

(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.

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**MARYN:** Welcome to podcast Sunday. Yes. I'm back on Sundays this time around. And I'm going to kind of be building a little bit on last week's episode about self care. You don't have to have listened to that, but it might be helpful. I'll call in some of those elements probably as I talk about intimacy and sex today. Okay. So I can hardly believe in 200 plus episodes I have never gotten to this. I was sitting this morning with why that is. And I realized I definitely have some feelings around sharing on this topic. I think having part of your life or many parts of your life private when you're somebody that does share so openly and has a place where people can listen in also is important. So there are definitely, I think, for all of us, right? Areas of our lives we kind of protect for lack of a better word. And I realize this is one of them. But there is no reason not to talk about this topic especially as it applies to mothers. If you're not a mother, you might still enjoy this or not. But I am speaking specifically today from my own perspective, which is not surprising, as a breastfeeding mother to ten children and how sex and intimacy comes into my life, how I kind of think of things, and how that all factors in when you have so many people around, and all of that.

So let's see. Any brief updates. I am having my second postpartum, after Rumi, bleed. And today is the first day. So I almost didn't record. When I woke up, I thought, "No. Today is just not the day." And for many of you, that might agree. If you're tuned in to your cycle really intimately and you've read some books or whatever, you might resonate with that whole scheduling your life around your cycle a little bit. I don't think it's crazy. And for that reason, I wasn't going to talk today. Just can be such an energetic output. And when you're bleeding—and this really does go with the sex and intimacy topic actually. When you're bleeding, it's just not the time often for being on a soap box or giving a huge presentation or speaking publically or even running around town. But I checked in with myself and despite the first day of real bleeding, I'm feeling like this is an okay way to spend energy because I'm in my sanctuary. I'm in my special

bedroom. Yes. It might be loud downstairs. Oh well. I'll cope. I didn't have to get out of my pajamas. I didn't have to get into my car. This is relatively low stress. And I'm not speaking in a sense to a live audience, so I don't have to interact with anybody else's energies which would feel important right now.

So I wanted to share that because I think it's fun to share that. And like I said, it does go along with some of the things I want to hit on today which is just timing and our own cycles in life and in our bodies. The bleeding itself has been really easy. I mean today is the first day. But I guess I mean last cycle, which was the first one. So that's feeling good. And yeah. Just kind of flowing with that whole process. So where do I start? I suppose I'll share, just briefly, that I have had this topic on my brain for probably a long time. And it's never been the right time for whatever reason. What prompted me into wanting to talk a little bit more today about this was, like always, there's often an email or sometimes a post. And I think in this case it was a post on our social network, which, by the way, is free to join. You can get the link on our Instagram account. But I believe the post was in our school group, so that is reserved for our Indie Birth Midwifery School students. And yeah. It's always nice to hear where they're coming from. And so this question was posted, and I thought it was such a great one. And I don't know that I'll get this verbatim, so apologies to the person that asked. I remember the gist of the question.

But this mama is a mama and breastfeeding, I believe, and has a couple of young kids. And so her question was just like, "What do I do to instill my libido again?" And I don't remember the exact timing for this mama, but I feel like it doesn't matter because for some women this topic comes up even just in their heads, right? Like why do I never feel like having sex? Why? When they're three months postpartum. Some women it's a year postpartum. Some women it's three years postpartum. So not to freak anyone out. I don't know that any extreme is the average here. But everybody has a different experience. And there is so much that goes into the feelings around sex and our own bodies and what they've just been through. Again, whether it was three months ago or three years ago. So honoring this mama for speaking up, for asking for help, and yeah. Just posing the question like, "What do I do? Is there anything to be done?" And if I recall, there might have been talk of supplements or this or that. And actually, that might be what had initially gotten my attention in a sense. Because I think there's all of those questions that come into our brain when we feel like—and I don't want to speak for this person. I'll speak for myself. When I've had those thoughts of like, "Oh, man. I really just—that is the farthest thing from my mind." And this probably dates back awhile before I kind of worked through it, but having those thoughts and being like, "What is wrong with me?"

So, again, not putting words in anyone's mouth, but those have been my thoughts after—whatever number of months postpartum. Your breastfeeding. Sometimes you're breastfeeding two. I am not right now, but I have tandem nursed. So imagine, breastfeeding two people. In most cases, it's really hard to get any time for yourself as a mom of really young kids. Hence, last week's podcast. So again, no one has to listen to that, but I do think there is something to be said for establishing our own soul and our own growth in whatever way. And I talked a lot about some of my ways last week before, in my mind, we layer on this piece of being intimate with ourselves which is really how I like to think about it. I think that, for me, is a layer that comes after taking care of kind of my basic physical and soul needs. But that's a lot. That could be its own podcast part two is just that especially for breastfeeding mamas. How is that possible? And I kind of hinted around it last time saying, "For some people, you're going to be annoyed. You're going to say this is impossible," or really maybe it's not at this moment. You have a partner that works outside of the house, and you really don't get ten minutes alone.

