

S2E7_Honoring the Body and Practice of Pregnancy: Birth and Postpartum with Chiropractor and Childbirth Educator Dr Elliot Berlin

[00:00:00] **Dr Elliot Berlin:** In the modern world, the lines are very blurry, sometimes reversed altogether, which is fine, but I think that for many people, instinctively animalistically, the men get rewarded for going out and hunting and gathering, and the women get pulled in two different directions. They instinctively, oftentimes wanna be around the nest and around the young and societally are being pulled out to hunt and gather as well.

So, uh, that's a piece of the postpartum struggle. That women have. I think men also sometimes have postpartum struggle, but I think that's part of the postpartum struggle that women experiences that they're fighting their animalistic instinct and they're being heavily divided, and each one requires a hundred percent of what you have.

So it's really nearly impossible to excel at both.

[00:00:55] **Kaitlin Solimine:** I am your host, Kaitlin Solimine, and this is the Postpartum Production Podcast. [00:01:00] Here we hold conversations about the intersection of caregiving, creative practice, and capitalist production, as well as what it means to be producing art while also being a parent in modern society. Find out more at www.postpartumproduction.com where you can also sign up for our newsletter.

Today I am excited to share with you a conversation with Dr. Elliot Berlin. Elliot is an award-winning, prenatal chiropractor, childbirth educator, labor support, body worker, and co-founder of Berlin Wellness Group in Los Angeles, California. Dr. Berlin graduated Summa Ude from Life University of Chiropractic in Atlanta, Georgia, and the Atlanta School of Massage.

His separate schooling and massage therapy body work and chiropractic formed the backbone of his [00:02:00] innovative pre and postnatal wellness care techniques. Dr. Berlin's informed pregnancy project aims to utilize multiple forms of media. Including podcasts, YouTube series, documentaries, and online

workshops to compile and deliver unbiased information about pregnancy and childbirth.

To empower new and expected parents to make informed choices regarding their pregnancy and parenting journey. It's clearly something that the world needs. Right now, Dr. Berlin lives in Los Angeles with his wife, perinatal psychologist, Dr. Alyssa Berlin. And there are four fantastic kids, Dr. Berlin, and I first connected probably about six years ago after the birth of my first child when I was helping produce another childbirth documentary.

These are my hours. I followed his impressive podcast, and I highly recommend that all of you listeners check out the Informed Pregnancy Podcast. I also had the great pleasure of being a guest recently as well. [00:03:00]

I am so excited that we were able to connect here today, and as I was saying, prior to us being official, right now, you are the first male guest we've had on this show, and I think. We've probably had close to, I haven't counted maybe 20 guests, so Ah, you

[00:03:24] **Dr Elliot Berlin:** Well, I'm honored. I'm sorry your show's going downhill, but I'm honored

[00:03:29] **Kaitlin Solimine:** and I know that we've connected in the past in birth world related stuff, but I'm really excited today to talk to you a little bit about, I actually don't know this answer, so I wanted to know.

How you came to work so deeply in the birth world and what that means to you and hear a little bit more about postpartum specifically, and I know you also do a lot of work with. Postpartum mothers and a lot of creative postpartum mothers. So I'd love to hear more about [00:04:00] your insights on that journey and your perspective as a care provider.

Let's start though with how you got

[00:04:05] **Dr Elliot Berlin:** here. How did I get here? In 1974, I was born, by the way, eventually, and that started a whole career in something. Birth related. And I do a lot of breach work, actually. So, huh. I don't know. Maybe that's where it really started. More recently, when I was seven, I walked into a building in New York City and in the lobby they were doing a C P R class.

Hmm. I was terrified. I was like, oh my God, what are they doing to that poor woman with no arms and no legs? And then they explained that you could use

your body. To be somebody else's heart and lungs for a little while, to give them oxygen like lungs and to circulate it like the heart when theirs fail, until they can get advanced medical care.

And that literally planted a seed in my mind that I just, I wanted to know, what can I do? How can I help other people in other ways, you know, with my body. It sparked my [00:05:00] curiosity for healthcare. Hmm. I started maybe when I was 10, taking classes from the American Red Cross in. CPR and first aid responding to emergencies, lifeguard work.

And then I just, by the time I was 15, I was teaching those classes to other people for the Red Cross, for and American Heart. And then 17, I took the emergency medical technician training in 18, I was working in ambulances and emergency rooms in New York City. And 19, I'm in college studying pre-med and I'm thinking I am gonna be the greatest something, whatever surgeon there ever was.

