Anna Malaika Tubbs - Before Birth

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IN THIS EPISODE

Scholar, advocate, and author Anna Malaika Tubbs joins Dr. Elliot Berlin, DC at 38 weeks pregnant with her second baby, in the Before Birth half of a before-and-after pair. Her acclaimed debut book, The Three Mothers, tells the stories of the mothers of Martin Luther King, Jr., Malcolm X, and James Baldwin — and Anna traces that work back to her own mother, a nomadic childhood spent moving between countries, and a lesson she grew up hearing: the way mothers are treated is an indicator of how a whole community will do. She opens up about becoming Stockton's first partner while her husband served as mayor, and about the erasure of women — especially Black women and mothers — that her scholarship works to undo. Then she turns to motherhood herself: writing the book and her dissertation while pregnant with her first, the research that changed how she thought about pregnancy and medical intervention, and the doulas who helped her discover how much control she actually had in labor. She walks through that first birth in vivid detail — the Braxton Hicks she tried not to mention, the pad thai she later regretted, thinking she was at ten centimeters when she was at three, and the moment of surrender when she stopped fighting the surges and joined, in her mind, all the women who had done this before her. Now she is planning something different: a home birth with a midwife and doula in Los Angeles. Anna shares how this pregnancy compares to the first, what self-care looks like while parenting a toddler, how she has nested and readied her home, and the belief in herself she is carrying into this birth from the very beginning. She even makes her predictions for the birth ahead. Will this second labor unfold the way she imagines?

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DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: Welcome to the informed pregnancy and parenting podcast. I'm your host doctor Elliott Berlin You have tuned in to an awesome episode. My guest today has incredible energy and incredible accomplishments She's a scholar and author in her powerful and highly acclaimed debut book The three mothers how the mothers of Martin Luther King jr. Malcolm X and James Baldwin shaped a nation She celebrates black motherhood by telling the story of three women Who raised and shaped some of America's most pivotal heroes? She herself is knee-deep in motherhood

mom to a two-year-old son and 38 weeks into her second pregnancy Anna Malika tubs. Welcome to the podcast. Thank you for having me. It's my honor to be here. I'm excited

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: I didn't even know how much crazy stuff you accomplished. I mean, I don't know if you say your age, but you're young and 29 so not even 30 and you've already done all that and I know you're working on more projects And you have the craziest good energy you came in and like everybody around you just like wakes up and you can't help But smile around you. So you're you're an amazing person. Thank you so much. I have so much to talk about Let's jump in. Where do you come from? How did it all get started? Yeah, I mean it's a long story

ANNA MALAIKA TUBBS: I'll try to keep it short and it's never a traditional answer Both of my parents were into international law in a lot of different ways for both players But they wanted to give us the privilege of traveling abroad. So a lot of my childhood. I was really nomadic So I was born in albuquerque, new mexico, but then lived in dubai for four years estonia Sweden, azerbaijan, mexico We came back to the states when I was a teenager lived in laramie, wyoming for four years And then I went to boarding school in indiana. I came out to california for undergrad when I went to stanford And then when I finished my first degree I went to cambridge in england for my masters and then

ANNA MALAIKA TUBBS: Went back and forth from cambridge to stockton california. I had met my husband in undergrad And he was born and raised in stockton and he ran for city council of his city And won at a very young age at 21 years old So yeah, we were navigating this kind of political life while also Me finishing my degrees and us doing this distance relationship But it's been an incredible journey. So that's kind of where i'm from and definitely my parents have influenced All of my life story and mainly with their decision to give us this nomadic abroad experience

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: Yeah, I feel like a horrible parent now. I mean my kids We sometimes take them to trader joe and sometimes ralphs and sometimes elbert Nothing like what you had. I mean, it's incredible was moving around I mean, you're very outgoing social but was moving around sort of awkward from time to time

ANNA MALAIKA TUBBS: You know for me, it really does depend on the kid I will say because there's different personalities. I think for some it could be harder than it was for me I loved it. I loved anytime we were moving to a new place It was sort of like, you know, I have great friends here and now I get to make great friends somewhere else I remember it being harder for my brother. He's three years older than me But he had a much deeper connection I think to all of his friends and so he felt more upset when he was taken away from his friend group And having to start over somewhere else, even though he always did it and we're all the three of us My sister brother and I are all very outgoing, but I think it was something that he wasn't as excited about

ANNA MALAIKA TUBBS: So for me, it was great and it makes it easy to talk to anybody, but I don't think that it's easy for every child.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: Okay, when you did your studies, what were you planning to do long term?

