Your Zen Mamas

Episode 224 · April 8, 2021 · with Teresa Palmer and Sarah Wright Olsen

IN THIS EPISODE

The Zen Mamas are back: best friends and actors Teresa Palmer and Sarah Wright Olsen return to Dr. Elliot Berlin, DC with their new book, The Zen Mama Guide to Finding Your Rhythm in Pregnancy, Birth and Beyond. What began at a West Hollywood cafe — two young actors who would rather talk babies than auditions — became a blog, a community and now a one-stop guide to the whole journey, and the two of them explain how they juggle sets, travel and very hands-on motherhood with partners who work in entertainment too. Along the way: the things nobody told them — a posterior baby and a two-day labor, a postpartum plan that turned out to be a lifesaver, the dreaded belly massage after birth, group B strep, and a cervical lip Sarah first met at Teresa's birth — plus audience questions on making room in your heart for a second baby, keeping a marriage close as the family grows, and what really changes after breastfeeding. How do they make it look this fun — and what surprised even them this time around?

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DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: Welcome to the Informed Pregnancy and Parenting Podcast. I'm your host, Dr. Elliot Berlin. My guests today are no strangers to the podcast. When these besties started their families, they sought to work together and create a cozy community for other moms and families all over the world. Their wildly popular blog discusses the comedy, beauty, and complexity of pregnancy and parenthood in a very open way, which I can only describe as uncomfortably refreshing. I'm so excited about their new book, The Zen Mama Guide to Finding Your Rhythm in Pregnancy, Birth and Beyond. Zen Mama's Teresa Palmer and Sarah Rae Olsen, welcome back to the podcast.

TERESA PALMER: Thanks,

SARAH WRIGHT OLSEN: Dr.

TERESA PALMER: B.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: It's crazy. You both look a bit at least the same, if not younger than the first time I interviewed you and now you have - Dim lighting.

TERESA PALMER: It's the dim lighting.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: Oh, it's the dim lighting. That's the secret. I know. I'm learning all the - To me

TERESA PALMER: Anyway.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: Dim lighting and big sunglasses. Not that you're wearing any, but no I'm just saying. All right. Now you each have 11 kids or something like that. We'll find out. We've both been here before, sometimes together, sometimes individually, and you're both very accomplished actors, but somehow super duper real, kind of like what you see is what you get and super easy to talk to. It's been a while and I have a lot of questions about what's happened in between and catching up. And our audience submitted some very juicy questions for you as well via social media. But before we get to that, let's recap how this all got started. How did Zen Mamas come to be?

TERESA PALMER: Well, we tell this funny story about how we met, which is we were at Earth Cafe on Melrose, right in the middle of West Hollywood. It was like Sarah and I and about six other girls. They were all actresses and everyone was talking about, "Oh, did you see the script? Did you go for this audition? Who's your agent? Are you signing with the publicist this month?" And Sarah and I were like, "Do you want to have babies?" And so Sarah and I really bonded over this hilarious love for having babies when we were babies ourselves. And I think once we both had our first children finally, we realized that parenting and everything that came with it for us was such a true passion of ours. And we were so lucky to be around people like you, Dr.

TERESA PALMER: Berlin, and so many wonderful midwives and people we've spoken to throughout our pregnancy and birthing experiences that we felt so equipped with all this knowledge that we wanted to share because of all the wonderful people we were meeting along our path. And so we're like, "Why don't we just start a blog and we'll just write about all of our experiences and we'll also let it be one in which everyone has a voice. So if anyone has a story they want to share, they can share on the blog too. It's not just going to be her and I writing, it's going to be the entire community." And that's really how it started at the end of 2014.

SARAH WRIGHT OLSEN: And I think one of the things that was so important to us was creating the space where it really felt like women supporting women, we're a sisterhood. It's like how do you lift someone else up? And listening to people's stories is so important. Telling your story is really important and that was a way for us to be able to create this safe space where people could come and share

TERESA PALMER: Without judgment.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: Yeah. It's kind of interesting because both of you separately threw me off when I would work with you because you would be like, "How are you doing and how's your family and what's going on?" I'm like, "Me? It's not about me. It's about you." But there's this genuine interest and warmth and curiosity and it's always refreshing. I think that probably anybody who connects with

you, whether through the blog or the book, is going to feel that and flock towards it and bring all their other mommy friends. I mean, personally, I just wanted to talk about scripts and auditions, but I guess we'll talk about this movie.

TERESA PALMER: So boring.

SARAH WRIGHT OLSEN: We were like, "No, we're not interested in that."

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: I know. Let's talk about that for a second though, because when it comes to any career, entertainment, I think even more so, it's really a tough juggle. I have this semi-popular idea, and it's not my own idea, but it's something that I read and I really cling onto that men oftentimes, not always, are hardwired that when a baby comes into the family, we're just hardwired to go hunt and gather more and bring home more to feed the growing family. And women oftentimes, but not always, are sort of hardwired to stay around the nest and do everything for the newborn. And in today's day and age, it doesn't often work like that. First of all, gender roles are all over the place.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: You can do whatever you want to and things are a lot less traditional than they once were. But even so, men get rewarded for going out and working more, but women are kind of split, pulled in between being home around the nest and going out and working. And I see a lot of people struggle with that in general, but in entertainment even more so to be able to go out and audition and take roles and sometimes have to travel very far away for whatever it is that you're shooting. So I see just this trend where a lot of women in entertainment don't have babies until their late 30s or early 40s, but you guys are like 19 and you each have a bunch of kids.

