

Fourth Trimester Podcast

Episode 48: How To Ease The Transition Into Parenting

Sarah Trott: [00:00:05] My name is Sarah Trott. I'm a new mama to a baby girl and this podcast is all about postpartum care for the few months following birth, the time period also known as the Fourth Trimester. My postpartum doula, Esther Gallagher, is my co-host. She's a mother, grandmother, perinatal educator, birth and postpartum care provider. I've benefited hugely from her support. All parents can benefit from the wisdom and support that a postpartum Doula provides. Fourth trimester care is about the practical, emotional and social support parents and baby require, and importantly, helps set the tone for the lifelong journey of parenting.

When I first became pregnant, I had never heard of postpartum Doulas, let alone knew what they did. So much of the training and preparation that expecting parents do is focused on the birth and newborn care. Once a baby is born, often the first interaction parents have with medical or child professionals, other than the first pediatrician visits, is the six-week checkup with the OB/GYN. *What about caring for mama and family between the birth and the six week doctor visit? What are the strategies for taking care of the partner and the rest of the family while looking after your newborn?*

Our podcasts contain expert interviews with specialists from many fields to cover topics including postpartum doula practices, prenatal care, prenatal and postnatal yoga, parenting, breastfeeding, physical recovery from birth, nutrition, newborn care, midwifery, negotiating family visitation, and many more.

First-hand experience is shared through lots of stories from both new and seasoned parents. Hear what other parents are asking and what they have done in their own lives.

We reference other podcasts, internet resources and real-life experts who can help you on your own parenting journey. Visit us at <http://fourthtrimesterpodcast.com>

Esther Gallagher: [00:00:43] Hi, it's Esther. Sarah isn't with us today, but I have a wonderful guest Serena, who I first met at Saint Luke's Hospital here in San Francisco, which is a place where the residents of San Francisco, if they want to have a midwifery centered childbirth experience, can go. And Serena has since been doing lots of other things, and we wanted to have her on the show to talk about all of that. So I'm going to let her reintroduce herself properly and take off like a rocket.

Serena Saeed-Winn: [00:01:21] Awesome. Thank you so much. So it's Serena Saeed-Winn, right? Yes, that's that's the full title. So yeah, we first met CNM. Yes. Cnm Women's health nurse practitioner, mother of three. I have many titles. So are seamstress also. So yes, I love to do. Um, but yes, we did first meet at Saint Luke's and before that I had worked in a birth center setting. I'd done some home birth and I also worked in a nonprofit sector for a little while. Homeless prenatal.

Serena Saeed-Winn: [00:01:59] It's a wonderful place. I love that place. Amazing. I still do work with them, like on a volunteer basis, just because I'm so passionate about that place. Like it's just the most amazing, wonderful. And it definitely changed kind of my perspective on a lot of things. So yeah, it did that for for many years. Yeah.

Esther Gallagher: [00:02:17] And I'll just note that often my clients come home from the hospital and or home and have a lot of leftover stuff from the birth, and I always gather it up and when they're done with it and take it over to homeless prenatal and they have a wonderful kind of sharing program there.

Serena Saeed-Winn: [00:02:40] Absolutely. Yeah. And they run classes, right? So they run classes once a week and then a lot of times they'll give away that stuff, especially if it's new, really nice stuff, and then they'll give that and then they have a huge baby shower at the end of the series of classes and they give a lot of that stuff away. So keep donating.

Serena Saeed-Winn: [00:02:57] Yes, yes. New, new and nice stuff, especially for the baby shower because it's really fun. And for some people, it's the only baby shower that they'll have. Is this one at home prenatal. Yeah. And it's it's a really beautiful and nice

experience. That's so nice that you do that. I didn't know that you did that. That's really cool. Yeah, it's.

Esther Gallagher: [00:03:14] Easy to do. You know, I'm already in their homes and it saves them a trip. Totally.

Serena Saeed-Winn: [00:03:19] So that's great. That's so great that you do that. So, yeah, I worked there for a while and then I went to do midwifery at Saint Luke's and I was a full scope midwife. So I did everything from GYN care to delivering babies to postpartum care. And then I had twins. So I have one seven year old amazing child. And then I have twin two year olds who are also just as amazing and wonderful.

Serena Saeed-Winn: [00:03:48] But I you know, when the twins were six months, I went back to work, but I was still breastfeeding because I exclusively breastfed my twins the whole time. Wow. So I was like doing call, which is I do I did 12 hours, sometimes 14 hour shifts, and I'd be like pumping. And then my husband's a fireman. So he works 24 hour shifts. So between the two of us, you know, the time between like when they were six months, when I went back to work, to the time I finally decided to leave, like nine months later was just crazy. I got mastitis twice.

Serena Saeed-Winn: [00:04:17] Like it was just nuts. Anyways, I just decided the universe is telling me I need to take a break and focus on my family a little bit. And so that's what I've done. I left in January of 2017 and making the transition from being a midwife and working with moms to staying home and being just a mom like a full time mom, which is so much just not just it's so much work, right? Yeah. But what I started to find is that the identity of mom was overtaking every other part of myself. Right? So I had no kind of an adult conversation that you get when you go to work, right? I had none of that except for with my friends. But a lot of my friends, like they work 9 to 5. Right? So when do.

