Holiday Top 10 Countdown: Part II

Episode 440 · January 2, 2025 · with Rose Hart Landsberg

IN THIS EPISODE

The countdown reaches the top: picks 5 through 1 of 2024's most popular episodes — from freebirth with Catalina Clark, to Ina May Gaskin on midwifery, to Hilary Duff's two-part birth story. Dr. Elliot Berlin, DC and producer Rose Hart Landsberg host Part 2.

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: Welcome to the Informed Pregnancy and Parenting Podcast. This is the second part of our two-part series, the top 10 countdown for the holidays of the Informed Pregnancy Podcast 2024. I'm Pregnancy Focus Chiropractor Dr. Elliot Berlin, and I'm joined by our amazing producer Rose Hart Landsberg. If you missed it, we did episodes 10, 9, 8, 7, and 6 in part 1.

ROSE HART LANDSBERG: And now we're up to number 5. I even de-medicalized my whole house. I took the Doppler out of the house, I took the meds out of the house, I took anything that would be considered a medical intervention that I carried in my midwifery bag out of my space.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: OK, this is an interesting episode with Catalina Clark. I love her. She was on the podcast earlier when she had her first baby, and she was a student midwife at the time. And she was very active in attending birth, a lot of home birth, training with midwives. And she had her own birth with the midwives that she was training with. And there were some challenges in that birth. And I think that in the recovery from that first birth experience, it shaped her a lot in terms of both her personal philosophies and approach to childbirth and also her professional approach to childbirth. So with her second baby, she had a free birth. Free birth is essentially where she would describe it as fully autonomous and

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: unassisted. So you're kind of at the birth without medical professionals there, although in her case, there was one medical professional there, Catalina Clark.

ROSE HART LANDSBERG: I think this episode is really interesting, and I think that it's such a great contrast to a lot of our other episodes. She's a trained birth professional, so her doing a free birth on

her own without anyone else attending is, of course, completely different than someone like me doing that, which I think is important to note. But I think it's funny that in her quest to move away from a lot of interventions that feel forced on her and other women and just in general, that she took on an air of rebellion almost. And so I felt from her that some of her choices were almost specifically to kind of go beyond what was expected. For example, she refused, you know, a certain kind of check. Dr. Berlin, maybe you can help me.

ROSE HART LANDSBERG: I'm blanking on what it's called.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: I mean, it's not just a free birth. She had a wild pregnancy, which is a term that basically indicates you kind of choose which diagnostics you want to do or not do. Do you want to do visits during the pregnancy for wellness checkups or anything else or not do them? And, you know, she opted to do some and not others. I don't remember if she did like a gestational diabetes check and other things like that. I think she pretty much opted out of most of them. And, you know, these ideas of wild pregnancy and free birth, they challenge the conventional narratives around childbirth in today's medical birth society that we live in. It certainly seems foreign, but I think it's important and it highlights the kind

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: of importance of personal autonomy and the trust in the physiological process. And she's a great advocate for those ideas. And if you really want to get to understanding Catalina and her point of view, I think it's important to listen to her first birth episodes. It was a before and after. There are episodes 97 and 98. And she really brings us into that experience in those episodes. And then you can understand the processing that took place afterwards and what kind of work she did to bring herself to overcome fear and to really try to understand what happened at her first birth and to sort of have a different experience the second time around. I think that a lot of times people come on the podcast and have ideas and

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: desires and experiences that are not the ones that I would choose for myself. And maybe not the ones I would recommend to patients. But I really think it's important to have a platform where people can speak their ideas. And to be honest, free birth and wild pregnancy are gaining in popularity. They're becoming more popular. More people are saying, I want to take full total control and autonomy for what happens to me in the most natural, unintervened way. And also they're not blind to the idea that things can go wrong. They are very much aware of those things and they're making choices nonetheless. It's a powerful concept and it creates I think the opportunity for powerful conversation and dialogue.

