Filmmaker Jacqui Blue: 'Beautiful Births'

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IN THIS EPISODE

Filmmaker and hypnotherapist Jacqui Blue has given birth just about every way there is: a cesarean with twins at 21, two VBACs — one peaceful, one she had to fight for — a pain-free water birth, and a precipitous home birth where her teenage son caught the baby. She joins Dr. Elliot Berlin, DC to talk about how six very different births became her documentary Beautiful Births, and how her Beautiful Hypnosis Births program and book aim to take the fear out of birth by reminding parents that they have options.

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DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: Welcome to the important pregnancy and parenting podcast. I'm your host pregnancy focus carprector. Dr. Elliott, Berlin My guest today has had virtually every kind of birth experience possible from c-section with twins to VBACs a water birth and a precipitous home birth out of her experience She created a wonderful film called beautiful births now streaming on informed pregnancy plus and she's currently working on a book version She has combined with her childbirth hypnosis program to help others out to have a fear-free beautiful birth Jackie blue welcome to the podcast. Thank you. Thank you for having me. Oh my goodness You're like a wealth of information

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: everybody wants all the data that's in your head that's stored in your mind body and spirit about what birth can be and You know all the different experiences and how to kind of get where you want to be Let's start with the beginning where you're from originally

JACQUI BLUE: Originally from Hollywood, Florida So from Hollywood to Hollywood from Hollywood to Hollywood exactly. I'm from Hollywood to come to the right, Hollywood To get the things done that I needed to do that. I wanted indeed you work in film Yes, okay. What role do you play there? I'm an independent filmmaker and I've made two documentaries I have other things in development as far as documentaries go and that's a passion of mine I would love to break into the mainstream and do you know feature narrative films? But right now I've been focused on the independent documentary filmmaking. I know you have beautiful births Yes, and what's the other one? My other one is called I

chose life stories of suicide and survival and it addresses the huge

JACQUI BLUE: Suicide crisis that just seems to be growing and I have solutions if people want to talk to me about it We need to get the conversation going about suicide because I think that not talking about it is what leads to more

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: And that's a whole other cover. I was just looking at statistics about how many high school children Seriously consider suicide at some point or otherwise just very dissatisfied with life very depressed The numbers were staggering. You think it's a tiny number and it's not it's a huge number And of course you see it you see not only suicide you see homicide suicide together and it's a downward spiral That's not being addressed mental health in general needs to be addressed and some of those topics are very hard to talk about I haven't seen that film yet, but kudos to you for making it and trying to get dialogue moving Thank you

JACQUI BLUE: and you know One of the things I learned after making that film was that the maternal suicide rate has tripled in the last decade And I feel like that's something people don't want to talk about also is postpartum and even antepartum depression Absolutely, and not just in women Yeah, not just in women too. I feel that there's a lot in uh with my hypnotherapy work I would like to venture into working with women and their partners when it comes to postpartum and adjusting to new parenthood because Yes, the mom is dealing with a lot But also you have a new father here who doesn't really know what to do either It's a whole new world for him as well

JACQUI BLUE: And sometimes I feel like partners don't always know how to be supportive because the focus is on the mom and the baby So nobody's really helping the other parents in the situation as well. So how'd you get into film again? first place? I was in a very unhealthy marriage and I told my ex-husband I wanted a divorce and he decided no he's going to try to kill me. As I was lying in a pool of my own blood I thought to myself if I survive tonight I'm changing everything and that was on a Saturday night that following Monday I enrolled in a film program and I decided because it's kind of one of those moments where it's like what have I done with my life and what am I leaving behind for my children if I

JACQUI BLUE: died right now and my kids were very young they were from the ages of two to seven at the time and I decided you know I've always been interested in film I've always been a writer I've always been in theater I want to make films and so I enrolled in film school and that was my I'm going to become a filmmaker I'm going to pursue my dreams because I want my children to know that no matter what happens in life if you want something you got to pursue it and dreams can come true so that was kind of my goal was if I died tonight what am I leaving behind for my kids and the answer was absolutely nothing so now 12 years later it's a whole different world I've created a whole different life for us and that's what got me started

JACQUI BLUE: was really that night was the impetus that got me onto this track. Well that's such a

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: powerful sign I sometimes feel like life has a video game with little signs that come up and say go this way or go that way you know right mine are subtle yours was not. That was not

