

(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.

(music)

MARYN: Welcome to podcast Sunday. I am back on the Sunday school at least for now. At least before next week. I'm doing an online breath work course next Sunday. Not course actually. Class. So I don't know. That might mess things up. But Margo is here as many people know. So that kind of threw my Sunday podcasting schedule for a loop. But here I am. I am back again. And ironically, it's a very beautiful sunny day outside. So it's a little sad to spend this time in the office. But I was feeling creative and really wanting to speak today about what makes us different here at Indie Birth. First, just sharing some personal updates and such. Saturdays are my day off. I was thinking that I wanted to share that since I've done other podcasts recently about self care and such things. And I don't really have more to say about it than that. But I am looking into extending that time off, so I wasn't on the computer at all yesterday. Saturday. And I extended that way into Sunday today. Pretty much just got on here. Check the million of emails and made some notes for this podcast.

But that feels really excellent. And so if you needed a boost or a push into setting some boundaries around computer time, I don't know how many of you out there really spend a lot of time on your computers or not. I think more people, I'm guessing, spend more time on their phones. I actually don't. I'm somebody that has resisted the email on the phone for one. I do have an iPhone, so I can't say I resisted all of it. But I don't have email on my phone. I don't want that ever. I don't want to see emails coming in on my phone. So I use my phone to text like most people. But yeah. Anyway, I don't feel like I have real problems with that. But the computer time can really build up over the week. And my own findings just honest transparency here—my own findings have been that—and this is over the years. I don't do a lot of quality work on the computer. So what am I actually doing? Hmm. Well, yes. Emails. There's a ton always although shout out to our new email assistant, Meghan, who is making both of our lives—Margo

and I—so much easier. So I really don't have that excuse to fall back on anymore since Meghan has so dutifully and really beautifully taken over responding to most things.

Other things I would do, we have a social platform. Just kind of checking in there. Seeing what posts people have made. Sending out client stuff and emails. Maybe writing. Writing posts or we're working on some eBooks, right? There's all kinds of creative things that we write about, and computers are great for that. But when I'm around my children, which is most days of the week, I don't get a lot done honestly. And that's okay because I have days where I do get things done. So I guess what I'm saying is having boundaries around it when it's not feeling useful and then taking complete days off. So I take Saturday completely off from the computer. What did my daughter, Belgium, say? Just something cute the other day. She wanted to turn on my computer yesterday. And she said, "I promise when I'm done I'll put it back to sleep," or something cute. So it gets put to sleep on the weekends. Saturday. And I've discovered into Sunday really feels good.

And I'm looking at possibly doing that in the week as well. I think Tuesdays would be a great day to not get on the computer because I don't get anything done. That's the day that Jason works. He doesn't work really—I mean he does sit at a computer. But I mean appointments. He doesn't have appointments usually other days except for Tuesday. So if he's working on Tuesday, I just don't even want to commit myself to getting anything done during the time he's working. So it's silly, right? It's silly to turn on a computer. It just takes your attention away from your children or whatever you're actually trying to focus on. And, again, just the frustration sometimes builds because I don't get anything done. Maybe I can replay to an email. Excuse me. So anyway, I'm just sharing that because I thought maybe people out there would find it helpful just to hear what another person is doing and maybe give you, like I said, that kick to make your own boundaries around whatever it is for you. Maybe it's your phone. Maybe it's your computer. Maybe it's social media. I don't know. But I really love having the time off.

And I guess the last thing I want to say about that is it really provokes your creativity in a different way. So I consider myself to be a highly creative person in all the ways. I like to make people. And I like to make things. And I don't have a problem coming up with ideas. But I really get kind of super charged when I keep a notebook on these days where I don't allow myself to type. I think there's something really old fashioned and just more grounded for me of putting pen to paper. That's where I feel like some of the best ideas and things come from are on those days when I don't have a keyboard to click on. It's just not the same for me. It's just not the same. So sometimes I'm resistant in a sense. Like Saturday rolls around, and I'm like, "Oh, shoot. Oh, I wanted

to do this thing. Or I wanted to respond to those emails.” And I have the discipline, luckily, to hold myself back and just say, “Nope. Not today.” And the day always goes beautifully. I don’t need that. And it feels so much better. And I think there’s something about just being in your own experience, for me, that’s really helpful. There’s something about computer world and Internet world and social media and all of that, right? That pulls us from our center. It pulls us. And we’re comparing and contrasting and gossiping possibly and all of the things. And it’s just really not feeding our health, and I know that to be true for me.