ROSE HART LANDSBERG: Yeah, it was interesting for me too. Her initial episodes were way before my time working on the show. And so I actually had a conversation with her and then went back and heard about her previous births. And I think just like a lot of our Cesarean and VBAC episodes that it's one influenced the other. Like you said, it was her processing her first style and complications and choices that she made during that that really almost led her to a place of fear of fear or rejection of any type of fear is maybe a better way to put it. And like you said, I don't know if that's a choice that I would make, but I think it's really interesting.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: I think if nothing else, there is a lot that Catalina did in terms of self care and prenatal care and even postpartum care. And I think on the postpartum side, she did have more

support because she wanted it. And I think also it's a really powerful expression of self. There's a couple of documentaries that also one that comes to mind is These Are My Hours and basically this mama loaded up her house with cameras and microphones and she gives birth. And it's not a free birth in the sense that there are support people there, but she wanted minimal interaction with them. And she has minimal interaction with it there in case she needs something. And otherwise you're watching her go through all the stages,

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: the natural beautiful drama of the various stages of childbirth. And along the way she narrates what's going on. And another one is orgasmic birth, which sort of is a click baity title, but it's really about the power of giving birth with a lot of oxytocin in your system. Oxytocin being the hormone that is the gas pedal for the uterus that makes it contract productively. It is a magnifier of all things pleasing in the body. So anything that's mentally or physically pleasing becomes magnified when you have a lot of oxytocin. And also makes you quite stretchy. And so more likely to stretch than tear, which reminds me of an older episode. There's a three part series called Labor Day Surprises. And it's two sister-in-laws who give birth and

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: they each had a little surprise at the end. One had a breech baby and one had an 11 pound baby. And the mama who had an 11 pound baby did a hospital birth, but she knew that you can have an oxytocin rich birth. And she really studied how to be able to do it. And she did it. I was there at that birth and she gives birth to this 11 pound baby, eventually unmedicated. And Rose, are you sitting down?

ROSE HART LANDSBERG: I am.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: You are. She doesn't even tear. And it's because of the oxytocin rich birth. And you can really get a lot of insight into that from Orgasmic Birth, the film, and also from These Are My Hours, both streaming on Informed Pregnancy Plus. If you wanna hear Sarah's story of the 11 pounder, that's gonna be Episodes 20, 21, and 22, Labor Day Surprises, Part 1, 2, and 3. If you wanna hear from the powerful Catalina Clark, here's a quote from her episode on free birth.

ROSE HART LANDSBERG: And I wonder about the dystocia and about the length of time that the baby took to emerge with five people's eyes and hands on me at one time. And so that's how I really processed and unlearned and just rewrote the story of, was it a shoulder dystocia? Was it an energetic dystocia? Was it not a dystocia at all? Was it just a completely normal birth? All right. Another thing that I think is interesting about this episode is that traditionally, at least in my mind, midwifery care and doula care are these natural societal communal spaces where women care for each other. And in general, at least my ideas surrounding that are very positive. And so I think it's really interesting to kind of go in the other direction,

ROSE HART LANDSBERG: away from community to a solitary birth. And I don't think either one is negative or positive, but it strikes me as a different direction. And so I think that's really interesting.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: Yeah, it kind of is interesting because I do like watching animals give birth in nature.

ROSE HART LANDSBERG: Do you?

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: I really do, because I try to learn from them and see what birth would be like if it was totally undisturbed. And some of the most beautiful things, there's an elephant birth that sticks out in my mind. You can get it on YouTube probably, it's called Risky Business, R-I-S-K-I. And this elephant gives birth and she is all by herself. And apparently they do that a lot. They leave them back and go give birth all by themselves. And she is confident, you could just see, there's not fear on her face. She's confident, she's poised, she does this little dance, almost like she watched belly dance for birth, which is also streaming on Informed Pregnancy Plus. With Mahal and Lusa, an incredible adjunct for

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: people who like to move their bodies in ways that are conducive to babies coming down. This elephant was doing the dance and she kind of bears down and gives birth to this, I don't know, 240 pound baby. And then immediately turns around and starts doing neonatal care. And she realizes that the baby's not breathing and she has all these different remedies. She kind of kicks the baby, which would be kind of like when we slap him to try to get him breathing. It's still not working and she's assessing with her trunk. It's really powerful. And then eventually she does this maneuver. I'm not kidding, you have to watch this video. I'll put a link in the show notes where she wraps her trunk around

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: the baby's tiny little trunk and then yanks up on the trunk and you hear the baby's neck crack, this little baby elephant neck crack. And all of a sudden starts to breathe. And then-

ROSE HART LANDSBERG: Wait, she gave it a chiropractic adjustment?

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: She gave it an adjustment. She did all those things and she didn't have a podcast. She didn't have any documentaries. She didn't have a childbirth education class. A nurse, a doctor, a doula. She did a free birth. She did free neonatal care. She did a free chiropractic adjustment. Then she says, hey, get up and walk around. And 10 minutes later, the little baby is on all fours. The cutest thing ever. Anyway, so that's a great way to round down our number five pick. Moving on to number four.

