimate connection that comes with being a doula. And I feel like as an apprentice, I'm more observing and in the background and I love the support and really, like I said, getting to know the families and I feel as a doula, I'm more of a friend than a care provider.

And I like that role. I also am not making money as an apprentice and so money. Is a thing and , I'd love to continue making money during my apprenticeship while also having the opportunity to witness and hold space for families birthing in the process. Cool. I don't know if that really answered your question.

It does. And I think it brings up two distinct conversations that are both worth having one, which is a little bit more philosophical. And maybe we'll save for second is like how to bring or, how to, we blend like the doula role with both being an apprentice and with being a midwife, because I don't think they're mutually exclusive or they don't have to be it's a little different when you're an apprentice, since you're under the.

Guidance of a midwife, but it's a conversation that you could certainly have with your preceptor. I know I often felt like I was filling the doula role with clients as an apprentice, but that was, that might not be the case for everyone. And in every apprenticeship it might look different. So I think that's a cool conversation.

Not that it ever would necessarily feel exactly like they were your doula client since you are still there to support the midwife too. But I wonder if there's other ways to bring in some of the aspects that you really do love about being a doula, so you don't have to go without them for your whole apprenticeship so that's Aing conversation and then the other is okay.

And I think we briefly talked about this by email. You're mostly wanting to attend home birth. And you're apprenticing with this midwife, but you're not wanting. Like it, it's not gonna work to have someone hire you as their doula and also be the apprentice at the same time. That's not the same.

So tell me more about, it'd be great if it was a thing tell me more about what other home births are happening near you. Are there other midwives? What does that look like? Before starting this apprenticeship, I had attended births with two other home birth midwives in the area.

And I started attending the local midwives association meeting for my state, which they meet quarterly. So I've had the opportunity to meet other home birth midwives and trying to like, get my name out there. I feel like I've at maybe been put in a category of apprentice and I guess I want to still be in their category as a do.

And something that I'm just thinking about right now is I don't know how my preceptor would feel about me attending births with other midwives. I don't know if that's a thing even in the doula capacity. So yeah, there are, I'm trying to think one there's at least four or five other home birth midwives that are within a two hour drive of where I'm located.

Okay, cool. So it sounds like there's plenty of opportunity to be, wanting to be pretty narrow with the home birth doula scope. So that's cool. And I think. I'd be curious. Yeah. So now again, two more conversations. One is, yeah. How does the midwife working with, feel about you taking on doula clients? I can speak to how I feel about it as a preceptor. And then also how to have those conversations and develop those relationships with the other midwives, if that is something that is on the table and as an option.

And I guess the third conversation is what to, how to balance the two which gets priority if you get called to two births and one's a doula client and one's a, an apprenticeship client. So which of those would you like to start with? I'd love to hear your perspective as a preceptor.

And then the priority question I think is a really important one because. I feel like I'd be more attached to my doula client because you get, you take all this time getting to know them intimately. And I know that I have told my preceptor that I'm here for her and I know that she needs me and that would be a really hard situation to find myself in.

So yeah. I'd love your thoughts on both of those. Okay. I will totally give me my thoughts on both of those. Are there any other doulas close to you who could possibly be your backup and are there any other midwifery students who could possibly be a backup? Is my first question though. My preceptor has one other apprentice slash assistant.

I'm not actually sure. if she is still following the apprenticeship, or if she's just decided she wants to be an assistant. My preceptor feels like she needs a team of two people with her at a birth. So her and then the assistant and then the apprentice are two apprentices. In that sense, I feel like she always talks about how she wants layers of support.

And so if one of us couldn't be there, then the other person would be there at the last birth we were at. And it could have just been the nature of the birth, but it felt like it was all hands on deck and all three of us were needed and various in various roles. But I feel like that would be an option if I talked to her about it.

As far as other doulas, there's one other doula. I, it would depend on where. The Mo the mother's birth was taking place. I have a really close friend that lives 30 minutes away from me. And I think that she could be somebody that would be on call for me if needed. And she's also a doula or was a doula.

She's my doula. So I know that she's awesome. She just has three kids and is figuring out what that life looks like for her. Yeah, just lining up different people and then deciding, which one would be the priority to have somebody be my backup at the apprenticeship or somebody be my backup at the doula birth?

Yeah. So my thoughts and the what I've seen work well has been to prioritize apprenticeship clients because ultimately if the goal is to become a midwife, each of those births really is crucial in working that direction. So even though doula births are awesome and and okay, so it's taking a step back.

If your midwife that you're working with is taking about two births a month, even if you had a doula client every month, the likelihood of them overlapping is pretty small, like per birth, right? So this is all just like to be quadruple clear with everyone in the event that this unlikely thing happens, here's what we would do.