So if I ever really just want to get back to myself and remember what I like about myself and how I feed my own growth, it’s not through a computer. It’s through the outdoors. It’s through nature. It’s through the sunshine. It’s through my children. It’s just real life. So anyway, I don’t know that that has a lot to do about what I’m going to talk about although maybe it does. Maybe it does actually. But I thought that would be fun to share.

So just quickly, too, I thought I would share a card that I pulled for February because it is the beginning of February here. And, of course, if you’re listening to this years later, well, you can just skip past this part. But I realized in the card pull that this podcast is also shaped on that. And I don’t find that surprising. I find that not coincidental. I find that to be synchronistic, right? That’s how things work. That’s how the world works. So I pulled this card February 1st, a couple days ago. And I’ve just been kind of sitting with it because I think the intention of even just pulling a card for a month and saying, “This is the theme, right? This is my theme for the month,” and then noticing where that happens and where it plays out. And I think just bringing our own attention to whatever the theme may be, of course, makes us notice more, right? It’s kind of like a hamster wheel effect.

So let’s see. I wrote it down. So the card I pulled from my tarot deck, the Light Seers, which is one of my favorites. So, again, the intention was for February. Just what is needed this month, what is needed in knowledge, what is needed in embodiment for myself and possibly others, if you’re listening and this resonates with you. So I just pulled one card. I like to keep it simple. And the card was the Six of Wands. So six is a cool number. It’s a more masculine, balanced number. And that might mean more to you in one way or another. And then wands is our spiritual growth for one. Fire is another. And the message of this card, at least in my own estimation via intuition and also consulting the card guide in the book or the book in the box, I should say, this is about sharing your brilliance. So, again, wands, fire, lighting the way, sharing your

brilliance with the overarching message, and I think this is so beautiful. And I think this is a direct quote from the actual book that comes with.

“No one else in the world has your magic.” I love that. I love that. And I think that is just beyond truth for me. I know I’m magic. I know I am. And I want to share to you—share with you today some of the ways that I think Indie Birth is different and how we’re magical and how we’re doing things and holding space for whatever in a very unique way. And, of course, that means the same for you. That means absolutely everyone whether I like them or not, whether I think they’re doing good work or not, doesn’t matter. Everyone in the world has magic. So I don’t know that I think—and this is opinion of course. I don’t know that I think we’re in a time necessarily where people are really connected with that. Maybe we are. Maybe the shit show that we’re seeing is actually magic, and it’s people coming to their own truth via way of freedoms being lost and all of this bullshit, right? Who knows?

But the fact remains that we are each magical. And sharing your brilliance, right? So that’s what I’m doing today. You could call it bragging. You could call it whatever. I’m choosing to say I want to share the brilliance that is Indie Birth today. I want to talk about it because why not? There are plenty of people all of the time that are maybe confused or possibly new or both. And so why not? And here is your opportunity in whatever way is true for you and whatever way you might kind of interact with the world or speak to the world to share your own brilliance. This is really a celebration of that. Me sharing what makes us different and unique is a nod to every single person out there and the brilliance you have to share.

That card felt great. It felt great to pull, and, like I’ve said, kind of sit with only a week into the month here, right? I’ll see how it manifests. But already I could tell you so many stories in the last week where it felt like, “Oh, yeah. I am remembering that.” Clients or potential clients come. Quite a large number of interviews here for me. But I don’t work with all of them. And not all of them want to work with me. Full transparency, right? And that also can feel weird, right? To just not have the right match sometimes can make us feel sometimes insecure or like, “Am I being too picky? Or what am I not doing,” or kind of getting down on yourself or being negative. And really this idea of sharing your brilliance is something I want to remember, and I want us to all remember this month and possibly longer.

What you offer to the world is nonnegotiable. And, again, what I’m going to share with you today it’s nonnegotiable. It doesn’t matter if people love it. It doesn’t matter if people hate it. My mentor, Donna Maria, had something to say along those lines. And I can’t directly quote her, but just kind of giving her credit for reminding me that this is

true. Like someone pays you a compliment, it's just a way of looking up to the Universe, to God, to whoever, whatever you think is bigger and just saying, "Hey, thanks." That comment, that compliment someone just paid me isn't really about me. It's about the fact that they see I am living my soul's path. That's what that is. It's not about me, Maryn, as the ego. It's that oh, they see that light in me. And the same when someone has something nasty to say perhaps, right? We also look up and say, "Thank you. Thank you for showing me that there is something special about me that not everybody likes." And I'm grateful for that. I'm grateful for the unique voice that I have. And you, possibly, can be grateful for the unique whatever, voice, or action, or method, or whatever you have brought to the world or will bring to the world. It doesn't matter. It just truly doesn't matter. So thanks to the Six of Wands for leading us in today to a podcast, a short one probably, about what makes Indie Birth different.