Hmm. And then my father died suddenly, partially from a medical mix up. Hmm. And it, it really gave me a new respect for healthcare in a lot of different ways. But one thing I realize is I think I want to be on the side of healthcare that works with the body. Hmm. Rather than the side that you [00:06:00] know takes over the body.

And it doesn't mean I don't love drugs and surgery, I still do. I respect them very much. I didn't want my life to be that. I wanted my body, my life to be helping the body do its own doctoring. And so I took some time off. I studied a lot of different alternatives and complimentary forms of healthcare while making pizza during the day, and I fell in love with the combination of chiropractic and massage together.

I feel like the musculoskeletal system is not just muscular or skeletal, it's deeply intertwined and I feel like it's a powerful system, not just for pain. You know, obviously if there's pain and stiffness and restriction and compression of nerve, you're gonna feel a lot of discomfort. But it's also the protector of the central nervous system.

They bring in the spinal cord that control and coordinate the function of every cell and organ in the body, and when there's compression instead of protection. Those structures prevent the body either from being able to get good information about [00:07:00] what's going on in the different parts of the field, the peripheral nervous system, or being able to send appropriate help.

And so I went to school separately for both of them. Now, by this time, I had met my lovely wife and she was on her pathway to becoming a psychologist. We went to grad school together in Atlanta, Georgia, and when we're. Both just about done with grad school. We thought, let's have a baby. And so we followed the instructions and no baby came out and we ended up on a three year path of the fertility rollercoaster and all things natural, all things medical.

And at the end, even though we were pretty young in our twenties, they told us, we don't think you'll ever have a baby together. So that way, and you should look at alternative pathways to parenthood like. Adoption or other, other things like that. In the meantime, we were totally broke. We had no money, we had no relationship.

We had no mind, body, spirit, health as [00:08:00] individuals as a couple, and we were no position to really become parents of any kind. Hmm. So we just decided to take a break. Let's sit back and work on improving things, working and earning money, and not giving it all to fertility treatments. Hmm. Spending our time together, just bonding, finding that spark that brought us together in the first place and nurturing it and helping it grow into a raging fire.

And our individual health, whether it's was meditation at that time, nutrition, a little bit of yoga, Chinese medicine. Really nothing to do with having kids just to get our lives back to a healthy place. And that ironically ended up taking about nine months. Around which time we moved to Los Angeles and once we settled into Los Angeles, we thought, okay, now is a good time to look into the things that they were talking about.

And we never got the chance cause we found out we were pregnant. Hmm. And that just went on for basically every other [00:09:00] year. Another baby came out, we couldn't turn it off. And now we have four kids, healthy kids, and they've grown up a bit. But when we opened our mind body practice together in Los Angeles, it was for general health and wellness with a little bit of an angle on boosting natural fertility.

Hmm. You know, there's only so much you can do, but if you're not at your potential for what your bodies can do naturally, then how do we get there? How do we raise your goals and efforts and try to bring out the potential that you naturally have? And through that program, a couple of babies came out the first year.

And every year after that just kind of snowballed more and more babies. Now on that journey, becoming a chiropractor that's now helping with pregnancy,

you start to learn a lot, especially from someone who came from such a medical background. People are asking about different supplements they can take.

I'm like, oh, just all I know is nyqua and different. Questions about childbirth, about medicated or unmedicated home [00:10:00] versus hospital versus other settings and, and V A Cs and doulas and breach birth. And I didn't know anything, so I just would research and try to ask questions from the experts and read literature and come back with the information that I found, and then you just realize you're getting the same questions over and over.

So we turned it into a blog, then a magazine, then a podcast that, And we have another blog that's raging and, and the streaming service. So, and then service-wise, it turns into I'm working prenatally with people, I'm working postpartum with people. Eventually someone says, Hey, can you do this body work while I'm in labor?

Mm-hmm. And then the next thing you know, you're going to birth with people and you think, I'm the first dude on your podcast. I'm, I'm in a small club of male doulas and, and, and that's it. Then you become a doula because if you're gonna be at birth a lot, it's helpful to have other tools. Mm-hmm. You know, in the tool belt than just a body work that you do.

So, and my wife is a doula too, and she's is a psychologist. She does mostly pre and postnatal care and also is [00:11:00] like a specialty doula because of her deeper understanding of things that are sometimes require more input or expertise, like strong anxiety or OCD or things like that. Mm-hmm. That's also a nutshell.

That is perfect, starting from the very beginning.