As a doula at a home birth, yes, you're getting to know people. But in my experience, having the doula swapped out is less jarring typically than having for example, like a midwife not be there and having a backup midwife come not to say that doulas are less important at all, but just like that role can just.

is and it depends on the doula. It depends on the mom. It depends on the relationship, all of those things. But I think the other part is setting the expectation from the beginning. So I guess what I'm saying is in my experience, both as a student midwife myself, and then now having midwifery students being a preceptor, what worked really well with my first apprentice was, she would meet with doula clients.

She was mostly either doing home birth or she was doing, unmedicated hospital births. And she was very clear from the interview. If you're in labor, when one of my midwifery apprenticeship clients is in labor, you'll get my backup. And she never had anybody who was opposed to that. And it never, I don't think it ever came up.

I don't think it ever had to happen, but that felt good to do as the preceptor. Do you know, if she introduced her doula backup or was just like, this is the person, or did she have one designated, she had one designated and I think she even had a backup for the backup. We have a pretty rich yeah.

Network of doulas here. And many of them are very like-minded and yeah, so that, that was, I think, a thing that felt good to people. And just knowing that from day one, the expectation was just set like this probably isn't gonna happen, but if it does, you'll get this other really cool person.

amazing person. Yeah. And layers. Yeah. I love my preceptor always talks about layers of support for the mama and for the birth team. And I think that yeah. That applies to doula in as well. But that said, I think, how did you, I think you, oh, sorry, the lag is real here, but I was just gonna say that it's a conversation to have with the preceptor that you're working with too, because if she has an assistant, who's pretty rock solid and is okay with that possibility of you being at a doula birth, earning, you'll have to just weigh out, is earning that money more or less important than getting that particular birth experience.

And for me, I was in a, also a low volume student setting. So we were only doing a birth or two a month. And for me it felt like every, if I were to miss a birth with Maryn, that would put me another month behind schedule is how it felt. And for me that month was. Worth more like saving that time was worth more than a doula client could ever pay me.

You know what I mean? So totally. But that's a individual judgment. How did well, how do you feel, or how did Maryn feel if you attended births with another midwife in a doula capacity?

Yeah. Let's see. I don't think that ever happened for me. My apprentice attended other births in the apprentice role with with other midwives and for me, I actually really think that it's a great idea. I think it's really awesome to see how

other people do things. If you're at a birth as a doula, a home birth as a doula, You're you will be in the doula role, but you still will be learning, right?

Like birth is birth. We don't you're you, maybe aren't gonna be doing some of the skills, but you're still learning the observation skills. You're still watching what the midwife is doing. You'll still I'm sure have a conversation with her and be learning from those births as a student midwife too.

That would be super valuable, I think. And I think the only time things like that get weird is when we have weird like competitiveness in the midwifery community. And I'm really thankful that I've pretty well insulated myself from any of that so I don't quite know what that would look like, but it might be important to yeah.

To suss out what some of those relationships are. Like, I guess where I'm going with that also is like reviewing after. If I wanted to discuss something that happened or process something that happened, do I reach out to my preceptor? Do I reach out to the midwife who was there? Or I don't know.

I feel like some of the lines get blurred. Yeah. I don't know if you have any insight on that. I'm a processor I really like to process things, whether I'm journaling or talking to somebody about it. And I really would prefer to process things with somebody who cares and understands birth. Yeah.

Yeah. I think, in my experience with all of the people in the birth world, yes, we have confidentiality. Like you're not gonna tell people their, name and social security number and health history necessarily, or every detail of their life. But but in general, like birth workers do talk to each other about birth they've been to, and sometimes that looks like saying, Hey, I was at this recent birth.

We're always negotiating the line of how, is it okay to talk about births we've been at even anonymously, on social media? Is that okay? Or do we need like explicit permission? So I tend to err on the side of not sharing a ton especially, publicly, there are definitely midwives out there who are like, Hey, I just got home from a birth and blah, blah, blah, blah, blah.

And they'll talk about it without any identifying details. I don't know how I feel about that necessarily, but. if you go to a birth as a doula, I guess that's where

does any, is there any like midwife relationship funness in your community is a question to ask your preceptor and just navigate that best you can.

Okay. Yeah, I feel, I would just ask, like, how would it feel about me going diverse with these people? Is that gonna be, oh, sorry. The darn internet leg.

Okay, so bouncing off of that. How many, maybe not even bouncing off of that, but how many apprentices do you work with at a time?

I currently work with one at a time, but if my load were to get bigger, Which probably will happen. And when my little guy gets a little bit older and is easier to leave I think it's reasonable to think I would be perhaps working with two at a time and either having both of them attend births or I like that layers of support phrase or, planning to have both of them at births, but if one of them can't make it, , for some reason or needs to swap out.

Or if we I could envision with first time moms having one join me, earlier on, and then the other come relieve us if it's long . But at the moment I work with just one at a time but now my first apprentice. Got on to be a midwife. So I do feel like I have a really strong backup and could call upon her also if I needed yeah.