So as usual, this all comes from somewhere, right? It doesn't just come from within me in some opportune moment. It really comes from, usually, a certain number of places at the same time. And so these were some of the conversations I think synthesized that Margo and I had when she was here which was, of course, the best. It was the best. There is nothing like having your best friend around and especially when you're business partners. There is nothing like working in person. And I think we both realized how powerful that is. That online is great. We get a lot done. Whatever. But in person is really great.

So anyway, long story short, through a bunch of different conversational threads over the two weeks she was here, this came up a lot. Just what makes us different? And I think—and I won't lie. I won't lie. I think there is a tendency for women to shadow their brilliance, right? It's weird to be like, "Hey, I'm brilliant," right? We can even say it easier when we talk about other people. "Oh, she's brilliant. Or he's brilliant. Or that's a brilliant idea." But when it comes to sharing our own brilliance, we sometimes we shadow it because we don't want to be thought of as egotistical. We don't want to have these labels put on us. But, again, I'm here to say that it is perfectly fine to talk about what makes you unique. It doesn't mean you think you're better. It doesn't mean you think you're worse. If we could remove the comparisons from the conversation, it would simply be a way to school people—and I don't know that that's the best word. But help point them in the right direction, right?

So maybe that's you. Maybe you're new to Indie Birth. We have so many new people all of the time. Or maybe you're someone that's been around for awhile, but you're still like, "Oh, well, I don't know exactly what makes them different." We hear all of the time that people have us confused with other groups or teachings. And while that's all just innocent and fine, right? That happens. I thought it would be really fun to just be totally

honest and share our brilliance with you about what makes us different. So if you're new or confused or both, here is what I think makes us unique, Margo and I, and Indie Birth, which I think really is a bigger thing than either of us in a good way. I think it's a powerful force that we've created. I think we are both powerful, but we have created a powerful force and organization, which is Indie Birth. And this is the energy of that. And, of course, we're part of it.

So this is only for certain people. Not the podcast, per se. But it's not an invitation of convincing. That's not my energy around this. Like, "Oh, please. No. Like us better. We're cooler. We're whatever." Nope. Don't care. Yeah. I just—I don't care. This is about us. This isn't about anyone else. So if you have a question about, "Oh, well, does So-and-so do those things. Or So-and-so does those things. What are you talking about? That doesn't make us unique." Yeah. So be it. Go figure that out. I don't know. I don't know. And that's another thing is sharing your brilliance requires that you put your energy on your own brilliance. And I think there is definitely a time for calling out bullshit and things that we see in the world. But ultimately—and I know Margo agrees, 98, 99% of our time is spent focusing on us and what we do and how we can do it better. And that really is the honest truth. I won't say we don't occasionally hear things or maybe we get in a more negative space. And it's like frustration around whatever. Whatever it is that doesn't concern us. But my invitation to myself and something I've learned over the years that I need to do for my own emotional security essentially is to raise the vibration of whatever it is that kind of gets under my skin and say, "How can I elevate this? How can I elevate this conversation?" For myself. Because it really, really fucking sucks to sit in the negativity of things. And I decided I certainly wasn't going to do that today.

All right. So we're 20 minutes in. Some tea here. Clinky cup. The first thing that makes us unique is that we are midwives. This doesn't make us better or worse than anyone else. I don't think midwife is a label or a title or a role that should be elevated necessarily amongst people. I think it is in an important role. I think it is a very necessary archetype in the community. But it's not better. So whatever you identify as far as your role, it's great. There is no better. But I think we've gotten so far away from what midwife means that there are a lot of arguments around who is doing what. And then it starts to feel like this strange competition. So all I'm going to say is we are midwives. I don't know what other people are doing or what it means to them. But I know that I am a practicing midwife. I have been working in birth, actively, for—well, I've been in birth for 17 years. And I've been working as a midwife on my own in my own practice for 13 years.

