Olesya Rulin - Before Birth

Episode 302 · September 15, 2022 · with Olesya Rulin

IN THIS EPISODE

Russian-American actress and environmentalist Olesya Rulin joins Dr. Elliot Berlin, DC at 39 weeks pregnant with her first baby — due, as she puts it, at any moment. She looks back on growing up in a tiny Russian village of twelve houses, off the land with forest-ranger parents, before culture shock, Utah, and an acting career that began with Disney Channel movies at twelve. Olesya opens up, for the first time, about surviving abuse, the PTSD that fogged nearly a decade of her memory, and the eating disorder she is still learning to live with — and how a year of intensive therapy, her brother's own PTSD journey, and a curated circle of support changed everything. Plus: meeting her husband Joseph on Raya and knowing almost immediately, conceiving despite warnings it might be difficult, hypermobile Ehlers-Danlos in pregnancy, and the birth she is planning — laboring at a rented house in Los Angeles before finishing at Cedars with her doctor, her doula, and Joseph, as natural and fully present as she can make it, armed with the acting technique that gets her through anything: you are safe, you are loved, and everything's going to be okay.

About this transcript: *This transcript was created with AI-assisted transcription and reviewed by our team. It may not be 100% accurate — names, medical terms, and phrasing can occasionally be mis-transcribed. For exact wording, please listen to the episode audio.*

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: The important pregnancy and first thing my custom your host pregnancy focused carprector dr Elliott Berlin my guest today is an actor an environmentalist and a social media influencer for environmentally sustainable brands she's also about to become a mom like wow, maybe on the show today

OLESYA RULIN: God willing Let's see. Oh Rulina. Welcome to the podcast. Hi. Thank you so much for having me. I'm so excited to be here

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: Oh my god, I love your energy. Okay, and your eyeballs Giant eyeballs. They're fascinating intriguing. It's really hard to focus on anything. I'll take that as a compliment. It's a huge compliment Alright, let's see. Let's go back to the beginning before we get into some of the more cool stuff that's going on here You are from?

OLESYA RULIN: Mother Russia mother Russia. I am from mother Russia. I can make fun of my own people and I think that's socially acceptable

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: I make fun of everybody and I think really acceptable. Of course. I just stand up comedy. Yeah, it's a form of endearment

OLESYA RULIN: Yes, I am from Soviet Russia. I moved to America in 1992 right at the end of the Cold War and Both my parents are licensed forest strangers and tax remiss by trade. It's what we did in Russia We lived off the land. I'm from a little village of 12 houses with no ender plumbing or gas

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: We did have electricity though. Wait, it's just slow down slow down. You're just like what?

OLESYA RULIN: Yeah, because you're young like who knew that this happens

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: Wait a tiny bit with 12 houses like I don't understand like no Postmates. There's no Postmates. There's no there's no story

OLESYA RULIN: No story, there's no road the mail does not show up no phone nothing

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: So what is that like? I mean was there a formal education?

OLESYA RULIN: Nature and both of my parents are very well educated So until I would move to America if they they homeschooled my brother and I who's here an app holder

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: Because they're forest rangers you got to live in the forest so you grew up with like all sorts of animals around you

OLESYA RULIN: Yeah, I mean whatever is in the wilderness We did have what you would call a small farm, I guess but in the American version of a farm we're not like Using beef or anything like we had a dairy cow. Oh Yeah, I did actually and we had a cow and a horse to help us plow the fields and it was more of like a Vegetarian lifestyle on us like and we had chickens and dogs Hunting dogs that would help my father and mother hunt for bear and bore in the world

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: What do you do? Oh bear for what do you do with bear when you you stuff it? Oh tazza to me tax for me And what do you do it for?