JACQUI BLUE: subtle no I feel like the universe had been giving me signs to get out of this marriage for a long time and then finally it was like okay well now something big has to happen to make you realize you need to get out of this marriage or you're going to die and I would say a traumatic experience but also it's one of those things where from the trauma I learned how to live my life I learned what my what purposes my life had and I say purposes because I feel like sometimes we have more than just one purpose in life I feel like everyone says what's my purpose what am I here for I feel like I'm here to do multiple things and then pregnancy and birth is a big part of what I feel is part of my purpose as far as

JACQUI BLUE: having the experiences and then sharing my information with others and to help remove the fear and that's really what the hypnotherapy program in the upcoming book is about removing the fear and anxiety because as you know working in birth when somebody has less fear their body reacts and their body is calmer and if your body is calmer and your mind is calm you're

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: going to have an easier experience. Well yes we're going to chat about that because you've had all the experiences I just observed them but I think the two different vantage points might come together in a powerful way I will say that for most living things all living things really there's a four-part life cycle where you're born you get bigger you reproduce and you die since you have not that much control over being born and getting bigger and generally over dying the one thing that seems to be our mission here is to reproduce not a popular opinion among everybody but that's kind of on a gross level what I see like we're here for a very short period of time in this world and what we do professionally could be impactful

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: and for sure we all try to leave our mark on the world and make it a better place but the biggest impact we leave on the world is our children so it's something that deserves a lot of attention before we get into your hypnosis work you were a serial birther how many children do you have now I currently have six I had five boys in my marriage I had five boys

JACQUI BLUE: within five years starting with twins and I always tell people that I cheated because I had two from the start okay okay so then how old were you when you had the twins I was 21 when I had the twins okay was that planned no okay a lot of people say to me too how did you get pregnant with twins because you know did you use fertility drugs and no it just naturally happened and twins actually run in my family so I don't know if there is a link with that my aunt had twins and my grandmother's sister who would have been my great aunt also had twins so I know there's at least three generations of twins are they fraternal I don't think so are they identical I know fraternal but the other twins in my family

JACQUI BLUE: my aunt says that her twins are identical and they do look very similar but I also as they've grown up and as I've had my twins I notice all the differences between them so I guess they're identical but I can see the differences yours are identical no no mine are fraternal that my twin cousins as you know I see but I think maybe their personalities might have also shaped those things that are different about them oh totally okay so you have these twins not planned to even have one. So that must have been a double surprise for you. Yes, very much. It was a huge surprise. I was young. I didn't know anything about anything at 21. I had known that they did because I was fascinated by this when I was little. When I

JACQUI BLUE: would see, you know, in your elementary school, middle school, and they give you the science books and they've got pictures of fetuses developing. I always thought those images were so fascinating and how did they get those images? And I loved, ever since I was a child, I was drawn to the development of children, of babies. I just thought it was so fascinating and interesting to see those pictures in the science books. And I remember learning about water births and thinking that would be so cool to do that one day. And I loved the idea of water birth, but I didn't ever plan on having kids at 21. And so at that age, I didn't know anything about water

JACQUI BLUE: birth. I just knew that at some point I wanted to have one. And then when I had twins, I knew, oh, this is definitely not going to be water birth.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: What did you plan for the twin birth?

JACQUI BLUE: The twins, I didn't really have a plan. I didn't know enough at that time. I pretty much went with what my doctor who had been, you know, my OBGYN and he brought my sister who's 11 years younger than me into the world with my mom. So I knew him and I trusted him and I trusted his expertise. And I was like, he's the expert. He knows what he's doing. So when he said to me, if both babies were head down, he would let me try for a vaginal birth. I was terrified of birth. I was terrified either way, vaginal birth or a C-section. The idea of surgery scared me so much. The idea of anesthesia. What if the medication wears off? I had heard horror stories from people about the epidural. I've heard horror stories

JACQUI BLUE: about people from C-sections. Like everyone wants to tell you their horror stories with pregnancy. So I was scared. I was really scared at 21. And when my water broke at 33 weeks, you know, I was terrified. One of the most terrifying moments of my life. I was 21, didn't know what to do. Didn't have a plan for the birth. And my doctor had said, baby A is head down, but baby B is sideways. He was transverse and he was up high by my rib cage. So my doctor said, well, we can try a vaginal birth with baby A, but if baby B doesn't drop, then I might have to go in and turn him and there's a chance he could die. And do you want to take that risk? Oh, wow. That's quite the presentation. Yeah. He painted a scarier