So I'm not just embodying this word midwife as in, "We're all midwives. It's in our hearts." And I think that's true to a certain extent. I think all women have this deep connection to life. To life bearing. And life witnessing. But we are unique because we are actually out there doing it. We are actually out there doing it. And unless you know what that is, it's hard to even explain how that shapes your experience in life. Like I don't even know how to share that. It's humbling. It's educational. It's exhilarating. It's exhausting. It's so many things that I don't know that people that aren't attending births could possibly know about. That's all. So you couldn't know what you don't know. And if you're not actively taking care of women with them, of course, unless you're actively doing the work. So I don't just mean like showing up at a birth where the baby falls out and being like, "I'm a midwife." Totally. It's so fun when that happens.

But I'm talking about the hard longer road that has bumps in it over 15, 13, 17 years. So every single prenatal. Thousands and thousands of them. Every single postpartum. Again, thousands and thousands of them. Hundreds of home births. Occasionally, transports. Occasionally, cesareans. Occasionally, death. This is not something to be taken lightly. So that's where we are unique. We're not throwing this word around because we think birth is really groovy and beautiful although we do. We are actively assisting women in the childbearing year and probably beyond and probably before. And that is our definition of midwifery. The experience piece, I think, is huge. And again, it's not something everyone cares about, and that is also totally fine. I think if that's offered transparently people make the choices they do.

And I've had that thought myself. I mean just the other day tables were turned, and I felt kind of judged by someone who had worked with a midwife that has probably attended thousands of births. Alls to say that this person's birth didn't go very well. And I had to bite my tongue and say, "Hey, did all those thousands of births make that person a better midwife?" Maybe it did. But, of course, we know that that's not necessarily true. So believe me, I'm on both sides of it. Sometimes I'm the person with a lot of experience. Sometimes I'm the person with not a lot of experience. And that's just how it is in birth, right? That's always how it's going to be. There's always going to be someone with more and less. So it's just about being honest. And then the women can choose because, certainly as I just said, I don't know that I'd hire someone who had been to 5,000 births and had a lot of fear and had seen some really awful things. I think there is definitely an attractiveness to someone that's newer to practicing midwifery. They're probably not new to birth. But newer to practicing midwifery, you might still have kind of this naïve kind of glow about you which is attractive sometimes, again, when juxtaposed with perhaps a more fearful, negative bunch of experiences.

So I'm not saying that experience is everything. But I think having experience is something—yeah. Definitely something that makes us different. All of our courses, our school, our *13 Moons*, which is for pregnant women, our *Birth Warrior Project* which is doula training, every single woman we're interacting with is, for better or for worse, getting our experience as part of whatever it is we offer whether it's a suggestion or a video or a course or these 200 plus podcasts. You're on the receiving end of my experience. So I think that is something that people don't necessarily realize. And, again, I'm not here to say, "Well, So-and-so doesn't have, or this person isn't a midwife." You do that, if you're the one kind of looking and wanting to discern the differences. This is just my honest truth.

Another thing that makes us different, we are constantly looking within ourselves for the answers. I feel like it's been pretty transparent for people that listen to this podcast. And, of course, not everyone does. Not everyone will. Margo has different ways of communicating. But for me, I think it's clear that this is a really important piece to offering ourselves through Indie Birth to the world. It's really hard sometimes to face ourselves and to know that whatever we're experiencing is a creation of whatever. Our beliefs, our vibration. So in the end, the motivation for doing that work is simple. We can create even better stuff for you whether that's courses, in person stuff, retreats, and we can easily attract more likeminded women all over the world if we continue to look within. So I think Margo and I both naturally are attracted to that. And that's why we're best friends. I think it's a really special relationship, and this goes for all relationships. Jason and I are like this as well. That you're constantly pushing each other a little bit. Or maybe not constantly. A lot of the time. A lot of the time we're pushing each other a little bit to expand or to question.

And, again, it's simple. That makes us unique because it is something that totally shapes where we're going and all of the things out there that we offer. And if you're one of our courses, you know this first hand. We always start with that. We don't, in any course we have, jump right in to practical information or offering our experience ahead of your own centeredness, your own groundedness, your own reflection on where you came from, where you're going, what you want because only then can people integrate knowledge, right? Or experience of another person. I mean really. My experience means nothing to anyone without the piece of self reflection. So, again, we're hoping that in our continuing journey of doing that that it is inspired in you.