OLESYA RULIN: Well, you also stuff it but you can also eat it

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: Multi-purpose

OLESYA RULIN: So, yeah, I grew up living off the land and

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: I do most of my hunting and Ralph's Ralph's works. There's also the pavilion Yes

OLESYA RULIN: Yeah, so I grew up loving Mother Nature and

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: We had now house which means what like there's water flowing underneath it or no

OLESYA RULIN: It's a hole in the ground and then there's a little house that you build on top of it and it just decomposes

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: Kind of yeah

OLESYA RULIN: and then like once the hole is full you shift the little house and you dig a different hole

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: and cover that one up oh wow okay cool you're my connection to the back yeah thank you and then

OLESYA RULIN: you came here when you were seven seven almost eight yes we moved to america right as the cold war was coming to an end and that was an interesting shift so i moved to america i had a lot of culture shock learned the language when we were here and started acting at the age of 12 thanks to my incredible mother who noticed that i was shy and i read a lot and it was very introverted and she's like you're fun and charismatic she wanted me to meet more children that were well-rounded and came from different backgrounds which actors tend to be

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: where in the u.s did you grow up like from utah oh wow interesting yeah it's severe climate

OLESYA RULIN: seasonal changes just like russia like really hot really cold and they love to hunt and for two

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: tax remiss that made sense so we grew up in utah okay utah and then when you started acting like what kind of acting like on stage or no um stage terrifies me because you have to be

OLESYA RULIN: big i'm big and there you go you have to be big with your energy not just your physicality and i am five two and like 105 pounds and i just can't i was like no no no i cannot be on stage projecting myself like that um but i loved film so i auditioned for disney channel

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: okay objection you'll have bigger energy than i do oh thank you i guess

OLESYA RULIN: yeah but on stage you're just like staring to this black abyss with all these people i'm like oh my gosh okay i like to be smaller and then have the camera find me and find those nuances of like an eye gentle eye twitch or like the single tear that drops down your face and i find that really challenging um so yeah i started working for disney when i was 12 doing what disney channel movies they came to utah to shoot three or four disney channel films a year because it was a non-union state so i worked as a non-union actor yeah from 12 until 25 i was with the company and i did such incredible films and i was part of the heist musical franchise and that changed my life in a big way in a huge way but meanwhile

OLESYA RULIN: i was just a normal kid coming to school and then i was a nursing assistant when heist musical came out and was in college and moved and to paris just to the economics i did not think acting was like a thing for me when you're an immigrant and you come from a village like to tell your parents like oh by the way i'm gonna move to la and become an actor um it's not the stability that was looking for well i think my parents would have supported me doing anything it just didn't seem

stable to me but i got really lucky and had a great career shift and joined the union and i joined the union at 12 got my sad card oh really so

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: you've been watching the screeners for a long time i have been watching them for a long time if i pay my dues on time yes uh okay so can we jump into the awkward stuff but like yeah

OLESYA RULIN: ptsd from something yeah so i never actually talked about as openly but today when i was writing my little bio for this podcast i was like oh you know what i'm in a great place for the first time in my life where i can talk about ptsd and trauma and as i'm transitioning into motherhood hopefully today i i really want to obviously let go and allow that energy to shift out of my body but i think it's also a time on the planet right now where we can talk about these topics without being scared or as scared at least maybe i'm not as scared to get negative feedback from it so yeah i am i i guess you would call a survivor of physical abuse mental abuse and some really really fun traumas and had to deal with 10 years of

OLESYA RULIN: intensive i can't remember 10 years of my life ptsd could cannot and i i was lucky i cannot remember from 18 to about 25 oh wow 16 17 18 19 20 21 it's all foggy if you ask me like how i shot for example high school musical i cannot tell you i don't know and so that's kind of hard actually because like sometimes the fans come up to you and they're like how was it or interviews and i kind of give a pretty blank statement that's all-encompassing like yeah it was great because sure it was great i can't tell you how i got to work i can't tell you how i got to london for the premiere i can't tell you how i did anything do not know. And I was fully sober. Never used drugs in my life and I didn't start drinking

OLESYA RULIN: really until I was 30. So my mind protected me in a beautiful way, but I am missing a lot of memories.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: What kind of things were happening to you?

OLESYA RULIN: Just domestic trauma and mental abuse and manipulation and luckily having sexual, which is lucky for me, just physical abuse and just not having a space or a place to be able to go and away from that in a safe way.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: You didn't have anybody that you felt comfortable with?

OLESYA RULIN: No, and being in a new country and like we don't have family here, it's just tricky. And at the time, this is, you know, here, whatever, 20 years ago, we weren't talking about depression or even anxiety, let alone abuse as openly as we are now, right? So having that freedom and that gift to have that now has been really beautiful. And I hope if I talk about it a little bit without getting into too much detail, maybe other people will seek help and not feel as traumatized or stigmatized by it as well.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: I'm so sorry you experienced that.