ANNA MALAIKA TUBBS: I knew and always knew that I wanted to get a PhD, but not necessarily to become a professor, but more so to take from what I learned in the academy to make things

accessible and easy and welcoming for everybody outside of the ivory tower. And so as much as I am a nerd and I love school and I love research, I knew in my academic path that I didn't intend on keeping any of that information solely for academic audiences, but instead making it something that would be enjoyable to read for other people. And so that kind of is a broad spectrum of what you can do with public intellectual work and I'm open to whatever that means. So I write fiction and nonfiction. I have a lot of ideas for screen projects or plays.

ANNA MALAIKA TUBBS: And so I think my writing hopefully can translate to just bringing more people together in conversation.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: That is so sorely needed. And I feel like if anybody can do it, you're the shining star that can bring people together in a very divided time.

ANNA MALAIKA TUBBS: I'm going to try. Thank you.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: And your husband, he didn't stop at city council.

ANNA MALAIKA TUBBS: No, he did not ask their city council four years on city council. If he wanted to run to be mayor of his city. And that's when I decided, okay, I'm going to come to Stockton and be here to support you, but also get to know the city for myself. And I spent two years teaching there and I was incredibly inspired by the work that he was doing. He ended up winning this election and became the youngest mayor of a major American city in American history, which was incredible.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: Were you married already by that point?

ANNA MALAIKA TUBBS: So we got engaged right after he was elected to the mayor's seat. And I guess during the campaign, he wanted to propose, but he decided that he didn't want to make it some kind of press thing or that people could read it as some kind of performance. And he wanted us to have our separate moment. So we waited that until after he was elected, he proposed, then we got married the following year.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: And you became the first lady of Stockton.

ANNA MALAIKA TUBBS: Yes. I like to say first partner to keep it inclusive, but yes,

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: you were the first partner of Stockton. Yeah. I always wondered how that would change over time.

ANNA MALAIKA TUBBS: And it was a really interesting experience. I was well aware that as a young woman of color, I was going to be seen sort of more as just, I don't know, eye candy or not being taken seriously, especially in comparison to his very public career. Even though I was pursuing my PhD and doing all the work that I care deeply about. I experienced it very clearly. All the things I was studying around the erasure of women and our identities and our strengths and our talents. And so I wanted to bring my own work to what he was doing. And I told him that he needed to do more for women and then to think more about gender equity in the city. And to his credit, he said, that's great. And you know, a lot more about that than I do. So where do we start?

ANNA MALAIKA TUBBS: And I said, we really should think about the data and the numbers and think about very specifically the status of women in Stockton. And so I looked it up and there'd never been a study done on the status of women in Stockton specifically looked at and addressed to the needs of the women in our city and in the community. And so we produced a report with the San Joaquin data co-op and came up with this amazing report that really showcased issues that women were facing. But again, women's issues are community issues. So in order to address the needs of the entire community, we needed to return to women and very specifically mothers.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: What kind of got you started on the book?

ANNA MALAIKA TUBBS: Kind of, yeah, I've always really wanted to think about the erasure of women. Mothering is something that my mom spoke a lot about in the different places that we live. She, like I said earlier, is a lawyer, but she specifically focused on women's rights and children's rights in a bunch of the different places that we lived abroad, as well as in the US. And so she would often say the way mothers are treated as an indicator for how this country or this community will do as a whole and on a larger scale. She can relate everything back to the way mothers were being treated. And so I always thought very specifically about the role of motherhood. And I think it definitely informed the way I viewed the world.

ANNA MALAIKA TUBBS: And I realized that a lot of other people didn't have that same perspective or didn't have that same education. And when I started my PhD, I knew I was going to do something around the erasure, not only of mothers, but very specifically of black women. So it all kind of came together when I started that degree.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: Can you elaborate just a little bit on the idea of the erasure of women?