JACQUI BLUE: image in my mind as I'm already terrified. So I just kind of gave into whatever you think is best. I'm going to put my life and my children's life in your hands. And I'm going to trust that you're going to do the best by us. And that was my mindset at the time, because I just didn't know anything. It was during my second pregnancy that I really started to educate myself and learn about VBAC because my, we didn't even say, so I guess you had a C-section with the first. Yeah. The twins were C-section. They were C-section and not knowing anything else. How was that experience for you? The C-section itself was fine. They gave me a spinal. They numbed me. I was numbed all the way from like up from my shoulders all

JACQUI BLUE: the way down to my toes. I couldn't feel anything. So that was fine. As far as like physical pain goes, the recovery of it was horrible. In what way? Yeah. I felt like I was on fire. I felt like my intestines were on fire. I could not stand up straight for weeks. I could not walk straight. I could barely walk for weeks. And you have twins. And I had the twins, but the twins were in the NICU. That was my saving grace was they were in the NICU while I was recovering. So I would have somebody, usually my mom or my stepdad, drive me to the hospital because I couldn't drive. I couldn't drive. I

couldn't walk. Couldn't get comfortable. So they would drive me to the hospital and I would spend a good

JACQUI BLUE: half of my day there just sitting in a rocking chair, holding the babies because they were so small. They couldn't take from my breasts. So I wasn't able to breastfeed them, but I was able to give them my breast milk through a tube. Okay. How big were they at birth? At birth, my oldest was three pounds, 14 ounces. And then the baby B my second oldest kid was four pounds, five ounces. Oh, B was bigger. B was bigger. Yeah. Interesting. And once they reached five pounds and they were able to eat on their own, they were able to leave the NICU. So they were preemies and they were early, but they weren't like sick, sick preemies. They were just small. They were just small. Yeah. How long were they in the hospital

JACQUI BLUE: for? They only needed to be there for four weeks. And during those four weeks, I was able to recover. And I just kept thinking to myself, I don't know how people do it when they have to recover from a C-section and get up and down and take care of a newborn. That was 20

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: years ago. Yeah. And then since then there've been four more children. Let's take a little break. and see how the journey continues. We'll be right back. Welcome back, we're talking to Jackie Blue, unexpectedly pregnant at age 21. It turns out to be twins, premature, and then NICU, but that sort of had a silver lining of giving you time to heal from your cesarean birth. Next baby, how much later?

JACQUI BLUE: So the next baby was born 2005, so that was two years later. And he was my first feedback.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: Plan pregnancy?

JACQUI BLUE: Nope, none of them were planned.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: Okay, not a planned pregnancy, but just one this time.

JACQUI BLUE: Yeah, just one, it was a singleton.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: Were you concerned it would be twins again?

JACQUI BLUE: Yes, I did have that concern. I was very- Are we leaving ultrasound? I was very concerned when I saw one baby on the ultrasound, I was very happy. You know, you hear the stories about people having multiple sets of multiples, and I was terrified of that. I was more scared of having a repeat C-section, and how am I gonna take care of two toddlers and a newborn and recover from a C-section? And at the time, my husband was in school and working, so I was like, how am I gonna juggle all of this?

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: So you explored the idea of VBAC.

JACQUI BLUE: Yes, so at that time, VBAC was the only thing that seemed even possible for me. The idea of having repeat C-section, I just could not wrap my head around, how am I gonna recover? I can't do that, I need to have a VBAC. And then trying to find somebody who would do a VBAC, that can be a little difficult.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: Right, and especially then, I feel like things have just ever so slightly moved into making VBAC, and if you don't know what they are, vaginal birth after cesarean, making VBAC more accessible, but especially in 2005, there were large swaths of the country, there still are sadly, where nobody offers the option to give birth without some sort of procedure in the absence of a procedure, which is so strange in America, but were you able to find somebody?

JACQUI BLUE: Yes, I was. I found a nurse midwife group. We had moved to Indiana at this point, so I had my twins in Florida, and then I had my third child, my second pregnancy. Half of that pregnancy was in Indiana. My ex-husband was from there, and his family was from there, and so he thought, maybe we should have this baby. We'll be by my family this time, and so it was just easier with school and work and whatever was going on in life at the time. So we lived in Indiana for one year and had this baby there, and it was a very different medical system than what I was used to in Florida.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: How so?

JACQUI BLUE: Well, because in Florida, I had had this doctor that I'd had since I was 17, and so I knew him, and I was comfortable with him, and there was rapport, he knew my family, and then I moved to Indiana, where I don't know anyone aside from my husband and his family, and all of a sudden, I'm now with these certified nurse midwives. They were certified nurse midwives, and although they had the title midwife, they operated very much like OB-GYNs. When I told the midwife that I wanted to try for a natural unmedicated birth, vaginal and unmedicated, she laughed at me, and she said, I'm not a very big person. I'm like 5'3", barely weigh 100 pounds when I wasn't pregnant at that time. So I said to her, I want to try. by a non-medicated vaginal birth.

