

An Intimate Retelling of the Indie Birth Story from the Answering the Call to Radical Midwifery Retreat

Hey, we have a very different sort of episode today for you. Where you get to listen in on a portion of our answering the call to radical midwifery retreat that we did in April, 2022. We are talking about the Indie Birth story and it's a really intimate, retelling conversational style. Experience that you're about.

To hear where we share. All kinds of really cool stories and. Ideas and details about who we are and what has brought us here to this point. We are offering this again in October of 2022. And we have some spots available for that. If. You want to come join us? For conversations like this, and so many other really important, crucial conversations for women who are considering becoming a midwife.

You can learn more at indiebirthmidwiferyschool.org/answeringthecall.

I apprenticed in Chicago, Illinois, and the midwife I hired for my own birth was in underground midwife.

I couldn't even get any names, but I was due to have. Got her name, chose her over a CNM because it just felt right. I didn't know anything about anything. Had a great birth, became an apprentice to another underground midwife and worked with her for a couple of years. At one point, she got a cease and desist from the state of Illinois had her house searched and she carried Pitocin and stuff and they took all of her stuff and that was a thing.

So then we moved, all of us, the midwife and my family into Ohio. We were in Indiana and I continued to work with her. She got another season distance from the state of Ohio left the country completely and has been a registered midwife in Canada. Yeah, she was a CPM. She had been working on it as I was a student.

So that was pretty traumatizing. And we had one birth in particular where the baby died and that set off the one seasoned assessed and that, still makes me

feel emotional on some days, right? Like I remember the baby's name and all of the things, but the feeling was just a fear. And I don't remember having a lot of discussions with the midwife, but she was in her own process around it.

And like all of us, have our complete own path for a while. So she had different reasons. She had reasons for this happening in her life. Even though to me, it just seems random or oh, it's because she's an underground midwife. And now I know having walked a similar path, like no, like we invite these things in and we can use them to grow or not.

But at the time it was just like, oh my God, that's random. And it must be because we're in Illinois and it must be because she doesn't have a license. And so we moved to Arizona, she moved to Canada. We laughed. And I haven't really talked to her since, by the way, she just shut down and is like a medical midwife now, which is so shocking because everything that's like nearest to my heart about midwifery that I learned was from her.

And, but maybe she loves it. Like I have no idea. We moved to Arizona because I thought I need to get a license that was horrifying. I don't ever want my kids to see our house being searched. So it was so fear-based, but I didn't see it that way. I was like, oh, this is just the solution. So I got another apprenticeship in Arizona and that midwife was very medicalized, but funny enough, hadn't been licensed for many years.

And then as I was coming on, as a student had chosen to get licensed. So it was like the opposite side of the coin. And she did everything just like by the book. It was obviously scared of being reprimanded by the state, even though she took on VBACs and things we weren't allowed to do. So it was like this weird version of it.

So I saw that and learned, just like the way licensed midwives, try to make it work for them. And I got a license and that took a lot of years. It was very hard in the state of Arizona at the time. The CPM is now equivocal. You know what that means, but the CPM was separate at the time.

And the licensing test was like probably the hardest in any state. I think it was like an eight hour skills test by myself and you know what? I totally rocked it. I did the best of anyone that had ever taken the test. They were just like, oh my

God, I practice for hours and hours like recording newborn exams, doing everything.

And, did it as perfectly as I could. And I was really proud about that. It was really cool. I got the letter that gave me a number. I was licensed number 1 59 or something. And in Sedona, there wasn't a licensed midwife. So the midwife I had worked with, even though she had been there, she moved down to Phoenix.

So it was like mine. And I was so naive, really excited about that. I remember calling up a doctor's office in the area and seeing hi, I'm a local midwife. If they'd love to meet you and. The secretary said we don't support midwives and hung up the phone. And I was like, oh, okay. Another like side little story, the local paper somehow was like, oh, we want to like, have a story about you.

You're like the midwife here. And they did that. And now I realize in hindsight, but it alerted the doctors and the community. Which again, like it was all perfect, but that's how it went down. And this is all over the course of a year. So I was pretty newly licensed. I took on a woman that had this area, which was prohibited care for a home birth.