So not to say you can't be thinking about intimacy if you're in that place. I'm just saying for me that would be way harder. I feel like first things first, right? That old metaphor of putting on the oxygen mask for yourself first on the plane before you can help anyone is exactly what I mean. So for me, that's, like I said last time, getting time alone. Being out on the earth. Having some kind of spiritual practice, and then I can find the space. I can find the time to work on this sexuality piece. And is it a piece? I think that's a whole other conversation in a sense, right? We're so compartmentalized in our lives, and I think that way too a lot of the time. Side note, on another thread somewhere else on our social, someone had asked this week about finding balance. And, again, same thing I believe like little kids, right? This is the most common thread amongst women who are mothering. One young child, two, or three, or four. Whatever the case may be.

There's this real struggle to create a routine and what the mind perceives as balance to feel like we're doing a good job. So back to that thread, my respond, at the moment that day, was, "Balance is sometimes imbalance." And I do think that's important to bring to this sexuality conversation because sometimes the balance, with little kids and breastfeeding and mother and all of that, is that intimacy doesn't have a huge part to play. So I'm just being honest about that from my own life. You may be someone that doesn't feel that way. And maybe sex and intimacy is on your top three of must haves, and you have totally found a way to always work that in. Good for you. For me, it has definitely fallen down on the list over the years. And I'm not apologizing for that. I think there is a beauty about the imbalance, so to speak. Meaning that everything isn't checked off. That some months we are really knee deep in some kind of spiritual process. And the next few months everything feels really smooth, right? And maybe

something physical comes up. Or we start working out, and we're really into changing the shape of our physical body.

So yeah. Balance. That's a whole other podcast. I don't think in the messy, feminine way that's really a word I would use. So just to be clear, what I mean in this context is sometimes when we are balancing all of these things there are things that don't get attention. And sex is definitely one of those areas. So at different points in our lives and for different people, different women, it's just up to us to decide is this a piece that I need and/or want right now. And, again, breastfeeding mothers, I think, very often if we really ask ourselves that question honestly—and this isn't about our partners. This is about us. Ask yourself. Is that something that I want or need right now? And sometimes the answer is no. And that's perfectly okay? That's perfectly okay because just like the seasons of the years, just like this bleeding cycle that I'm currently experiencing, the tide will turn, right? And two weeks from now, sex will sound amazing, right? And I think that's so human and so beautiful really to really feel and appreciate and be grateful for the cycle.

So, again, that might not work in a relationship all the time. That's kind of another facet of this discussion. Is we're asking ourselves as women, as mothers, "Hey, what do I need?" It may not jive with our partners. So we need good communication and ways that I probably share of being intimate without going all the way all the time or feeling like we need to give more energy because, for sure, intimacy is a give and take. In whatever physical way you want to talk about this, right? There's all kinds of ways to be intimate. And we can be intimate in thought and touch and—it doesn't have to just be like sex, sex, sex all the time. But it takes energy. So the same energy that I was describing in even speaking today when I'm bleeding, it's not always the best match. And so we have to be guarded and intentional about our energy. And I don't mean guarded in someone is trying to take it. I think we protect our own energy.

So wow. That's a lot of sub little topics there that I don't what anybody will do with those. But hey, that's just what came out. So let's get into this idea of being intimate with ourselves. It's taken me a long time to come to this. I don't know if everybody is the same. It's taken me a long time of understanding that oxygen mask metaphor kind of in the sexual realm. So if you don't take care of yourself first, there is nothing to give. And I think—I'll speak for myself again. And that's always what I'm doing here. I hope you know. Those times when sex is the worst thing you can think of—it's just like oh my god. No. I just have zero, zero percent interest in that. That makes sense because we're not stoking our own creative fires most of the time. And that's essentially, I think,

what sex, intimacy, all of these words around creation. So I'll let that settle for a minute because I think there is a lot of bigger topics in there.

To get to know ourselves. Hmm. What does that mean, right? There's so many ways. And like I said, last week, the self care podcast, I think, I offered some ideas. Those are some ways to get to know yourself on a soul level. So important. But now I'm talking about being intimate with our creativity and, for sure, our actual physical bodies. And in the case of being a woman, our wombs. Our uterus. Our cervix. Our vaginas. Our yonis. Whatever terminology you want to use. Just sit for a moment aside from partners, aside from whatever this topic brings up for you. Just recentering yourself to the miracle of the female form. Whether or not you've been pregnant or birth does not matter. It does not. All of these children that I have—so grateful for them—an amazed that it took me so long to really have gratitude for this female body that I'm in. I think so much taking for granted over the years in just the ways that we do. Getting pregnant easily, birthing easily, not really having a whole lot of issues, per se. I mean, yes. Some traumas, but nothing unusual. So just kind of being like, "Oh, yeah. That's what bodies do." And sure, it's also really ordinary in a sense what our bodies do and what they're capable of. But just feeling the gratitude for whatever you've been through in this physical body as a woman. And feeling that and paying attention to it.