JACQUI BLUE: And she was like, you know, I'm fine with VBAC, like that's fine, but you're gonna have to have it in the hospital. At the time in Indiana, the laws were, there was no home birth midwives and home birth was illegal in Indiana. I don't know if that's changed, but I know that was the law at the time because that would have been my preference. My preference would have been find a midwife that fully supports what I wanna do, but that just wasn't available. So she laughed at me and she said, I've seen women bigger than you buckle under the pain of labor, don't try to be a hero. And the tone of voice, yeah. I was like, wow, like you're supposed to be a midwife. You're not supposed to be pro the medical side. You're supposed to be, you know,

JACQUI BLUE: if a woman wants to go unmedicated, you're supposed to like help with that and be okay with that. So that kind of threw me a little bit. And I was just-

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: Right, to be clear, they're not supposed to be anti the medical side, but the driver is supposed to be you. Exactly. What you want should be of utmost importance within the realm of safety. So that sounds very non-midwife. Did you end up having the VBAC?

JACQUI BLUE: I did end up having the VBAC and that actually ended up being a really good situation. So I wrote a like huge 10 page birth plan because I was like, okay, well I know what kind of midwife I'm going up against and she's not on board. So I had to tell my husband, I was like, listen, no matter what I say in labor, I don't care how much pain I'm in, I don't want an epidural and here's why. And I gave him a list of reasons why, because I knew from the research I did during that pregnancy that if I have an epidural, I'm gonna have pitocin. An epidural could slow down my contractions and

the pitocin can squeeze the baby so much that the baby goes into distress and then I have to have a repeat C-section. So at that time,

JACQUI BLUE: it wasn't that I was pro natural birth at that time, I was anti repeat C-section. So being anti the repeat C-section is what led me down that other path. And the fact that this midwife was so against me trying to go pain-free, makes me think that maybe she's never seen that. Maybe she has never seen a woman have a baby without an epidural or without pitocin or without all the drugs. And that's if she's only worked in the hospital system, it's very likely that maybe that is only what she has been exposed to. I tried not to be too judgmental on her, but when I got to the hospital and I presented them with this huge birth plan, they looked at me and they said, oh, we've got the nurse for you. And I thought, oh my gosh, I'm in trouble.

JACQUI BLUE: I just screwed up. Now they're gonna give me like the worst, most horrible person. But they actually gave me this lady, I cannot for the life of me remember her name. If I could, I would like send her a copy of my documentary and thank her for what she did for me. When we got into the room, she said the reason they gave you to me is because I'm an underground doula.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: Oh, you got lucky.

JACQUI BLUE: Yes, I got very lucky and she was amazing. Although I wasn't able to birth in water, she allowed me to labor in water with the shower head going at my back and that was so much relief. She sat in a rocking chair and massaged my feet while I was in labor. She brought me food and drink and I felt nauseous and she's like, here, eat and drink. And I was like, but no. And she's like, I know it sounds counterintuitive. And she's like, I'm an L and D nurse, but I'm really a doula. And I looked at your birth plan and I'm the right person for you. And she really was. And she made the experience so peaceful and so beautiful. So it's absolutely possible to have a beautiful birth experience in a hospital when you have the right people with you.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: A couple of quick questions. So it sounds like you did it unmedicated.

JACQUI BLUE: Yes.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: And I'm gonna go backwards, but how was the recovery from that birth?

JACQUI BLUE: That recovery was so easy compared to the C-section. I was able to stand and walk right away, no pain.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: And the baby came right home with you.

JACQUI BLUE: And the baby came home with me.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: So infant and two toddlers.

JACQUI BLUE: Yes.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: You could juggle.

JACQUI BLUE: I was able to juggle that a little easier than if I had recovered from a C-section, yes. My mom had come up for the birth and then stayed for a few days and helped me out for a few days,

maybe a week. And then my best friend had come up from Florida and she spent a couple of weeks helping me adjust. So I was fortunate in that I had a couple of people around to help me get used to the new situation with a new baby and the toddlers. But the baby was easy because he slept a lot. He nursed and slept a lot. And so I was really lucky in that sense.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: Wonderful. And then, so my other question was more about like, I guess twofold. Like what did it feel like in your mind and body as the baby was coming out of you? And the other part is like, were there any concerns about the fact that you had already had a cesarean? Were there precautions? Did they have nervousness about it? Did you have nervousness about it?