And I remember meeting her, talking on the phone and I really liked her. She was around the block for me. And my feeling was just like, why doesn't this woman deserve a home birth? Like everybody else. So it turned out to be a really complicated birth, if you recall.

I'm like, that's such a weird part of the story.

Like I wasn't with you for the, I started apprenticing when that woman was like probably 30 weeks pregnant or something. So I didn't meet her until like you'd already started seeing her. And when I came in as a totally green apprentice with zero experience I think her birth was, I think the third one that I attended.

Yeah, again, in hindsight would I have taken on someone like that? Nothing to do with the VBAC, but just this woman herself? No, probably not, but that's where I was. And so I did and get her birth.

Like she's not the title of client you would work.

Yeah, I don't think she was taking full responsibility. I think she wanted someone to save her and make it okay. I don't think she was completely convinced she even wanted to be back. So those were the reasons why now I would not have answered into that, but I really liked her personally and we had a good relationship and we continued to well through this, so that wasn't a problem, but the birth was just weird.

In fact, she was like going to just go to the hospital. If she was like 42 something weeks, there was no labor in sight. And on her way to the hospital, she went into labor. And came home and it was just like a first birth that was really long. And at one point she said, I don't think this, I think something is wrong with her words.

And I said, okay absolutely, you should go to the hospital. And so she did, she had another C-section because the hospitals don't do VBACs and the doctor there just questioned her parents in the waiting room and wanted to know who the midwife was. Filed an anonymous report online. So lesson learned there when you're licensed, you're fully just like open and accessible.

Any person walking down the street can file a report about you and not even leave a name. So through the whole legal battle, I never saw that it was, I never saw the reports. They wouldn't even show them to me. So he filed one then, and then. A couple months later, like I had another transport anytime I had a transport, which they were reasonable transport, there was nothing wrong.

There were women that needed to go to the hospital. Like one woman had preterm labor. And so they would just file a report every time to transport someone. So the licensing board, called me and it became this huge investigation. It was administrative not currently. But it was horrible. The person that ran the department, actually, I know this is harsh, but I think he's dead now.

He was like an absolutely evil man. And he didn't know anything about midwives, cosmetology and midwifery were the same guy running the departments or like you're, I'm like auditory, geology. Yeah. It was like, they knew nothing. Hearing aids. Yeah, it was completely unrelated. He had no idea.

He was just following orders. And I guess another take home is like the medical board is always going to win when they're investigating a midwife. Like you have

no fighting chance. You never will. So all, and then non-US report and then I'm on the defensive to prove what? So they tried to give me an out many times they were like maybe she didn't pay you.

Or maybe you didn't know. Just lie already because we don't want to have to deal with us. And I was like Nope. She deserves hope. And I was her midwife and I don't apologize at all. And it was like, oh boy. And then they just ran with it and everything became a problem. And they started that.

They subpoenaed me for all my records and I just basically gave them the finger. I had a lawyer, but I was like, absolutely not. I remember this is so ridiculous. The phrase they used was we want all your past present and future, yeah. For every client. And I had clients like the community was so supportive they raised money for me. Everybody knew what was going on and this woman and her baby were totally supportive and they were like, there was nothing wrong except the rules have been followed.

Yeah, the ed clients were writing letters saying leave our midwife alone. And every time they got a name from a, the woman would sign her name. They subpoenaed me for her record. Oh yeah. Wow. Yeah. It was like so wrong in every way. And to think they get away with this kind of stuff. And everything.

So I stupidly said submitted some records for the women, like the C section lady, the VBAC lady. And then that was just even worse. So don't ever do that. Don't ever give anyone your records, you will never ever win. I don't care how you chart. It does not matter. So they took my records and they went through them and they were like, you didn't take her weight on this day.

You didn't take her weight on that date. Fine. Fine fine. Fine. Oh, in the meantime, being like, we're just going to take your license. And so the law, the lawyer had been hired to fight for the license, which in the end became very confusing to them when you told them to forget it. But this went on for several years.

So the meantime I was practicing, I was taking on clients. I never knew if in the next week I would still be doing this, but at a certain point I just kept going and I would tell people, when they came, I'd be like, this is happening. If you don't want to work with me, it's totally. And people didn't have a problem with it.