And I'm going to get into some more detailed ideas because I think these are the ways we connect more intimately with ourselves first before we can invite in a partner and wholeheartedly invite them. We must already be activated. We must already have—I don't know how to say it. Yes. Maybe worked through some stuff. I mean it depends. It depends what will come up for you in connecting with yourself again in this way. Connecting with your own intimate self. It definitely might bring some stuff up which I think is why we don't talk about things in this way. I think it's way easier for even conscious women to not be thinking too deeply, right? It's just like, "Oh, yeah. Well, sex. I have a partner, and I get pregnant every now and then." And yeah. Sex is good and all of that. But in between, who are you in this? How has your body changed? That's something that was really fun to discover for me after Rumi was born. That I had birthed all of these babies. And not been afraid of my body at all—totally trusting although I definitely know that his birth purposefully gave me a tiny bit of doubt along those lines which I think is really healthy and gave me a lot of humility even though, in the end, my body did amazing in birthing him in the way that it needed to.

But after his birth, in his postpartum, I got really interested in just connecting more with what was deeply in there even if I came at it initially from the angle of, "Oh, man. I wonder if any fear got trapped in there," right? Because it was kind of a crazy experience. And it was very scary. So I was interested primarily in locating those

physical points in my body because I knew they were there. So here are some ideas. Here are some things I tried, again, with that intention. My intention was to identify the emotions within my womb after his birth. But also I've kind of built on that since and will kind of lead into a talk about womb awakening which I'm sure other people have used. But it kind of came to me as what I was trying to activate within myself since his birth. So a healing, a healing of emotion, and also a rejuvenation of life and energy and cycles in this case and a return to the sexual identity which we all have in varying degrees.

After his birth, I did a lot of steaming. So yoni steaming. Vaginal steaming, whatever you want to call it. Probably most people here listening to this have an idea what that is. If you don't, there are lots of great resources even in our *13 Moons*—our childbirth course. We have some webinars and such. So that was not new to me either. I have steamed after a couple of my babies' births. But after Rumi, I did it more intentionally meaning that when I would sit there and let the steam kind of rise up and in I was visualizing the inside of my body. And this might sound weird or esoteric. You kind of just have to try it. We have a pelvic bowl, and we have all these organs and bones and all of this stuff inside. And even if you don't really know the landmarks or whatever is in there, you can just kind of imagine this inside, right? Your womb space whether you're pregnant or not is such a sacred space. And I think how we even visualize it says a lot about how we feel about it and if we're getting energy flow there or if things are stagnant or cut off. Again, another invitation maybe when you're done listening to this to try that. To try steaming or even just kind of sitting and meditating and directing your energy and your vision down to your uterus, down to your womb which really is a portal. Really, really, truly is a portal to life and to all of these amazing angles and parts of ourselves that remain hidden even from ourselves, even after we've birthed all these babies.

So that was my first step. I was also reading, at the time, *The Wild Feminine* by Tami Lynn Kent. Excellent book so add that to your resource list. And she kind of walks you through this. So it wasn't something I just came up with on my own. Totally giving credit to her for just these kind of visualizations. But the visualization part, of course, wasn't new to me. So it was relatively easy and very life affirming and very healing to do this. Just kind of imagine where I saw light, where I saw some darkness, where I kind of felt like there were cobwebs or things needed to be cleared up, and this is all just happening in your third eye, in your other vision in your body. But that is extremely effective. And I realized there were places for sure in my womb that had just birthed that felt like they hadn't been touched by energy in—for so long. And I thought that was really fascinating. And, of course, I wished it was something I had done more of in my pregnancy but may or may not be harder with an actual person in there.

So bringing attention to this part of your body is a huge layer and maybe not what people want to talk about, but it's a huge layer to this idea of bring yourself to someone else. Is just knowing your body. It's just knowing where you're holding what energetically without even touching anything, and I'll get to that in a minute. But just simply feeling your own energy. And I think if we're being honest and we're learning to do better connecting to our bodies, which I think we all are, sometimes you notice that just your normal breathing, your normal way of being in the world, you don't even give any thought to the flow of blood, to the energy, to your womb, to your pelvic floor, any of the stuff down below. Kind of like it's cut off. Just the other night I was hanging out with a new friend here, and I don't even know what we were talking about. But she said something like, "Oh, yeah. My breathing is so shallow. I should work on that." And I didn't say anything. But in my mind, I was like, "Yeah. All of us should," right? So many of us, at different times even, or when we're feeling scared or insecure or whatever, we do breathe really shallowly.

So I don't want this to be a podcast on breathing. Just saying that if we're going to talk about sexuality, if we're going to talk about bringing our best selves to relationships, this is another piece. This is another huge physical piece. And, again, full disclaimer, I'm trying my best to give resources that I learned from. I'm not taking credit for any of these things. I'm just simply sharing how I use them or were affected by them. But this is the life's work of so many women out there like Tami Lynn Kent and other people. So this should be a course that perhaps you embark on taught by someone else. I'm just sharing how I've used some of these in my own life and because they've been so helpful. I think it's so beautiful to spread the word and the wealth and the light of amazing resources of women that have made this kind of thing their life's work because it is so needed. And whether it's because you want to have a better birth or you want to have better sex or whatever it is, it's all the same thing. And yeah. That's that.