ROSE HART LANDSBERG: Ultimately, it's my job to keep the mother alive. Sometimes that might even suggest or presume at the cost of the baby. So I look at the whole health of this person. Is this person going to survive childbirth at home? And is their number one priority to stay alive through childbirth?

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: Another interesting pick. I guess they all are. That's why they made the top 10. This is Dr-

ROSE HART LANDSBERG: I hope.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: Nathan Reilly is the most unusual OB-GYN. He's a holistic OB-GYN. I met Nathan Reilly a long time ago. Our film, which is called Heads Up, the Disappearing Art of Vaginal Breach Delivery, also streaming on Uninformed Pregnancy Plus. You get a lot with your subscription to Uninformed Pregnancy Plus.

ROSE HART LANDSBERG: I'm just starting to realize.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: You're just starting to realize.

ROSE HART LANDSBERG: I might actually subscribe and buy a gift subscription for somebody else, which is a thing.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: I think that would be a great gift for a new mom who's sitting up nursing at night maybe and needs something to watch. Yeah, it's really quite inexpensive. The whole goal was to make all this visual empowerment available to anybody anywhere, anybody who has an internet connection. It's on Apple, Android, Roku. You could stream it straight from the web. It's on all devices. It streams really well. The functionality is great. And it's meant to be inexpensive. And it's a valuable gift. Go onto the website and click Send a Gift Subscription, and you'll be helping somebody out. As you can tell from all these episodes, the more information you have, the more empowered you are, the better experience you can set yourself up for.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: Now, back to where I was. Heads Up, The Disappearing Art. When it first came out, we were invited to several medical facilities to screen it. And one of them was Kaiser Permanente here in Los Angeles. We screened it for a room full of labor and delivery people. There were OB-GYNs, there were residents, there were nurses. And it was one of the first places we screened it in a big audience in a medical setting. And I was like, I wonder what these guys are going to think. And the feedback was pretty positive. There were a couple of skeptics and a couple of people didn't like how we portrayed this or that. But there was one person who was really actively touched by it. And he asked a question, and I remember his question kind of created

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: a really intense conversation, almost a little debate, because Kaiser Permanente at that time was not offering vaginal breech delivery as an option. And one of the points we make is that if vaginal breech delivery is considered, which it still is today, a viable option for a way to deliver a breech baby if you meet certain criteria, then if they don't offer it, are they obligated to tell the patients, hey, we don't offer it, but there are people in town who do offer it. And because they're an HMO network, that means they would also have to pay for people to go out of the network. It's called gap exemption. So if you're an HMO and people can only come get coverage within the HMO, but you don't offer something that they need,

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: then you kind of have to pay for them to go get it someplace else. And it created this massive debate. Is it necessary or not necessary? This person is saying, hey, I just want to give birth to my baby without having surgery. And you're saying, no, you must have surgery. And they're saying, well, there's other people who do without surgery. Is avoiding that surgery something that Kaiser would have to take care of? And it just created this kind of intense dialogue and debate. And I was like, that guy's gonna be a cool OB. And that is Dr. Nathan Riley.

ROSE HART LANDSBERG: Yeah, I feel like that speaks very well to his style and his philosophy. The main thing that's interesting about this episode is that it's not one male birth worker, but two. There's two of you and you found each other. Kind of a holistic male birth workers.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: Holistic-y, meaning partially holistic.

ROSE HART LANDSBERG: Hashtag holistic-y. Is that a thing? Can be now? It's gonna stick. There's two of us. I think as part of his episode, he and his journey, he talks about, as he went

through training and, kind of similarly to you, he thought he was gonna go in a more medical way and realized that isn't the way to prevent. That isn't the way to practice holistically. And your anecdote also, I think, speaks to his discovery that patients don't have autonomy. That patients can be bulldozed into a direction that they don't want or that they're not comfortable with. So I think as he was going on his journey, figuring out the ins and outs and the problems of the birth world, I think it's important to note that most women are already very familiar with the idea