Also, because this isn't just about birth, and I do think that is something that makes us different. Yes. It's called Indie Birth. And if you go to our Instagram, you're going to see a ton of birth photos. But if you dig just a little deeper, if you are in our social—our free social community, you'll know that this is not just about birth. That we are all about

personal power, and we're also women. And life, hopefully, is long and has many varied phases. So yes. Birth is important. But personal power is really the ultimate goal. I'd say freedom as well. I think Indie Birth was started on a platform and a premise of true freedom, and I don't think that's changed. It's not a change to say that personal power is freedom. So I'm talking about legit power, and this is something maybe you want to sit with. Maybe you have questions about. I'm not sure how clear this will come out, but I've said this before. I'm going to say it again. Legit power, being in your own power whether you're a midwife, whether you're a birthing woman, whether you're a woman, whatever, is not empowerment.

Years ago when we started Indie Birth—and that is like 15 years ago—I always hated the word empowerment. And I never knew why. I didn't do any deep soul searching on it. And honestly, I was a completely different person back then. So I don't know. I don't know what it was I didn't like about it. I still don't think it's the correct word for what I'm talking about. Empowerment is kind of this ego based feeling that might pass through. Is that a good way of saying it? Maybe it doesn't pass through for everyone. I think it can be an ego based sort of superficial like, "I feel great. I feel ready to do this thing." And that's not bad. I think it's just reflecting on the difference between true power. So true power in your own physical body in the way it's reflected in your words, in your actions, in your ability to create in the world comes from a place of wisdom. And we all have wisdom. And I'm not sure that it is based on age. So I can't quantify anybody else's wisdom. I think I still have a long way to go.

In fact, Deva the other day told me, "Mom, you're getting old and wise." And I laughed. And I said, "Deva, that is the nicest thing anyone has ever said to me." Because yes. Of course, I'm getting older. And the fact that I'm getting wiser, Deva, is amazing. So we all have a long way to go on wisdom, I believe, but it is something that we do gather as we gather the pieces, right? The pieces to personal power as we see them, and we all have different pieces. But I think what I'm talking about, what makes us unique here at Indie Birth, is just this discussion. I don't think people are really going this deep or digging this deep necessarily, at least, at first glance. And I think this feels really authentic and right for us. And whether you're in our midwifery school, whether you want to be a midwife, again, whether you're a client we're working with, our hope for you is that you find and can express your legit power as a fucking badass woman. And this will be based again on your experience and your wisdom.

You do not achieve full power. And what is full power? You do not achieve this powerfulness in your life without experience and wisdom. So if you're missing those pieces, whether it's you're attending your births or you're putting yourself out there as someone that can teach about birth or offer wisdom, what goes around comes around, I

guess. I think when it's not based on a true wisdom of some kind it falls flat. So that is not something that we feel we're about. And, of course, that's something we're constantly always on. I don't think I'm in a full state of wisdom for sure, but I'm getting there according to Deva.

So another thing that makes us unique here at Indie Birth—and you may love this or hate this. Is I think we're just fucking honest. And I think that's great. I enjoy being honest. I think I've tamed that. I've refined that over the years. In my 20s, I was probably just as brutally honest, but yeah. It wasn't as refined and probably not as thoughtful and, admittedly, probably came from a place within me that needed some resolution as many 20 year olds might also experience. So anger is a great example of that. So it's not that I never get angry, but I think the fucking honesty that Margo and I both have is from a deep place within us. And without apology, so whatever we say, whatever we do isn't really about anyone else. It's about the fact that we deeply care about the future of midwifery, the future of birth, our freedoms. This isn't just about birth, right? I've stuck my neck out a couple of times as has Margo with this plandemic bunch of nonsense. And I'm not afraid to keep doing that, right? There's a time and a place to speak your truth and be honest without apology.

So, again, the motivation there isn't to instigate. It isn't to offend. It is to provide an example of honesty from our viewpoint at least and, hopefully, provide the opportunity for more women to find this place within themselves, to look a little bit deeper, and to figure out what their honest trust is because that's really all that matters. As long as we're not hurting anyone and, again, we're pure in our intentions of no. This is about shining our own brilliance. Then we're good.

Another thing that makes us totally unique in the world, especially of natural birth—which is quite a phrase. I don't think that's gotten any easier to understand over the years. But this is the belief that there is no right way or perfect recipe for pregnancy, birth, mothering, life. There is no right way. We do not teach a method. We do not teach a dogma. And we do not promise anyone anything. That is not our role. So you can reflect on that perhaps, but that is the honest truth. And anybody that knows all of my stories, which I am so transparent about—it always surprises me when—I don't know. Someone new finds our Instagram or whatever it is and says they have no idea who I am. “Oh my gosh. You have 9 children.” And I was like, “No. 10.” “Oh, 10. Where are their birth stories?” And I was like, “Oh, wow.” Of course, there are. What do I think? Everyone knows me. No. They don't. So it's always fun to just be humbled in that way and be like, “Oh, yeah. So all of my stories are out there.” Literally, I think every birth story that I have you can read.