OLESYA RULIN: It's OK. You know, that's the beauty of therapy. You transition through things, you learn through things, and I'm actually not being held back by it anymore. And it's beautiful because it

gave me so much desire to heal and to feel better. And I was in a position where I did have money in savings and could take a year off and did every possible therapy, Reiki, crystal hut, which ceremony I could do to drain my savings, become very, very broke. And heal. And I know that's not the case for most people. And I was able to do it at a young age, but my 20s, you know, at some point

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: when you got out of that cave, how did you bring yourself out? Like, what helped you get out?

OLESYA RULIN: I hit rock bottom. I was really successful. I was 25. And I had just got out of a relationship and I just I couldn't remember. And I got so sick of not remembering memories. And everyone around me was having these experiences where, you know, they wanted to party and have fun and use like like alcohol or whatever just to escape the body. And I could not do anything to keep myself in my body. So it was frustrating because the idea of like the whole reason you, you know, have fun with substances is to escape. Right. And I I couldn't stay. And and making conscious decisions was really hard because I couldn't remember details. And after so many years, it's a point of frustration. We're like, I don't know how I got on a plane.

OLESYA RULIN: And it'd be one thing if I wasn't sober. Right. But I just couldn't remember so much of my life. And I was like missing insurance payments because I couldn't remember that like how to pay an insurance payment. Like my brain just wasn't working. And so I think that was the rock bottom for me to be like, well, something's wrong. And luckily for me, my brother is actually a war veteran from Iraq and Afghanistan. And he had come home and was doing PTSD treatments as well. And so I kind of started paying attention more to that and being like, oh, I kind of have some of these symptoms as well. And maybe there's something there. And then I just went to Barnes and Noble and bought probably like eight or

OLESYA RULIN: ten books in the self-help aisle, like co-dependent, no more. And like all these other books, I was like, something's wrong. If I just keep reading, like I'll find it. But I think it's a beautiful testament also to show like, to check in on your strong friends. Right. Cause I was fully functioning, really successful, making money on a TV show, like working and could not tell you what I did for 10 years.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: So I mean, in retrospect, is there a point where you would have, you know, put a stop to it earlier on? Like, is there?

OLESYA RULIN: No, cause I was a child and I was young and I also didn't know any different. And I don't think so. Do you know what I mean?

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: Yeah. Well, I just kind of wonder, like if young you is listening to this interview, what advice do you have for young you?

OLESYA RULIN: No, I don't really do that. I don't go back and reflect.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: It's not young you, it's somebody else.

OLESYA RULIN: Oh, for somebody else?

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: In the same position as young you.

OLESYA RULIN: There we go. I can do that one. For someone similar, I would say, find an archetype, whether that's inside of yourself or someone that you can look up to that's outside of your bubble. or community or resource that's similar, or the things that you want to be, or the things that you admire that they have or what you would want one day to have, whether that's safety and security, whether that's love, and just make yourself as close in alignment to that as possible. And know that everything is temporary. And the situation that you're in right now is maybe horrible, but it's temporary. And there is an opportunity or there will be an opportunity for that to no longer be your story and to not carry the damage of that story as a badge of honor

OLESYA RULIN: because it's just a chapter. It might be a horrible chapter, but it's a chapter. And there's so many more that you're gonna get to look through that are beautiful and vibrant.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: Thank you, Alessia. I guess once we're on this topic, you also have an unenough, again, eating disorder.

OLESYA RULIN: I do, which I've also not talked about. I was a ballet dancer growing up because I'm Russian, that's what we do. I mean, we dance ballet and play hockey. That's what we're doing. We're scientists and spies. So yes, I danced ballet for a really long time and I loved it. But because you are projecting your body through a floor or into the air, it helps to be lighter. So my eating disorders were never centered around an image, actually. They were centered around performance.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: That's so interesting.

OLESYA RULIN: Yeah, so I've never been like, oh my gosh. I mean, I'm sure I've said that and I have, but though I'm quote unquote fat or I feel a little bit off, but it's not really so much about like fitting into clothes or looking a certain way. It was more of just like, if I weigh too much, I can't jump aside and it's harder for me. Or if I weigh too much, then I can't fit in the right clothes for acting. And then I look different on screen and the camera doesn't favor you in a specific way. And then I can't provide for myself and feed myself. So it was more of just like work-oriented, but I felt that way since I was about 12 or I'm 36 now. But it's a lot more under control and my eating disorder choice was just anorexia,

OLESYA RULIN: like was restricting, not anything else. I feel like they did less damage to myself

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: and like would you count calories or would you just not eat?