ROSE HART LANDSBERG: and the experience of being bulldozed into something you're not comfortable with or something you didn't agree with. And that even though men, of course, are parents, that it's a little bit more academic in some ways because it's not your body. So I think it's interesting and important to kind of think about and talk about the roles that men play in these very female-centric and female-oriented industries and what advocacy looks like and kind of practicing what you preach looks like. And so I think it's interesting from that perspective to listen to male birth workers talk about their experience.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: Yeah, I think especially Nathan Riley because again, there's a lot of male birth workers who are obstetricians or have been since the age of time, but ones who are more focused on patient autonomy and holistic wellness and well-rounded health care. So I think there's this idea of health care which is in the US is actually a misnomer. It's really disease care. The system is not there for you to help you stay healthy. It's there for you when you have something wrong and bring you back to neutral. And I think what Nathan realized is that the hospital system applies that to pregnancy which is just a normal stage of life. And our goal is to maintain and support your health and wellness and not just in a mechanical way or physical way

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: like pee in this cup and let's take your blood pressure but in a holistic way, your whole mind, body and spirit. And I think after seeing a home birth that was like the final piece of his light bulb going off and then he left the hospital system and he collaborates with midwives and he does home birth including quote unquote, high risk home birth, whatever that means. It's telling people that you have options and you have choices. I think it's popular because it reminds me a little bit of how drug companies made baby formula and they improve their baby formula and they kind of led this campaign that not only is it new and improved, it's actually better than breast milk. And they sort of made women feel bad for breastfeeding

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: and not using this new and improved formula. And over time, that crap became translucent. They saw through it and women started to seize back advocacy and power for breastfeeding. And I think to a degree, the same thing happens. All of a sudden, everybody's given birth at home with midwives surrounded by loved ones. Then where you're told the only way to give birth is in the hospital with all these machines and interventions and then it slowly starts to come back towards a middle or back towards the other direction. And that's what's happening but sometimes it's hard to find those elements in terms of support. And I think to your point, Rose, support from dudes. And Nathan Riley is really exceptional in the work that he does.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: It's episode 390. And I'll tell you what, he reminds me a lot of Jennifer Lang, who's an OBGYN, who was on the podcast a while back. Her episode is number 147 and she was planning to have a C-section, not because she was afraid of childbirth from things that she had

seen as an OBGYN but really fear based on how she was trained as an OBGYN that everything's a train wreck waiting to happen. And emergency. Exactly. And we have to intervene early and often to prevent something from happening all the time. There was no trust of birth. And when she realized that she did a fear release with Alicia Tamburi, who's a local hypnobirther, guru, Yoda. And she let go of all that fear and she's like, you know what? I'm gonna try to have a vaginal birth.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: And she had the most epic birth at the hospital. I'm not gonna tell you her whole story. You're gonna have to tune into episode 147 with Jennifer Lang, very powerful. But here's the spoiler alert. She has her next two babies at home with a midwife and then she starts to turn very holistic in her approach to childbirth, much like Nathan Riley.

ROSE HART LANDSBERG: Something else that's interesting is that Dr. Riley's philosophies to me greatly mirror Catalina Clark's from earlier in our countdown. I think that they sort of both have taken the quest for low intervention to what I would consider to be fairly extreme that really no intervention or virtually no intervention is the goal. So I think it's interesting to see how far you go if you take it all the way to the other side of the pendulum.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: Yeah, it's a support for total autonomy meaning you know the risks, you know the benefits, you know the outcome possibilities and you get to make the decisions and have them respected regardless if that's not the decision that we would make for Catalina doing it herself and supporting her clients in that way and also for Nathan, same thing, supporting his clients in that way. To bring us into commercial, here's a quote from Dr. Nathan Riley, Holistic OBJYN, episode 390.

ROSE HART LANDSBERG: The home birth experience was probably one of the most important experiences of my life but certainly of my career where all of those things that I had been conditioned to believe that it's irresponsible to have a baby outside of the hospital, I mean I'm a heretic as an OBJYN to have a home birth.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: We'll be right back. All right, welcome back to the Informed Pregnancy podcast. It's me, your host, Dr. Elliot Berlin and our amazing producer, Rose and we are counting down the top 10 episodes, the top 10 stories, moments of 2024 and we're up to number three.