In the moment. And she's available, totally. As your load, if it does get bigger and you do have two apprentices at a birth, do you think that would ever feel like too much? I had one apprentice in a doula and my best friend and my husband at my home birth and my small house.

And I didn't notice how crowded it felt, but my husband definitely later was like, everybody was in our hallway. Is that, was that okay? and because our, yeah, our, the way our bedroom was set up, it was really small. And so it was our bathroom. And I guess I'm in my head about that too, because I want everybody to have a really amazing.

Birth experience. And I know each person that's there adds another layer of subtle energy. So I'd be curious to know what you thought about that. I think I used to feel really strongly that really, we didn't need more than two people at a birth, but now I could see that there are definitely births where more would be better.

Especially if there was like fresh energy at longer births. And that even just so it's funny, you asked that. So as my new apprentice was coming in September my previous apprentice was with, for the first two births. And so there were three of us, there was me, the graduating apprentice and the brand new apprentice.

And afterwards I was like, wow, that was sure. Nice. Like it just felt like , the load was more. manageable. And it's, it was harder. It was easier to stay in like a good place and not get start feeding off of each other being tired or something . Totally. Yeah, so I think that, I think instead of the number of people, it's more about the energy that they do bring.

If there were two super like high energy like cheerleader types, along with the midwife, like that might feel really bad although some people might love it. So I think it's depends on the, you would need to be assessed. Yeah, it would depend on the person, but I think in general too, two apprentices would not be weird.

Especially if you stagger their arrival or, if the house is big enough that people can be in another space, just at the ready instead of staring at anyone. Yeah. And going back to one of the first questions that we talked about and blending doula stuff with midwifery stuff, I think that's something where I like totally believe that can happen.

And that maybe it's just more like multitasking I guess at the birth, like in your head. But I felt like at the birth, I was at my first birth as an apprentice. It was just like, I was in full observation mode and trying to watch the more senior person do everything that they were doing and trying, I didn't wanna be like taking notes in my notebook, but also trying to just absorb it all.

And I'm sure that gets less overwhelming as you continue down the apprenticeship, but I just, I like got home and could not imagine. doing both. And I saw the midwife do both, like I saw her, tend to her, tend to the mama in a very loving, nurturing way. And then also get back into her midwife brain as she needed.

And she's been doing it for 26 years. So I believe that's possible. I guess it's just hard for me to see that right now in myself or how to be both. Yeah. And I know

you said at the beginning of your first or your apprenticeship, you were more in the doula role at the beginning anyways.

Let's see. How would I describe that? I think it's a fair assumption that the first like 10 births you attend as an apprentice midwife. Like you Maryn always jokes. Like you just cry in the corner. That's the first time yes. Is you're just like awestruck and whoa, this is a lot.

And you're just soaking it in. So yeah I didn't, I had moments of feeling like I was in the doula role. But mostly I agree. It was just like, I would clean up and make eggs and take notes. Yeah, but then yeah as that part wears off just the, as you start being able to integrate it in the moment more.

Then I think that's where you can start doing more of the doula support mixed with you'll start doing the same thing you saw her do, which is mixing the two together. And knowing when you could just be in that full on doula role mode. And when you need to pop out and take some notes or ask the midwife questions or, do more of the midwife kind of stuff, charting I love that you said 10 births.

Cause yeah, the first one I was like, oh my God. Cause I'd been to births as a doula before, but I was so in that role and I'd have had my own home birth. So I don't know why I was so amazed when I was just there to watch it happen. How much is actually like going on all, all around. And it's amazing that it feels so seamless.

When you're the person or from my experience when I was the birthing person or at a home birth in the doula role, I really, until I opened my eyes as an apprentice, missed how much happens on the sidelines, or what's happening in the background. Yeah, I know it. So I know it's one of those things where it's like it's, and then once you're a midwife, you also look back fondly on the apprenticeship days being like, oh, things were so much simpler, then I just got to observe.

It was so lovely. And then yeah, in the doula role, it's really, sometimes I think it's really cool. Obviously I don't want transports for my clients, but when it happens and needs to happen, it can be really neat to be in that more doula role myself in the hospital setting to be like, oh, I can, I don't know.

You just get to participate in such a different way. And. There's it's more stressful in some ways, but way less stressful in other ways. Totally. Yeah, it's just super interesting. What a good conversation. Hello everyone. If you're enjoying this podcast, you'd probably really enjoy our other more in depth offerings.

We have a comprehensive course for mamas called 13 moons epic education for the birthing year. And in everything you need to know course for aspiring doulas who want to change the world called the birth warrior project 120 day doula training and transformation, and for the real birth nerds who want to become home birth midwives, we have the Indie Birth midwifery school, and you can find out about all of these options and Indie

Indie.