ANNA MALAIKA TUBBS: Definitely. And I guess I could take it. I'll take a couple more steps back. One of my primary inspirations was Margot Lee Shetterly's book, Hidden Figures, and for those who haven't read the book, you've probably at least heard of the film and this kind of, you know, box office success. where we learned that the brains and the mathematicians behind the space launch were black women all along. And it's this moment where you feel such inspiration but you also feel such frustration that it took years and years for us to know this history. And it's not because someone said, oops, we forgot to mention that it was black women but instead we were erased very intentionally kept from being highlighted because that doesn't fit this hegemonic notion

ANNA MALAIKA TUBBS: and this very patriarchal notion of who the leaders of our stories are and who our heroes are. And so those stories are just swept under the rug. And that's the kind of erasure I'm talking about not only because it's not okay to keep that recognition where it's due, but also because that leads to further disrespects when it comes to lack of policy, lack of intervention, lack of support. If we're not highlighting the stories that are representative of all of us as a nation then we're really missing the point and we're not meeting the needs of all of our citizens. And that's why erasure can be so dangerous. It's not only because we don't see people it's because we don't see people as people and as human beings who have needs

ANNA MALAIKA TUBBS: and require attention and deserve support.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: Well, it's deep and it sounds like you tackled it in a very powerful way. What you said earlier was like taking these concepts that are more academic and bringing them to the public in a way that they can be easily consumed and understood and kind of inspire people to take action. How has the book been received?

ANNA MALAIKA TUBBS: It's been received really well. I've been so fortunate to have had a lot of support and a lot of attention. It was a New York Times editor's choice. It was an Amazon editor's choice. And all of these independent bookstores have really gotten behind it as well. And the book has sold out twice. Once when it first came out and then another time when we were celebrating Mother's Day and it really actually, books really shouldn't sell out. But it did better than my publishers thought it was going to do. So we weren't quite ready for that with our supply but the paperback edition comes out in January and we'll be ready this time.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: Amazing. It's always great to exceed expectations. And that's the crazy thing. At 29, you're just getting started and you've already accomplished so much.

ANNA MALAIKA TUBBS: Thank you.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: Among your accomplishments is motherhood yourself. Let's take a quick break. When we come back, we'll find out about your first pregnancy and birth. We'll be right back with Anna Malika Tubbs. Welcome back to the Informed Pregnancy Podcast for talking to Anomalyca Tubbs. Okay, let's talk about motherhood. Did you want to get started early? With motherhood?

ANNA MALAIKA TUBBS: Yes. Yeah, you know, it's interesting. I think if someone had told me when I was, you know, younger that I was going to have two kids and be married before I turned 30, I would have said no way. In my mind, I really thought, okay, my 30s, that's when all of that will happen. But my husband and I met really young. We met when I was 19 and he was 21. And so we got married six years after that. And then we were ready for our children to kind of parent together and take this next step. Not that I believe parenting is a milestone that everybody has to hit, but it was something that we wanted to experience. And we were really blessed that we were able to and have been able to. And so it happened a lot faster than I would have planned years ago.

ANNA MALAIKA TUBBS: But we were just going with the flow of our lives, I guess.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: So how was pregnancy for you, the first pregnancy?

ANNA MALAIKA TUBBS: It was incredible. I mean, one, because I was writing this book at the same time and I was also writing my dissertation and there are two separate documents, even though they're about these three women who I have grown to love so much. But I was influenced by the research that I was doing. So in the middle of writing the book, my husband and I were expecting our first. And I was knee deep in this maternal theory research, as well as understanding all of the politics behind motherhood. And especially for Black women, the money that is being made off of our bodies when it comes to things like medical interventions that are not always needed.

ANNA MALAIKA TUBBS: And I'm somebody who deeply respects medicine. I think that it's so great that we have it when we need it. But I started to realize that pregnancy was being seen as some kind of disease and that labor was being seen as something that required surgery. When that was not the

case most of the time. And so I was really thankful for the fact that I was doing this work. I was already well aware of the Black maternal health crisis. But in being in the research and reading from all of these different sources was impacting the crisis the most. I realized I needed to be very well prepared to start my own process with mothering and thinking about the care I was going to receive.