[00:11:19] **Kaitlin Solimine:** That's really helpful. I didn't, obviously I haven't heard much of that. I know much of the latter of the work that you're doing now. I didn't know the foundation of how you got there and. Actually share a very similar journey on the fertility side, so I appreciate that.

Yeah. We did have to use more Western specific medicine for our first two, but our third was a. Didn't think this would happen on our own sort of thing. Yeah. So I feel for that journey and I, I know it well, and I, I'm really grateful that you were able to build that into your practice as well. I'm curious, in terms of the birth [00:12:00] work that you do, you mentioned your own birth.

How much of that did you know and how much it seemed like that. Influenced you and then also the births of your children, how that played a role in this journey for

[00:12:13] **Dr Elliot Berlin:** you. Yeah, that's, that's really interesting. So I didn't know too much about male birth other than I came fairly quickly and I was breach.

Hmm. Nobody cared that I was breached in 1974, and I was just born that way. Where were you born? I was born in Staten Island, New York. Mm-hmm. And you know, I'm the youngest of two. And so, you know, I didn't see kids being born after me. Mm-hmm. Uh, or, or babies in the house. That was all foreign to me in terms of my kids' births.

Yeah. That just like, really, I, I've been to a lot of birth now. I daress say around a hundred births at least, actually a hundred births and every single one. There's not one that's boring or not interesting or like, okay, I've been there, done that. Like every single one. Is is just so [00:13:00] miraculously fascinating.

It doesn't matter the, the setting or, you know, the provider or even the mode of delivery. It's always interesting. My own kids, I mean, my wife gave birth to our first, she, she also kind of grew up in a more medical background, but did not really want an epidural, I think primarily because, did not want a giant needle near her spinal cord.

Mm-hmm. Nothing to do with like holistic kind of mindset. And she was really determined to not have it. So it was a 42 hour birth, completely unmedicated, except for 400 milligrams of Advil, which I kept taking every four hours for my ridiculous headache. And now I'm not so medical, but I didn't want her to have to deal with all my primal noises.

And so, yeah, I mean, to watch that like. It could have just been a quick, smooth, easy birth, and I still would've been blown away by it, but mm-hmm. But like the [00:14:00] inner strength and the, just the, the mostly she progressed great when everybody just left her alone to do her own thing. Hmm. And that was already kind of interesting.

I was like, you know, my idea of birth is just what you see on tv. In movies. You go to the hospital, scream a lot, and everybody's running around with their hair blowing in the wind, and then the baby comes also screaming a lot and to see that be what birth is and could be like, was very, very eye opening.

The second one was born very quickly when she went into labor with the second one, you know, they were five or six minutes apart the contraction. So I was like, okay, it's gonna be a. Along two days again, and then about two and a half hours later, the baby was out. Hmm. We got to the hospital and we're just, we're just navigating, we're running through the halls, navigating for about 18 minutes and then we get into the room and the baby comes out.

Hmm. So that was also a very interesting, fascinating birth. Birth. Third one is a little [00:15:00] longer, and the first time we really had any sort of conflict from hospital staff, meaning my wife was really comfortable laboring. On all fours and want to deliver that way. And then the nurse came in and she was like, oh, you gotta get on your back honey.

It's almost time to push. And to sort of, I what? What? I'm uncomfortable make jokes. So I just sort of said, oh, I hope you're talking to me, because she's quite comfortable like that. And I guess that irritated her even more. So, you know, they really tried to put pressure on her and then there was conflict and then the resident came in cuz the doctor wasn't gonna make it anyway.

Mm-hmm. And the resident was like, fine, I, you know, she could be in any position she wants to and then, That nurse kind of stormed off and never came back. So, you know, we had our fourth at home, which was also very eye opening. By that point I had been to a bunch of home births and you know, I always thought home births was very specifically reserved for, you know, tree hugging PRAs, driving vegan hippies.

And then I'm watching these meat eating doctors and lawyers give birth at home. And, uh, one of them drives a suburban. I'm like, what? [00:16:00] How is this possible? And it was just very eye-opening. Like, you realize there's a big difference. We, we had always said our first birth was like home birth at the hospital.

Mm-hmm. Like totally unmedicated. But then you realize the key ingredient that's makes a home birth, home birth is home. And we did have an unmedicated hospital birth, but it wasn't a home birth. They're just, they're just very different. And not to say that, that somebody will have a great experience in one place or the other if that's not where they feel safe, but just by nomenclature, they're very different.