So this isn't I have two kind of questions. Business one's business related and one's maybe not. So business related. The first one is any suggestions. If I'm taking on less doula clients, as other potential sources of like a little side cash, I used to teach prenatal yoga in my community right now it's pretty much only accepted virtually and it, I wasn't getting, it used to be a good source of income for me and the virtual format.

Just not as many women were interested in it, and I don't super enjoy that format. So I guess I'm just trying to pick my brain for other ways to like, be in the birth world and also being able to generate some income. That's also putting my name out there because when I was teaching prenatal yoga, it was pretty easy to get clients because everybody was coming to my yoga class and then I got to know them and be like, yeah, I like, yes, we vibe.

I know that we vibe because I've. Time with you. Yeah. So there's that question. Let's start with that. And I'll remember my other question. Okay, cool. So I will answer this. We also talk about it pretty extensively in our new intro to midwifery course. Cool. And to an extent, also in the Indie Birth midwifery school, in our apprenticeship course that we have as part of the overall program.

But my briefing thoughts are, placenta, encapsulation is a big one that people do as apprentices bring in some side income that might be something to ask the midwife you're apping with, does she offer that to her clients or is there

someone else she's been referring them to and could she refer them to you instead?

I know that's a thing. My apprentice would offer it for a price to the community and then would offer a cheaper. To my clients. And so many of them, would ask in a prenatal or I'd bring it up and they'd say, oh yeah, I am wanting to encapsulate this time. Do you know someone who does it?

And I'd be like, she does it. So she was charging something probably way too affordable to my clients, but, she didn't have to drive to pick it up and you know it and she's gonna see them for postpartums anyways. So I guess her thought was like, it saved some time and gas or whatever, but that's one thing.

And then teaching classes, I think is the other huge one. And that might not necessarily be a huge side income itself, but I sound like such a broken record, especially on these recent podcasts with people like teaching the labor blueprint, the free workshop, or some variation that you come up with either online or virtually or in person.

That's what I meant to say. Sorry, online or in person really can maybe fill that space where you were getting interaction with the prenatal yoga. Also I think you should totally just teach prenatal yoga if you want to teach it in person. I just need to find somewhere that will like let me do it.

Like I need let you a yeah. Or a space. When it's nice out, I have a beautiful peril in my backyard and that's actually where I started teaching prenatal yoga. When I was having like imposter Sy imposter syndrome, like four years ago, like I'm not whatever good enough to teach this.

And so I started in my backyard and I love teaching in my backyard. So that's my vision. This summer is too cool. Have that again. And knowing. that the right people will show up because it's in person and , that would be a good way for me to meet people that I feel like are on the same page as me anyways.

Totally. Totally. Yeah. And I love, yeah, I love prenatal yoga. it's just a really fun way less. I what you were saying about like when the transport happens and you're in the doula role. Again, I feel that way about prenatal yoga, where it's just a little bit more fluffy, than a birth class or like a prenatal meeting.

And I love that the mamas get to connect with each other. I think that's really important for pregnant mamas to meet other mamas that are pregnant at the same. totally. Yeah. So any, and all ways that you enjoy bringing people together, is huge. It's really just about establishing yourself as like a community resource, someone who cares and like a leader in your birth community.

And now you're in a new place. So you'll have to, start over in some of those ways, but you don't have to start over with your confidence that you've acquired, which is great. And I think my, this kind of goes back to something I had touched on at the start and I think would be a good conversation to have is like how to connect with these other midwives.

If you're wanting to attend births as a doula for their clients. I would recommend, I guess first, I guess my first question is how much do you know about them and their practices and what they are. offering, wanting, needing for their clients and their philosophy on doulas at home birth, do you know their stance?

So there's I feel like two groups of midwives in the state where I live. And I feel like both of them, both groups of midwives, like working with doulas or like having doulas there, especially for first time moms in this city that I currently live in, there's a doula group that I'm not a part of because I just, we don't resonate.

We're not looking for the same type of clients. And I feel like one midwife group always refers to that doula collective. So I need to focus on the other group of midwives. I know this is in your new city, so the way. Where I live, I feel like the midwives and doulas just drive all over the state.

Everybody is driving two or three hours or willing to drive two or three hours. So all of the midwives it's commingled, okay. So I would be working, I could potentially work with any of these midwives in the city that I'm living now or the city that my husband and I are moving to this spring, if that makes sense.

Got it. So yeah, the one group of midwives, I feel always refers to this collective of doulas that I'm not a part of. And then there's this new group of midwives that I've been introduced to through my preceptor that I didn't really even know they existed when I was having my home births last couple years.

So it feels like a whole new world. I don't know how they feel about doulas. I don't know why I haven't thought to ask that. I feel like when I have been at the midwives association meeting, I've felt like I was just listening and didn't need to be like promoting myself and maybe I need to do a little more of that.