They were like, oh yeah, whatever. But yeah I stopped transferring to that hospital, which funny enough is where Rumi was born. So it came full circle. And I was just naive. I was a new midwife. I didn't know. I didn't have any mentors. I didn't have any elders. If I had known, I would have just transferred to the hospital up north and never had a problem.

So it was supposed to go this way is the point it was supposed to go there. And before I got the license, I knew that it wasn't right for me. And I hired a lawyer. Then I heard a lawyer before I got a license because they wouldn't give me the testing opportunity. They told me they didn't have money in the budget.

And I was like, I've been training to be a midwife for five years now. So you're going to let me take the test, the signs were there. And I remember doing like a ceremony in my. Around this and I, like this path is going to be clear to getting this license. Yeah, totally worked.

I didn't hate the signs, but again, all perfect. But all to say that it wasn't something I really believed in. I just thought that's what I had to do. And then as I learned more as I got into this, my eyes were opened and I was like, oh my gosh. Like the state is like in the bedroom with these women and these midwives.

And I couldn't believe that I had agreed to it. I didn't know, like they didn't really tell me. It was my responsibility to know, but I didn't know. And I see that midwives now still don't know, and they may have been practicing 20 years, but it's it hasn't clicked that every time they send people's paperwork off, like they're allowing that to happen and they don't tell their clients.

They're like, oh, when you hire a licensed midwife, by the way, all of your information goes to. I've never heard of midwife say that quarterly reports. I would have people that didn't want a birth certificate. Okay. If you don't want a birth certificate, I better not file a quarterly report, so you start like going crazy in your brain to make sure it's exhausting. It's exhausting. So I'm so glad. That it was so clear for me to know do I want to go this way or don't want to go this way? It wasn't clear for a while. It became clear. And I wasn't confused as to what they were really doing.

And as many of I had true, which is what that painting is of. That's my maybe true. He was our sixth baby and I always call it a free birth and that's no offense to Mario. Margo was like a brand new student.

It was a free. Like in the sense of, I was very deliberately not wanting any of the midwives to attend my birth. And some of them were friends, I hadn't met my friends and I was just like, oh my gosh. Now that I'm wise. So there's as a mother, I want nowhere near this care. I didn't want them submitting my information or like looking at their watch or worrying about, I had experienced that already with my fourth birth of licensed midwifery.

Like fucking everything up again. Good story. But yeah, I'm so grateful. So at the end of it, two years, Tru was born and his birth, like birth tends to do maybe a completely new person and it came out of his birth and I was just like, fuck that. I do not want it. And if I never go to another birth, I guess that's the way it's supposed to be.

And I was super sad about that. Of course. Months of tears. And so angry in that way. And I don't feel that way anymore, but just but this would be so hard. And how is it this hard? And so after he was born, I called the lawyers and I was like, I'm just done. I don't want to, I don't want it anymore.

And they got mad at me. They were like that's what you hired us for. Too bad. I don't want to anymore. And you've done a really shitty job actually, but the state of Arizona wanted to settle. And to this day they've never taken anyone's license and they'd gone absolutely crazy on midwives since then, they are always finding somebody there's a couple of midwives that have taken them to court.

Like it is a shit show, right?

The midwives allow it. They're a part of that and there's all kinds of ridiculous rules, if a woman miscarries, she's no longer your client, so you can't help her. If a woman bleeds postpartum and she goes to the hospital, she's done, she's not your client anymore. You can't take care of her like vaginal exams and labor they're required by law.

There's all kinds of things that they've gotten really crazy. Yeah. Yeah. They tried to settle it. They were like, oh, you can keep your license. And it was like, oh,

you have to take another midwife to birth with you. And I didn't have any other midwives near me and I didn't want them at birth with me.

And I just, yeah. I don't think it was ego. Like for a moment. It was where I was like, no way, no way, but then really deep down, I was like, no way, because I don't want this thing. Why would I do this? I'm just going to wind up in the same situation again. And I guess that's like the energy.