SARAH WRIGHT OLSEN: Not true.

TERESA PALMER: We're overly ambitious. All of it.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: How do you do that? How do you juggle those things and especially with your partners also in entertainment?

SARAH WRIGHT OLSEN: It's interesting because I think when I first became a mama, I definitely was like, "I'm going to work and I'm going to be a mom and I'm always going to have my kid with me and they're always going to come with me to set." And that's really great when you're working in the same town as your partner, right? So Eric works in LA and when Wyatt was first born, I was able to do a show that worked here in LA as well. And then stuff was sort of coming to me later that was after that experience that was out of town. And I think there was a lot of conversation like, "Okay, do I go shoot something out of town?" I mean, because he was definitely going to be shooting here. So it's always this sort of conversation that comes up. Is it worth it?

SARAH WRIGHT OLSEN: And what is it that is really important to me? What do I want to do? Do I want to go in Canada and shoot a show and take my kids with me and be away from my husband? Is that how I want to spend the next eight months of my life or going back and forth? Or do I want to try to find something here and just do a project that I really love? And if that comes my way, great. And if not, that's okay too. I mean, that's a privilege because my husband's working on a TV show right now, so I'm able to do that. But I think that I found some of my passions in life, not just acting, but also in writing with Teresa and starting my company Beo with Anna, which is a plant-based organic skincare

line.

SARAH WRIGHT OLSEN: And being able to do that with my girlfriends and being able to throw myself into things that I'm passionate about that's not just about, okay, now I have to go shoot something that shoots in Australia and be away from my family. I think that it's a good problem to have if you have those things come up, but it's also something to think about like what is it that you want to spend your time doing? What's your passion and what's important to you when you have a family and what are you able to do? What's coming your way? And for me, then I like to try to work here if I can. And if I can't and we need to do something else, then we'll try to go somewhere else with it.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: Well, I think when people hear that from someone in acting, the assumption is that you're going to have a dozen people just doing everything for your kids, but I've never seen you... Right now you're sitting on a ball balancing a baby. I've never seen you not be super hands on no matter what else it is that you're doing work-wise. I think it's amazing. I always say this also, it's amazing what you guys do versus what we do to bring babies into the world. The whole growing them in your body and delivering them through your body and feeding them with your body and the art part's sort of embarrassing. But then to be pulled in two different directions and juggle all of that and somehow still take care of us husbands is kind of amazing.

SARAH WRIGHT OLSEN: Well, your support system's really important too. I mean, part of it is that a lot of times you have family members that can come and help you and we don't have family here. So I do have an amazing nanny/doula/best friend of mine, Sonya, who I don't know how our life would work without her as our teammate. But it's just so nice to have that support for sure and that I'm able to have that support with her.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: Teresa, you traveled around the world while your family was growing. How was that?

TERESA PALMER: It was good. Look, I'm in a different situation to Sarah in that my husband, he's an independent filmmaker, so he actually writes. So he can come on the road with us, which means we really have that flexibility to be able to travel. So I live half of the time in Australia and then I was living in Wales. I was shooting a show there and I probably annoyingly so to some producers, I'm quite vocal about my needs as a parent and my want and my desire to have my children around to be hands on. And actually I feel like I have been so beautifully embraced since I've had children that every set I've been on, I've been afforded the luxury of having a space for them to go in my trailer. And oftentimes my mom will travel with us, not away.

TERESA PALMER: She's getting a bit older now and a little bit more tired. So she's not with us as much anymore. And if I'm working, we don't have a nanny if I'm not working, it's just Mark and I and the kids. But if I am working, I usually choose a friend from home. My best friend Cass has traveled with us before. She works for Sarah and I at Yosem Mama. And then I have another great friend, Susie, and if she's available, she'll come with me. So it's been great because I've been able to sort of keep this community around me who I love and I value and they can support me while I work. Yet I can still have my kids around set. I can breastfeed whenever I need to. I get to be hands on and get to be with them during their day, which is really lovely.

TERESA PALMER: And I can understand the privilege that that is because not everyone can bring their kids to work, but because of what we do, we as actors in particular, not everyone on the film set would be able to bring their children to work, but as actors, you're really well taken care of. And in that respect, I feel incredibly blessed and lucky that I've been able to manage both being a mom, which is my passion and my dream and everything that I get excited about, but also acting, which is another part of my life that I really enjoy.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: I vaguely remember you going to an award ceremony and having a hotel room across the street so you can run out and

TERESA PALMER: Dressing. Yeah. And I borrowed Sarah's nanny because I didn't have a nanny and I was like, "Sarah, do you mind? Can I steal her for one night?" And she sat in this hotel room and I was at the Golden Globes and I would just race up in my dress and be like, "Sonya, is everything okay?" And of course she was like a baby whisperer and was amazing with my little three week old forest. And I'd go breastfeed and then she helped me zip back into my dress and I'd run back down again.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: That's amazing.

TERESA PALMER: Yeah, she was great.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: All right. We're going to take a quick break when we come back. I have lots of questions about finding your rhythm in pregnancy, birth and beyond. Welcome back to the Informed Pregnancy Podcast. We are talking to Sarah Wright Olson and Teresa Palmer, the Zen Mamas. All right. So you learned a ton over your journey. You both have three kids each now. You've given birth three times. Should we say that?

TERESA PALMER: Yes. I have a baby in my tummy as well.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: Oh, you do? I do.