Just one example is in the hospital, you just see all the time the laboring person asking, hi, C, can I drink this? Can I, can I have a little bite of that? Can I go peek? Can I, can I wear this? Can I, you know, and at home if, if anybody's

asking questions, they're asking, Hey Sarah, do you mind if we use your towel for this?

It's the opposite. It's who's in the driver's seat. Mm-hmm. And that alone, natural birth is so physiologically driven by [00:17:00] hormone. You know, the hormones shift a lot when you're the one in power versus submissive to everybody else in the room. Hmm. So I learned a lot from our own birth experiences. I don't know that I learned anything specific from mine, but it was interesting that, you know, nowadays people don't really have the option to deliver breach Babies vaginally.

And the more work I've done in that space, we ultimately made a, a documentary about it called Heads Up. Mm-hmm. And the more work I've done in that space, the more providers I find who are in that space, who were also born breach. Hmm. Hmm. Interestingly enough. Mm-hmm. So, I don't know, maybe there's a

[00:17:40] **Kaitlin Solimine:** connection circle.

Right, right. Interesting. Yeah, that I didn't know that either. Well, I know that. Now, in terms of the media work that you're doing and the podcast, your blog, the streaming services, you are connecting with a lot of mostly women, it seems, caregivers who have given birth recently and work [00:18:00] in creative fields.

And obviously that's where I've come to this podcast. So I'm curious to hear from you, your perspective on the conversations that you have, the care you provide. You know what that looks like, because that's really been intriguing to me and to our guests of like when you become a parent, how your relationship to creative work shifts and what that looks like.

And if you've have any specific examples or conversations that you had that are coming to mind now in relation to that

[00:18:32] **Dr Elliot Berlin:** topic. I think the biggest shift that I see is that, look, an observation that I've made a few times now is that all living things have a life cycle that has four stages. And it doesn't matter if you're grass, if you're an egg, like an ameba, if you're a bird, a mammal.

We, we are born, we [00:19:00] get bigger, we reproduce. And we die. And when you zoom out the blip of time on the screen that we have in this world, the tiny amount of time we have in the big picture, when you consider those four

things, at least what I consider them, the big one is reproduction. You can't really control being born and dying very well.

Hmm. And you just get bigger. It's the one thing that seems like built into our life mission. Is reproduction. That doesn't mean the other things are not important, but I think that once you start to reproduce, they for many people, become less important and the focus becomes your primary task in life, which is.

Raising the kids. Mm. Giving birth, raising children, nurturing them, being close to them. And it's actually kind [00:20:00] of interesting, I think, that not everybody agrees with this. And then for sure, it's a generalization. Not everybody even falls into these categories, but I think my observation also is for myself and for people around me, men, when they start having babies, have an animalistic instinct to go hunt and gather more and provide for those babies.

And women have an animalistic instinct to guard the nest, to be around the nest, and to nurture those babies and raise those babies and protect those babies. In the modern world, the lines are, are very blurry to sometimes reversed altogether, which is fine, but I think that for many people, instinctively animalistically, the men get rewarded for going out and hunting and gathering.

And the women get pulled in two different directions. They instinctively, oftentimes wanna be around the nest and around the young and societally are being pulled out [00:21:00] to hunt and gather as well. So, uh, that's a piece of the postpartum struggle that women have. I think men also sometimes have postpartum struggle.

Mm-hmm. But I think that's part of the postpartum struggle that women experiences that they're fighting their animalistic instinct and they're being. Heavily divided and like each one requires a hundred percent of what you have. Mm-hmm. So it's really nearly impossible to excel at both. Mm-hmm. And so creatively, I think what I see after people have babies, I see a lot of people, for example, in high power attorney jobs that are just like, okay, I'm gonna have to start my own business.

Which you would think is like so much. Like having another baby, essentially. Mm-hmm. Running your own business. Mm-hmm. But you need the freedom and the flexibility to be able to do what might be your primary goal, which is raising the child. Mm-hmm. You know, being there as a mother in a way that nobody else really could.[00:22:00]

[00:22:05] **Kaitlin Solimine:** I wanted to take a pause here to thank our sponsors of this episode, as I mentioned in the past here at the Postpartum Production Podcast. We are experimenting with sustainable ways to ensure our podcast team is paid for their work while you also receive the quality content you enjoy. We've shied away from asking you, our listeners for paid subscriptions or starting a paid, because to be honest, we know many of you are very busy and cash strap.

As is. So we've looked into alternatives to support our production costs. To that end, today's episode features two sponsors whose products feel aligned with our mission of providing increased support and care for caregiver artists. One such sponsor is needed. A leading women's health supplement brand recommended by nutritionally trained practitioners needed was founded by two mothers.