Or just letting people know that I am also a doula and not just an apprentice, but I think I need to talk to my preceptor first and figure out what our boundaries are, and then reaching out to the the other midwives. I know that one of the groups of midwives, they already have two apprentices.

So I don't know how they'd feel about having a doula at a birth two in addition to their apprentices. But yeah, that's yeah, that was gonna be.

oh, I was just gonna say that was gonna be, my suggestion is yeah. Talk to the midwife. You're apping with first. Get all of that really clear. I have a follow up question after this thought, which is after that. So I've got three pieces here, so yes. Talk to her, get really clear about the boundaries, like you said, and then, yeah, I think, I guess let's go there first.

So what is your vision of what would be perfect for you in terms of client load for home birth for your apprenticeship? And then how many doula clients would you want? Does this make sense? What I'm saying here and not that you can necessarily control, especially not that we can control anything, but not that you're in charge of the load in your apprenticeship, but is two, two a month pretty typical for her.

yeah, I would say two a month is pretty typical for her. Okay. Two to three a month. She said that she's had more requests for home births than she's ever had ever this year. And so her load seems to be picking up and I've noticed that at the midwives association meeting that all of these midwives are experiencing the same increased interest in their services.

So yeah, I've thought about it and I would love to have one doula client a month if possible or every other month. I feel like just that little bit of extra income would help and I'd love. I just, I, yeah, I love birth. And at all the births I have attended with various midwives in the doula role, I've learned something and they all do something a little bit differently.

And so I think also. now that we've talked about it, I think that's also what I'm wanting more or yes, I wanna be the doula and yes, I want the extra income, but as we've talked, I think I also really just enjoy seeing other people's perspective on the practice or other, how other people approach their work.

their work midwife, how other people are approaching it. So I don't know if I answered your question cause I just started my own question. No, you did. And I think that it's good to be clear about that going into the conversation with your preceptor. And then also as you're approaching these other midwives, I think there's a couple ways you could do it.

One is, you could say, Hey, like I, you could even approach, I think the midwives who are referring to this other collective and just say, Hey, I know it seems like you typically refer to this collective. I just wanted to make sure you knew that I'm available. And I specialize in home birth. Yeah.

I think that's an interesting approach. And and also saying and I also really love, witnessing and observing and learning from other midwives. It would be really cool. If we get to attend a birth at some point together the other thing I would say is just that I would, I guess this is where I would encourage you to just get clear about it.

As, as clear as possible, because you could also just approach those other midwives and say, I'm in an apprenticeship with this midwife, but could I come to a couple births as like a second apprentice with you too? If it turns out that you're actually just wanting to go to births and learn more from other people, does that make sense?

Totally. So there's kind of two ways that you could fill those needs that just wouldn't meet the financial piece. But I think a lot of midwives myself included at some points in time have thought what's the point of having a doula? Like sometimes that starts at a home birth.

So there was a stretch of time where I felt that way and I don't think I'll ever feel that way again but it might just be just so you know, there might be that barrier there and if they have apprentices already. just being ready to explain I'm not there to, I'm there to make your guys' job easier, essentially.

And I think that the biggest hesitation that midwives have with having doulas at home birth is they worry about the end. the, the energy driving between the doula and the midwife team. , if that makes sense. Totally, and I think hopefully if they, if I introduce or, they all already know me.

I feel like I just need to send an email. That's Hey, and I'm a doula. Consider me. Yeah, because I haven't done that. And even like, when we've gone around at the midwives association meetings and introduced ourselves, now that I'm thinking about it, I've always introduced myself as my preceptors apprentice.

I haven't said. and I'm also doing doula work. I have attended a birth as a doula with one of the other midwives that comes to these meetings. So she knows that I'm a doula, but that doesn't mean that she's like thinking it, I guess if that makes sense. Do you think that just sending like a general email to the midwives association that they all get would be good or should I just email them all individually?

Good question. Maybe a mixture or sending it to all of them and then, talking to them one on one, I think, a lot of midwives get approached by doulas, especially who are wanting home birth experience. Usually it's not people like you, that are saying that, but.

That is a thing that a lot of us get is Hey, I want some more home birth experience. I'd love if you'd refer your clients to me. So I think meeting one on one to help them understand why you're different than that usual typical request would be good. But email could also be good. So I guess I would email them individually and I'd also ask if they want to get together sometime, especially as you're in a new area, even though you are traveling all over, it could be cool to be like, Hey, what do you, can I pick your brain about what this community needs so that I can, figure out how to best be helpful to the community and also to the midwives here?

Is how I would frame it. Yeah, totally. I feel at least for me, when I was having home birth, I didn't realize how many options of midwives there were. It felt like there was only this one. midwife group, because that's who like primarily serves the city that I live in right now. And then actually after doing the birth warrior project, when the interview portion to interview a midwife, I started like Googling.