TERESA PALMER: Do you want to see my tummy? I'll show you. Look how massive this is. Oh my God. This is only 14 weeks. What? What? Oh look, who is? Mine still wins.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: Yeah. Sorry. That's the other thing. I've seen you both through every stage of pregnancy and none of you have ever caught up to my tummy.

SARAH WRIGHT OLSEN: Come on. I've given you quite the run for your money.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: Actually, you get out there. That's true. With your 19 pound children. Wow. So you're having another one.

TERESA PALMER: This is my surprise baby, my little surprise girl who decided to join our family, which is so, so, so sweet. I mean, Sarah knows I wanted to have 17 children anyway, so this little blessing came along.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: A dozen more surprises and you'll be there.

TERESA PALMER: Mark's like, "No way. No way." He doesn't want any more. He's like, "I'm closing up shop. We are done after this baby." Hopefully I can convince him.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: Yeah. I found out the woman decides. I though we were only going to have two.

SARAH WRIGHT OLSEN: Yeah. You had a nice surprise there, didn't you?

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: Yeah, now we have four. I don't know. She's very convincing. So what are some of the things that you've found out the hard way that nobody told you that you wish you would have known?

TERESA PALMER: One thing for me is actually this is just a very specific birthing thing. In my first birth, I had read a bunch of books, not necessarily all the ones I should have read, but I had a posterior baby and I didn't really know what that meant. And now obviously having the perspective and knowing how I'm able to help with optimal birthing positioning, I wish I had done that because I had such a very arduous two day long labor, which was just stop and start and I had pre-ruptured membranes, so my waters broke and labor didn't kickstart. And it's just funny because then obviously with my second baby, I had a posterior baby again, but I was like, "Right. Now I know. Now I know what to do."

TERESA PALMER: And I did spinning babies and I did all the different things to help turn the baby and just get the baby in the right position. So that's just a very specific thing that I wish I could go back to myself who went through those two days of being like, "What's happening? Oh my God, my back is breaking." Poor Sarah, she's at my birth. She was putting all her weight, her and Mark together, putting so much counter pressure on my back and I was still like, "Help, I'm dying."

SARAH WRIGHT OLSEN: Oh gosh. I can't even imagine that. I have no idea if I had pain in my back.

TERESA PALMER: You had pain in your tailbone.

SARAH WRIGHT OLSEN: Oh, that's right.

TERESA PALMER: You were pressured on your tailbone a lot.

SARAH WRIGHT OLSEN: Oh, I think every birth actually I've had pain in my tailbone. In the birth with Winter, I also had crazy tailbone pain that I'm sure that's a positioning thing. Yeah. For me, I think going back, gosh, I don't think I realized, and it was really wonderful that I had this great doula my first time around. Anna Paula was an incredible birthing doula. And she had told me to set something up for myself because I didn't have family here. She's like, "If there's any way that you can have friends come over and help you with food or have someone come by just once a week and help you do laundry or something," because she knew that my husband was going to be going back to work and working 14 to 16 hours a day on the show at that time.

SARAH WRIGHT OLSEN: So she kind of pushed me to make some choices for my after birth plan. And I ended up hiring a postpartum doula just for a couple days a week. And it was the greatest thing ever to be able to have that. And then I also had friends who came by and helped me with laundry

and helped me with food. And not having any support would have been really tough because during labor, I actually popped a rib. Is that how you would say it?

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: Yeah. I remember.

SARAH WRIGHT OLSEN: You remember that? So a rib kind of popped on my chest and I wasn't able to pick up the baby on my own for the first couple of weeks. And so I needed a lot of help. It was super painful to do that. So I don't know. I'm glad that she had that. I would not have known that had she not mentioned like, "Oh, you might actually need some help." I was like, "Oh, I can do it all. I'll be fine." And I'm so glad that she set me up for that. I also didn't realize the kind of annoyance that after you give birth, when they push on your stomach to get the placenta out, that part, I guess, I mean, do you want to know that or do you not want to know that? I'm not sure. I've thought about it every time I've given birth.

SARAH WRIGHT OLSEN: I despise that part so much because it's over. Birth is over. The baby is out. It's on your chest. You're ready to start breastfeeding. They're still sucking snot out of baby's nose. Things are happening, you're seeing stuff being pulled away. You feel relieved that you finally pushed baby out. And then this nurse or midwife or whoever just starts pressing on your stomach to help do what, Dr. B? They're helping your -

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: Oh, the clots. They want to make sure you have no clots and that your uterus can start to stop all the bleeding and start to heal.

SARAH WRIGHT OLSEN: Yeah. And they're trying to get that placenta out. And not going to lie, I absolutely hate it so much.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: I've never seen anybody ask for more of that.

TERESA PALMER: Yeah. Could you say that again?

SARAH WRIGHT OLSEN: It doesn't hurt to let people know that that is something that is not great, but it needs to happen.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: Yeah. I do see that, especially at home birth, because once the baby comes out, you do think, "Hey, this is great. We did it." And then there's more stuff to do. Birth the placenta, and then they do that mean massage, but it's for a good cause. The other thing is I like to look at nature and see what the other animals are doing. It's not always like we're going to do what they do. Sometimes animals give birth and they eat the baby, which I don't recommend, but I've never seen this maneuver where an elephant gives birth and another elephant comes and starts jamming on the belly afterwards.

SARAH WRIGHT OLSEN: Thank you. I agree with that.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: Yeah. I'm sure there's a medical necessity for it. I'm not a medical doctor, but I'm just curious how they do it in nature.

SARAH WRIGHT OLSEN: Yeah. It's a really good question actually.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: Do you have from pregnancy a memorable moment each of you from your various pregnancies? I probably have a memorable moment from each of your pregnancies.