ANNA MALAIKA TUBBS: And decided that I was going to work with doulas. And again, very grateful for the fact that I did make this decision. I originally wanted to do a home birth actually. But where we were living in Stockton, there weren't any midwives of color that I could find. And so I kind of made this compromise that I would work with doulas and just have them with me in the hospital. But even then in order to find doulas of color, I had to ask three doulas who were willing to come from Oakland to Stockton. And for those who don't know the geography of that area of our state, it takes about an hour and a half to get from Oakland to Stockton on a good day without traffic. With traffic it would be up to three hours.

ANNA MALAIKA TUBBS: And they still traveled to see me for my prenatal visits. And they were there for my labor. But they really changed my perspective entirely. I can see in motherhood. I didn't even realize that I was lacking confidence in my ability to be a mother. I thought this is a normal experience for women to be afraid of labor or to think that it was completely out of our control. And so my journey with my doulas as well as writing this book, I shifted my mindset entirely to realize, no, I have a lot of control over this. My body does know what it's doing.

ANNA MALAIKA TUBBS: I should feel confident in my intuition. And everyone is here to support me. It shouldn't be that they're telling you what to do or that I need somebody or a doctor to explain what my body can or cannot do, but instead to feel really empowered by the natural ability that I carried.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: Are you previously more of a holistic person to begin with or?

ANNA MALAIKA TUBBS: I would say so. I mean, I definitely am somebody who's all about vaccines, all about, you know, when you need medicine. I'm so grateful that it's there. But I am somebody who tends to lean more towards, you know, for instance, if I have a headache, I'm not going to take a Tylenol. I'm going to drink more water. Or if I feel like I can't fall asleep at night, I'm not going to take a sleeping aid. I'm going to do another yoga practice until I can calm down a little bit. So I definitely lean more towards, I don't want to have it unless it's necessary, but I am very grateful when it's there and when I need it.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: How were the different trimesters for you during the first pregnancy?

ANNA MALAIKA TUBBS: They were great. I mean, first trimester, I think is the hardest for me and both pregnancies, you just feel so out of it. I always describe it as just like your body doesn't realize what's happening and it's kind of treating the baby as a parasite or something because you're just like, what's going on? And you feel sick, you can feel tired and emotional and kind of this roller coaster. And then the cravings and the food aversions, all of that was a lot the first 13 weeks in both of my pregnancies. And then by the time it's my second trimester, I feel this immediate rush of energy and kind of much more clarity. And throughout my whole pregnancy in both times, yoga has helped me so much in terms of dealing with.

ANNA MALAIKA TUBBS: with even nausea or pains in my body. I like to have very little of those. And I think it's because I try to keep moving as much as possible throughout the trimesters. But yeah, definitely the third trimester. Then I got a little more tired and anxious and just excited for the moment.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: How did your labor start?

ANNA MALAIKA TUBBS: My labor started really the night or two nights before. So my son was born Saturday at 9 a.m. But the Thursday night before I was getting back-to-back frax and hicks. And I didn't wanna say anything to my partner because I realized that three weeks leading up to the labor he was so on edge and so excited that anytime I said anything, he was like, is it time? Is not it time? Or I would call and just be asking for, I don't know, where'd you put the toast? He's like, is it time? So I started to kind of be a little better about holding things back until I was maybe a little clearer of what was going on. But I had frax and hicks that Thursday night. But I thought, that's really interesting. Maybe something's happening.

ANNA MALAIKA TUBBS: Then that morning I woke up and had bloody show. And I thought, okay, I think this is like a really clear sign. I texted my doulas and they said, it's definitely a sign, but it could be today. It could be a couple of days from now. So don't get too excited. But just like continue your day, start to relax a little bit. And I was like, okay, that sounds great. Can I still go to yoga? I asked them and they're like, yeah, okay. But don't push it too much. So I went to my hot yoga class. But I could feel in that class that something was, like my baby had dropped and there were certain poses that I could no longer deal. And I said to the instructor, I think this is my last class before the baby's born. So I proceeded with the day.

ANNA MALAIKA TUBBS: I was texting my doula. They started to get sort of those period cramps and I was just keeping them updated. Went and got my nails done. Because I thought it might be a while before I can do that. And then around 4 p.m. that day, I said, you know, these cramps are getting pretty intense. I don't know, they may or may not be turning into contractions. And they said, okay, take a nap. This might be kind of like the last time you can sleep for like quite a few hours. So take a nap. Let us know how you feel when you wake up. And when I woke up, I said, okay, I might have a meal. My husband went and got me some pad thai. And then I quickly felt very, all of a sudden like, oh no, this is happening. And I need my whole team here.