Of who we are coming through. Like we're either true to ourselves and we're aligned. And when we're not not to say like bad things happen, like the right things happen to show us that we're not in alignment with ourselves. So that was the lesson. It was very gratefully received. At some point later, I did find out about PMAs and started working that way.

And I'm not going to keep going, but. And even that, there was a lot of process. We moved to Minnesota with Margo together and we moved back to Arizona. There was a lot of trying to like shift and figure out how to do it in what felt like a new way and to not do it with fear. And for a while, that was really a challenge.

I remember being at one birth in particular where I didn't have a license in Arizona soon after, and I was scared. And at that moment, I remember this woman. I remember looking at her and being scared and being like, oh my God, If this is the way it's going to be for me, I just can't do it. So to encourage you in a sense, like there's, there's all kinds of like roadblocks sometimes and ways to grow and it's not just like putting your blinders on or practicing underground, maybe works for some people, but I was pretty sure that wasn't going to work for me.

I was there another 10 years and never had a problem with. It was completely out in the open and more so than I ever had bad, but I think they knew better. I think they knew better than to even try.

And we all have different versions of that fear, but I lived my version and now I can say that was absolutely worth it. Like I'm not dead. I'm here. So what's the worst that can happen. What do we really fear? It's we fear our own mortality. That's what we're really talking about.

We're untouched. On a soul level. So I know that starts to get out there, but that's where I have to be for me to do this work. Yeah.

So it's, 20 years ago, it might've been weird. To say oh, I don't have a license. And then you have to explain that nowadays people are like, oh my God. Yes, please. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. I think your story is what showed me too, like licensure and things like that, do not protect you from prosecution.

And almost like you said, put you more insight of things. Technically speaking, like in Arizona, once you're not licensed the. Board of licensing has no jurisdiction over you. Yeah. Not to say a cop couldn't show up at your door, but they're only responsible for the people that have paid them money for them to be responsible too.

There, there are other people in Arizona, of course, that have been on license for many years and they're always trying to get their names and all that stupid shit. It's just a game and I wish more people knew that. I had a friend years ago. I don't remember what state she was licensed in, but she was criminally charged.

It was a surprise breach, birth, everything wound up fine. New Mexico was, yeah, I think you're right. I made friends with a lot of midwives over the years, not so much anymore, but when I was going through all that, like we had a club on Facebook for all the midwives around the world that had been persecuted or prosecuted and, maybe a sad group now that I look back.

But most of them were licensed in fact, 98% of the more.

If you're in our course or beginners guide to radical midwifery, you probably know this, but making midwives legal is a really awesome book.

I would recommend everybody reading and yeah, it's just a really good book. The guy that wrote it actually uses Arizona as a case study, nothing to do with me. Licensed vendor for you versus not. And he came at it really open. He didn't know anything about birth and what his conclusions were about, the risks and benefits of all of it and the harmful direction that, that is, has taken women in birth.

What other activity, like what other, like with guys, like what could possibly happen with their body? That would be right? Yeah. That there would be like 12 pages of rules on, it would never happen. So just like that simple fact, when I shared that at free workshops, I think gets a lot of people's like attention at least oh yeah.

Why would anyone care? What's going on in my house or who I hire to sit there. It's really crazy. Really crazy. Okay, I'm done. No, you don't have to be done. I was just going to say, I feel like there's this other piece now, too, because there's the licensed not licensed and like your stories that like such a cool illustration of all of that.

And then and I don't have to do a there's not really a story necessarily that I have, but just sharing a little bit about my experience coming in. I had never planned to have a license. I'm an avid. That's my background like anarchist political organizing is what I was doing with my life before midwifery.

And so I came into this being like, that's just not for me. And Marin was like that's cool, fine. Like not a big deal. Which is a miracle in itself that I like asked the right person for an apprenticeship, because if I hadn't talked to any of the other midwives in the area, then. Yeah, we are not going to help you because that's crazy.

And not to interrupt, but it was still beneficial for me. What are the chances that I would eventually be going through this and have a student that would be supportive? Because I think a lot of students would have been like I'm out of here. That was bad. Yeah. Yeah. It's like totally amazing.