SARAH WRIGHT OLSEN: I think this pregnancy being during this pandemic is very, it's going to be one for the books for me, for sure, because I think I went through such a wide range of emotions and levels of, okay, I'm feeling really good, feeling very neutral about everything to levels of anxiety to being worried about going to my doctor's appointments. I mean, truly, I did see Dr. B. I normally see him lots more, but towards the end of this pregnancy, I needed to see him so bad because we just came back from a big road trip with our Airstream. And I was probably eight and a half months pregnant at that time. And I was like, "Dr. B, my back is all out of whack. Can you come over during the pandemic outside and work on me?" And he did.

SARAH WRIGHT OLSEN: And I was wearing goggles and legit, my kids' swimming goggles, a face mask. And I don't know, he kept saying I was wearing a wetsuit or scuba suit.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: I was like, "How am I going to do this massage from six feet away?"

SARAH WRIGHT OLSEN: Oh my God. I know. I had been dreaming for like eight months of him just cracking my spine because it felt so compressed. And I was like, "I can't wait anymore. I need you to come and help me." But yeah, I think that whole pregnancy will just be very memorable because it was just, when it started off, I just had a pregnancy loss and then I was pregnant and I went through a couple of really solid weeks of being nervous and then I knew the baby was okay. And then we had a pandemic. And I was like, "Oh my God, I'm not going anywhere."

TERESA PALMER: Colorful. Yeah. I mean, specific memorable things. With all of my pregnancies, I get obsessed with playing certain games on my phone. So my first pregnancy, I became obsessed with this Dynadash game and I would sit in the bath playing Dynadash over and over for like an hour and a half.

SARAH WRIGHT OLSEN: Okay. That is amazing.

TERESA PALMER: It's really weird. Mark always brings it up. He's like, "You in the weird game obsessions." And then with Forrest, it was the Monopoly app and I would dream about it every night. I'd wake up thinking about what my next strategy was. And it was always to buy up all the houses and create a housing shortage for the other players so they couldn't get houses. And I would never turn them into hotels. I was like, "Never get hotels because you will cause a housing shortage if you only put four houses on each of your color sets." Anyway, what a nerd. I know.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: Is that how you know you're pregnant? At the beginning you're like, "Ah, candy crush. I must be pregnant."

TERESA PALMER: Do you know what? I became obsessed with SimCity this time, and this was our surprise, baby. And I downloaded SimCity and I was like, "Oh my God, this is so good." And I just kept playing and I was like, "Oh whoa, this is amazing." I was getting really obsessed with it. And Mark's like, "Oh, you're so nuts." And then sure enough, I took a pregnancy test and boom, pregnant.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: There you go. That's the new test.

SARAH WRIGHT OLSEN: That's how you tell.

TERESA PALMER: That's such a strange thing. Yeah. It's so funny. And then of course, with my third pregnancy with Poet, my pre - COVID pregnancy, which is my 2018 pregnancy, I tested positive for antibodies, which is just this routine blood test that you get at 12 weeks. Well, I basically caused a shit storm and it meant I had to have really crazy intense monitoring because my husband has this rare antigen with his blood called the Duffy gene, which essentially means that my baby inherited this gene. My body though of my baby as a foreign object and started building up these antibodies to essentially attack her and reject the pregnancy. So that started at 12 weeks.

TERESA PALMER: And so I would have to get my blood tested every second week to see how much I was attacking the baby. And it can get to the point where your baby has to have an in utero blood transfusion. They can be born really jaundice, premature birth. There's lots of complications. So it's called an isoimmunization pregnancy. And so that was like, "Oh, here we go." Because I just always get random things. I also had an eyebrow aneurysm in that pregnancy as well, which is all these weird things happen to me when I'm pregnant. And I swear to God, I'm just waiting. I'm 14 weeks now. I was like, "When's it going to happen? What's going to happen this time?" But yeah -

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: Well, there is a worldwide pandemic.

SARAH WRIGHT OLSEN: I was going to say, you're having a baby during a pandemic, so there's your thing.

TERESA PALMER: Oh

SARAH WRIGHT OLSEN: My God.

TERESA PALMER: Which is hilarious. So anyway, that was a very colorful pregnancy, but she was fine. And my body actually stopped, which was quite miraculous apparently. It just stopped creating antibodies. It got to about 17 weeks. I was like, "Ah, she's fine. She's cool."

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: She passed the test.

TERESA PALMER: Yeah.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: We'll keep her, thankfully. Your blog and now your book really talk about everything. I know that the title is Finding Rhythm in Pregnancy, Birth and Beyond, but you talk about pre-pregnancy, pregnancy, all the different stages, getting ready for birth, birth itself, postpartum, early parenting. You really cover a lot of stuff. And each step of the way, you've lived it together many times and you have this community that contributes as well. There's a lot of great information there that I think is hard to find. It's hard to find it compiled in a way that's easy to digest. So I'm really glad that you did it and not only that you did it, you did it Your style. We're going to take another break.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: When I come back, I want to learn more about the structure of the book, but also I have these juicy questions that were submitted and I'd be letting my audience down if I didn't blush as I read them to you. We'll be right back. Welcome back to the Informed Pregnancy Podcast. We are talking to Theresa Palmer and Sarah Wright Olson. So let's talk about this. I put out on social media, I'm like, "I am interviewing the Zen mamas tonight. What do you want to know? I

have all these questions. This first question is a question that I also had when we had our second baby, which is nervousness about having a second baby and am I really going to be able to have enough love for both of them and love them the same? Surely you went through that as well.