OLESYA RULIN: Both. So I would not eat or what I would eat would be really low in calories or I would just like, oh, I had a salad today.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: Have you been working during pregnancy?

OLESYA RULIN: I worked my second trimester. I worked on a show called The Rookie. It was really fun.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: The Rookie?

OLESYA RULIN: Yeah, I did an episode on The Rookie and I'm still on NCIS LA where I met a lot of, where I met such incredible people. So like Sarah Rytlesland and her hubby, Eric, so.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: Our buddies. Yeah, your people.

OLESYA RULIN: Our people.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: Yeah, so I just wondered because if performance was the issue and then you're pregnant and growing, did working while pregnant pose a challenge for you?

OLESYA RULIN: I definitely had a day when my fitting for The Rookie and they pulled all these skirts and like little crop tops and like what I would normally fit into, right? And I was like, okay, that is a different body and we're gonna have to adjust those track bands and accordingly. But you know what? I think because I'm in a really good place and I can't highlight this enough because of the amount of therapy I've done and software, I feel really supportive for the first time in my life with my incredible partner, my husband Joseph, my friend group that I've curated over the last 15 years in LA and he has been so supportive and beautiful and I've created this family and this network that I wasn't born into

OLESYA RULIN: and it took a long time and it took a lot of hard work but now I'm in this new chapter where, yes, I looked in the mirror at the fitting and I was like, whoa, this is brutal and it's also like overhead, like, you know, fluorescent lighting, like it's just not right. It's not right. And you're like in a carpeted area somewhere like the Warner Brothers lotters, it's not great. So I just was like, you know what? This is just my body and this is happening and I told the crew once I got on set, I was like, I'm pregnant. So let's work through this one. Okay. Yeah, but also, you know, I'm really little and what I realized was like, that's okay. My body's just this beautiful vessel that gets to be a conduit of something magical

OLESYA RULIN: like another human life. So if they think I'm too chubby, then they can shoot, you know, boob up. They don't have to show my belly. They can figure it out. It's cameras and we make magic for a living, right? It's like razzle-dazzle and fog and mirrors. So they can make me look six feet tall if they want to. And once I kind of talk myself out of that. and got out of the horrible lit room I was fine and then yeah I ended up having a wonderful time it was a beautiful show and I didn't actually think about like the fact that my belly was showing and I looked the biggest I've ever looked

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: clearly on set but is your character pregnant no okay all right let's go let's take a little break because you're about to pop and have your kid a little bit more about hang on there and what your plans are we'll be right pregnant and gosh before we get to your plans for birth which hopefully they're made because it's happening any minute let's talk about how you got there so you talked about your wonderful husband Joseph how did you

OLESYA RULIN: guys meet we met on a dating site called Raya Raya it's for people in a creative industry so it's creative still on there and I don't know it's like pretty Instagram heavy and you can't do like a screenshot so I think some famous people get on there because it's a little safer and more private but or not I don't know I got on there because my girlfriends encouraged me I saw this really cute boy and I was like you're cute and I liked him and he liked me back mm-hmm that was

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: like your number one experience in right no it wasn't my first

OLESYA RULIN: experience around but it was clearly the best I married him yeah I don't

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: understand that you can't screenshot it because can I screenshot it with my

OLESYA RULIN: phone are you I don't know I guess so I think some people get excited or

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: maybe they want to like catfish celebrities or something I think we all want to catfish celebrities I would probably catfish a celebrity yeah I probably do a whole podcast about which celebrity people would catfish he really top rated podcast yeah okay so you met Joseph on there he's always

OLESYA RULIN: he creative to them I take it he is he owns a fat a woman's fashion line called the laundry the laundry room yes they make bougie t-shirts and sweatpants it's all women's yeah but most of its unisex I mean let's say women's because it is a women's fashion line but they you can definitely wear the t-shirts unisex as well as I still try to put bougie and unisex together and it became bougie sex we'll just next we'll see maybe

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: we'll put that on a t-shirt for everyone it could be whatever you wanted to be Uh, okay. So he's creative and you're creative and you guys live off the beaten path.