So that was key. And back to kind of the list of things after Rumi where I was just learning, again, to feel, feel in my body, in my womb, bring energy to there. At that point, six weeks postpartum I wasn't really thinking about sex. For us, that usually takes a month or two or whatever. So that was my intention at that moment. I just felt like that was part of my healing. Another resource I really want to share with you that I love is my friend, Devon. I'll include these links for sure. But her business, her website, is called Inner Spark. She is a really beautiful witchy woman that I've had the honor of collaborating with here and there. And I discovered her just on a random Google search. I think I've shared this other places. Because she had a course, and I hope I get the name of it right. But I'm going to include links. I think it was called *Yoni Exploratory Course* or something like that. *Yoni Exploration* or whatever.

And it just came up when I was kind of searching for this kind of thing which there is not tons of resources on. And her course was really fabulous. I'm not sure if it's something she offers there, but you can get in touch with her if you don't see it. Anyway, it was super simple. Like a lot of these things, it wasn't like earth shattering, but it was so perfectly timed for me. So taking her course, just simply communicating with my body. I remember she had a series of questions to ask your yoni. And I know that sounds maybe kind of funny or silly, but these are the thing that I think do bring sometimes a layer of uncomfortableness because we think, on some level, it's a waste of time or whatever. I'll tell you it was not. And I'm someone that is fairly connected already to my body, and I got so much out of it. So I won't give away her course. But just asking questions of your body as if you're waiting for the response and, specifically, about your yoni, about the inside of your body, about the womb space and hearing what reflections come from your past, from your past history, from all kinds of things came up for me that I wouldn't say, on paper, would look traumatic. But they were for me in my own ways. So I'd imagine everyone of us, every single one of us, has things especially after birthing babies or maybe having miscarriages or both and throw in sexual partners and all of that stuff. There are things there that you have forgotten. I promise you. So her course is great. But even just whatever coming up with your questions can be really helpful too. And just listening. Just listening to what your body has to say.

Another great resource and another thing that I did and felt just so mind shattered by in the best way was a vaginal mapping session. So in *Wild Feminine*, she does talk about vaginal mapping. And the long and short of that is getting inside your body with your hands, with your fingers inside your yoni, inside your vagina, whatever you want to call it and feeling around. Feeling around for pressure points. Feeling around for whatever you feel. So, again, I'm not going to go in to that whole tutorial here. That's really not—that's not mine to teach. My friend, Stacey, does though. And I'm going to include a link for her. She is an amazing teacher, and I hopped an hour-long Zoom session she did. We all turned our cameras off, of course. And Stacey led us through a really, really beautiful vaginal mapping session where a lot came up. And this was awhile ago, and I don't think I had ever even shared with her just how mind blown I was and how connected I felt. And it's the kind of practice that goes beyond words. And that's probably why I won't say too much more. But a lot of memories came up for me, a lot of physical sensations, a lot of emotional sensations came up, a lot of just hidden stuff.

So I think I would love for everyone out there that's listening to this to try that and take one of Stacey's classes or read about it in the *Wild Feminine* and do it yourself. And that's a whole other thing is sexuality and this sometimes outdated view that, of course, we engage in that for someone else's benefit, right? Or because we feel like we should or we have to, all of those old beliefs that many of us are happy to let die. And



something like this, this vaginal mapping, this yoni mapping, takes the power of your own body actually, literally, into your own hands where you realize, “I don’t need anyone. I love my whatever, partner, husband, and I want to give of myself with him for the collective experience we have together, and all the reasons that, of course, we do love intimacy with a partner. But I also can get what I need from myself.” And I don’t even mean that in a sexual sense. Of course, that can be part of it. And vaginal mapping, all of the stuff where you’re feeling your body, it is sexual, but it’s not. The point isn’t necessarily to induce self pleasure, right? But go for it. Go for it too if that’s what feels right to you.

But I think it’s amazing—at least it was for me to really kind of open that whole conversation to myself. That is touching these places, that—bringing up feelings. There’s so much more to our bodies than sex, than orgasm, than having babies, than bleeding. Those are just kind of the base layer things that our miraculous bodies and wombs offer us. But there is so, so much more. I would, again, totally advise having a session with Stacey because there are a lot of things can come up if you’re feeling really in a trauma space or just if you have whatever circumstances where you’re like, “Hey, I don’t really know that I should go into this alone. It might be too much for me.” Then I would totally enlist the help of a sister who has helped many people before because I think that’s also just a really, really beautiful offering. And, again, I’m so grateful to that class I took and just what it opened up for me.

So okay. I’m telling this really long-winded story here. And it might feel like I’m not even talking about the topic, but I am. To me. Because this was just kind of the beginning for me of the most recent womb awakening. I’ve probably had different ways of doing this after different babies. I’m just sharing the most recent and the most profound. I think Rumi’s birth being as difficult as it was and challenging me and instilling this like both immense power in myself and also this humility led me these really amazing resources that—fast forward now and he’s 14 months yesterday—have really helped me reclaim my own sexual identity and my own being intimate with myself although when I began postpartum, like I’m explaining with the steaming, with the vaginal mapping, I wasn’t thinking about it in that way. I was simply like, “Okay. I need to reclaim my body. I need to clear trauma from this birth,” and that was my intention.