TERESA PALMER: Yeah, for sure. I remember your first baby is so all encompassing and I was so obsessed with my son. He was the entire world to me. And then when I got pregnant with my second son, I did question that. I was like," How? How will my heart expand? "But it just does. And then your love grows infinitely. And I think seeing the two of your children interacting is one of the most profound experiences. And seeing their love grow for each other is just such a divine and sort of spiritual experience in many ways. And it's always the cliche, your heart just grows bigger. It really does. But you love, I think, you love your children with every bit of your being, but you love each of them individually and differently and uniquely.

TERESA PALMER: And it's just such an interesting thing because love can't be... I always say this if one of my kids is like," Did you love daddy more than me? "Or," Do you love Forrest more than me? "I was like," Love can't be measured like that. Love is just a big, beautiful, incredible feeling. And you guys are loved more than I could ever explain. "So it just happens. You just love them. And I did have a period of mourning. I think when I was 37 weeks pregnant to 40 weeks pregnant, I was very hormonal, but I was grieving. I was sort of breaking up with the idea that it was just me and my little man. I was just the two of us against the world together because I knew that dynamic was going to change.

TERESA PALMER: But what was birthed, pardon the pun, was something more beautiful and incredible. So yeah, I wouldn't worry about that at all. And I would say have all the babies.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: My oldest will sometimes sit around the table after the younger ones have gone off to rest on the couch or play or whatever, and he'll never let us forget. He's like," Look, it's the original three. "And I was like," Before you, there were the original two. It was just mom and dad.

TERESA PALMER: "Oh my God, that's so funny. If I have a quiet moment with Bodhi, because I fall asleep with them every night, I sleep in the middle of the two of them and I go down, I put them to sleep. And usually Forrest will fall asleep before Bodhi, but I often say to him, I was like," You're my firstborn. Oh my goodness. Can you remember that time when it was just you and I? "And he says that he remembers, but he only really remembers a world in which there was all these brothers and sisters.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: So here, I'm going to read a few more questions. How do you preserve the relationship with your husbands as your family grows?

SARAH WRIGHT OLSEN: I think it's different for everyone. And it's also different with each child that comes along. The first time around, it's interesting because you're definitely falling into your role as a parent and you're also sort of having to navigate, okay, what does our relationship look like now that we're mom and dad? How do we make time for each other? And that I think was part of something probably that I overthought about right after I had my first was, okay, do we need to have date night or do we need to have this time alone where we just stare at each other and focus on each other? And

for every relationship, I have to imagine that it's just going to look really different for Eric and I.

SARAH WRIGHT OLSEN: I think trying to make a special day where we get together and we do something, it was almost too much. Sometimes he would be busy doing work or I would be busy doing my work and it was like, oh, how do we fit this in? And for us, it just made more sense to kind of let it flow. And when we had time together, it was amazing. And then when it was me and him and Wyatt, we were also so stoked on that. And because he's working 16 hours a day or 12 hours a day or whatever it is on set, when he was home, he definitely wanted to have that focus time with Wyatt. So we always said that for us, the weekends are family time and we try to not over schedule anything.

SARAH WRIGHT OLSEN: And that's always been something that we do is we'll go on a little excursion out on a hike or out to the beach or something. And then when we had Esme, then I kind of felt like Eric would go off and do stuff with Wyatt and then I would be with the baby and then we would all come together and do stuff together. And so it really changes, your family changes and things kind of grow and change in a different way. But just making sure that we were communicating with each other about that time, I think was the most important. If one of us needed it, having that communication was really important for us.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: That makes sense. It's kind of interesting. We've gone through different phases of realizing it's hard sometimes to have enough of you for even yourself and certainly you end up last on the totem pole oftentimes and then for the kids and for your partner. And now we've done all sorts of different things like a lone night, just us with one kid at a time so that they get spotlight attention. But now my oldest is about to be a senior in high school and I can already taste how he's going to leave the house and it's devastating. I'm like, no, don't do it. Just stay with us forever and be a little guy. It's hard to find time for everybody, but it's important. I think communication is key. I have two juicy questions here.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: One of them is from two different people. One mom wants to know after breastfeeding, will my breasts ever be the same?

TERESA PALMER: I wouldn't know because I haven't stopped breastfeeding since 2014. So I don't know. They're not looking amazing yet. I'm hopeful that when we're all finished, maybe they'll just kind of bounce right back up to their 27 year old selves. But no, I'm not sure that they ever will apparently. I have heard from people that the boobies just change shape.

SARAH WRIGHT OLSEN: My experience is they do kind of change shape. And then once the milk is completely gone, they look quite a bit different than what I remember them looking. But now it's been so long ago that I can't really even remember what they looked like totally.

TERESA PALMER: Someone told me, I remember this was maybe when I was pregnant with my second, that your boobs end up resembling. If you put a sock on your boob and then you dropped a billiard ball at the end of the sock, that is what they would look like. Oh my God, how exciting. Thank you so much for letting me know.

SARAH WRIGHT OLSEN: That was so mean. By the way, I have had a moment after breastfeeding where I did not have milk and I don't know, it just depends on your... For me, I was like, okay, I need to get used to this for a minute because I've had milk in my boobs for a while and I've really enjoyed

that situation. But now that they're emptier, I need a minute to get used to that.