ANNA MALAIKA TUBBS: And I said to my husband, if you need to get back immediately, I'm pretty sure like future contractions are starting. So he started timing it. And I had these, you know, contractions for so long. I thought I was moving faster than I was through labor. It was my first time. So I was, when I was at a three, I thought I was like at a 10. I was like, this is done. I have had so much pain. I must be, you know, ready to push. And we got to the hospital and they said, no, actually you're at a three. And that's when I shifted even in my mindset to approach my labor with much more. I guess I just realized I needed to kind of put the drama on pause and really trust myself again. And in order to get through it, I was gonna need to have a clear mindset

ANNA MALAIKA TUBBS: about how long this was going to take and labor through the night. And then he was born at 9 a.m. in the morning.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: Well, so many questions. Did you eat the pad thai?

ANNA MALAIKA TUBBS: I did eat the pad thai and I later threw it up.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: Oh, okay.

ANNA MALAIKA TUBBS: So you could throw up a centimeter or two. So maybe it was helpful. It was, yeah, I guess it was good. And we like saw it all over the floor. And I was like, oh, there goes the pad thai. I'm grateful, though, that I still like pad thai. Sometimes if you get sick from something, you might not be able to have it later.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: Yeah. When you were experiencing the intensity that made you think you were 10, could you describe what those surges felt like?

ANNA MALAIKA TUBBS: Yeah, it just, hmm. Some of it, not that it becomes a blur, but I think because it's so wild that we're able to survive through it, it feels like your body's breaking. And each time I was like, there's no way I'm gonna be able to do this for much longer. And then each time I just felt almost amazed with myself that I've made it through it. But the pain was like, it took over my whole body and it would start in my belly, but then just kind of surge. And I like tensed up so much. And my dealers kept having to remind me to just like calm down. And they would just put their fingers on my forehead and on my shoulders, try to like calm me down. But for the first couple of hours, it just felt like I couldn't calm myself down if it came.

ANNA MALAIKA TUBBS: And the fact that I knew that a contraction was coming was also really playing with my mind, that there wasn't a break anytime soon, but that they were just gonna keep coming back to back to back. And so once I got to the hospital though and realized this was gonna be a much longer process than I thought, and because I wanted it to be completely unmedicated and I didn't want an IV in my arm, I started to shift and think, okay, how can I calm down? How can I move through this, walk through this, kind of move through the waves of labor? And I took several hot showers to start to slow it down a little bit more because I realized that the stress I was carrying was making them come faster than they needed to. And that all helped a lot.

ANNA MALAIKA TUBBS: But there was a very clear kind of mind shift that happened at a certain point when I said. Oh, gosh, this is going to be a while longer, you know, at least, at least seven centimeters.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: When that switch happened, is that the switch of surrender that you were able to kind of relax into them instead of getting tense and fighting them?

ANNA MALAIKA TUBBS: Yeah, I think that's what it was, it was, you know, sort of like there's only one way out of this, and I can't go back, like all I can do is move forward. So I need to just accept that. And I also have this kind of moment of clarity thinking about all the women before me who had done this. And at first I was a bit like, this is so scary. My body's going to break. I'm not going to make it through this. And then I thought, no, actually, OK, women have been doing this for so many years and now I'm joining them. And I feel really inspired by that. I felt very specifically tied to my ancestors and thinking through how proud of me they might be that moment. And, you know, my doulas and my husband all have said that in that moment, I

ANNA MALAIKA TUBBS: kind of went somewhere else, like I was in a different world, like talking to other people and was nodding and kind of saying, yeah, OK, yeah, I can do this. And it really was, I guess, a good word for it definitely is surrender.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: I mean, they say that when you have your first birth, there is the birth of the baby and also the birth of the mother. Did you feel that transition then or did it kick in later?

ANNA MALAIKA TUBBS: I think that was the moment for me. Yeah, like I was joining this esteemed group of incredible people who had done this as well.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: All right, let's take another quick break. And when we come back, we'll find about this pregnancy and your due anytime. I do have this question. Where were you in relation to your due date when you had your first?