But time moves on. All of these things are just a way of building our own relationship with ourselves. And along the way, of course, there were other things I just kind of discovered and wanted for myself. And, again, this was sort of aside from sex but definitely play in. So just asking the question, “What does your body need?” And I think I mentioned that last podcast, and I think I already said that today. But just feeling what it feels like. What do you need? And I know, for me especially, sometimes of the month

right now since I am having a cycle, the answer is really clear. It's like rest. Like no one—no one else needs to be involved. The body doesn't want to expend that extra energy, if that's how it's being seen, right? Because sometimes intimacy, it feels that way, and sometimes it doesn't. Sometimes the answer is rest. And then other times it's like, "Oh, no. My body is really wanting that connection with Jason. I really am looking forward to that," and so your brain and your body really work together. And that's something else I've kind of learned over the years.

Sometimes we have to program ourselves—and I mean this in the most positive way because, of course, don't do anything you don't want to do. I do not mean that. What I mean is if you're like me at all and whatever—maybe you're a couple months into the postpartum, maybe you've had sex, maybe you haven't, but you just want to want it, right? Do you know what I mean? You want to want it. It's not because your partner wants it that you want it. You really want to want it. But you don't. So it can be kind of this slow process of lining your body up with your brain. And for me, it was just acknowledging that. Like, "Okay. This is good. I don't not want to do that. I want to, but I can't find where that fits. I can't find the emotional energy for that." So you just kind of put it out there to the universe. Like, "Okay. I would like that to manifest. I would like to be shown how I can connect with that more." And making that intention out loud or in a journal can really go a long way. I know that sounds kind of silly. But even when it comes to your partner themselves, right? So if I put that out, that intention, then the littlest things can build, right?

Because if you're a mom, I mean not to be stereotypical here. But I'm going to be for a minute especially of young kids. My experience is you don't generally go from like absolutely sex is not my radar to oh my gosh, the most wild and passionate sex ever in one day. Most of the time that doesn't really happen. So it's a gradual thing where you set the intention like, "I would like to be in that sphere again. I would like to have that connection." And then you see your partner during the day, right? And maybe you just give him a little kiss for no reason. Little things you forget when you have kids. At least, I have. You wake up in the morning. Let's hug. Let's just connect for a minute. And these tiny, little ways totally build especially if that's your intention. So you can send fun texts. Or, again, for us because we're both home all day, it's just this intention of like, "I'm just going to come near you. I'm going to touch you." And for 10 seconds, I can hug you or just wrap my arms around your neck and just be with you and feel your heart beating. And the kids can wait 10 seconds. It's so easy with young kids to really feel like you never have the time because, honest to God, there's always someone that needs something, right?

And if no one is being hurt, I just have to take a breath and remember that we get the choice to connect. And that those little connections can totally build. So if it's something that you haven't tried and, again, your intention is there and you're at the place where you're like, "Oh my gosh. Maybe I need a supplement because I have no libido," how about trying this first? Just try this little method of connecting here and there. And you can tell your partner this is your intention, or you can just keep it to yourself. Sometimes when they know it's really fun too because then they'll do little things. And it's just about the little moments. Nobody is going to probably run off into the bedroom. That's probably not, at least, what's going to happen at my house with a million people around. But it's building. And you're getting it back, and it all feels good and organic and natural, hopefully. That's the best we could hope, right?

So onwards, kind of through my very long story here, we moved. Moving is super stressful. So just a moment to acknowledge when we're talking about, "How do I get back into this intimacy, sex thing," life stresses are real. And I'm not saying that we should use that as an excuse all the time. I think we also know when we're using them and when it's really, right? For us, it felt real. And having moved many times, we had been through this before where it's kind of like you're just in this fight or flight state for at least six months. And we had had a baby. And we moved. So for both of us, honestly, that gave us permission, in a sense, to just not have a whole lot of expectation around this topic. That we are close in other ways. We're each other's best friend. We're soul mates. We've got a lot going for us otherwise. And this piece, again, the imbalance in the balance was just like, "Okay. We're going to wait. We're going to wait until that really feels right. And everybody is totally on board." Because when I was feeling really stressed, maybe he wasn't. And then he was feeling super stressed about whatever moving related, and I wasn't. So we really made an agreement to just be with ourselves as much as possible. Let the stress dissipate and pass.

Of course, keep taking care of ourselves individually and know that it will pass. So I just want to say that again because if you have had a baby in the whatever—last few months or, like I said, for some people it's years. I don't completely resonate with that, to be honest. I don't and I can't speak for anyone else though. I feel like if sex is completely never on your radar for years and years—I don't know. There might be something else there, perhaps, right? In the relationship. Or maybe something is just really depleted or kind of off in the body and hormones and that kind of thing. To me in just a normal, healthy relationship, that's a long time. That's a really long time. And it's not just the physical obviously. There's so much. There's so much emotional connection and even spiritual connection. To me, months feel pretty normal after a baby. Not years. But that's me. But yeah. If it's only been a couple of months, I would definitely be patient with yourself. And different babies, different births, brings different

experiences. I mean I can remember a couple of our kids that were really quite young when I felt perfectly excited and fine to return to that. And then, like I said, more recently just life stresses kind of made it a longer time.