TERESA PALMER: I breastfeed through pregnancy onto tandem breastfeeding, then I get pregnant again onto more tandem breastfeeding. So I've just done that since 2014. But I'll go through a period of time where right before I'm getting pregnant and my kid's almost two, because I usually get pregnant right before they're two, where they've just shrunk. I just don't have boobs anymore and I've always had boobs. My whole life I've had pretty big boobs. And then all of a sudden they're just these little, little things. I'm like, "Oh my God, I've always wanted to have less boob and I'm finally like, I look cool in those low cut tops now and I can wear the singlets without a bra and this is what it feels like not to have boobs."

TERESA PALMER: So I didn't mind it actually, but now they're growing massive again being pregnant and breastfeeding.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: I have really long eyelashes and when I was in seventh grade, some of the girls were jealous of my eyelashes and my boobs, but then in ninth grade they totally took over. Anyway, I was hoping after we had four kids, maybe I would end up, but I didn't. They're still the same size. Anyway, I'm trying to contribute to the conversation.

SARAH WRIGHT OLSEN: Thank you for that.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: Yeah. On this one, this other one, which I think actually a lot of people struggle with, she's five weeks postpartum and she's craving intimacy with her husband, but she's terrified of what that's going to feel like. Any ideas on how to rekindle the intimacy?

TERESA PALMER: Take it really slow, I think. Don't rush into... I think they say wait at least six weeks postpartum before having sex again. And make sure you communicate with your husband. Just be like, "You need to listen to me. I'm going to tell you, yes, that's okay. No, that's not okay." And I just think that first time, don't imagine it's going to be some amazing sexy romp because it's not going to be like that. It's going to probably be a little bit more like talking through it. And then once you've done it one time, then you're fine. Then you can get back into the rhythm of it.

SARAH WRIGHT OLSEN: Yeah. Think about it like you're about to have sex again for the first time ever. You're like, "Oh, I'm a virgin again." Think about it like that. You got to go slow. Take it easy. Don't rush into it.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: Is that true each time with each kid?

SARAH WRIGHT OLSEN: Yeah, Maybe. It has been... Yeah, for me too. I mean, everything just kind of feels more tender. Yeah. The way to say it. It just feels like a little bit more tender. And for me personally, sorry, I'm going to speak just for myself. I personally feel a little bit more aware of my body and everything that it's gone through. So at that time, I think I want to be a little bit gentler to myself.

TERESA PALMER: I'll say as well, it also depends on how your birth went too. So I had some vaginal trauma with my first birth and I tore right up by the little sensitive spot up there and that was so bloody painful. I got to tell you, I was not interested in doing it for so long. I was like, "No one even gets to be down there at all. Go away." But then with my second... And that was a land birth. I call it a

land birth.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: As opposed to water.

TERESA PALMER: Yes. And I was on my back pushing in that position. All the things that I had read not to do, but anyway, that's what I ended up doing was I had just a vaginal birth, a natural birth, but I tore and your placenta gets stuck and I have to do a manual extraction. Just that whole area was not interested in having anyone near it for so long. Then after the water births, I had the most gentle, healing, beautiful, amazing births, my second and third, that I honestly felt totally fine down there. And I definitely was way more ready to get back and get cheeky with it with my husband long before I did my first. And that for me is the water birth and the pushing aspect of giving birth in water.

TERESA PALMER: It was just such a different feeling for me that I didn't really feel like there was any trauma at all down there.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: Especially the contrast for you between one and two. I'm pretty sure, if I remember correctly, my wife already brings a security guard to stand by the bedroom door for about 10 weeks.

TERESA PALMER: You also feel really touched out, I think too, because you have a baby on you at all times and you're milky and leaky.

SARAH WRIGHT OLSEN: I don't think what anybody understands either is that when you've been caring for a newborn, changing your milk shirt, changing your giant granny panties, doing all the things that you've been doing over the past six to 10 weeks or whatever that ends up happening, then you're right, Teresa, with the feeling touched out aspect, you feel, or at least I did, I felt a little bit like the only real time that I would have any time for myself was if I was walking to go take a shower or something. So you're kind of like, "Where do we fit this in?" Because I need to sleep, take care of the baby, breastfeed, all that stuff too.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: Video games, it's not easy.

SARAH WRIGHT OLSEN: Video games, those are good. Handy crush in the bathtub.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: Exactly. All right. So I mean, by way of example, there's nothing that you're not willing to talk about openly and honestly, and the book proves that as well. So how did you lay out the book?

TERESA PALMER: Well, we wanted to... I think we both had the same experience when we were pregnant with our first babies that we couldn't find everything in the one book. It was either a book on pregnancy or a book on breastfeeding or a book on fertility. We were really adamant that we would have a one stop shop book, which would take you on the full journey thinking about getting pregnant, your fertility journey, talking about infertility, pregnancy loss, if that happens, then the pregnancy, the birth, and then the postpartum period. So initially we got together and I think we just sort of divvied up the different chapters to each other like, "All right, I'll write chapter one, you write chapter two."

TERESA PALMER: And when we first handed in the manuscript, it was like a hundred thousand plus words and it was like, "No, this is going to be cut in half." And so we had to kill a lot of our

darlings, but it was quite therapeutic because it's just the very, for us, we feel like it's these little gems that have made it in there and we're really, really excited.

SARAH WRIGHT OLSEN: I was going to say, Dr. B, I remember when I was very first telling you about the book and I remember telling you what our idea for it was, is how we wanted to go from exactly what Theresa said, from your first initial thought of wanting to have a baby all the way through the postpartum period. And you were like, "Is this book going to be 100,000 pages long?"