And then I was like, oh my God, there's all these other midwives. So I guess where I'm going with that too, is letting families know that there are more midwives in our area than just maybe who first comes to mind and how to share that information as well. And I love what you said that yeah, I do specialize in home birth and that does set me apart because all the other doulas in my area they'll attend any birth setting and I am not interested in that. And I think it's taken me a long time to feel okay with saying that, because I think I felt like before that meant that I was judging the choices of other women and I'm not judging their choices, I just know myself and that's not what I'm interested in supporting. So yeah.

I'm glad that I have clarity that I have clarity on that and not feeling ashamed that I do just wanna support home birth because that is what I wanna do. It's just the truth of the matter. It's just the truth of the matter you can't get away from it. Cool. I had another question, but now it's escaped.

Okay. This is a question that is more about apprenticeship and my relationship with the preceptor and it's twofold. So if you're. Apprentice, it has a concern about something regarding a client or if something came up in a prenatal that she wants to share with you. Obviously not doing it at the prenatal waiting until afterwards, but are you like, do you want the insight from your apprentice if I get like a weird vibe about somebody or something?

Or do I just keep that to myself? My preceptor make her own judgements, if that makes sense. Yeah. I think that's a question for her. It's tricky. And I think, I don't know that there's a blanket answer in general, yeah, no yes. I think communication is good. And I think just even asking her do you want these insights or I don't know.

That's a tricky question. okay. I think it's a good one for me. Like you said to ask her, I think it's up to everyone to just communicate the best that they can. And and go, this is just like a general, I feel like birth question. Have you ever found yourself or like in a situation at a birth where the energy is weird and you just need to ask somebody to leave and how I'm trying to figure out how to best.

That is what, if you're in a situation and you feel like somebody is like disrupting the energy of the birth. Yeah. I guess I feel like it's something I need to talk to

my preceptor about because I'm like thinking about something specifically in my head where there was somebody at a birth.

I felt like I should have asked to leave, but I didn't because it wasn't my birth and I was observing. And I feel like I answered my own question that I just need to talk to my preceptor and figure out the best way to communicate stuff like that with her. Yeah. Such a good question. And I think it's hard.

I definitely have been in situations where I felt like there were people who were not beneficial to be there and sometimes were able to like kindly tell them we all need to go for a walk or something, or we all need to give them some space. But it can be really hard. And sometimes it's the partner and then you're like she chose this partner and, I can.

I don't know, it gets really tricky. I think just finding really like subtle ways of being like, do you feel like you need some space from all of us or? I don't know. That's usually my go-to move. Not just when people feel like they are maybe not contributing positively to the environment, but sometimes women really do just need space from all us, but that is be a good move yeah.

By anyone. So then you can make it not personal, yeah. Oh, it's all of us. We're all gonna go in a walk. We're all gonna go get a cup of tea now. My last question, I guess that's coming up going bouncing back to the business side is, do apprentices get paid at any point or is that something that is just dependent on the I'm sure it's dependent on the preceptor, but I would love to hear your insight on that.

Yeah. It varies wildly from preceptor to preceptor. Some places some, birth centers or preceptors charge apprentices to come to births some, and then some pay apprentices and then some it's just like a, equal exchange. They don't get paid and they don't have to pay.

The thing I've come up with is pretty loose. Like I often have a hard time remembering, like where I'm at in the process with someone, but I don't pay people for the first 10. And then I pay like a small stipend that at least covers their gas and like food. And I buy food for apprentices of births and stuff like that.

And then I increase that amount, each birth, or I try to, when I remember, and I often have to be like, what do I pay you lately? But I increase it each birth. To reflect that they're like becoming more beneficial and helpful. 'cause that is the case until I reach the amount that I would pay and assist.

Does that make sense? So first 10 for free and then, the next 20, it's like a little more each time and then I pay them the assist fee at the end. Because they are essentially there as my assist and if they're in the primary role I then, they're often doing a lot of the work of it.

But I still have to be there and supervise and all those things. So I don't know. I don't know that there's a perfect method, but that's what I've come up with so far. Do you feel like there's a point where you, that makes sense? Yeah, no, that totally makes sense. I guess for me right now, I feel like I would pay somebody to take me to a birth.

And so it's crazy. to think that at some point I'll feel hopefully like I am deserving of a token or whatever, an exchange of energy for my energy that I'm putting into it right now, because yeah, right now I totally feel like at the beginning of my apprenticeship, I just wanna be at as many births as possible.

Yeah. At the end of my apping years, I did pay to go to births at a birth center in Utah. Wow. And I can't remember how much it was honestly. But it was a couple hundred a week, I think like maybe it was, I can't remember. I wanna say it was like \$400 a week or something. Were you in a primary role or were you just.