And serendipitous. Like I literally the so started apprenticing with Marin January 1st, 2011, like new year's day. That fall semester. I had done a semester of graduate school. My first semester of grad school, where I was studying criminology, applied criminology and my papers and my focus that semester had been on the criminalization of 'cause I realized oh, I think I want to do that. And so I was doing domestic violence policy work prior to that. And so I was like, I think I want to shift gears. I want to get into birth. Women's I have a women's and gender studies degree. I knew I wanted to do something with women. And so I thought that was a really interesting area.

And I knew I didn't want to be licensed. So I was like, what has happened around like law and birth law and the Witchery. So like literally with studying this and the third birth I went to, I think Marin would know, I think that woman was due in February and had her baby in March. So I started in January, went to this birth in March where all this started crazy, right?

What are the odds? And I'm a 22 year old, like who's totally new to all of this. I had never had a baby, nothing. So anyways, fast forward, I wasn't planning on getting a license. I did play around with the idea of getting a CPS. My, my CPM AC, whatever you want to come hide over, you want to say that becoming a CPM to the point where I did all the paperwork, I had, I think, five more births, because a bunch of didn't count with Marin that first year she was too newly licensed.

Does that make sense to like red tape BS? I had a number of bursts. I needed to be a CPM, but some didn't count anyway, so I was five short. And that was when I ended up moving to Minnesota. Again. The second time I went with Mary and the first time. And then moved back with her to Arizona. And then I moved back to Minnesota again for a bunch of reasons.

Family's there, it's where I'm from. I really love the area, but one of the perks was that volunteer licensure is voluntary in Minnesota for midwives. You don't have to have one. You can have one if you want. Wow. Yeah. Is there a list or something we're not? Yes, totally. And this is the kind of thing we're happy to mentor you with.

And again, I don't want to get caught up on the logistics cause wait for my point. So I am there, it is explicitly legal. The other state is Utah. There's Minnesota and Utah. I live on of, in Nevada. Yes. And there's others that are like a legal, I don't know that it's expensive. There's a long list of places.

Or the promised land of midwifery. It's so Minnesota happened to be one of them. And my family's from, I was born there. So it felt okay. Yeah, like that's where we're going next. We got priced out of Sedona. Couldn't find a house for my little growing family. So my point though, is I arrived there.

I didn't have the CPM, even though I was technically like, I'd been given the blessing by Marin and other like elder midwives, yeah, you're totally right. I had

the numbers. I had studied my ass off. And I had explicit permission from the state, to do this, even if I wasn't licensed. So I had those things and I still wasn't sure if I was ready, I was scared.

And I was scared what people would say there wasn't another unlicensed midwife in my area. But I did it anyways. So I was like very brave and did my workshops and put myself out. And started attending births. But my point is that even when we have this like promised land and explicit permission, there's an inside job that has to happen.

And I think a word or a phrase that came to mind as you were talking about it too, is like, there's this trial and error that has, as part of this, figuring it out for yourself. So while we have like our stories to share, like yours will be doing. And just trusting that you will figure it out or you won't.

And that was the same thing I felt. It was like, if I can't go to a birth without feeling scared and I just shouldn't go, like I should go work at PetSmart, it'll be sad. I'll try a lot about it. There's even like Facebook posts I had made right after I moved there being like, I don't know what I'm going to do.

Like I'm not ready. And I can't find someone here to help me finish my last five versus. There was there's this Ooh, and then another myth, maybe, I guess I'll tell them it's a short story. There was another unlicensed midwife who I connected with and she asked me to be her backup for a birth that fall after I moved there in 2016.

And I said, yes, and she was going to a conference and the mom was going to be like 38 weeks or something and she had other babies. So it was like, she's not going to have her baby that weekend. I'm going. But will you be my backup just in case and her? And I said, yeah, and she lived like an hour and a half away.

So that was the first birthday attended in Minnesota. And I was on the way driving. It was like an hour apple took time crazy. What am I the middle of the night? I didn't have an assistance. I had a doula who was there as like my assistant who had maybe never been to a home birth. And like barely knew this woman I'd met her one time.

Her name was Rachel, bless her heart. And she had this like really very birth. All right. I guess I'm doing it. Baptism by fire. Totally. And there's, we're not saying you have to like fully, like there is no fully ready, and we can talk about apprenticeship later. Yes, there are things we should do to prepare to be a good way.