OLESYA RULIN: We just, we met and I was ready to escape LA a little bit after 15 years of Los Angeles, which I love LA, but COVID and life, I just needed a little bit more of my roots, which is nature. And I just knew I didn't want us frustrated with that plumbing in the house.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: Yeah. I mean, what is up with endless water supply and gas and electricity?

OLESYA RULIN: And I met him and he already had a beautiful property. He was renting out and right outside USMU national park. And then he took me up there because actually it was the one place we could get a COVID vaccine. So we drove up there to get it vaccinated. And I saw the house and I said, that's great. We're getting married and we're moving here.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: Wow. You're forward.

OLESYA RULIN: And he said, okay.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: Wow. Being a little Russian, but I get it.

OLESYA RULIN: And they respected and you know, here we are.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: You're an athlete or married pregnant living. You're somebody that was all quick. I didn't realize it was that recently that you were just browsing through where I am not taking screenshots.

OLESYA RULIN: Yeah. We got engaged on our six month anniversary in the middle of the meeting. Yeah.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: So did you have like a pandemicy wedding?

OLESYA RULIN: Kind of. We did. It was only our biological family, which is very small on my end. It's my mother and my brother. And on his end, it was 11 people. So tiny, tiny little wedding.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: Beautiful.

OLESYA RULIN: I'm my biological father is just not in my life anymore, but my chosen father is in my life. And he came into my life when I was 13 and is the most incredible human, his name is Kenton. And I would not be here today without having continuous love. And how do I explain this? He taught me what unconditional love was from a male figure and over years of showing up, regardless if I allowed him any like credit to doing me, I'd be like, Oh yeah. Every birthday, every Christmas he just showed up and he was constant and it is the biggest gift of my life. So I do have an incredible father figure.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: Oh, that's sweet.

OLESYA RULIN: But he didn't come to the wedding. No, because he's on a little older and I didn't want to risk him flying or driving and he had just had back surgery. So we'll do another big ceremony. Once this munchkin decides to come Earth side and we'll do a big party and now he can travel and it's just a little safer. I didn't want to impose that cause he would move mountains to show up, but I didn't want to give him that motivation.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: That's great. So when you said, Hey, Joseph, we're going to get married and move into that house. Okay. And he was like, sure, babe was babies on the radar too.

OLESYA RULIN: Yeah. You know, Joseph is an incredible human being, like I said, and I'm so blessed to be with a partner that has also done a lot of the work prior to meeting me and to know exactly what he was looking for and what he wanted out of his life in that family sense. And we're both really fluid and open to like pivoting our plans, right? But we did know what we wanted out of a partner and what kind of life we wanted when we met, we aligned and we went through this checklist before we got romantically involved of like, I want this, do you want that? So there wasn't any pressure to answer any other way, but being brutally honest with each other. Cause you don't like like each other yet. You haven't kissed each other yet.

OLESYA RULIN: You know, we did it over zoom too. So it was just kind of like, Hey, do you want a family? I want a family. Where do you want to live?

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: You had those conversations when it was still our first date.

OLESYA RULIN: Okay.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: I was going to say still a lot of logic and all that emotion.

OLESYA RULIN: Yeah. There was no like Twitter paid it. Like we liked each other and we thought we were, you know, I liked him, but I didn't have this, Oh, you know, I kissed him and now I'm all like Twitter paid it and I like him and now I'm going to maybe not be as honest or shift my authentic like core needs. So we're both very blunt with each other and we got lucky and we aligned. And I definitely think I'm daily before doing all of that work and having those uncomfortable conversations with me in the beginning, because then we could just start living our life. And there was no like

surprise by the way, I don't want to have kids, you know, a year into it. I mean, what's the plan?

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: Let's just come here and have kids right away.

OLESYA RULIN: It wasn't the plan to get pregnant right away, but it was definitely that we want to have a baby and let's see what happens. And we were thinking like we'd start now, like in this summer, try.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: For the next one.