Navigating a fertility journey, which I personally appreciate as I had my own fertility challenges. For years, the needed founders were shocked to realize [00:23:00] that 97% of women take a prenatal vitamin, yet 95% still have nutrient deficiencies. So they teamed up with a group of perinatal nutrition and health experts to redesign the prenatal vitamin and supplements women need from the ground up.

Needed's products are based. On the latest clinical research and in practice experience of nearly 4,000 women's health practitioners needed, provides a range of support from your everyday prenatal vitamin to more pregnancy, specific pre probiotics, egg quality support, sleep stress, and more. You can save 20% off your first order of.

Any vitamins or supplements@thisisneeded.com with code postpartum production, and that will all be linked in the show notes as well. Another sponsor of our podcast is Better Help the world's largest therapy platform, whose mission is to make professional therapy accessible, affordable, and convenient, better help offers access to licensed, trained, experienced, and accredited psychologists, marriage and family [00:24:00] therapists, clinical social workers, and board licensed profe.

Counselors, their mission to break down barriers to mental health resources is one that definitely resonates with me, and I hope is also of interest and assistance to our community of listeners. As a postpartum production listener, you can save 10% off your first month with the code postpartum production, or by accessing the link better help.com/postpartum production, which will also be linked in our show notes.

Both needed and better help are postpartum production sponsors and va. Your purchases, our podcast will receive referral funds that help keep our lights on, and we hope that eventually we'll be able to raise enough funding to build out a caregiver, artist, residency and grants, as well as additional programming.

Now back to our very entertaining conversation with Dr. Berlin.

[00:24:58] **Dr Elliot Berlin:** The other thing is like in more [00:25:00] creative spaces, I think it can go either way. Some people really like singer songwriters start writing. Mm-hmm. Lullabies. Christina Perry, we just had on our, on our podcast for a trio of episodes. All of a sudden she's coming out with lullaby albums and I think that's reminiscent of what many creative people do.

I mean, it, it does consume you to a degree and I think even some, some like major. Artists, musical artists who are not viewed as like mommies. You know, either rockers or just heavy musicians that will have babies that kind of become a little maternity and sometimes get crap from the press for it. Mm-hmm.

You know? Mm-hmm. But that's what's coming out of them. That's what's consuming them, and that's what where their creative energy is going. And so you start to see that the music or. See people all of a sudden getting involved in books related to the journey to parenthood. Mm-hmm. Mm-hmm. Or films. [00:26:00] And then the other side of the coin is I see some people just run away from an altogether in their creative work for a total separation of sort of church and state.

Mm-hmm. This is me as a mommy, this is me as a professional. And they're not to overlap. Mm-hmm. You know, and need to have clear boundaries. So I can see that going that way too. I mean, for me, obviously, and my wife, it's exploded until all we do now. Mm-hmm. Day and night is pregnancy, birth, and a little bit on the pre side fertility and on the post side parenting of slightly older kids, toddlers, twins, and so on.

So it's had a massive impact on us, but those are just some of the conversations and observations that I have in that regard. It's

[00:26:40] **Kaitlin Solimine:** not something I've explored yet, but one thing that's been coming up on our podcast a lot is in terms of the legitimization of work surrounding themes of motherhood. So for example, like our lullabies in the singer songwriter category, seen as like quaint, can you win?

Can you win a Grammy? [00:27:00] Yeah. Based on a lullaby, right? I would argue, obviously you can, I don't know if anyone has something to look up, but. Similarly, I think there's this movement now of work in literature around themes related to motherhood, and the question is why do they even have to stand outside?

Like you're saying, if reproduction is part of the lifecycle, then any art that's created that's related to that is not its own little niche genre. It's just like any art that's related to death. Any art that's related to growing up or birth, and that's a whole other subject matter, right? Of like how little art and.

Writing and film. There actually is, that just shows birth, right? I actually have a friend who does a lot of research on birth art and the number of pieces of art related to death is like exponential compared to that, related to birth. Even though obviously everyone is born and dies, but men don't give birth.

Therefore, one could argue that the prevailing powers that control production of [00:28:00] creative works. Haven't cared to produce work about birth.

[00:28:04] **Dr Elliot Berlin:** Yes. That's quite possible. I also think if you go back, not that far, you know, just over a hundred years ago, men were not even a part of birth. Right. All, all the old pictures that I see are a woman surrounded by women.