I was in primary role, but that brings up the whole con yeah. But that brings up a whole conversation about what does that actually mean when you're with a group of midwives who don't really know you and trust you? Yeah, I was the primary, but there was that trust wasn't there. And so when things did come up, I often did actually get to practice my skills in the way that I would have if I had been the primary at the same birth with Maryn, for example.

So it was a valuable experience and it was nice to get a lot of birth in quickly and to work with a bunch of different midwives but lives. But yeah. So you think it is important to work with a bunch of midwives or at least see, try to, yeah. Yeah. I think it's useful. I think it especially helps build confidence.

That's how it felt for me at least was like, oh, I like showed that I could hold my own. Is how I have framed it other times that I've talked about it that I can you with. Yeah. Yeah. Like even more me, with more medical midwives, I still could hang, and I, it just helped me feel confident.

Like I wasn't missing anything major and yeah. I'm glad that I'm not crazy for being like I'd pay to go to a birth. It's good to know that people actually do that. And how far, how long we'll definitely do that. How long had you been working with Maryn before you went to Utah? For Uhhuh? I had been with her for five years.

Okay. How long do your apprentices and so stick around. That, that was like two questions at once. My, yeah, my recommendation pretty much across the board is to attend about 50 births. And I roughly, like I think the I'm not a CPM and I don't actually support norm, but I do think their general recommendations in terms of numbers make sense.

So like 10 observes, 20 assists and then 20 primaries. And so that's my recommendation for my apprentices too. And that can look a lot of different ways, when combining doula work with maybe working with some other midwives as well. So it might not be 50 with me, but 50 by the time that your apprenticeship is concluding.

Yeah. Yeah. I have my preceptor. is a CPM. And I, I don't know if that's the route I want to go down eventually, but I do that Narv has a structure because that kind of helped yeah, quantify what to expect or how the apprenticeship would, how the apprenticeship would look and yeah, 50 births.

Okay. And that's 10 births a year, if you are gonna do it in five years. Cool. Yeah. And like I said, we had some pretty slow years. So it wouldn't have taken five years in a, if it was two a month, it would be like, two years, maybe three years, but. Where was I going with that?

Maryn has a really great podcast called a midwife by the numbers or a midwife by the heart, I think where she talks about some of this and like the numbers and quantifying it all. And then we also, like I said, I guess I'll just mention for people who might be interested. We do talk about apprenticeship pretty

extensively in our intro to midwifery course and in the apprenticeship course in the Indie Birth midwifery school.

So these are things that we often talk about on our weekly student calls. I have questions actually are happening right now. I think Gail Hart is talking to our students today for their weekly call, which is cool. How, what's your question? I'm interested in doing the Indie Birth midwifery school, and I guess I'm wondering before I like Stu I didn't feel like I stumbled upon this apprenticeship. I'm gonna say I manifested my apprenticeship. I was to do, you did the I was planning to do the Indie Birth midwifery school starting in July, or that was like my game plan before I started this apprenticeship. And do you have midwives in the school that are also apprenticing?

And how does that jive? Yeah, we think that as long as your time allowed or time allows and your energy allows and time management skills are up to snuff, , that it is ideal to do our school and program alongside an apprenticeship at the same time that it gives people at the same time.

Yeah. Ideally we have a lot of people who either. Aren't in one right now and maybe have been in the past or have never done one at all. And they still get a lot out of the program and it's fantastic for them, but it definitely seems to be the case that the people who are able to put into practice, these ideas are able to, just contextualize them and integrate them at a deeper level than people who don't have that actual hands on experience.

And, I also know a lot of the people who have had hands on experience. So we've had people who either did complete apprenticeships and were already, practicing as midwives in our program. And we've also had people who've just, they're part way through an apprenticeship and then do the program.

And so we've also seen that those people without the structure. Of a program often were, even though they were getting a lot of the hands on skills, we're missing a lot of the nuance and the research and a lot of the internal, like self-development that needs to go along with it. Like for my apprentice, both of my, have been in the Indie Birth midwifery school, it's a, it's a requirement for working with me.

They, where am I going with this? We do prenatals once a week and then we occasionally have other postpartums like throughout the week and we have some driving here and there, but for the most part I don't have time to be like, let's process all of the fears you're working through or like totally, like I don't have time to do that as a preceptor.

And it's amazing knowing. They're getting that in the program. And so it ends up being this really cool balance. And Alicia was my first apprentice. And she's now on her own as a midwife. Not on her own. I'm here if she wants me, but she is off in the world doing her thing, is what I need to say.

You birthed her. And I think that it was I've yes, she's birthed herself. I suppose. And I think she's a resounding success story in terms of she knows her stuff, she got the experience she's confident. And she's also just a cool human in general, but I think that there is an element of the combination of the apprenticeship alongside this really comprehensive program has made it an easier transition.