JACQUI BLUE: When the baby was coming out of me, so I had made a playlist of music to listen to in labor. And when the baby was being... born. The baby was born to the song called The Night You Saved My Life by Tonya Donnelly, which is such a beautiful song. It's so perfect. Because I feel like that song is about a baby saving your life. Like if you don't know the song, I highly recommend listening to it. But I listened to that song as he was being born. And as he was coming out, I had read a lot about birth and labor and done a lot of research about VBAC and stuff. But because I'd never previously experienced actual birth or actual labor with the twins, I don't want to say

JACQUI BLUE: actual birth, because I didn't experience vaginal birth, because all birth is actual birth. The baby is born. But I didn't experience labor. So I didn't have those pains. I didn't know what it felt like. And when he was crowning, and I felt the ring of fire, I said, it burns. And they said, Yes, that's how you know the baby's crowning. That's how you know the baby's coming. And I was like, Oh, okay, because nobody told me it burned. Like I was not expecting that. So when I tell people what birth feels like, when they asked me, I warned them about the ring of fire. Nobody warned me about the ring of fire. And then when it comes to the fact that it was a VBAC, were there any precautions around that? I don't believe

JACQUI BLUE: there were. What's funny is the midwife that I told you about, the certified nurse midwife, who I kind of butted heads with, she didn't actually show up at the birth until the baby was actually coming out of me until the baby was being born. So that was one of my concerns is, is she going to fight me on this? And thankfully, I only had to deal with the underground doula nurse while I was in labor. So it was actually a really easy labor experience because of that. I didn't have a bunch of people coming in and arguing with me or putting me on a time clock. The next birth was like that though. The next VBAC. Okay. Since you went there, what was that like? So the next VBAC was horrible. I mean,

JACQUI BLUE: my doctor did a bait and switch with me and told me throughout my pregnancy, he was on board. It was the same doctor I had the twins with. And so he told me the whole pregnancy. He was on board with VBAC until I actually was in the hospital. And he calls me up and says, well, what are you doing at that hospital? I said, well, I'm about to have a baby. What else would I be doing at the hospital? And he says, oh, I don't do VBACs at that hospital. So you need to have the baby by two o'clock or you're going to be forced into a C-section. So that was, yeah. Uh, thankfully the baby ended up coming by 11,

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: but it's also interesting because you already had a vaginal birth at that point. So even

JACQUI BLUE: though it's a VBAC, you know, you still have what I guess they refer to as a proven pelvis. Yeah, I had already had a successful VBAC. I didn't think there was going to be a problem. So my mom and a cousin and I went rogue and we were like, no, we're going to do this our way. And so my mom's like spoon feeding me like yogurt and my cousin's massaging my lower back and the nurses are fighting with me and saying, well, people like you don't give birth in the hospitals anyway. Cause I was like, well, you just need to catch the baby and cut the cord. Like my body is going to do everything else. I need you for the aftercare. I need you for all the stuff that happens afterwards, but for the actual birth, my body's doing all

JACQUI BLUE: the work. I just need some juice. Yeah. I'm in the right place. I'm where I need to be in case there's an emergency, but I'm not preparing for an emergency. So more stressful situation, but still a good vaginal birth after cesarean. Yeah. I was able to have a VBAC, a successful VBAC, but I was left with a lot of emotional trauma after that birth. And I understand when people say birth abuse, because I felt like during that labor, that was very much how I was being mistreated and not listened to. So I would not define that as a beautiful birth experience, but it was a successful VBAC. I just had to fight for it and that put a lot of stress and I was on edge. And then I was depressed for a good while about how that birth went.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: I'm sorry, Jackie. It's really important because sometimes you hear people say, as long as long as the baby came out healthy and you're relatively healthy, that's all that matters. Obviously there's a lot more to it. For example, especially when they say, as long as the baby's healthy, you know, right? Cause what about you, you know? And then that's clearly not true because if we were to sort of chop off your torso and take out the baby, nobody would be like, well, as long as the baby's healthy. Right. So there's a lot more depth there. That's four babies, two more to go.