OLESYA RULIN: No, and I was told by multiple doctors that I had endometriosis and I've had issues with just like my reproductive organs in the past and scar tissue and it's going to take a long time or it might be tricky for me to conceive and knowing that I went on a regiment of herbs from my homeopathic doctor and just tried it for my own health and my own wellness. I figured, yeah, like if it helps our chances are getting a little nugget, great. And we just got really lucky. And after a year of me drinking stick juice and I have no idea what herbs were in this tea, no clue, Chinese sticks. And I drank them for a year and they were great. And here we are and I'm pregnant. So we got pregnant.

OLESYA RULIN: We found out four days after our wedding that I was actually pregnant.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: Oh, wow. So you were pregnant at your wedding?

OLESYA RULIN: Yeah, she came to the party. She wanted champagne.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: You said all the biological family.

OLESYA RULIN: Yeah, the whole biological family showed up and we just laugh and call her Sneaky Sperm because I wasn't even in the same city when she decided to do her thing. And we actually conceived because she stayed alive in me for four days before my egg dropped. So I was like, you sneaky girl, you were very determined.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: Little Russian spy. Amazing.

OLESYA RULIN: Yeah.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: Just as a brief rundown, I know we talked about your second trimester, you were acting, you were working. How was your first trimester?

OLESYA RULIN: Horrible. I was just so sick, so nauseous. My body is very sensitive to hormones. So I think the extra boost of estrogen progesterone and everything, I could not, had worse brain fog. Can't tell you like how I got through those three months. I was just very nauseous, food sensitivity. All I could eat was white rice and cantaloupe. Ginger chews all day long. Couldn't drive down a windy road.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: So when you live next to Yosemite National Park, that's rough.

OLESYA RULIN: Yeah, it was pretty horrible. And we had just started renovations on our home to make it more of like an eco retreat house. So we were doing reno and restoration of this beautiful property and like painting walls and trying to figure out what we're going to do with interior decorating

and as I'm vomiting. So it was kind of a blur. Second trimester, I got my brain and my functionality and my creativity back, which I really thoroughly enjoyed. And now third trimester. This is the most I've enjoyed being pregnant to tell you the truth. Cause now I'm actually pregnant right now. I look pregnant. Whereas my second trimester, I had like a bum bun, just looked like I got a little chunky and now I feel pregnant and I really enjoy

OLESYA RULIN: her like swimming around and doing a little thing and I feel more in my body than I did my first or second trimester because my body's bigger and there's more mass I'm in more chronic pain cause I have hypermobile ADS as you well know, cause you just put my hips back. My ligaments are all over the place. So I'm a little too stretchy. Other than that, it's been the most fun.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: So just to break that down, hypermobile means your joints move a little bit further apart from each other than typical, the ligaments that normally hold them stable are not as stabilizing as typical. So now it's Ehlers-Danlos syndrome with hypermobility. So that's you in general. And then pregnant people in general have some hypermobility cause of the relaxation hormones of pregnancy. So you have super hypermobility, which is not something, you know, put on a cape and fly around town saving things with it's uncomfortable.

OLESYA RULIN: It's very uncomfortable. I've been walking with the limp for two weeks. It's not fun, but, and as a physical or human being, I love yoga and Pilates, I definitely haven't moved my body for seven months other than walking because you can hyper extend or you can push yourself and not notice, especially with relax and going through my body and giving me like extra stretchy capacities, I've definitely, I'm so excited to be able to work out in a gentle way because I'm just too scared. I'm like, no, I'm going to do a downward dog and pull something and not know. That's how I feel.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: There you go.

OLESYA RULIN: Yeah. I have no reason for it though.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: Uh, all right. We're getting very close to you giving birth. So let's take one more break and then find out what you have in mind. We'll be right back. Welcome back to the Informed Pregnancy and Parenting podcast. We're talking to Alessia Rulina. Is there a more Russian way to pronounce that?

OLESYA RULIN: My real name is Alia Segura Rulina. That's what it means.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: I can barely say it. Okay, good. Nice two of us. Yes, so you're 39 weeks. You're due at any moment. You have a plan. What's your plan for labor and birth?

OLESYA RULIN: My plan for labor and birth, let's see what the universe conspires. I would love to be as natural as possible as someone that has PTSD and is living with PTSD. I am so excited to have an experience that is quote unquote painful and quote unquote extreme, but feels supported, loved, and safe in that experience.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: Wow. I did not see that coming.