So a couple of months ago, I was kind of at that point where I was like, "Okay. We've moved. Everything is good. We're not running from a tiger anymore. And I really want to get back to this part of our life together. It really does feel important." And I had to kind of develop a plan for myself. So already brought this far with all of the other things, kept steaming, kept doing what I've already explained, and I kind of said to myself, "I'm going to wake up my womb," which is sort of corny and silly. But it felt right to me. It was like, "I feel that there is activation needed, and I want that now. But I have to kind of wake it up." And so yeah. The things I've talked about. Steaming and all of that. For me, night weaning Rumi was huge. And, again, not telling anyone how they should do it. I know, for me, after ten kids that I cannot nurse all night past a year. I can't. My body doesn't like it. My hormones don't like it. I don't think it benefits anyone in our family. So once Rumi was night weaned, then I could feel. I actually could feel my womb coming back to life.

So, again, suppression of libido, suppression of hormones, suppression of fertility is all physiological when you're nursing a baby all night. Just remember that too. So at the base level, right? Having a sex to create babies. Of course, that's not the only reason. But at a base level, it is. So if your body is busy nursing all night or nursing all day or nursing two babies, your body is being really smart in not wanting that. Hence, the decision to embark on herbs and supplements and things when, in a lot of the cases, the body is just not there. It does not care. It does not care if you have another baby. In fact, it would love you to not have another baby right now.

So fertility is definitely a part of this conversation as far as there being cycles to wanting to be intimate, to wanting any of it. I mean that's just the way our bodies were made. And we live in a culture, don't forget, where many of us aren't on birth control. Pharmaceutical birth control, at least, as opposed to natural family planning, condoms kind of stuff. And people that are on birth control have no cycle. So the average woman out there is kind of like a man in her hormones. And men, of course, they kind of will have sex all day every day, right? All month long. They don't have the ebb and flow that we really know of. I mean I really do believe they have a cycle of some kind. But anyway, the point being is that they're fertile all the time. We're not. But people on birth control—women on birth control, if that's kind of the norm, then also this lack of libido is also part of the norm because a woman who isn't cycling—I mean I remember it back in the day. I was on birth control for a couple of years in my very early 20s. I don't remember necessarily feeling like I wanted to have sex. And I think that's pretty odd

given my age and the fact that we didn't have kids. But now that I know more, it makes sense, right?

So, again, I'm not really talking to probably any of you here but just saying that the social expectation, the cultural expectation, is that we should have sex whenever. And really there is only a couple of weeks in a month, if we're cycling, that our bodies even want to do that. And of course, for some women as they get close to bleeding, sex feels really awesome or whatever it is. We all have our individual variations. But I'm just saying from a mammal point of view, that's a thing. And so there definitely are partners and men and guys out there that don't know that either. And I feel really lucky that at this point Jason is very tuned in. So he can feel it too. The fertile time is the fertile time. And that's when everything is the best because everything is on board. Your body, your mind, your soul. And this is aside from whether or not you're trying to create a pregnancy or not. But the hormones are there for that, so take advantage of them.

Anyway, I kind of got off on a rabbit hole. But I do think that's really important especially as we're teaching girls and young women about their cycles. The decision to use birth control and all of that is personal but just in how it alters this whole conversation. And this idea of libido and what it means to be a sexual creature doesn't mean, at least for most women I know, that it's all the time and every day of the month. It just doesn't make sense. It doesn't make sense with our bodies. So yeah. So that wake up womb, weaning Rumi, of course, and just feeling my body slowly, slowly take steps. And breastfeeding mamas know being really dry vaginally is just part of the picture, usually, when you're nursing a lot. That's just, again, the suppression of the fertility and a way to make sure that you don't have another baby. But it can make sex not as comfortable when your body is not producing its own lubrication. So that's a really great benefit of weaning a baby at night when they're ready and when you're ready because slowly all of those things start to return. And you can feel it. You can feel your body stepping back into the cycle, which is really cool, and then observing as that's taking place what your own status is.

And for some women keeping a journal, keeping a chart, can be really helpful because the libido changes over the cycle or even as you're getting back into it and can be affected by so much. And if you're really kind of a nerd of charting and all of that—I kind of am. I mean I can be, and I have been in the past. But there's all kinds of things, right? To chart. Like how you're sleeping and how are you eating and how are you taking care of your body in other ways. And when I do the steaming thing, which again is so simple, Jason totally knows. I mean he knows anyway that I'm doing it. But he says that there is an actual physical difference in my energy, and it definitely feels more sexual. It feels more—I feel more open to him which I don't think is an accident. So if

you haven't tried it, I guess that's one of my hugest plugs today. I just do it with salt water. I don't do anything fancy. I hang over an edge of a chair in my bedroom. Nothing fancy at all about it. And it brings flow. It brings energy and blood flow and oxytocin, and it really is sexually stimulating in a sense. It just feels good. And there's all kinds of layers and levels to feeling good. They don't all have to be crazy orgasms. They can just be really subtle in the ways that we care for ourselves. So steaming gets my number one vote and my husband's vote in just getting the womb activated and—yeah.