And so you will see that isn't just me spouting off. "Oh, there is no right way. There is no right way." No. I've lived it. I've absolutely lived—as has Margo—that there isn't one way to do this. So pick a free birth. Pick a hospital birth. Pick a birth standing on your head. I don't care. Just follow your soul. And remember the other points shared. Be fucking honest with yourself. All of these things are also what we love to share in the spaces of working with clients and our students. But there isn't a right way, and it's just so absolutely ridiculous to act like there is. So yes. Natural birth. Great benefits, of course, to following our bodies, to listening to our hormones. But anybody that's going to connect with that wisdom and make choices from that places, they're going to do it. We're just the ones providing maybe the platform or the information that hits them at that time. But we're not promising anyone anything. That's absolutely impossible. So this is a free autonomous situation even for the clients we work with. Everything is just a recommendation.

And that's not said out of fear. It's not like, "Oh my gosh. I might get sued." Um, no. It's because I don't actually know what's best for you. I can share my experience. And I can share years of working with other women and a shit load of resources. But in the end, you have to choose what's right for you. And unless we hold space for women to really open that up for themselves and not feel like they need a label on anything, we're not going to have change. We're not going to have more powerful families. We're not going to have the generation that we're raising really change things either. So it's just so important that this gets through. We are not free birth. And I think if that's a new idea to you that we're not there are so many resources we have for you. We don't believe birth is absolutely the safest thing on the planet. We also don't believe it's a disaster. Birth is as it's meant to be. And as Harriette Hartigan would say, "Birth is as safe as life gets." There absolutely is no guarantee. And I think that raw honesty, again the fucking honest thing, isn't everybody's favorite. They're like, "Oh, man. That's fearful. I'm going to go where no one tells a story about anything going anything other than perfectly." And you know what? Hey, if that's what you need, totally go for it. But we're about honesty.

We are revolutionaries. So, again, shining our own brilliance here. I don't say that lightly, but I know, in my own stories, there has been things that have happened and challenged me that have allowed me the opportunity to do things differently. And that's what a revolutionary is. People that do things differently and keep going and blaze that new path. And I'm so both proud and humbled by the fact that I—I, little old me, have gotten the opportunity in this life to do some really cool things. So from starting a PMA, which is a Private Membership Association, over 10 years ago, being the first person probably—not the first person. The first midwife probably in the world to do that. To all kinds of cool things that we're doing now through Indie Birth that feel really light and

new. And, again, I don't know if anyone else is doing them. It's not really my concern. But it's feeling like, for Margo and I both, that we are closer to walking our souls' path. It sounds clichéd, but that is the goal. And it's something that I think we've both been led to do in a really radical way. And, again, radical meaning from the root. Radical is a cool word. I like it. But I don't know that that is the purpose. It's always just been doing things in a way that feels good to us. And we both happen to be on the more radical side of things, so that's the way it's expressed.

That said, at the same time, that I believe we are revolutionaries and a lot of what we have created through Indie Birth is indeed revolutionary, we are humble. We do not make birth safer. And we believe everyone has their own inner wisdom that they should follow. So, again, choices and freedom, not control and dogma. Choices and freedom. Choices and freedom. Choices and freedom.

Another cool thing that makes Indie Birth unique is the teaching that everything should be questioned. And this comes from my dear mentor, Carla Hartley, who is now in the spirit world but who was a mentor for me for many years as I went through her school. And so I totally want to give credit to her because I don't know when I would have come to this on my own. I think I would have. But I don't know when. So this idea that everything we're doing in life, in birth, should be questioned. And that doesn't mean we're questioning other people, per se. They are free to do what they want to do. But as far as our own life, our own practices as midwives whether we're pregnant women, everything should be questioned. Don't take anything for granted. Do not take anything for granted. And do not believe anyone. Do not believe anything I say. Do not believe anything that I teach you. Figure out if that's true for you. And weigh it with what you know.