I think for her, is it like the birth warrior project where it's like. guided and I'm for the birth warrior project. It had a recommended week one. You do this week two, you do this, but you have four months to complete it, or is it more structured than that? I can also look on your website if you don't wanna get into more than that.

Okay. Yeah. I could get into it for a second. And anyone including yourself, Lindsay, and anyone who's listening, if you are curious about the Indie Birth free school, you should totally email us. We do regular discovery calls with interested students and walk people through all of it.

And we have a lot of really cool free resources too. On the website, Indie Birth dot org slash resources. There's like a whole section that I'm still putting together, but it's already pretty comprehensive for people who want to be midwives. So it's more structured in that we have an actual. . It's similar, but we have units and so units are anywhere from two to six weeks long and you move through the unit as a cohort.

Cool. And you have six weeks. Does that make sense? Yeah, and you're doing it depends on the unit, but some units are three classes at a time and some are

one at a time and it looks a little different in the second year. The second year right now is we have it structured is one course at a time for three weeks.

So you focus on one topic for three weeks. So it's more focused and then deep not that the first year courses aren't deep, but they're a little bit more if you can imagine, like the first two years of college totally. Where you're like your gen getting the lay of the land and foundational.

Yeah, exactly. And they're yeah. Right now I'm trying to think what they're in right now. I know the very first unit if you started in July, you would take oh my gosh, I'm blanking. What would you be taking? I'm gonna look it up for you.

it's midwifery Herstory. So it's a really cool course all about the hers history of midwifery specifically in the us. And you also take the speaking your truth course, which is taught by me. And it's all about content creation and starting to figure out like how that fits into, what it is to be a birth worker.

And some self-work stuff like your personal narrative and what is your story that you're bringing? And then of course. Called listen, the art and science relationship building in midwife free. And so that one's all about holding space. We explore a book called non-violent communication.

Talk about goal setting with clients, coaching skills, fears, all kinds of stuff. So those three you would be doing at the same time. And then you get you do a two week course called the wise woman within. And just to give you like a super brief overview, the third unit, you take hormonal balance and fertility birth models around the world and the heart of what we do wise woman prenatal care.

So maybe that gives you a little sense of yeah, it's like you're in a class, you're in the set of classes with your cohort. You move through in six weeks, you move on. So yes, you can do it faster. You can't really do it slower. And we have final projects at the end of each course.

Cool. That you submit feedback. Nice. Yeah. It's really fun. Yeah. I like that. You moved through it with your cohort. So that you like, get to know yeah. You're all at the same place. Like I said, I like to process and talk about things. So if there's yeah. People that are in the same place as me, I think that's great.

Yeah. We've been giving them cohorts animal names because it was getting too confusing. Now that we have two start dates. We can't say first years and second years anymore. Yeah. Because we have a bunch of people in the first year and a bunch of people, so right now we have the Ravens, the wolves and the snow leopards.

Oh my God. So I don't know what July's cohort will be called. Probably not the snow leopard, but I like that one a lot. maybe the lions. Yeah. Lionesses. I don't know. Yeah. The lionesses. Cool. Any other like concluding questions, thoughts things that you'd like to talk about. I feel like my family might be home to interrupt us soon.

No, I think we touched on all of the things that I had in my head, as well as other things that came up as we were talking. So I have a lot to digest and it was really helpful to have this conversation with you. So thank you. you're very welcome. And for others who are listening and wanting to explore all of these ideas and then also concrete skills and tools and all the things related to either being a doula or midwife, we have a couple really cool options for you to check out at Indie Birth dot org.

Like I said, we also have the intro to midwifery course, which is new. And it's one of two options as far as prerequisites for the Indie Birth midwifery school, for people who are wanting to be doulas. We have the birth warrior project. Lindsay is an alumni of that course. And so if you're wanting to attend the Indie Birth midwifery school which you can learn more about at Indie Birth midwifery school.org.

We have a prerequisite and that is to either take the birth warrior project or the intro to midwifery course, not both one or the other. And they are both really great options. And we would love to chat with anyone who has questions. You can always email me message me, chat with us on the website, whatever we've got a million ways to be contacted.

And we love hearing from you. So thank you so much, Lindsay, for having a cool and interesting conversation around this intersection of being an apprentice and also wanting to continue your doula work. Yeah. Thank you so much. It was lovely to chat with you. Yeah. Likewise. All right. If you enjoyed what you heard, please hit the subscribe button and give this podcast a five star review for more

enriching content and conversation around the primal physiological process that is pregnancy birth and beyond.

Please head over to [Indie Birth dot org](http://IndieBirth.org). And if you are in the Duluth area, seeking prenatal and midwifery support, you can find Margo at [Duluth midwife.com](http://DuluthMidwife.com). Thank you so much for listening until next time.