I think making time when you have a lot of kids is a thing. And this is already getting so long. But I know people are curious because for so long people have been like, "How? How do you ever find time for that?" And the answer is, "Well, we have ten children. So clearly, we do." And it's fun to do that in a way. I won't lie. It can be a challenge. The days of having one or two kids and having them be tiny and fall asleep right away—gosh. That was easy. Now not only do we have people in our bedroom, but we have people around all the time. They're coming in and out of the bathroom. They're coming up and down the stairs. They're coming up and down the hall. There doesn't feel like a lot of privacy, which is definitely something I would love to change, but I don't know that it will. So it's kind of being comfortable with the uncomfortable in a sense. And just being flexible and releasing expectations and plans, I think, is my most helpful tip there.

So sometimes it's kind of in your consciousness, right? With your partner. Like, "Okay. Tonight's a good night." Or whatever. And nope. Every time we have a plan it falls through. Every single time. And then it's the times you don't expect it, right? It's like, "Oh my gosh. Everyone passed out tonight. They were out playing in the yard all day. They all fell asleep at 5:00 p.m., and they're staying asleep. Who would have guessed? Who would have guessed that tonight is a great night?" Or the morning. The morning is a favorite time for me at least because I don't like my sleep interrupted. I'm like that sometimes. And Jason has learned to respect that, and that's kind of our compromise. It's like oh my god. Like I really am too tired. That's such a cliché excuse. I really am. And I'll be so much more fun in the morning. So I'll wake you up in the morning when I get up to pee at whatever. 5:00. I'll wake you up, and that will be so fun and a great way to start the day. And then I can go back to sleep. He gets up and does his stuff. It's perfect. So I don't know. I'm sure those of you with little kids have figured that one out.

But yeah. The releasing expectations. When you have a baby in your bed, which we have for 20 years—not the same baby—but we have had a baby in our bed for that long, yeah. I guess you just get used to it really. And I don't know. Maybe this is a

whole other topic to people. But people have posted on our social whatever in the past few years questions like this. Like, "Oh, are you going to damage your child emotionally if they're in the bed with you when you're having sex and they're sleeping?" I think not. I mean I could be wrong. But I think not. There is nothing weird or wrong about having sex and how do people think they got here which is always what Jason says to the kids. "How do you think you got here?" And I think it's great really for a kid—I mean not that they're—they're not sitting there watching. I draw my line there. Baby must be sleeping because I can't pay attention to a baby and another human at the same time. So if they are sleeping, sure. I mean they're not unconscious. But they are probably in their own little dream world, and what better for them to know that their parents love each other. I think that's great. I think I've never had a problem with that or thought it was weird.

And for many of us, right? We think of our own parents, and we're like, "Oh my god. I can't." So kind of dealing with some of that around it all and realizing you're the parents now. And you kind of have to shift your perspective a little or understand or just be okay. Just be okay with being human and this is a part of being human. It's a very beautiful part of being a human, and I don't think kids are damaged by it. At least, I don't think my kids are. I think it creates more healthy discussion eventually when they're older which is another topic rather than my parents, who never once said the word sex ever in all of my years. Whatever. That's very strange to me. So yeah. Releasing expectations.

I have kind of a funny story. But I don't know. A couple months ago that was kind of the plan in our minds one night. And it seemed like Rumi was going to go to sleep, and he hadn't slept all day. And right? We had all the ducks in a row for how this was going to work. And Rumi just would not. And it's like he knew. He knew. He kept almost falling asleep and waking up. As if he was staying awake on purpose and then grabbing for me and hugging me, and he's very—almost competitive with Jason. I don't know if any of you with little boys out there have noticed sort of the strange dynamics that can happen with little baby boys. They can own their moms in kind of this cute and weird way. So he was like very much sort of protecting me and the feeling was, "Oh no, dude. This is my lady. This mom. She's mine. Leave her alone. I'm not going to watch this. This is not happening on my watch." So we laughed about it because then a couple of nights later I think it worked out. And we both kind of chuckle. He was laying there asleep. It was like he just had had it. He just had stayed up too many nights in a row trying to police the situation. And here he was fast asleep. And yeah.

So laugh about it. Try not to get upset. Easier said than done. I know we've been that way too in the past when maybe we were both kind of less mature I would guess. Anger for sure. And I remember Jason being angry like, "Why does this never happen?"

These kids get taken care of. And they're always on you." And then my fight back of like, "Oh yeah. Of course. I always have these kids on me, and they're always nursing. I'm touched out. I can't give anymore." So that's also a very real part of the conversation and just being honest about that. It's not personal even though it feels like it, I'm sure, to these dads, to these men. It's not personal when you have a kid or kids groping you all day, touching your breasts, touching your belly, hanging on you. Sometimes you just can't give any more physically? And, again, I think there is just a time to say, "Hey, that's okay. These kids aren't going to hang on me forever." Or maybe another way comes in where you're like, "I need some space. If I'm going to be able to activate this part of myself, then blah, blah, blah, blah, blah." You kind of develop your own plan, and you kind of take your power back, if you need to, in that way.