ANNA MALAIKA TUBBS: He was born three days early.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: OK, three days before your due date, which is like in 10 days from now. All right. We're going to take a quick break. We'll be right back. Welcome back to the Informed Pregnancy podcast. We're talking to Anna Malika Tubbs. She is now 38 weeks pregnant with baby number two. How was this pregnancy compared to the first?

ANNA MALAIKA TUBBS: There were a lot of similarities and some differences similar and, you know, like the amount of weight I gained or whatever, the ways that I felt in terms of being able to still do my yoga. All of that was pretty much the same. And I feel like I've been really fortunate with very manageable pregnancies. The differences in the first trimester with my son, I was always craving pizza. I wanted anything with bread. Cheese, all the carbs. But with my second, I had a lot more aversions and, you know, I thought pizza was going to comfort me, for instance, because it didn't the first trimester with my son. And then when I ate it, it was just disgusting and it made me so sad. So a lot less things that comforted me and just more

ANNA MALAIKA TUBBS: things that I wanted to avoid. But other than that, that was really the main difference. And I have been experiencing a little bit more of the pelvic girdle pain this time, which I've been told is just kind of normal. And my body is just remembering that it needs to open for my baby, but it's not always very comfortable.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: Yeah. How is it different like being pregnant, but also already being a mom?

ANNA MALAIKA TUBBS: Oh, that is huge. I mean, your attention is so much more consumed by the toddler than the baby that's coming. And definitely in the first and second trimester, I had to keep reminding myself that I was pregnant. So I was doing all these things, you know, obviously taking care of my son while on this virtual book tour. Luckily it was virtual, not celebrating at all. The pandemic, but it did help me to manage my pregnancy because I would wake up and feel kind of sick and then still be able to do all of these Zooms and be speaking to audiences all over the place and without having to leave my house, which is very nice and could stay in my sweatpants, but I kept getting so exhausted by the end of the day and being like, why am I so tired?

ANNA MALAIKA TUBBS: And my husband would say, yeah, because you're creating the humor inside of you and you need to slow down. So that was a good reminder for me, but definitely your mind, it's so much harder to think about the child that is within you versus the one that's running around outside of you.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: How about self care? Has that changed?

ANNA MALAIKA TUBBS: I have tried really hard to still prioritize my time and still my, for instance, my partner is wonderful. And every morning he takes morning shifts with my son. So I can always sleep until seven. So no matter what is going on with my kiddo, I know that I will sleep until seven and I'm going to have at least 45 minutes to an hour to shower and just kind of start my day. And he has always prioritized that he's very much somebody who realizes, I think one, because I care so deeply about motherhood. And I think I know how important motherhood is, and I know how important the needs of mothers are that I'm very good at vocalizing. These are things that I need. I need a consistent schedule as much as possible.

ANNA MALAIKA TUBBS: I need to be able to have some time to myself in the morning. And if I can have those things then from there, and if I can go to yoga three times a week. And then from there, I'll be able to do this really well. And it's something that he speaks about so often. He's like, she's just incredible at raising our kids, but organizing her time and voicing her needs. And those are things that are really easy for him to do. And it's not like he's doing me a favor. He likes spending time with his son in the morning. So that kind of partnership is really, really crucial for us and makes all the difference in the world. So that kind of self care, I never feel like I have to sacrifice it. And if I ever feel like I need more time,

ANNA MALAIKA TUBBS: or if I want to go get my hair done or get my nails done, I just tell him and we just make it work. So it's really nice.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: And it sounds like a wonderful dynamic. How has your son reacted to pregnancy?

ANNA MALAIKA TUBBS: It's been really interesting. I think in the first trimester, because I was quite sick and would be sick in the mornings, especially I would wake up and they would be playing, they're doing their father-son time. And then if my son heard me, he would get very concerned and kind of run into the bathroom. And then just be looking at me like, what is happening? And so trying to comfort him, even though I felt really sick, it was interesting. But also, I needed to find my energy. So it almost makes it a little easier in the second time because the first time you don't have like other kids that you have to have energy for. So you can kind of like feel all of the exhaustion, feel the fatigue and like lay in bed

ANNA MALAIKA TUBBS: and sometimes feel sorry for yourself. Versus when you have a child, you have to get up and you have to just keep being energetic and push through it. And I think that kind of almost makes it a little bit more manageable because you don't really have enough. It's really hard to manage you being low energy ever.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: Yeah, I know, it's definitely a thing. I feel like your low energy is probably my peak energy. Yeah, maybe. A lot of people say that about me. On a different spectrum. Okay, so

now we're getting close to your next labor and delivery. Are there things that you learned from the first one that you're bringing into this one?