JACQUI BLUE: Right. So my next birth was my amazing water birth that I had with an amazing midwife in Hollywood, Florida. Her name was Debbie Marin. She owns the Hollywood Birth Center. And it was such a beautiful experience by candlelight with water playing. My husband was in the tub with me, sitting behind me and my mom and my sister were there. My midwife was there. We were laughing and joking throughout the labor. It was just such a beautiful experience. And I actually did not feel any pain during that birth. I felt pressure, but I was in water. And at that time I had learned a little bit about self-hypnosis. So I was using self-hypnosis on myself during that labor. I was in a great environment, surrounded by people I loved and trusted.

JACQUI BLUE: And everything was so peaceful that literally no pain, just a little bit of pressure. And my mom had brought my younger sister who was 15 at the time. My mom had seen my previous birth, the horrific hospital, second VBAC birth. So my mom said, well, I'm gonna bring your sister to this. So maybe it'll scare her out of sex because, you know, she'll see you screaming and how unpleasant birth is. And that just wasn't the case. And after the baby was born, my mom looked at my sister and said, no, she made it look easy. That's not actually the other one.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: Well, speaking of which, cause you know, it seems like there is potential for three components to the intensity of labor, that there's pain, there's pressure, and there's pleasure. You said pressure. Did you detect any pleasure?

JACQUI BLUE: After the baby was born, I felt such a euphoric high that like no drug could ever replicate. It was the oxytocin. So there was a pleasure in that, the oxytocin release. And I think you don't really experience that fully when you have an epidural. I've never had an epidural. That's the one thing I've never had an epidural, but I've given birth in all different ways. So I don't know. I know that oxytocin release was definitely an extreme high, an extreme pleasure. I was like, I went from pressure to pleasure, but no pain during that birth.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: Wow. You attribute that to a combination of what is it the self-hypnosis, being in water, being surrounded by empowering people, supportive people.

JACQUI BLUE: Yeah. It was a peaceful environment. The environment was great. My support people were all on my side. I felt very comfortable with my midwife because unlike my doctor, what I discovered with the medical versus midwifery model of care, and they both have their pros and cons, and some doctors are wonderful and some midwives are not wonderful. And that's one of the things that I learned during all of my experiences. But with my midwife, I would get 45 minutes at an appointment with her. I could talk about anything I wanted to, even emotional things. When my dog died during that pregnancy, our family dog from when I was in high school had died. And so that was emotional. And I went in and talked to her about it

JACQUI BLUE: and she held my hand and cried with me. My doctor would have never done that. With my doctor, I waited 45 minutes for a five minute appointment. With my midwife, I waited five minutes for a 45 minute appointment.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: Yes. That's the difference in the model. I would add one more thing, which is that sometimes there are doctors who are absolutely wrong for you, but might be great for somebody else and same for midwives. And being with somebody who's not a great fit for such an important and intimate journey, you really feel it when the conflicts kind of come up and you're feeling under supported at the least, if not worse. Okay, Jackie, you still have another baby. Is that what you got to talk about? Let's take a little break. I want to find about that baby and all your other babies. By that, I mean all the work that you're doing to help other people have beautiful births. We'll be right back. Welcome back. We are talking to Jackie Blue.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: At this point in our story, she has five children, but in reality, there is another. Tell me about this last baby.

JACQUI BLUE: So this last baby was a complete surprise. She came 13 years after my last son and I was done having babies 13 years ago. So I just didn't expect that I would go through this again. But then when I did get pregnant and it was an unexpected and a whoops, but it was also a beautiful, happy accident, right? So I kept thinking the whole time, well, if I'm gonna have another baby, at least I get to go through a water birth again. So I was going through the whole pregnancy, just fixated on, I'm gonna have a beautiful water birth experience. At least I get to do that. At least I'll get to feel that euphoric oxytocin high again. So I was like, okay, well, this might've been unplanned, but I can still see the light in this.

JACQUI BLUE: I can see the light at the end of the tunnel. I can see how we're gonna make this a good and pleasant experience. And my partner had never seen anything but C-sections. His previous

partner had two C-sections. So I thought, oh, cool. So he'll get to experience a water birth with me and see what other birth is like. So go through the whole pregnancy, planning a beautiful water birth. And my daughter decided, nope, she had other plans. I was in labor for less than three hours total from first hard contraction until she was on my chest. And the amazing thing about this is I had gotten the phone with her dad. as soon as I realized I'm in hard labor. I'm like, okay, I call her dad. Well, he and I had just talked the night before

JACQUI BLUE: about our whole plan. And she came five days before we were expecting her. So she just knocked all of our plans out of the park. My 15 year old, who's now 16, was the only person who was able to actually be there for the birth.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: Oh, wow.