I think it is also common—and I spoke to this on the last podcast about attachment parenting—it is sometimes common for this to become a pathological situation. And by that, I mean these moms—and there are these poor attachment parenting moms that are baby wearing all day and breastfeeding two children and up all night nursing and sleeping with the baby and all of the things that are so attachment and relatively awesome. But these moms are completely drained. Not only are they drained on a soul level which I talked about last week. And thank you. Many of you wrote in to me to say like, "Hey, that was super helpful because no one talks about attachment parenting sort of that honestly," and the detriment it can be when we don't take care of ourselves. But also this physical just wasteland that you can find yourself in. Physical wasteland of attachment parenting where you swear to God if one more person touches your boob you're going to lose it. And that's been me. So that's how I can speak to this as well because I nurse on demand. I have nursed on demand for 20 years. I never would put my kids on timers or tell them they couldn't nurse or breastfeeding is for all kinds of things. They fall down. They need a nipple. This is the way it goes.

But by the end of the day, to not feel like being intimate with an adult human is more than reasonable. So you have to find a way to either be where you're at. Again, if you have really tiny kids, it might just be a phase of life thing. But I also think—and this is, again, where I'm repeating myself. I also think it's a place to take your power back and not hang on to things that aren't working for you just to be in this dogma of attachment parenting, if that's what you're doing. And only you can know, if that's what you're doing. But if it's draining you and kind of killing you slowly and then on top of it your partner and you are not in a good place, intimacy is the farthest thing from your minds then it might be time to just make some little tweaks and changes and get that half an hour alone. Your baby—I promise you—will be fine even if your baby is relatively new.



Half an hour. The baby is going to be fine because until we reclaim some of our physical space we cannot give it away again.

And not that I think sex is giving it away. I think if it is it's purposeful. It's not an allowing. It's a giving in the best possible way. Giving and receiving. Oh, one last tip I wanted to offer, if you have a lot of children or young children kind of along the lines of no expectations is to just be together and touch. Just have bodies touch. And I kind of talked about that earlier just in a public way. Little kisses, hugs, just whatever, right? Because that releases oxytocin. It doesn't have to be, again, this like amazing sexual act. It's like a hug. A hug releases oxytocin. Let's start there. And then we'll build from there. So a practice that we've had in the past when we needed to because maybe actual sex wasn't happening would be just to lay together at night. Maybe Rumi is even nursing in bed. And we just lay there. Clothes on. Clothes off. Whatever. Usually off is better. But just skin touching skin. And so there is no expectation, right? So you kind of have to agree on that if that's what you want to do. No expectation. It's not—it doesn't have to lead to anything. Most of the time I'd fall asleep. That's the truth, if I was really tired.

But it was just nice to have that connection and to feel close. And maybe some other stuff happens in there, maybe it doesn't. And maybe it actually does lead to sex. And it's the most natural thing because then it wasn't planned. And I'm all for not planning, I guess, just because—yeah. Expectations. Expectations are the hardest thing sometimes. So that's a really easy thing to try, and you can kind of do it as an experiment even for X number of days, right? I think we said for the next week or whatever let's just try this. That in bed, at night, we'll just lay together. We'll just cuddle. We'll just touch. And that's it. And we'll all be happy with that. And that kind of adds to that level of intimacy thing building during the day.

So if you have many kids, if you have little kids, I think that really is probably my best overall tip is just to start racking up points. Start racking up your intimacy points through the day and through the night. And maybe one day, if you're lucky, you'll actually have sex again. No. I'm just kidding. You will. You will. You will. You will. But the goal isn't just to have it, right? It's to enjoy it and to look forward to it and to have it be whatever you need it to be for your relationship. So rack up those points during the day, and I am sure there are many more ideas out there. Little love notes or—I don't know. Again, it's just being basic. Holding hands, right? That's such a silly, fun thing. Sometimes when we take walks we do that and just little things like that. Like can you connect? Can you connect and have good conversations about it?

I think really—I can't speak for any of your partners, of course. But in my own partnership, these have been conversations we needed to have. So kind of a lot of the things I'm talking about, I would share. "Hey, I'm doing this thing." Or, "Hey, I really want to, but this is where I'm at. And it's not about you. But if you could,"—enter your request there, right? If you could be patient or if we could try this thing or that thing. Eventually, I will get there. And I think guys need to know that this is normal too. This whole conversation is just not really being had and how would guys know, right? Especially if you're their only partner. And here you are going through your first or second postpartum, how are would they know? They wouldn't really know unless you tell them and unless you talk about it. And they know it's normal. And maybe there are other guys they can talk to about it. I think that's always such a great idea that I've not really implemented. But I feel like, "Man, if guys could just talk about this stuff with each other,"—they can complain too. Let them complain that, "Oh, we're this many months postpartum, and we still haven't had sex yet." Or let them—because many of us are having the same experience. So many of us are. So I think just normalizing this conversation is a great thing.

All right. Well, an hour plus for the sexisode, as I will call it. And yeah. I'd love to hear your thoughts, your questions, and I will be sure to be post those wonderful resources below. All right, everybody. Have a great week.

(closing music)