But around this like law piece is so deeply ingrained. And I wrote an article about a couple years ago that we'll share in the group too. It's called the police officer inside my head. And it was about like realizing, even a little ways into practicing as a midwife in Minnesota. There was still this thing in my own head.

This was not someone else. This was my. Policing myself. And so my mantra for a while had to be like, I'm not doing anything wrong. Like I am being of service to women who want my service. And so that shift, I think in energy, again, not to sound like totally woo or whatever, but I guess, yes. I think is really protective, but I had to believe it myself and I didn't fully believe it.

Even as someone who came in knowing I didn't want to know. Just thing. So it's a process to really uncover a lot of this garbage that has been put in with we've allowed in maybe as children past lives, whatever, and okay here we are. And it's what do I really believe? And so for me, it was a process of having to actually do it and go to these birds and face that fear and sit with the question around can I keep doing this?

Should I keep doing this? How does it feel? What does it bring up? And then. Yeah, working on those beliefs, little by little, it wasn't like an instantaneous download, and having people like-minded people to look to and mentor me was so helpful. And now I can say I'm at a place where, when I was, we were just talking about this morning, like when Rumi was born, like you said so full circle for you and being there in the same house.

Where that horrible doctor screamed at you and then with coming in with the VBAC mom, right? Or no, it was the other one was the other one that, where the, yeah, it was horrible and just horrible many times. And then also for me, I remember there being a flash while we were going to the hospital and on the phone being like, how honest do I be when I call?

And I was like, I'm her friend and I'm. And I just remember feeling like I don't have any fear about saying that even though it is a felony to, to be a midwife in Arizona, to practice as a midwife, without a license. And I just was like, I'm not scared. And but that was not overnight. And that doesn't mean I'm not scared sometimes, but I felt like that was a really pivotal moment for me.

And people have asked me that oh, like you're going to burst and Kentucky with Marin, like you're not licensed. They're like, what is this. What does Kentucky like? And I was like, I don't care. I don't know. I don't care anymore. And so that's where but like I said, it's not an overnight thing.

It's not an all the time thing that I feel that way. But most of the time, when you really finally sit in your truth and you're like, I am a midwife, like nobody can tell me I'm. And what do I do with that? It doesn't mean I have to go to every birth or for it's happening on the street, but you have to be their midwife.

Or put yourself in situations that do feel Beatrice or reckless. That's not what I mean. So hopefully some of that's coming through someone in attendance asked us what happens when we maybe don't feel like the fit is right with a client or potential client. How we handle that and how it looks. One lady, she was man, just so complicated and she wasn't easy to work with.

She didn't want suggestions. She didn't want to work on nutrition. I was also pregnant at the same time. It was required that she come to a first time moms birth class. And so I have requirements of people if they want to work with me. Like we all have ways we need to be in a relationship and she didn't show three times, three times.

And on the third. That was all. And, I was annoyed for sure. And it was more just Hey, this is not the right match. If you're not feeling like what I think is important and that's all good. So yeah, she ended up, I think having a free birth, then I think how to find birth.

And, I remember and not say this always happens, but like 90% of the people that I've had that happened with come back and they say thank you. Like you saw something I didn't see. And that was really hard maybe for where I was in my pregnancy. But like I see now why you chose to do that?

And I'm super grateful cause I had a great birth or like another lady, one more short story. Really like to this woman she's super young, cute and everything was going great until one day for a prenatal. She brought her partner. Oh, I have never. I don't want to say boy, he was not a man. I have never met anyone like this.

And I still don't quite know what was going on. Was he on drugs? What was going on? But he was rude. He was beyond rude, everything that I said he had something to say about down to, she was asking about suturing did I suture and blah, blah, blah. He stepped in and said, I'm sewed up animals before I can do it.

And the guy was like off his rocker. And he was totally disrespectful to her. And the dynamic was like almost abusive or something. And anyway, like I have compassion for that, but I could not, I absolutely my eye, that was it. And so she did not take that well, but she's one that in hindsight, chorus kicked his ass on the curb.