JACQUI BLUE: Yeah, it was a very fast thing. So I had called my partner and I said, hey, I am in labor, we're having a baby tonight. He had his other two daughters. So he's like, well, let me see if I can find a sitter because we totally unexpected. Birth happens when the baby and the body are ready, not necessarily when we are ready. So he was on the phone trying to find somebody to come and watch the other girls and my water breaks. And I shout, my water just broke. And my 15 year old comes in the room and he is like, your water broke? What can I do? Who can I call? All my other kids put their headphones on because the mom was making weird noises. They wanted no part of it. My 15 year old was a trooper. He comes in the room, I handed him my phone.

JACQUI BLUE: I said, go call so-and-so. And I told him to call one of my friends. And he was like, well, they're not coming because they're busy. So what can I do? And at that point I reached down and I felt the baby crowning. And I was like, get towels, just get towels. And we had just packed the suitcase for the birth center. So I had packed like five towels in there. So I'm like, everything that I packed earlier, just get all the towels, put all the towels around me. He grabs the towels, he puts the towels around me. He holds my hand and he's encouraging me to push. And at that point there was nothing left to do. And I actually wasn't pushing. My body was fetal ejection.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: Fetal ejection reflex. Yeah. Michelle O'Don't.

JACQUI BLUE: Yep. She just kind of like came out and my kid was like, one more push. She's here. And I was like, can you see her? And he's like, yeah. And my first thought, and I don't know why I said this but the first thing out of my mouth was does she look human? In the aftermath, I'm thinking what else would she have looked like? Like, what was my brain thinking at the time? But that was just the first thing that came out of my mouth was does she look human? And he laughed and said, yes. And then he said two things to me after she was born. The first thing he said was, wow, mom I didn't know you could sing but you just hit every octave in the human. And then the second thing he said to me and he looked at me very seriously and he goes

JACQUI BLUE: and you're paying for my therapy.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: That's a powerful, intense, beautiful story. What'd you do after the baby was out?

JACQUI BLUE: As soon as she was out, I called her dad again and he answers the phone and he's frantic. And he's like, I've got a few calls in and I'm waiting for a few calls back. And I was like, okay, it's fine. She's here. And he's like, who's here? I was like the baby. I just had the baby on my bed. And he was like, oh, oh, oh you called me less than an hour ago. Like, yeah, she came in less than an hour. I had called the midwife before I called him and she was like, oh, you sound great. We'll meet at the birth center in an hour. I didn't have an hour, apparently.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: Precipitous labor.

JACQUI BLUE: It was a very, very fast precipitous labor. And so once the baby was out, I called him he was my first call. And then I called the midwives and said, well I just had the baby. And there was at that point, no way that I could get in the car and drive to them. So they came to me and did all of the aftercare here at my home on my bed. And they offered my 15 year old, my 16 year old now to cut the cord. So he got to cut the cord and he was involved with helping with the aftercare. So that was a very interesting experience for him. I mean, for everyone. Yeah, definitely. That's something that I think my daughter is gonna hear multiple times throughout her life. And I think that he already has a very special bond with her.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: I was wondering about that, of course. Yeah. I mean, gosh. Okay. That's all the babies, except you have some other babies. You have this film, Beautiful Births which is a beautiful film. Was that your first film that you made of your own?

JACQUI BLUE: That was my first film, yes. That was my first film ever.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: And what is your point of view in the film?

JACQUI BLUE: I wanted to educate and inform people on the fact that they have options because one of the things I learned through my own experiences and as I'm going through my pregnancy experiences in my twenties a lot of my friends and then their family members and sisters and sister-in-laws and people would get pregnant. And so we would have these discussions. And I learned that most people don't know that they even have options when it comes to birth. Everyone thinks you go to the doctor, you go to the hospital and you just do what the doctor says. So I wanted people to understand that the medical model is great and some people need that but there's also another model and that's the midwifery model. And that can also be great.

JACQUI BLUE: And some people might really want that. And so I think it's really just a matter of preference. I would never deter someone from going one way or the other if that's what they felt they want and they're comfortable with. because to me, a beautiful birth is a birth where the mom's wishes are met, where the mom is treated with respect and with care and that her care providers and her are on the same page. Whether that is a planned C-section, a repeat C-section, an elective C-section or just a medicated hospital birth or a home birth or an unmedicated water birth. I just feel like people need to know they have options and then what they do with them is up to them.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: Yeah, so I mean, very in line with Informed Pregnancy, the idea that the more information you can get, the more you can sort of weigh your choices and options and see which choice you want to make instead of having them made for you and then being supported in the choices that you made. And it's a beautiful film. And as of right now, one of the places it's available is

at Informed Pregnancy Plus, informpregnancy.tv. You have a lot more though. You are currently a practicing hypnotherapist. And you specialize in this type of journey, these types of moments in life and the things that come with them, the fears and anxiousness that a lot of people have. How does your hypnotherapy sessions work?