ROSE HART LANDSBERG: We, we, we, we, we, we, we. You know, the only thing that makes this like slightly complicated is that I'm making this record, you know, with my sister in Topanga Canyon literally like days up until my guest date but we kind of need to have like a backup plan for if I was early and I am in Topanga. So we kind of had to figure out like, okay, I have Ivy, my doula, who's able to like come to me and she's flexible, you know, she's based in Ventura County and then the woman that she works with, that's basically her kind of partner that would relieve her if she's there for hours and hours and needs a break is Mary, who's really wonderful, Mary Skinner and they're like, we're good, we're there if you need us and it happens to be early.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: Pick number three is Ali Mashaka, another dynamite of energy, an incredible person, somebody who is dynamic and vibrant. She is an actress and musician. She was on the Disney channel as a kid and then she is together with her sister, one half of the music duo, Ali and AJ. She's very talented, sharp, well-spoken and curious and her episode is really cool because of

a lot of things but one of them is that she's one of those people that mid-pregnancy started to do research and get more informed and empowered and totally changed her birth plan.

ROSE HART LANDSBERG: I love her story for two episodes because she tells it in a way that is so detailed and useful. I feel like she really explains her reasoning behind a lot of the decisions that she made and she explains the feelings that she was having and the logistics in a way that I think if I was a first time mom wanting to listen to a podcast to get an idea of what pregnancy and labor was gonna be like, I feel like these episodes are especially good for that. She's very thoughtful and thorough and she's someone who had a lot of resources and was able to plan really well for multiple scenarios and then of course ended up kind of needing to do that actually and so I love that and the other thing that I think is extremely important

ROSE HART LANDSBERG: about this episode even though it's not covered a lot or these two episodes is that she takes antidepressants and she had been on them for quite a while and ultimately through some experimentation with her doctor and some changes decided to stay on them during her pregnancy and I think that that's something that's really important to talk about because there's a lot of judgment around decisions like that and again she's just really thoughtful and level headed so I think she's a great person to listen to talk about all of these things.

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: Yeah, she's also very funny and it's interesting to see because they were recording an album during this pregnancy and then the baby came not exactly when they were expecting the baby to come and how and when she found out and she shared her pregnancy with her sister AJ and how they recorded this album is all a very entertaining story all by itself and even more so because she's a great storyteller and very funny. To what you said Rose, I remember back in the day in the early days of the Informed Pregnancy podcast we had a guest Amanda Seyfried and it's episodes 31 and 32 she talked about taking her medication during the pregnancy and some blogger ran with it and kind of gave it to her for putting herself before the baby

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: and it just became a big news story and I felt bad and I thought she was you know, you came and you shared so openly and now it's turning on you but the truth is every credible source came out in response to that story indicating how important it is to take medication how the medications have changed and they are safe and sometimes it's a lot more safe than stopping to take your medication and we heard at that time from mental health advocacy groups and foundations about how important it was that Amanda spoke freely about it to help work against the stigma that's out there regarding mental health and regarding medication for mental health and Ali you know, drove it home again not everybody is willing to talk about it

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: especially if you're in the spotlight you know, it's sometimes harder to talk about it because you know, your whole career is your personality and Ali very boldly chose to speak about it because she knew it would help other people and already we got feedback on that that it has been helpful along those lines, Dr. Kirsten Thompson has been a guest on the podcast she is a psychiatrist that works almost entirely with women's health or I would just say focuses hard on women's health and a lot of our clients you know, if we make a referral they go to her because she is intimately familiar with the concerns of pregnancy and breastfeeding so Ali, thanks for sharing your story and I kind of miss her a lot she's one of those people that

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: she doesn't live super close and I got to see her a lot during the pregnancy and I'm hoping like man, she gets pregnant again

ROSE HART LANDSBERG: well the other thing that I think is hilarious about that episode is there's a stereotype in LA about discussing you know, like what route you're gonna take you know, what the traffic is like in the freeway and you know, different locations and I feel like the whole episode she's like, and then we had to go to Topanga and then we were in the car for 20 minutes and then we had to decide and I was like, yep, yep, this is LA like, anyone's wondering if the stereotypes about LA are true

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: I love watching TV shows that take place in LA for that reason also here's a quote directly from Ali

ROSE HART LANDSBERG: I've been very open with my fan base about when I got on antidepressants which was at a quite young age I was about 14 and a half, 15 and I knew that that was something that was gonna help get me through the pregnancy where I could function and not have this like depression kind of take over and paralyze me in my day to day life

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: and to listen to her episodes they are numbers 413 and 414 a very fascinating before and after birth story and that brings us down to number two

ROSE HART LANDSBERG: oh, do you have to number two? So what was the difference if somebody goes oh, the feeder first oh, oh, you're gonna have to your C-section scheduled at 35, 37 weeks, whatever maybe I'm exaggerating there, yes but instead the first one happened and the feet came and somebody went oh, that's so cute I'm gonna go get a camera well now the mom is not gonna seize up and clamp down because she's not committed the crime of having a breech baby they're admiring her and that baby just slides out, you know so once that happens and you have a bunch of witnesses to it the baby's dad, the other midwife students well then they know something that obstetricians have never had a chance to see