Mm-hmm. You know? Mm-hmm. Supporting her birth. Mm-hmm. And then she'd be part of the team supporting the next person number. Mm-hmm. They were out hunting and gathering. So there's a lot of art about hunting and gathering.

[00:28:26] **Kaitlin Solimine:** Yeah, good point. Those hunting scenes, oh God, you know, I'm, I'm intrigued to, to listen.

I've been listening to your podcast now for a while. Unfortunately, I haven't been able, you're prolific. I have not been able to. Keep up with every episode, but I think that you do clearly have a lot of creatives who come and talk to you about birth. And are you typically working with them in your office as well?

[00:28:53] **Dr Elliot Berlin:** And that's for the most part, we're just having those conversations anyway, so I'm like, Hey, let's turn on a microphone. Right? Share with everybody else. [00:29:00] You know, an interesting thing that I think happened. Was Hillary Duff really blows my mind and didn't four

episodes of the podcast with her, and the first two are really mind blowing because they turned out to be 10 days before and 10 days after she gave birth.

Mm-hmm. To her. Mm-hmm. I did hear those. Yeah. Her second baby, which was her first home birth, and in her case, you know, she went from really wanting a cesarean birth with her first. To sort of semi reluctantly going into a vaginal birth with all the medication. And she had a good birth. She had a good birth experience.

She's very happy with it. But afterwards, it was the time that she spent with her son for five years before her next baby came. Hmm. Where she realized almost what I was saying before, that the things in in life she, she has, by 21, she had lived so much life already, career successes and just. All the experiences that came along with that.

The moments in life [00:30:00] that were most exciting to her that she lived for were being present with her son. Hmm. Being present with her son. She said it could have been anything. We could be doing homework, we could be making dinner, taking out the garbage or something big, milestone events, birthdays, or concerts, it didn't matter.

Being present with her son is what really made her tick. And it was that that kind of led her to feel like, what if giving birth is the most present thing I could do? Hmm. With my child? The most incredible, crazy, powerful thing we could do together. Hmm. But I'm afraid to be present. I'm afraid of the pain.

I'm afraid of the process, so I numb myself to it entirely. What if I'm missing out on the greatest thing ever? And that's what really drove her to want to do an unmedicated birth. Although she realized if she's in the hospital, she'll probably cave. So she explored home birth. Hmm. Um, and then she had a great home birth experience as well.

But I think that kind of goes [00:31:00] back to what I was thinking earlier, which is that you're born, you get bigger, you get birth, and you die. And you can have the greatest, most successful, most impactful career on the planet. Mm-hmm. But it still pales in comparison to what you do by leaving your imprint, your DNA imprint on the planet.

Or it doesn't even have to be dna, your parenting imprint on the planet. Mm-hmm. For the future generations. I don't know why the world ticks that way. It's just an observation that it

[00:31:25] **Kaitlin Solimine:** does. Yeah. I definitely feel that it's, I think, as you said, we're so much, for me personally, like so much struggle comes in, in terms of balance and at the same time, I often feel like if I were, I have this feeling a lot, if I were 100% of the time with my children.

And I were present with them 100% of that time. I may burn out of that. Like I'm always like, I need space, obviously. And so balancing that against professional pursuits has always been something where I do feel like it juices me up and gives me the [00:32:00] space to be able to come back to my children and be with them.

And clearly you right now are doing a lot. Professionally. So I am curious in terms of your makeup of that balance, of the presence in your body in life, and then all of the rest that you are doing. Like how do you navigate that

[00:32:23] **Dr Elliot Berlin:** poorly? I mean, I look at work-life balance as the holy grail that doesn't exist.

Uh mm-hmm. You just gotta chase it as much as you can. I'm a d d on top of everything else, and so, I'm the person who always has at least 20 windows open on my computer. The tabs get so small you can only see the first letter and you're just constantly clicking on where is it? I think I paid my electric bill, but I stopped in the middle cuz a popup came up and then my power gets shut off.

That like I'm not good at at com compartmentalizing and I'm very moment to moment when my son [00:33:00] was 13 years old. He's a great kid. I mean, really my oldest is, is, the other ones are good too, but my oldest, he was the only one for a little while. He is a great kid and we're on vacation in Palm Springs and he's being such a little turd for lack of a bit of, and it's not like him, it's not his characteristic.

And I was like, Hey Joe, what's going on? Like, what's bothering you? This is not like, I wasn't even mad. I was just like, What? Well, I feel bad for him. What's bothering you? Mm-hmm. And you could tell he wanted to say something, but he just couldn't find the words for it. And I was like, Hey, look, I'm sorry you're struggling with something.