JACQUI BLUE: So I have three different ways to experience the hypnosis for childbirth program that I created. So there's one-on-one sessions. If someone does one-on-one sessions with me, I want to find out what are their fears and what are their anxieties about birth and how can we make them more comfortable? And so I really tailor it to their own specific needs. Not everyone can afford to do that or wants to do that. Some people are more of the, just give me the stuff and I'll do it on my own. So I created a whole program with videos, MP3s, workbooks that is digital, downloadable. They can go to the website and it's a do-it-yourself program, a DIY self-study course.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: What's the website?

JACQUI BLUE: The website is beautifulhypnosisbirths.com.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: Beautifulhypnosisbirths.com, okay.

JACQUI BLUE: That's way number two to tap into your magic. And then the third way is the book. So I spent most of last year writing a book, which I actually kind of started the book years ago because a few years ago, my girlfriend who worked on Beautiful Births with me, she and I discussed the idea of turning the documentary into a book, making a book companion version. So I had started on that and started writing a few chapters of that years ago. And then I decided, what if I turn the hypnotherapy program into a book? And I did a little bit of research and that does not exist yet. So my book is actually innovative and the first of its kind where the first 15 chapters are a regular book. Then you get to the second section of the book

JACQUI BLUE: and it is the same six sessions where you take your phone or your iPad and you scan the QR code and the QR code takes you to the video and the MP3. And then there's workbook pages within the book to do the activities to help get the mind there.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: Oh, very comprehensive.

JACQUI BLUE: Yeah, so I've spent a lot of time putting this book together and I'm really excited about it. And right now it's in the formatting stage and being edited and then I'm going to release it on Amazon but I'm gonna be doing pre-orders through the website. So people could buy it directly through the website or on Amazon or I would also love if I could like get it in some like midwives offices or doctors offices, like maybe you would be interested in carrying a few copies or doctors too. People who have clients that might be interested in removing the fears and anxieties and having that better experience.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: Absolutely, what's the book titled?

JACQUI BLUE: Beautiful Hypnosis Births.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: Okay, I see a theme here. So you have the film, Beautiful Births. You have the book coming very soon, Beautiful Hypnosis Births and you have individual work one-on-one

and you have an at your own pace self-guided program and all of it can be found at beautifulhypnosisbirths.com. Jackie, thank you so much for joining. Thank you for sharing your interesting birth stories. Honestly, each one could sort of be its own episode. So we got the very brief version of what is a very full birth career for you but I learned a lot and it's just fascinating to talk to somebody who's been through so many different types of birth in different settings and different levels of support. Where can we find you online?

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: Besides the website, are you on social media?

JACQUI BLUE: On Instagram, it's at Jackie Blue Life because I figured Jackie Blue Mom or Jackie Blue Filmmaker but I'm so much more than that. I'm more than a mom, more than the filmmaker, more than the hypnotherapist. So it's Jackie Blue Life. So I kind of use that to kind of plug all of. the stuff that I do, the hypnotherapy and the films.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: And what's your spelling of Jackie? J a C Q U I J C Q U I blue life on Instagram. Amazing.

JACQUI BLUE: And then I think it's also the same at Facebook. Facebook might be Jackie blue filmmaker and I had changed it because I'm like, well, but I'm more than just a filmmaker. I'm also a hypnotherapist and I'm also, you know, so we have Jackie blue life is where you can find me. Just search that in all the socials.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: Awesome. Thank you. And also thank you for sharing your film with us on informed pregnancy. Plus it's in great company with films like the business of being born, orgasmic birth, the mama Sherpas, our films, trial of labor, heads up and lots of other content. And what I love about it is when people come to see some of the other films, they find beautiful births and will now be exposed to your whole sort of tool belt of options for making birth more empowered and less fearful. And also when people come just to find beautiful births and watch that gorgeous film, they find the other resources as well. So I'm very grateful for that too.

JACQUI BLUE: Yes. And thank you for hosting the film. I'm very thankful for what you do as well. I think what you're doing is wonderful for people.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: Thanks, Jackie. To visit us, you can find our podcast or blog and our video streaming service at informed pregnancy.com or on Instagram at Dr. Berlin, D O C T O R B E R L I N.

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