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: Yeah, because it sounds like a three or four volume book, you might as well just throw in there like menopause, hospice care and burial. I actually was working on a little kid's book about pregnancy and even there, I broke it up into first trimester, second, third, and then fourth trimester, which is kind of a weird thing to say, fourth trimester, but y'all know what I mean.

SARAH WRIGHT OLSEN: We know what it means.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: Is there a thing, because I have a thing that I have in my head that I feel like when I bring it up to somebody during pregnancy, they have never heard about it and they never find out about it until the moment it happened. I'll tell you what mine is, and then let me know if you each have something like that, that people are just totally bewildered by. For me, it's the groupie strep positive or just the swab. They don't find out about it until the doctor's coming at them with that swab. They're like, "What's this now?" And I'm like, "Oh, we're just checking for this bacteria." And if you have it, you can't labor at home, you need to come to the hospital right away and we're going to give you IV antibiotics every four hours.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: And that's kind of stuff it would be nice to know about ahead of time.

TERESA PALMER: Yeah. I think you experienced that, Sarah. Did you have positive?

SARAH WRIGHT OLSEN: Yeah, I did. I actually had it with my second and third pregnancy. I had it and much more crazed over it the first time where I was trying garlic up inside of me and yogurt and I did so many amazing things, but I still ended up having to do antibiotics.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: You had more things than 7-Eleven.

SARAH WRIGHT OLSEN: Yeah, I did. I actually found my list the other day. It was like 15 things long of what I was trying to do to get that countdown.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: And you did get it down, just not enough to,

SARAH WRIGHT OLSEN: Right? Yeah. Yeah. It was really close. I mean, I only had seven days to do it, so I was doing a lot of work on that region in seven days.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: Even then, had you been able to think it through a month earlier, then you would have had time to prepare for it and see what might be possible. Anyway, that's a big aha moment for me that now I always try to tell people at 20 weeks, just know this is coming and prepare for it ahead of time.

TERESA PALMER: There's another thing that you can't really prepare for, but if you know what it is while you're in labor, I think it's really helpful. So I attended Sarah's birth, her first birth, her home

birth, and she had this thing called a cervical lip, which you know what that is, Dr. B, where the cervix swells up right when you're nine and a half centimeters dilated and sort of labor kind of stools in a way because the baby can't progress past the cervix because it's sort of swollen. And the midwife, I mean, it's horrendous, especially Sarah didn't have any pain relief, so the midwife goes up and sort of holds it back while you have to push with all your mind to get the baby's head past the lip.

TERESA PALMER: Now, because I had seen that and I had heard that term, I'd never heard of it before until it was happening to Sarah. It happened to me with Poet and I knew I was having the most just in strong, intense rushes, one straight after, just on top of each other. But I knew I wasn't ready to push yet. I was feeling up there and I could feel that I had a cervical lip. I said to my midwife, "I think I've got a lip. I think I've got a cervical lip because I'm having the strongest contractions I've had and I should be pushing. I know that feeling. I should be moving into the pushing stage or the breathing down stage." I was like, "I swear to God, I have a cervical lip."

TERESA PALMER: Sure enough, she went up there and I did, and I had to do the same thing that I had seen Sarah do six years earlier and squat on the toilet while she held it back and I pushed and it only took maybe two really, really strong pushes while she was holding it back for her head to come right down and then she was born in four minutes. But that's just something I had never read about. I didn't even know that could happen. I didn't realize that you can be aware of it as a birthing mother. You don't need your midwife to say, "Oh, this is what's going on." Yeah. And if I hadn't have been privy to it in Sarah's birth, I wouldn't have known exactly how to handle that moment. And apparently it happens...

TERESA PALMER: I'm expecting it's going to happen again with a fourth. So once you've had it once, they say that oftentimes it'll happen again.

SARAH WRIGHT OLSEN: I've had it with every birth. I have, every single birth now. And I literally, this last time I looked at my doctor and I said to him, "Oh my gosh, this is just my thing. This must just be my thing." I swear, he has to have such strong forearm strength to hold that back for me because it doesn't happen for me quickly like it did for you that time, Theresa. I have a 14 minute video where it was only part of him doing that, but he has to have his hand up there holding the lip back as I'm trying to get the baby's head past. So you can hear him on the video like, "Okay, you got to get my finger out. You have to keep pushing, keep pushing." I have to push past the lip and him holding it.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: Theresa, you could just pretend like it's a video game. You got to... You got

SARAH WRIGHT OLSEN: It.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: And then you'll be like, "Ah, let's do it again. Okay. Maybe I went too far."

SARAH WRIGHT OLSEN: I think the thing I always hear, Dr. B, is people asking and talking about poop. They always want to know like, "Oh, I'm so afraid about pooping and whatever." I got to be honest, there's so much poop involved with my births. I've had three births and there is no holding back on the amount of poo that happens when I am giving birth, especially - I've caught your poo.

TERESA PALMER: I've caught your poo before.

SARAH WRIGHT OLSEN: You've caught my poo. Eric's caught my poo. And apparently the people around you just become these wonderfully loving people that just don't even let you see it. So they just kind of quickly take the wee pads away. Yeah. You don't see that it happens. But my dear friend Sonya is a doula and she's like, "That's just part of it." She actually had this wonderful thing that she said to explain, which is going to horrify some people who are listening to this, but there's this point where the head is kind of pressing and it's like toothpaste. The head is pressing through and squeezing everything out. So everything has to come out. And you know what? She's right.