So this idea that Carla passed on to me kind of snowballed for me over the years into intention. Being around everything in birth and my life as a midwife. And this is also a path of continued learning. So just this last week, I had written a post on Instagram. I've been on a role lately. I've been scheduling my posts. It's been so nice. But I wrote this post about cord cutting and how I've learned over the years. And where did I learn this? Probably from the families, honestly, that I've served. To never ask if someone wants to cut a cord. Honestly, that drives me fucking crazy when I hear people do that. And that could be said about a lot of things in birth. And, again, I'm still always refining my list of what can I have more intention around. So this is a huge way that Indie Birth is unique because I think there is too many catch alls out there. And, again, it's back to the dogma and such, right? Water birth is great. And it's like yeah. If you're just learning about birth, sure. Learn about water birth. It's beautiful. It's great. But when we get really intentional about it, is that what this person—is that what you want? And

then on the midwife side of it, how to do even less in whatever setting it is whether it's water birth or land birth. Kind of doesn't matter.

And so with this idea that everything matters, a lot of things don't matter in the best way, right? It doesn't matter where someone has their baby because it all matters. It all matters. It doesn't matter if it happens in a pool. But are we being really intentional about the energy she is surrounded with that we're bringing, right? Because we bring energy. We all do. And then every word that comes out of our mouth. Do we need to say that? Sometimes we learn in retrospect. Does the birthing woman really need us to say anything? Sometimes she does, right? But, again, that's where we're really drawing in what's needed, and we're questioning everything. And this is where experience does come in. So I know for me as a younger midwife I did less of that because I was more eager to be in that role and be the midwife. And there was probably lots of unnecessary talking and touching. And now, having birthed 10 of my own and, again, having been in birth for so long, my challenge is always how to do less but be more, in a sense. To be more support but to do less. And I think this is a really unique perspective that Margo and I both hold, and we're always trying to go further with because it's not something that a lot of people talk about. It's nuance. It's nuance.

And I think that's something about Indie Birth that is unique that gets lost, right? Because nuance gets lost. People just want the bang. They want the shock. They want the controversy even in birth. It's so true. We always joke with our Instagram profile. They want the vaginas. They want the butt holes. They want that. And, of course, by they, I mean the mainstream. I think there are so many women out there who are into this detail, who are really desiring this almost soul calling. Not to Indie Birth, per se. But this kind of perspective. This kind of work. And I know because we hear that all of the time as well. So for as much as the nuance is lost on so many, it's also totally right for, as always, the people that are ready for it. So I think that is a very unique thing, and something I'm really humbled to have come across as something that I know is something I'm supposed to share. It's not mine, but I'm here to share it.

So we also teach from experience, right? So everything should be questioned. Intention is everything. We teach from our experience, and we give credit where credit is due. And that's something, I think, isn't happening everywhere, but that's okay because no one invented birth. No one invented a lot of these things, and it's not about that. It's just about, "Hey, where did you learn that," and giving credit where credit is due. So Carla Hartley, great example. Another great example is this abundance project that I offer to some of the women here in Kentucky is based on *The Gift Economy* by Charles Eisenstein, and I have said his name—oh my gosh. Probably the most of anybody on my podcast as far as giving credit. I didn't come up with gift economy. I did

come up with my version called The Abundance Project with credit to Charles Eisenstein.

And this is happening all the time in the world, in birth. And I think the advent of social media and just onlineness of life has people not giving credit. And does anybody remember—I mean I'm 44. But does anybody remember when there weren't computers and you couldn't just—I imagine what students do now is just cut and paste and sometimes attribute it to themselves, right? That's a thing that schools probably have a problem with nowadays because of the accessibility of other people's words and other people's information out there. It, easily, can just become someone else's. And so you really just have to be accountable to yourself, in a sense. I mean unless you get caught which really would be silly and suck. It happens. And it's happening in birth. And, again, when we're borrowing ideas, another great example is Susun Weed. We've talked about her so much. Not personally. And I don't want to get into that personally. But Susun Weed, as far as her work. Her work is brilliant. And without the six steps of healing, without her wise woman, and her spiral, a lot of the work we have done wouldn't be there because we built it on that. So full props to Susun Weed for that.

And I think, again, this is something that makes us so different. That we didn't come up with it, but we learned from other people. And we're teaching people every day. So please. Give credit where credit is due. And even if it's not credit, be like, "Hey, I heard this really cool thing this person said. I don't know where she got it, but let's talk about it." Or, "Hey, this midwife had this experience. And that's where I heard this story." There is really just this lack of integrity sometimes—well, in the world. But I do see it in the birth world, and I hold myself, honest to goodness, to an even higher standard of integrity every time I hear something that kind of rubs me the wrong way. That it's only my job to have integrity with the work I'm doing. But here is me saying that I think that's a great thing about us.