Whatever it is. Mm-hmm. I'm here for you. Just come anytime when you're ready to talk about, we'll talk about it. And then maybe an hour later, I'm sitting outside by the pool listening to beautiful, relaxing beats and taking in the sun. [00:34:00] Vitamin D and my son just comes over to me and he says, why do I even have a father if you're never gonna be home?

And I was like, I would love to answer that question as soon as we can pull this dagger out of my heart. You know? And he had just had his bar mitzvah and he is like, how much does it even cost to spend time with you? Can I buy up some appointments? I don't need my Bar mitzvah money for anything. No. So at that point we had seven offices.

Within the next six months, I closed six of them. Wow. My wife put a limit on the number of projects I could be working on at any given time to three. So a bunch of projects went on the back burner. Mm-hmm. I was more present, I was more home. I still wasn't the best, you know? Mm-hmm. And still to this day, I'm not the greatest.

I, I have better days and weeks and months and worse days and weeks and months. I find better, like my best [00:35:00] efforts that are work really hard and then play really hard. Like in a couple weeks we'll go to Italy for a couple weeks and no work and just focus on each other hardcore. And then when I get back, no Dad, I'm working.

Mm-hmm. Is that the best way to go about it? I don't know, but you know, I think it's working for us.

[00:35:18] **Kaitlin Solimine:** I love that your son, at the very least felt capable of. Saying that to you and that you were also capable of taking it and making an adjustment. Because I think that so many humans, let alone parents can't.

Accept that kind of critical feedback on their lives and then to say, okay, give me a moment. And

[00:35:42] **Dr Elliot Berlin:** Yeah. You know, I think if he was a kid who complained about everything and anything, it'd be one thing. But he never, I, I never know what to get him. He never asks for anything. Whatever you get him as, he's so happy to have it.

He never pulls rank on the other kids. I'm the old, he's like, okay, if you want this seat, you should take it. If that'll make you happy, [00:36:00] you should have it. And. I'm like, okay. I, I didn't even realize you noticed I wasn't home, you know? And, and he also, he said, dad, I'm only 13. Like, we still have time. We can make this happen still.

And we did. And if he hadn't, I don't know that we would have. Mm-hmm. I think mm-hmm. As much regret as I have now that he moved out of the house, by the way, this year off to the East coast. As much regret as I have now, it

would've been a million times worse had he not. Mm-hmm. Had those feelings spoken up and been the kind of kid where I think I could receive it really well.

And Hmm. And just, you know, my wife had been warning me for years. She was very wise, but I, I just, I am the classic workaholic and, uh, a d d and balances always seems out of reach, and I know that's probably true for most people to a degree. And it's just something that strikes me. I heard a TED talk where they were talking to hospice care workers.

Hmm. And [00:37:00] they did a survey of hospice care workers. What are your clients, what do they talk about as their greatest regrets at the end of life? And down at the very bottom of the list is, I should have worked more. Mm-hmm. And the first three are, I should have been more present with my family, spent more time with my loved ones.

Been around more, taking more rest time, vacation time, all the way at the bottom, like the last one as I should have worked more. So that does stick in my mind mm-hmm. As, uh, sort of a blueprint for what regrets do I want to have. Then

[00:37:39] **Kaitlin Solimine:** as you're talking though, I'm also thinking that like we live in a society where we really, really don't have a social safety net.

And so for so many, I don't know. You're sort of in this fraught space, right? Where work begets the life, begets the work beget, you know what I mean? Like, because the things, like you said, you had opened other practices, you're then [00:38:00] expanding out and then having to do that much more in order to support a family in a very expensive city.

So it's, it's tricky of how to actually extract yourself or your lifestyle from what is trying to perpetrate. Constant consumption really at the end of the day. Right?

[00:38:19] **Dr Elliot Berlin:** Yeah. I mean, I watch people move from here to like Idaho. Okay. That's, yeah. I mean, I lived in Nebraska for a year and the cost of housing, the cost of everything over there right, was so low in comparison to New York where I grew up in California, where I spent most of my adult life.

But how could you

[00:38:41] **Kaitlin Solimine:** do what you're doing in Abra? I mean you, but

[00:38:43] **Dr Elliot Berlin:** I don't even know if I'd have to do what I'm doing in Nebraska. Right. Fair. Okay. You know, like in Los Angeles, the pandemic hits and you're outta work for three months. The cost of living over those three months will give you a heart attack by itself.