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: this was a huge honor a highlight of my podcasting career to interview the famous midwife, Einame Gaskin it was our 400th episode blowout and I do need a blowout a number two blowout classy Einame Gaskin's a renowned midwife she's an author she wrote powerful books like Einame's Guide to Childbirth and others she's an educator and she's known as the mother of modern midwifery she founded the farm it's a midwifery center in Tennessee and it's internationally recognized as a community for natural birth that people fly into from all over the place all over the country for sure if not all over the world and she celebrated for her work in preserving midwifery skills and teaching her innovative approaches to childbirth I know so many people

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: who have watched the business of being born which is, yes you guessed it streaming on Unformed Pregnancy Plus and read Einame's books and between the two one or the other or both made them extremely empowered no matter where they were going to give birth whether they're at home in a birth center in a hospital in a strawberry field very empowering stuff

ROSE HART LANDSBERG: you know she is so awesome I loved chatting with her doing a pre-interview and I think the main thing that really strikes me about this episode and her wisdom is that everything she does is so immersed in common sense it's not complicated it's not fancy she has

decades of experience and she's seen so much but you know really even from the beginning she took what she saw and she learned and she's able to cut through the noise and keep the parts that are useful and the parts of the interview that I especially like are you know when she talks about using these simple conversational techniques to work through fear or create humor and it's all just human solutions to human situations and I really admire that

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: one of the things that I read from Einame Gaskin that I think really had an impact on me in the birth work that I've done is the idea of how a smile can help change everything so I remember multiple times where we'll be in labor and somebody is really struggling and you can kind of see that they're fighting their surges they're fighting their contractions and when they come they'll say like no no no no no and they'll hold their breath and tighten up their body and sort of grimace angrily and sometimes you can just say hold on when the next one comes instead of saying no because you're telling your body this is something that is bad that is not good for us we don't want it we want to fight it we want to run away from it

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: maybe just say yes or smile and it can make such a huge difference just that one thing and I remember one birth in particular her name is Yale Cohen Braun and we have an episode about it it's episode number 92 she's a powerful person who's very well accomplished in many different ways but I remember we were laboring at a hotel across the street from the hospital where she was going to give birth and it was exactly that scenario she would say no this is intense I can't no and then at one of them I'm just like just smile smile into it say yes accept it welcome it know that you're not in danger know that you're not in pain and that difference she describes just made everything better like all of a sudden it would come

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: and she's like wait a second I can't do this I can't tolerate it it's just that one shift in mindset and Einemay has so many different things from just years and years of observing and helping people find their strength and helping people see their natural power and reading her books and there's a movie about it that is not on Informed Pregnancy Plus despite my best efforts about the farm and Einemay is really powerful it's super empowering and even for me to just read her stuff and watch it gives me incredible insight and perspective and paradigm on childbirth that is outside of typical and she also shares like how she got into it from a very early age it's a fascinating story the whole thing from beginning till now

ROSE HART LANDSBERG: yeah you know her whole life just learning about how her family was treated by a nurse librarian instead of doctors and you know just picking up little tidbits about birth from various publications not the typical road to legendary birth worker that one might expect today

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: she's legendary she's an advocate and she has just like Ricky Lake in the business of being born her name comes up so frequently from people who are on an informed and empowered journey in childbirth here's a quote from the episode

ROSE HART LANDSBERG: it hasn't been that long I mean okay I'm still alive thank you that I'm still here to witness so much change in such a short time and then to find out the word midwife was actually removed from people's they didn't know what it was anymore most of the people and then we revived it again now it's a verb you know but it doesn't mean that we have very many midwives we ought to have a lot more midwives than we have and if you live in a time when there aren't very

midwives when you're greatly outnumbered by obstetricians then you're in trouble

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: we're gonna break for commercial and when we come back we will be down you waited you listened you anticipated for our number one pick don't go anywhere we'll be right back welcome back we are counting down the top 10 stories moments highlights of the informed pregnancy podcast from 2024 and we're finally at

ROSE HART LANDSBERG: number one if one more person text me or said to me like oh it's gonna be any day now oh you're so close I was gonna rip their head off like I had to like tell Matt he'd be like bah you're there you're there and I was like hey I love you so much can we please change the dialogue around like you're right there because we actually don't know like it could be two more weeks and for some reason it's really triggering to me so can you just be like hey every time I complain you just need to be like you're doing such a great job that's all I need to hear