SARAH WRIGHT OLSEN: And when that moment happens, everybody in the room's kind of cheering because they're like, "Okay, that means baby's further down and we're getting into this spot.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: Yeah.

SARAH WRIGHT OLSEN: We're getting into this place."

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: That's a really good one. People either don't know about it or overthink it.

SARAH WRIGHT OLSEN: They overthink it.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: Yes. They overthink it. And the truth is, I've been to a lot of births. I've been to a Sarah birth. I've never had the pleasure of catching any rear poo though. Although I do remember when your little guy was looking, somebody said something about poo and he went to look if you pooped or not.

SARAH WRIGHT OLSEN: True. I said that I had the poo and he was like, "I don't see any."

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: Oh, you lifted up your little temmet skirt or whatever.

SARAH WRIGHT OLSEN: That's

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: Right. Yeah. So I will say this. Generally speaking, it's not logs and logs of poo, it's slivers. Like you said, usually whether you're at home or in a birth center or hospital, they have layers of pads underneath you. As soon as anything's there, they just pull one away. They wipe it. Oftentimes you don't -

TERESA PALMER: Or they have little scooper. My husband had little pooper scooper in the water.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: For the tub.

SARAH WRIGHT OLSEN: That's true.

TERESA PALMER: One would slow it up.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: He

TERESA PALMER: Justs

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: Out of the

TERESA PALMER: Water.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: You go fishing. Again, another little video game and then scooping for poo. And then the other thing that's really cool about it though is whoever designed the system, your baby has to kind of push down towards your rectum and then come out the front. And it's designed to squeeze out whatever's in there because that's how your baby gets exposed to your gut bacteria and start to make their own microbiomes. So I think when you put it in perspective, it's like, wow, this is so cool. I hope you wouldn't want to not have a little bit of poo. I will give a Zen daddy tip or a Zen partner tip, which is... This almost happened to me at Sarah's birth, but it's happened to me a few times. I don't know why.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: When I feed my toddlers a baby food or a little baby baby food and I put the food out and I always open my mouth when I do it. I hold it up. I don't know why. Sometimes I'm like, "Don't open your mouth," but I still do it anyway. When I'm there supporting you somehow in birth and you're pushing with everything you've got, that 11 pound baby you had, yeah, I start pushing too. I'm not even kidding. When I got in the car from that birth, I though I had a hernia. Yeah.

SARAH WRIGHT OLSEN: Your booty was hurting you.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: Oh yeah. I was everything.

SARAH WRIGHT OLSEN: I have to say, this last birth that I had, I haven't told you this yet, Dr. B, but the craziest thing happened that I had not experienced yet and it's totally on my videos, but I burped so much, like full blown belching and they were so loud and so manly.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: Wait a second. In the mask? You burped loud and manly in your mask?

SARAH WRIGHT OLSEN: Very loudly in my mask. And then the mask came off towards the end because I literally was sweating so bad that the water on my face was wetting the mask. I was sweating so hard and I was so hot. You know how I get inverse, Theresa. I had you fanning me with the New York Times. But anyway, I ended up taking it off and my head was kind of down in my bed anyway because I was over on the side of the bed and I was in this squat position, but I just could not stop burping. And most of the time it was just me and Eric and my doula in the room and everybody else kind of left us alone and then they would come back in and out. But the burping was crazy and every time my doula would be like, "It's great.

SARAH WRIGHT OLSEN: It's great because the air is releasing and baby's going down further." Goldberg would cheer any doctor. He would be like, "Yes. Oh, that's great." He kept making me feel so good about it because I would do a huge burp and then I'd be like, "I'm so sorry. This is so bad. I can't believe it's happening."

TERESA PALMER: Oh my God.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: He's cheering on. Are they getting bigger and bigger and bigger? Yes. Cheerleader. All right.

SARAH WRIGHT OLSEN: They work.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: I could talk to you guys forever is the problem. We've gone long and there's a million more topics to talk about, but thankfully there's a book. So let's talk about two things.

Where can we buy this book? I'll remind people it's called The Zen Mama Guide to Finding Your Rhythm in Pregnancy Birth and Beyond by Teresa Palmer and Sarah Wright Olsen. Where can we buy this book?

SARAH WRIGHT OLSEN: This book is available where all books are sold. Oh, that's it. Yeah. You can buy it anywhere. You can go to the yourzenmama. com and it will be right there on the front where it tells you where to buy. You can also go to Amazon, you can go to Barnsdale. So you can get it anywhere.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: Where do we find you guys online?

TERESA PALMER: Instagram. You can follow us at yourzenmama and at Swright Olsen.

SARAH WRIGHT OLSEN: Yes.

TERESA PALMER: And @theresapalma.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: Beautiful.

SARAH WRIGHT OLSEN: That's right.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: All right. I thank you guys for writing the book. I thank you for coming on the podcast once again and sharing your incredible energy. And you make the whole thing because it is a ton of work and it's just very challenging each step of the way. Extremely rewarding, but very challenging each step of the way. And you guys make it look fairly easy and fun and real. And for that, I am very, very grateful.

SARAH WRIGHT OLSEN: And thank you, Dr. B, for contributing to our book. We are so, so grateful that you did that and you read it, and thank you for that.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: Yeah. I saw my wife was in there.

SARAH WRIGHT OLSEN: And your wife is in there? That's right.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: I'm hoping to find out some secrets about her. All right. At home, thanks for listening to our podcast. If you like the program, share us with your friends, send us feedback, and you can even find us on Instagram as well, whatever that is. It's Dr. Berlin, D-O-C-G-O-R-B-E-R-L-I-N.

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