And at that point wrote me an Instagram message and was like, I don't know if you remember me, but I totally get it. And he was. He was not helpful at the birth, by the way. He was awful. And we're separated now. And here's a picture of my cute baby. Anyway, so not I don't know, that might sound awful, but it just, I could not yeah.

Yeah, there was a lady here even. I'm not been here that long, but it happened here in the fall. She just didn't meet any of the requirements that I had and came on late to begin with.

So I only had whatever, six weeks with her and she didn't meet one thing. And then the last straw was like, she didn't show up to an appointment. And so I was like done, but for her, it was like super. Like professional and formal, like I typed out all the breaches of contract and it was just like, I'm done.

I'm not your midwife anymore. Never heard from her again. So you keep it more as far as like reasons why or whatever, which of course there could be so many. It sounds like you keep it more like to what you factual is good. It feels we, most of us, most of us know how it is to be pregnant.

Even if you don't, if you've worked with pregnant women, like they're super emotional. And they take things and sometimes run with them because they're really open. And yeah, I've had experience where I haven't been as clear about why, and that's been stickier and I've regretted doing that.

So since then, I've been like, Contracts are really easy way. So contract for me, isn't legal in that sense. It's so that this human knows and we both know what we've agreed to. And then that's a really easy place to go back to and say you signed your name to this. And I take that super seriously.

I'm doing my best to meet my half of the bargain. Totally. Yeah.

I have a refund policy in there. So I'll just mail them a check or, honestly, in most cases they owe me money,

The next question we got was. Essentially. If there were an opportunity to get involved with lawmaking in your state. Around midwifery. And trying to create a law that somehow would be a quote unquote, good law. Would you put your energy in that direction and try to be a part of that there doesn't need to be a law. My advice, if someone felt really strongly about being involved with lawmaking would be to look at the Minnesota model, which like somehow these oh my God,

No no regulated state is. Backwards.

She wrote to me being like, oh my God, Murdo in Iowa. They're trying to push for licensure right now. It's eight legal as well. There's a burgeoning, happy, wonderful culture.

There's a lot of Amish people. There's no need for licensing.

Whose idea is this?

So bizarre. It's just oh, they're really like push it hard. And what do you think? Do you have any advice? And I'm like, I don't know why you're and I'm not like really that interested.

I was like, who do you want me to send one of our books to I'll send as many copies of. As you want, so they can read this and be like, oh, this is stupid. We are setting ourselves up for just like headaches down the road when right now, like they're not being charged and they're not being like there.

They just think that it's going to be better. Or maybe there are occasional times that it's coming up, but it's then you should all band together. And. Be visible as licensed free midwives and be like, you guys have to stop trying to scare us. Cause we're not leaving. Like we're not interested in your rules.

Instead of being like, oh let's sign up for that. I dunno. But the effort often comes from, I know that sounds conspiratorial, but like Haycock or the CNM ACNM the seats. Yeah. We're like CPMs and. Unregulated midwives have had the most issues is like, that's the effort. It's not easily.

The CPM is rounding themselves, even though I think most of them are pretty dumb to us. Like they don't really get it. Yeah.

If we zoom out, figuring out what your truth is and how much energy you have to put there, and I've wondered this, even in Minnesota, I'm like, if they really did push to change our law to make voluntary license or not a thing anymore, if they made it mandatory license or would I even get involved in that fight?

Like probably not. I would just be like, Cool. I'm going to, if you do what I'm doing anyways, and that's true for me, although if I was plenty and I had tons of them, there'd be a no kids. Like I'd probably be up in their faces being like, have you read this book? What about this? What about this case study?

How about these other, collecting these stories of midwives who have been licensed and then had this happen. And there's not a right or wrong, but if you're in a state where right now it's just a morphous and a legal. My opinion is there's no benefit to pushing for licensure.

And there's this thing called the big push to people know about this. And that's old. It's still happening, but yeah, they've been trying for awhile. Yeah.

They're trying to get like midwifery home birth, maybe for CPE. They're trying to make the CPM, the equivalent of licensure across the entire us.

They think it's a really good thing that it's going to be helpful, blah, blah. They really needed to like recent into mine. I think this coming term, perhaps a whole other thing. Yeah. Being public about it.