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: and who doesn't love Hillary Duff Hillary with one L I love that about her and two F's yes one L and two F's Hillary Duff is such a charming girl next door who is super successful and super down to earth interesting combination she's incredibly easy to talk to and a great storyteller as many of our other guests but really just a great storyteller and she was on the podcast first right before she had her second baby and she kind of goes into it it's I think the most popular before and after story she with her first baby was very young she was planning to have a C-section because she was terrified of birth and then all of a sudden she like meets with her psychic and her psychic says oh wait the baby's telling me he wants to choose

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: how he's gonna come out of your body and then she says okay I'm gonna try for a vaginal birth and she has a great vaginal birth experience with all the drugs and she tells the story but then five years later she's pregnant again and she feels like she wants to be present like she might have missed out on the whole birth experience not feeling it not being able to move around not being an active part of it because she was afraid of the whole thing and she decided I'm gonna try to do this one on medicated and then she said I know myself if I'm at the hospital I'm going to get the drugs so she set up for a home birth and I interview her ten days before that baby came still kind of excited but afraid of the intensity and the pain

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: and how she's gonna get through it and then ten days afterwards and she had another great experience and the great storyteller that she is she tells both experiences you know a lot of times you hear somebody who had both a home birth and a hospital birth and they hated one and they're an advocate for the other and really she's just had two great experiences and it's great for someone who's mulling over their options trying to figure out what they want to do or might be interested in I think why it's aside from being Hilary Duff it's such a popular birth story and then she came back after spoiler alert she has her next two kids at home just like Jennifer Lange and she comes back so if you want to hear that first story

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: that everybody's in love with it's episodes number 317 and 318 is a great way to listen to it then she came back after she had her third baby and then she came back after her fourth baby and that is our number one pick episodes 416 and 17 it's two episodes it's not before and after but it's two parts and she again gets super real about the things that were hard about pregnancy and birth the things that were rewarding about pregnancy and birth she talks a lot about parenting

what's considered these days a large family with four kids in tow and she talks about it from mental, emotional and physical perspectives and says a lot of eye-opening things it was actually supposed to be only one part episode and then we just were talking

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: I'm like oh my gosh an hour has gone by and we decided to keep going and make it into two because she also talks about how it's her last birth her last everything the last pregnancy the last birth and the last breastfeeding and how she's kind of experiencing that

ROSE HART LANDSBERG: yeah, you know what I really love about these episodes I mean, I love her attitude I feel like she loves being a parent she loves having a big family and she loves a lot of aspects about what leads up to that and she doesn't live all of it and she's not precious about it she's not traumatized she's real and she can talk about it in this kind of open and positive matter of fact way I really like the part where she's just talking about how uncomfortable she is at the end of pregnancy and she's just so done and in contrast to a lot of our past guests who really just wanna let the pregnancy go as long as it needs to or as long as it wants to she was like get the baby out I want the baby out and I just thought that was hysterical and relatable

ROSE HART LANDSBERG: and just really kind of speaks to someone who's on baby number four which of course you relate to and I thought it was fun to listen to you guys talk about having four kids which frankly sounds exhausting I've heard so yeah, I get why her episodes are so popular

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: yeah, she also talks about even though she loves doing home births she talks about how right before the baby comes she says, you know what maybe I'll just go do this at the hospital like it's a very real kind of back and forth in her mind and it's a journey each time she reminds me of somebody who's climbed Mount Everest and it's a real intense climb and you do it and you do it for a reason and a purpose and it's an experience of a lifetime but she doesn't sugar coat it and make it seem like oh yeah, that's the easiest thing I ever did for example, here's a few quotes from Hillary from these two episodes

ROSE HART LANDSBERG: this is the first time I haven't been chasing back to work and I'm really trying to enjoy that work is also something that is a part of my identity and I need to be happy and to feel whole and fulfilled and like I'm someone else besides just a mom the thought behind it is like taking that moment to appreciate your body expanding for you and like kind of closing that chapter it's super emotional I'm like thrilled to never be pregnant again and then there's so many crevices of like corners of my mind and my body and my like just expansion process that like you just can't compare to anything else in life you can't get that experience anywhere else