ANNA MALAIKA TUBBS: Again, it's gonna be so different because this time I'm doing a home birth. And as a result of that, worked with my midwife and my doula here in LA versus my doulas in Northern California. They've been similar in terms of their approach to labor but also just different resources that I was able to have here that I didn't have in my first. Which for instance, working with you, being able to have, make sure I'm in alignment, things like that. I had a little bit more back pain when I was pregnant with my son that I don't experience it all this time, which is wonderful. So I'm very grateful for that. And just picturing being able to do this at home, all of that feels really different. But I do think that there's still a lot for me

ANNA MALAIKA TUBBS: to learn from the first one that'll still be very applicable, which is that belief in myself from the beginning and also going into the mindset of, this could be really quick because it's my second time or this could be just as long, if not longer and not freak out but continue to find ways to relax and ways to reset and lean on my partner and lean on my doula and lean on my midwife and know that I'm not alone. I think the first time, no matter how prepared you are, there is a sense of fear at the beginning of like, how am I going to get through this? So I think this time I'll be able to better appreciate, yes, I can get through this and I'm gonna be just fine. I'm especially excited to also go for the newborn stage.

ANNA MALAIKA TUBBS: The first time around, it's so scary in a way but you just don't know how long it's gonna last. You're so tired and you're just like, how are we gonna get through this? And then you realize later how quickly it goes by and also how easy the newborn stage is compared to what comes later. But I think this time I'm gonna appreciate that even more and really just be able to embrace having that baby that just lays on you all day long.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: Yeah, I kind of felt the same way when we had toddlers moving out of toddlerhood but we had friends whose kids were turning into teenagers and they're like, you just enjoy that toddlerhood because it only gets crazier after that.

ANNA MALAIKA TUBBS: Exactly, but your first time around, you think, perhaps this is so much or this requires so much energy or the newborns are using the bathroom all the time or just changing diapers and nursing and then you realize that it's so easy.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: Yeah, are you excited about being home and also how do you get your home ready for birth?

ANNA MALAIKA TUBBS: You know, the last couple of days I went into major nesting mode. Like up until like Thursday last week, I was sort of like, oh, I'll get the things done, you know, this is our second time, I think we'll be fine. And then suddenly on Thursday, I woke up and everything on my mind was like, you need to get this off the checklist and get this ready. So the main thing was just making sure I knew where everything was. I'm a very organized person, getting everything organized so that when my doula and my wife come in, they also know where things are. My husband knows where things are so that I don't have to communicate too much in the process and making sure that the room looks nice and that no one else is gonna go in that room

ANNA MALAIKA TUBBS: until the baby's born so it stays organized. I've been like deep cluttering the entire house and having a room ready for the newborn, even though I know like nurseries are not really. all that necessary as a lot of new parents think that they are. So right now, it's kind of like a hybrid between the top of the room that our son will move into as well as just a room where we can be with the newborn and have the rocking chair and just have your diapers ready and their clothes ready there. So I have a space now for the baby. And I'm now feeling very settled, which I think means the baby could come at any minute. Like before this, I kept saying not yet. I'm not ready. Give me a couple more days. And I feel now, as of this morning, I'm ready.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: Wow. What a great time to do a podcast.

ANNA MALAIKA TUBBS: Yeah.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: Are you a water birther?

ANNA MALAIKA TUBBS: I mean, you know, at the hospital, I had to get out of the shower that I was loving so much because they wanted me to lay down on the bed and do that. But I was loving the water. I was loving having like the heat on me and having water raining on me. So we will see. I mean, we're going to have the pool available. We also have like deep enough bathtub where the baby could be born. But I'm also well aware that day of I could just be moving and we're just going to see where I end up.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: Yeah. OK. So do you want to make predictions?

ANNA MALAIKA TUBBS: Sure. What about?

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: OK. First of all, when your son was born, you said three days before your due date. Yes. How big was he?