Mm-hmm. In Nebraska, you just walk to a cornfield, pick some sweet corn and [00:39:00] you're fed.

[00:39:02] **Kaitlin Solimine:** Okay. Well, speaking of, before we close, I know you mentioned. New projects you've going on and your wife's ultimatum with regards to how many you can balance at one time, but what would you like to leave listeners with in terms of resources and where you're at and what to follow in your

[00:39:20] **Dr Elliot Berlin:** universe?

Yeah. Thank you so much. The informed pregnancy project is literally a labor of love, of labor and everything around it. It's the desire for people to have information with which they can make thoughtful decisions. And find support for the decisions that they've made. And the podcast is in its 10th year now, so we have about 350 episodes.

Oh my gosh. Uh, the blog, we have such incredible writers coming to share their expertise and their personal stories. And it's just a fascinating reading, but the newest baby is the informed Pregnancy plus streaming service. Mm-hmm. And that happened because I made two documentaries, one about breach birth that [00:40:00] we mentioned heads up, and one about vaginal birth after cesarean called Trial of Labor.

And after making them, I was like, okay, now I've spent all this time and effort doing something. You know nothing about making a film. Mm-hmm. And I realized now that I have this film, the only thing I know less about making a film is what to do with it once you have. And so there's this flare up of activity, right when it comes out with screenings and premieres and online interviews and all sorts of things.

And then it just kind of fades away. And the most painful stabbing thing is when people would reach out and say, wow, I saw trial of labor and I loved it. I wish I had seen it before I had my baby. Mm-hmm. And I was like, we made it so you could see it before you had your baby, and that would hurt. And so I reached out to some of the other filmmakers in this space and they're like, yeah, we have the same issue.

Like, it's just hard to find the films, hard to access them, hard to consume them. And so I went on a mission to say, how can we get all these films together [00:41:00] in one place and accessible inexpensively to people where they consume their digital content, on their devices, on their TVs. And so that gave birth to Inform Pregnancy Plus, which is available online@informedpregnancy.tv.

Mm-hmm. But it's also on the major apps like Apple, Android, Roku. Oh, great. It'll soon be on Apple TV and wherever you go, you can just access all those films, web series, birth stories, video birth stories. We have a whole mind body section with meditations and yoga and pre and postnatal workouts. Hmm.

Workshops like my wife's workshop, how to prepare your relationship for her baby, which is called the after birth plan. And it's just growing with tons of content. Anybody can try it for free on any of those platforms, and then after that, it's like six or \$7 a month.

[00:41:55] **Kaitlin Solimine:** Awesome. Well, I'm glad that that is a resource that's available [00:42:00] because it's one that I wish I had.

Are there any animal birth videos?

[00:42:04] **Dr Elliot Berlin:** You know, it's funny that you say that because I'm trying to make an animal birth series. Ooh, where we, you kind of watch how animals do it in nature. One of my favorite things to use, elephant births. Yeah, those are great. To kind show a person like what kind of power you have inside you, what kind of knowledge, wisdom and power you have to give birth and to do neonatal care and the newborns.

It's incredible to watch. So it's funny that you mentioned that, but it, it is in the works.

[00:42:33] **Kaitlin Solimine:** Very cool. That was always something mentioned to me in my birth prep, especially through midwifery practices, is just watch lots of animal births, which my kids liked once they were involved in the process. That was fun.

Yeah. Well, thank you for speaking today and at some point my goal is to have a very specific birth and art and that Universe series. I think it might be after this season. So I'll let you know and maybe we can [00:43:00] strategize on something there, but I would love, love, love that. But it was fun to hear this background.

I did not know this about you. So now I have a full context of. Why you are the way you are and where

[00:43:12] **Dr Elliot Berlin:** I'm just learning why I'm the way you're preoccupations. But I deeply appreciate all the work that you are doing and thanks for thanks. Not only having me, but for taking a chance on a dude. I hope it goes

[00:43:22] **Kaitlin Solimine:** well.

I hope so too. Well, we'll look for the comments and the reviews. All right. Well, thank you Dr. Berlin.

[00:43:31] **Dr Elliot Berlin:** Thank you so much.

[00:43:37] **Kaitlin Solimine:** I'm your host, Kaitlin Solimine, and this is the Postpartum Production Podcast. If you like what you've heard today, please subscribe wherever you get your podcast and give us a rating which will help us reach more listeners like you. For regular updates, visit our website, www.postpartumproduction.com.

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