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: I also love how honest and funny she is I remember asking her in one of the episodes I asked her I'm like okay so like what kind of things do you do to calm down relax and entertain yourself and she's like murder I love all the true crime I'm like oh okay, murder

ROSE HART LANDSBERG: that I asked yeah I just feel like you know a lot of our guests have these profound pregnancy and labor experiences and that you know they abandon their careers and become birth workers which I think is amazing and I'm glad people do that and the vibe I get from her is that she's in it to be a mom like she wants to get those kids out and she wants to enjoy them and enjoy her family and enjoy her life and you know I find that very very charming I get the vibe from her

that she really enjoys being a mom

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: yes you can absolutely tell she loves it struggles and all and I also do think it's kind of incredible how she balances those things you know people sometimes ask me wow how do you get all done we have four kids and a practice and the media and I'm like I know how you have employees like

ROSE HART LANDSBERG: that is what I was going to say

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: that is true we have an incredible small but mighty team here but what I was also going to say is anybody who wants a secret and how to be able to do all these things I would say have an incredible wife and my wife makes it really easy for me to be able to go out and do all these things that I want to do and I'm home I'm around I'm active I think I'm a good dad but she takes like such good care of all of us and really nails down the home and all she works here full time also and kind of like watching her do that be able to have this successful career here as a psychologist and as a cookbook author and also really do the lion's share of the work at home blows my mind all the time and it's kind of like a Hilary Duff

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: she's very successful in her career but she's also not the mommy who like delegates everything for her kids for somebody else to do she is there you know like I have other patients who their kids are in dance class with her kids and she's there and I'm like how are you in a million places at the same time I think she has a twin sister

ROSE HART LANDSBERG: Yeah well and actually one of the other parts of your conversation that I liked was talking about how you know once you have four kids sometimes saying no to something is not a choice it's a necessity that there's so much going on that you prioritize you have to prioritize and that's something else that I liked about these episodes because of course most of our episodes are about you know the baby making and the baby having and so most of the conversations don't go further into the kids getting older and what that looks like down the road and so I think it's interesting to get a glimpse of that especially from someone who's doing both she's still having babies and you know finding out what it looks like

ROSE HART LANDSBERG: down the road and you know like you said all of the complicated divisions of labor and family dynamics and everything that comes after

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: Yeah you're so right we're mostly about pregnancy birth fertility pregnancy birth and postpartum and maybe very early parenting and this is a glimpse into parenting as the family continues to grow and the kids get older from a very real raw and funny perspective and she'll always be a favorite of mine because again she's just so surprisingly real and easy to talk to she's like a unicorn in my mind Are unicorns easy to talk to?

ROSE HART LANDSBERG: I've never had a unicorn that was hard to talk to

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: Touche On that note thank you very much for tuning into our holiday top 10 picks for the Informed Pregnancy podcast before we sign off Rose we're working hard we're peddling as hard as we can at Informed Pregnancy Plus and we have some Informed Pregnancy originals such as Baby Book Nook Empowered Mama, My Birth and two new things coming out in

2025 one is the postpartum series we finally took a look at postpartum I think that it's under observed under talked about under supported and we made a web series that is going to offer more spotlight on it and more things that you can do for mind body and spirit health during that transition so look for that On Informed Pregnancy Plus and we're launching an all new podcast

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: if you like this you're gonna love that it's called One Way or A Mother and because the birth stories are so popular and some of the feedback we get on them is could you take us a little deeper in sometimes an episode has a 40 hour birth story told in 40 minutes which is like one minute per hour of action and we don't get to get into super great detail and the feedback is take us in deeper so what we've decided to do is take stories that are a bit more involved and do a whole season on that story on a much deeper level interviewing the person who is pregnant and their partner and their parents and support people and doctors and weaving it all together the first season is Ariana's story and it's quite interesting fascinating and entertaining

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: and there's a couple of other great seasons that are coming right after that it's done in a serialized format so if you've listened to Serial the podcast it's kind of like that the whole story is told over 10 episodes yeah I was originally gonna call it Baby Serial but I didn't want to get sued so it's called One Way or A Mother and it'll be launching soon from Informed Pregnancy Media what else did I leave anything out?

ROSE HART LANDSBERG: No lots of good stuff

DR. ELLIOT BERLIN, DC: we are working hard with a small but mighty team and we appreciate you as our audience and listeners if you want to engage with us feel free to look us up on social media at Dr. Berlin D-O-C-T-O-R-B-E-R-L-I-N or you can access all of our media online at InformedPregnancy.com

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