I share a little bit more next about this question of being underground versus above ground and being visible versus invisible as a midwife. And how that has looked

Does that kind of bring unwanted attention? And I think it's the opposite. I actually think, there's nothing we can do to guarantee our safety, right? That's a flawed, I think blood thing, like in life, right? Like birth is as safe as life gets life as a safe, as life gets things happen.

And but for me, what does bring me a sense of feeling supported is having a lot of people knowing about what I'm doing and believing in it. So where I live, even if midwifery was, licensure for midwifery, licensure was mandatory. I would not go underground because that's how we get isolated and that's how, they can pick you off then.

Like I would get louder, probably just be like, oh, that's cool. I don't care. These women, yeah. They're not the 400 women that I've helped and their families and their friends and the 40,000 people on our newsletter list. Do you really want them on mailing you?

That's actually, you're jogging my memory.

Sorry. That's like how my, the whole thing with Arizona, went south so fast because I posted on Facebook about it. I was just like, whoa, this is happening. And I wrote a whole article and they like lost their minds. Yeah. They totally lost their minds. But. And you want to do, they want to do to shame yourself?

Oh yeah. And you know what other med I found out after, like there had been a lot of midwives who had their wrist slapped of course, over 30 years of licensing, but they always just shrunk back and didn't tell anybody and hid under the covers and all of that. I think it's in the hands of the women, which is like what you're saying, like why we do our free workshop.

That's not about me. That's not so I hope people hire me that's to educate the community. So they know what their choices are and they don't get railroaded like that. Of course licensing as a thing here, I'm a little late to that party, but but the spirit of licensing is not alive.

And even in Arizona, after doing that, the free workshop there for six years, it was just an accepted fact that I was a midwife there. Nobody ever questioned me, nobody ever asked anything. It was just even the licensed midwives. Most of them that, they didn't like me necessarily, but.

That was a choice. So I think we can like insert ourselves in the community no matter what, but we have to have the confidence to do that and like really believe in it.

Next, somebody asked us what is the difference between an underground and above ground midwife?

I think when people use the word underground, what they mean is that it's secret, that you have to like, know the secret password or to ask the right person and you'll get her name.

Like they don't have a website. They don't have business cards. They don't, maybe put on a free workshop and be like, Hey everyone, I'm a midwife. Like it's not public knowledge that they are that's to me what underground midwife means. And a lot of people use that language.

They're like, oh, I'm just going to be under. And that's what you were speaking to earlier. That would never work for me because that would be out of alignment for my I don't believe it should be secret and shameful. And for me, it's, if I can't find a way to do it, that's very visible.

Then it's a waste of time to me, but, but there are people who choose to do that. There's especially like in Canada, a number of women, although it's cool to see their process. There's some really interesting characters there who like our typical.

Their way into being more visible, if that makes sense. And it's like a little by little kind of process who maybe would have considered themselves

underground midwives there, because there's a very much like a, even more authoritarian, like structure around midwifery in Canada and Australia and the UK, like independent midwifery has been nearly erased in all three of those places because of the way that they have universally licensed and regulated midwifery.

We just had someone come to the workshop with Dr. Stu two weeks ago, she left Australia. I think she's going to come on my podcast and talk about it. She was a midwife there in the system and she was like, it's completely untenable. Like you can't, there's no way to actually be a real midwife in the system.

And they don't leave an option to be an independent midwife outside of their system. And so of course you can, we do know people who are doing it in all of those. They just get creative and then yeah. Have their own process around like how does this work? And what's true for me. Hopefully that painted a little bit of a picture, there's people who call themselves birth educators or birth coaches or traditional birth attendant.

That's a wrap for this. A really different style of episode where you got to listen in on any retreat that Marin and I did back in April. 2022, answering the call to radical midwifery. We talked about all sorts of fun things and you got to get a taste of what it would be like for you to also come to our next retreat.

And our next retreat is happening in October of 2022. You can find out all about it on our website and I'll put the link in our show notes, but it is Indie Birth midwifery school. Dot org slash answering the call. And we still have some spots available for that. And we would love. Love to see you there.