OLESYA RULIN: I have not had one of those in 36 years old and I have no idea truly what that feels like. It's going to make me cry. It's making me cry right now. I'm really looking forward to being in

quote unquote pain. It's actually on my birth board with my motivational little stickers and it says natural pain is good pain. I want to know what it's like to be in a room with people that love me and a doctor I trust and my doula who I'm obsessed with, my partner who I'm creating this life with and know that the pain I'm going through is natural and it's good and it's okay. I can be not a control freak because I naturally am, but I can control how soft I get to be, not how strong I have to be. I cannot wait for that experience on top of,

OLESYA RULIN: yes, of course, meeting my daughter and having this beautiful moment with Joseph and bringing the soul into the planet that I'm blessed to be a vessel for. So all of that's really exciting. So that's partly when people are like, why do you want to go supernatural? Because I actually, for the first time in my life, can remember and my PTSD won't get in the way. So I want to be present for all of those moments as much as I can. I never ever thought about that.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: I never thought about that. You want to feel life right now. You want to feel the intensity and you want to feel it in a loved and supported way and you want to melt into it and surrender to it. To my fullest capacity,

OLESYA RULIN: because I don't even know what that is. So I'm expecting, you know, maybe I'll have struggles with that and that's why I have a great birth team and I got really lucky with our doula and Hugh and my Dr. Rothbard, my doctor and my partner and like, okay, what's this going to feel like? Am I going to allow all of the lessons that I've learned and the tools that I've gained to actually just give in to this moment? And if I can accomplish that to whatever degree that is, what interesting chapter will that leave me down in this next moment of my life? And I'm so grateful for my daughter and my husband for giving me this opportunity to be able to have this experience. It makes me really

OLESYA RULIN: grateful for Joseph for choosing me to be his baby mama and his wifey to have this very soulful experience in the human body. I'm stoked.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: I mean, your plan has already changed a little bit because originally you wanted to give birth in the motherland.

OLESYA RULIN: I did. The birthing process is very different in Russia and just our healthcare system's different and my mom and I own the village I'm actually from.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: The 12 houses?

OLESYA RULIN: Yeah, basically. And we turned into a nature reserve. It's 400 acres. So I figured birth in Russia and go back to the nature reserve with my nugget and my hubby and live this like very earth mama life in my homeland. And I wanted her to have dual citizenship and she can always come back to her heritage. But then the war happened, which is horrible on so many levels. And we just had to pivot really quickly in March with our plan. So we stayed in LA, but luckily I had been stalking Sarah Wright Olson and yours and mama for like a solid eight years. I'm not even kidding. So it's actually one instance that I worked with her husband on NCIS and LA. And then I was, I DM'd her and was like, hi, I need the new

OLESYA RULIN: brick blend and she is all the connections in the world yeah she has all the connections i have her book i love her and teresa palmer so you know i've watched every video they

made and had already been on this birth journey i've been studying birth for almost eight years for fun oh just you like the topic you like the concept you like no it's a rabbit hole it's a rabbit hole once you start kind of when i started therapy like intensive therapy i had to learn to reparent myself or parent myself and where do you start you start reading like child rearing books and then what's before that birth and so then i just got into this rabbit hole of like how do you talk to your

OLESYA RULIN: energetic baby how do you talk to yourself how do you and just from the beginning and then just kind of stayed there and i thought it was fascinating like how people choose to raise the children and what that does and birth has so much to do with that because how you conceive and how at least to promote my education so anyway long story short reach out to sarah she dm'd me back and gave me all these resources so now i have a really amazing team and a plan here we are going to labor as long as we can at home which is not yosemite not yosemite at the moment okay yeah we rented a house in la for the birth and then we'll get our coupons to cedars and i and finish our birth labor with our incredible doctor doctor work

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: first two thoughts number one when you have that plan in your 27 weeks into your pregnancy that's one thing but when you have that vision and that plan and that clarity of thought on how you want it to be and you still want that natural approach with the understanding that it's going to be intense which you also want in your 39 weeks plus yeah it's a different story because like you're on the precipice of this happening like literally could be tonight or tomorrow hopefully now that you adjusted my spine it'll be tonight i hope so um but then at the same token like it's a path you haven't been down personally before so are you open to it taking detours if necessary 100 and that's the answer my