ANNA MALAIKA TUBBS: He was eight pounds, three ounces.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: And in total, from active labor to the end, how many hours?

ANNA MALAIKA TUBBS: Fifteen hours.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: Fifteen. OK. So you want to make predictions on this one?

ANNA MALAIKA TUBBS: Sure.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: All right. When in relation to your due date, do you think you might have your baby?

ANNA MALAIKA TUBBS: I think I'm going to have the baby about 10 days early. Like, I'm really feeling like this weekend could be the time.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: Wow. OK. Ten days early. And do you feel like it's going to be quicker, the same or longer?

ANNA MALAIKA TUBBS: You know, this is the hard one, because I'm like a research based person. And I feel like so often it's more off the common that your second is faster. So I'm going to

say faster.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: So first was 15, you think?

ANNA MALAIKA TUBBS: I feel like, you know, seven hours.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: Wow. OK, seven. Less than half. No, it's very possible.

ANNA MALAIKA TUBBS: I'm with you. And then maybe because I can already feel like myself more like open than I was in the first pregnancy. So I feel like less work to do.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: Yeah, maybe. And then your first baby was eight pounds, three ounces. Do you feel like this one's bigger, smaller or the same?

ANNA MALAIKA TUBBS: I want to say bigger, bigger.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: Wow. OK, so healthier. More than eight point three, even though you're going to be a week earlier.

ANNA MALAIKA TUBBS: Who knows? OK, I know that's a good point. OK, that's a good point with them together. But maybe it's going to average out. I'm going to say then like right about the same.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: OK, eight point three. And do you have premonitions on the sex?

ANNA MALAIKA TUBBS: I really don't have any guesses, but my midwife believes it's going to be a boy. So we'll go with boy.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: All right. Well, the cool thing is you agreed to come back and share your birth story for an after episode, which I'm so excited to hear. Because I know you're excited about having another birth and home birth. And I know your midwife and she's freaking amazing. And you're. Yeah, we can give them a shout out.

ANNA MALAIKA TUBBS: I wasn't sure. Oh, yeah.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: If you want to, you can.

ANNA MALAIKA TUBBS: Yeah. Debbie Allen is my midwife and Julia Underwood is my doula, which I'm super excited about this.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: All right. Amazing team. Starting with you, but they are powerhouses. OK, before we end, can we get a preview of coming attractions? Switching back to your career.

ANNA MALAIKA TUBBS: Yeah. Yeah, I am. I'm working on a children's book right now. Picture book about the mothers of three black women, leaders who are more contemporary. So my first book, of course, about the mothers, them with a junior Malcolm X and James Baldwin. And I haven't quite decided on the three women for this one because it'll depend on who buys the book and who edits it. Something to change. And then I also have a novel that I've been working on for several years and then turning my first book into a screen project. So a show that's in development. I will see what happens with it and potentially a play that we would later shop for movie rights. So there's a lot going on.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: You have so many little fires going on in different places. I was really hoping you were going to make the first one into a motion picture.

ANNA MALAIKA TUBBS: So, yeah, I think hopefully I think it'll just happen kind of over time. I guess, you know, motion pictures take so much longer, but you can also get like a play produced a lot faster. And I think there's something to be said, you know, about the musical or play and seeing it theatrically before it hits.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: Oh, absolutely. You know, each one brings its own unique storytelling to your work. So I think they'll all be fantastic.

ANNA MALAIKA TUBBS: Thank you. We will see.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: All right. So last question. Where do we find you online?

ANNA MALAIKA TUBBS: Oh, yes. OK, I'm on Instagram and on Twitter. My Twitter handle is Anna, A-N-N-A-S, and then underscore T-E-A, and then another underscore, Anna's T. You can see what I did there, honesty.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: Oh, I love that.

ANNA MALAIKA TUBBS: And then it's the same on Instagram.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: Awesome. Well, Ana, thank you so much for joining us and sharing your personal story and the amazing work that you're doing. I look forward to seeing you probably in just a week or two for your next birth story. And at home, thanks for listening to the Informed Pregnancy podcast. If you'd like to connect with us, visit us on Instagram. We are Dr. Berlin, it's spelled out D-O-C-T-O-R-B-E-R-L-I-N. I got a whole lot.

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