We are more than you see everywhere. That's kind of getting more to this authenticity point. We are more than what you see on social media obviously. We are full people. We have lives. And I feel like—I'll just speak for myself here. I am pretty open about most things. So what you see is what you get. And I guess you can choose to believe that or not. But everything you see or hear about me is real, and I welcome questions. I'm not say I would necessarily answer any question. But this is something I say to my clients too. Is like, "I'm an open book. If you have something you want to know, just ask me because there's all kinds of things that the Internet says about all kinds of people." So I'm, for one—or I, for one, never believe anything I read. And that comes from personal experience because Internet is not always the nicest place. So I think that is something that makes us unique. We're just down to earth women. We do stupid

things. We get angry. We have really bad days. All of it. This is just the way it is. We're not celebrities. And that's the real version right here.

So another thing, I think, that makes us unique is just this authenticity. And I know, for me, that's always been really important. And I don't know why per se. I don't know. I'm like have I had experiences where I haven't felt authentic. I've asked myself this many times. I don't know. I don't know if it's a past life thing. This need to speak clearly and honestly. Or I'm an Enneagram 4, and we really just love authenticity. And it feels really good to find our authentic selves. So there's all kinds of things I could go about explaining it. But all I'll say is speaking my truth is what makes my soul alive. And, again, it doesn't have to be your truth. You don't have to like it. But that's why I'm here. And I think Margo is quite good at it as well in her own ways. And that's just the way Indie Birth is. What you see is what you get. We are accessible. We are people. And we're not for everyone at the same time. And I think even that is something that makes us unique because that's authentic. It's authentic to say, "This isn't for everyone. You might be in the wrong place."

I've said this before, but I learned from my dear midwife mentor, Diane, years ago. And she is a midwife for a very long time. And she was many years ago a midwife for a very long time. And she always gave out other names of midwives. And she taught me that. And I can't say there are too many midwives out there that do that. They all act like they're the only midwife in the world. And now, of course, people can Google things, so it's sort of silly. But just this idea that, "Hey, this is about choices. And I am not the only person for you." Or, "I mean I am the person for you, if I am. But I'm not the only person. So please do due diligence, and do your research." And whether it's a midwifery school or a doula training or an in person midwife, please do your research and feel what feels right for you. And that is so important to me. That is so important to me. And if I could somehow make—I mean I won't really want to make people. But if I could make other women, other birthing women, figure that out for themselves, I feel like I would have sort of no complaint in the birth world. I would have no complaints about the birth keepers and the people calling themselves midwives when they're not or the OBs or whatever run of the mill complaint of the day that I might have. I wouldn't because I would just so understand that women were coming from this space of really, really following their hearts. I think we have some work to do. But I do think things are improving.

So last, but not least I don't think, something that makes us unique here is that we really super love this work. I hope that's clear. We have really been humbled and excited and have so much gratitude for the financial success that Indie Birth has brought us thus far, and we're calling more of it in because—hey, money is awesome. And we'd love to

open a birth retreat center and all kinds of things. So money is not evil. Making money through birth work is not evil. On the other hand, that is not why we do this work. So that might sound confusing to some. But my belief has always been that if I followed my heart, if I followed my soul, money would easily come, and so it has. And that took a long while to manifest. And I feel really privileged as well to be able to say that. Even my husband. I think stereotypically and in real life guys, for example, don't always get that freedom. They feel pressured to provide for their families and all of that good stuff. And so they just do what's necessary. I think it's harder for guys and just for some people in general to not feel the pressure and be able to really follow their hearts and see what happens. Just see what happens. So I'm really lucky. I'm really, really lucky. I'm really grateful that I have been able to follow my heart all of these years. That my husband, my support, my friends, all of it have been the type to hold space for—yes. Yes. You can do it. And following your truth is absolutely the way you should go.

Oh, man. Ultimately, I know, for me—and I am going to speak for Margo here. I know that Indie Birth is our baby. This is one of our children. It's kind of weird, but it is. And it means so much to us to grow this community, to grow our school, to watch it blossom in the world in all of the beautiful ways it has and will. And we, ultimately, want progress. We want more freedom. We want reform in midwifery. We want reform in life. And we want this new paradigm that we are so lovingly, I think, creating and holding space for every single day. That's what it's about. That's what Indie Birth is about. That is the ultimate creative energy behind everything you see. Absolutely everything you see from our newsletters to our posts to our school. This is the creative force. And I think that is why it's been so resonant and so successful over the years.

Thanks for listening to me share our brilliance today. I'd love to hear from you with any or all thoughts you have. You can always email me at maryn@indiebirth.org. Have a great week everybody.

(closing music)