OLESYA RULIN: doula would like me to say yes i'm really good at pivoting i'm a shapeshifter by nature and my job so i can pivot too and change i like change i enjoy change so like that doesn't scare me so i'll be okay with that of course i want to have this like whimsical amazing like fully present birth let's see what happens and it is a new experience for me but it's also like a collective experience and i really love tuning into that and knowing at the same moment millions of creatures and people and plants and everything's giving birth so i don't really feel alone and not and helps if there was fear helps that's inside yeah i love attending birth

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: with actors because you guys are so open to suggestion like direction and you know normally you don't need anything but sometimes when you get to a challenging point you need a little help over that point you know somebody in there that you trust can just give you a little bit of direction from the outside and then you take it so well and then you hop over that difficulty and you're back to smooth sailing again it's really cool to watch thank you i'm

OLESYA RULIN: excited we're actually using one of my acting techniques oh what's that in birth so i'm a little different in the sense that i cannot cry from sad things okay so say i have a scene for acting that i need to be really vulnerable for and cry and it could be something traumatic i play a lot of dramas so i'm usually like abused or running around and it's like you know a dramatic scene i cannot go into that scene from a place of thinking of any negative thought or sap i'll shut down and i become actually stronger and kind of want to like force myself through it and find the solutions of the problem right and so what i do is a little different so usually it's my director and i listen to a song but i have my

director come up

OLESYA RULIN: to me hold my hand or if it's my stunt team i'm doing the stunt they'll hold my hand or if it's just me in the scene and the camera operator who's like right here and like you know 25 inches away from my face i'll hold their hand because it's a collective experience and it allows me to feel like a kid that's at play But then I have them say three things to me. You are safe, you are loved, and everything's going to be okay. And if they just say those three things to me, I can do anything. Because all of a sudden, I'm safe, I'm loved, everything's going to be fine, and I can cry for six hours for you, or I can do a crazy stunt and you know, I fell 45 feet on a tiny type wire, which normally I would be terrified for.

OLESYA RULIN: But because I'm safe, I'm loved and everything's going to be okay, I got this. So that's on our board as well. So if there's a moment where I get fear, or I freeze up, and my husband, my doula, even with Dr. Offbart, knows to tell me, hey, everything's going to be okay, you're loved and you're safe.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: That's so beautiful. And it's so cool that you know that about yourself.

OLESYA RULIN: Therapy, man.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: I will wish you the warmest blessings for an amazing experience. I hope you get exactly what you want out of it. In addition to the beautiful baby that you'll get out of it. And I look forward to seeing you on the other side and learning more about it, two things that I will say before we end, number one, we talked about this feeling like you have the sneaking suspicion that although there is no known Jewish lineage in your family tree, you have like this deep feeling like there may be some in your blood.

OLESYA RULIN: I am so Jewish that I'm like, come on. And we tried to find the Jew in us, but everyone lied. And I'm from Russia and then, you know, everyone lied on the paperwork and just lied in general. So I need to do the 23 and mate. I have it. I need to spit in that little vial. We've got to find out.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: Yeah. But when we come back next time, I will have some results. We're going to find out what you have. I might even read them to you.

OLESYA RULIN: We might find out. Oh, that'd be so cool. Watch them just like 80% Mongolian, but I'm like, come on. Is this such a strong faith for me? I'm like, there's gotta be some grandma that we just like, don't know about.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: Okay. Well, that's going to be exciting also. And on top of everything else, but also where can we find you online?

OLESYA RULIN: You can find me on my Instagram, which is at Olicia Rulin. O-L-E-S-Y-A-R-U-L-I-N. You can also find me on NZIS Los Angeles. When I play Zoska Gai, I play a Russian spy. Of course I have an accent. And yeah, those are my two main platforms.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: Alicia, also, when we come back, I want to find more about your sustainability platform and, you know, kind of your mission in that genre. We're going to have so

much to chat about in a week or two, Max.

OLESYA RULIN: All the trees and the babies and saving the bees. And yes, it's going to be great.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: Oh my. Oh my. All right. Thank you so much for joining me. I'm going to go check you out online and see all the cool stuff that you have on your platform. And I invite everyone to come and visit us on the web as well. The interweb on Instagram at Dr. Berman, but our growing and exciting and informative blog has taken off and you can find that at informedpregnancy.com.

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