Esther Gallagher: [00:05:02] You get a chance to.

Serena Saeed-Winn: [00:05:02] Talk? Yeah. And then by the time, like, it's time for me to, like, talk on the phone, then my kids have a full meltdown. It's like they have some weird sense. They're like, Wait, is mom on the phone? Hold on. Everybody quickly melt down. Melt down, everybody. It's a real phenomenon. I think every mom knows that, that the minute you try to do something that's like, not related to your child, kids, like, can't handle it anyways. So I just started to find that, like, my sense of self was starting to kind of go away a little bit.

Serena Saeed-Winn: [00:05:34] So I decided to create this program called Mommy Mental, which I'm super excited about. It's two parts. So the first part is I teach a preparing for postpartum class, which I know it's such a good class. And you know, it's so funny because the first class I taught, I was like, Oh gosh, I hope this goes well today. And then while I was teaching it, I was like, God, I wish I'd known this stuff. I was like, I need to. But it's true.

Serena Saeed-Winn: [00:06:03] And I think that, you know, in the same way that our society. Right. Does all this planning for weddings, right? So it's like the wedding. The wedding. It's like everything has to be perfect for the wedding. So you spend all this time focusing, but then you forget that, like, guess what? After the wedding, you're married, right? Like, that's a thing that you have to do. And that's actually the longest.

Esther Gallagher: [00:06:23] And nobody told you how.

Serena Saeed-Winn: [00:06:24] Yeah, right. There wasn't like magazines on like How to Be Right married and all that stuff. So I feel like it's the same thing happens with pregnancy, right? There's all this hype for labor and it's important. It's important to prepare for your labor, of course. Right. But it's almost like if you don't prepare for the postpartum time, it's almost like planning your wedding and then, like, forgetting to check in on your relationship at the same type of thing.

Serena Saeed-Winn: [00:06:46] So that's why I decided to create this class. And I in the class, I actually my entire framework, everything from the newborn care to postpartum care, is all framed around. How is the experience for the parents? Right? So

even the newborn care part that I do, it's not just like this is exactly how you swaddle, because I think all of us know, right? There's no right way. We just figure it out. Everyone has a different thing. And like now I have three kids, so I realize before I thought it was like all about the parents and like, I got an amazing child the first time. So I'm like, Oh, I'm such a perfect parent. It's all me.

Serena Saeed-Winn: [00:07:21] But now that I have three, I realize like, Oh, kids are just born with their own personalities, right? And we do our best to, like, foster those and try to figure out like, what's the best way to work in their personality. But in the end, you just kind of have to figure out how to get by. So I think it's silly to think that there's like one right way to do things.

Esther Gallagher: [00:07:39] Right, and your instinct as a parent is as valid as anyone else's. I mean, my my wonderful mother came and was trying in the first three days that she only had three days she could manage to spend with me, but she was going to show me how to swaddle Susie. She really felt like it would be calming and Lord knows it might have been right. But I watched Susie struggle and fight and my instinct was She is not going for that. And I just was like, Nope, no swaddling for this kid. Neither of my kids ever got swaddled.

Serena Saeed-Winn: [00:08:15] But you know what? Good for you for listening to yourself, right? I mean, that's what we have to do as parents. Some kids don't like to be swaddled and some kids only like to be swaddled. Right, Right. So it's like.

Esther Gallagher: [00:08:24] There's a continuum, as in everything.

Serena Saeed-Winn: [00:08:26] As in all of life. Right. But good for you for listening to yourself and not trying to, like, force your kid when it felt wrong.

Esther Gallagher: [00:08:34] Right. And good for my mother for not being so deeply invested in doing things her way that she couldn't tolerate my having my own voice as a mother. Absolutely. So hint, hint to you grandmothers out there who are going to be supporting your children when they have them.

Serena Saeed-Winn: [00:08:52] It's that's a good very good point. I actually have part of that in my class. We talk a little bit about kind of like, you know, how to how to balance, like, you know, giving people respect and saying like, thank you for your help. And also, like, this is my baby and this is the choices I'm going to make for my kid. It's hard be really hard, you know, But it's so important. And you're right. Good for your mom for being able to be like, cool. Don't want to swaddle. We'll move on.

Serena Saeed-Winn: [00:09:17] Yeah. Yeah, that's great. So anyways, I started. That's why I started the preparing for postpartum class because I thought it was really important. And I also I remember talking to a patient one time and I was asking her, I was like, What do you think? Like, you know, was the hardest part of your postpartum time? Right? And I thought she was going to be like my stitch or something. I don't know, like something, whatever. She's like, Yeah, She was like, you know, the most, like, the hardest and kind of most shocking part was the Perry bottle. And I was like, Really? So the Perry bottle, right. For people that are pregnant or don't know, Perry bottle is just a little bottle that you wash your vulva with afterwards when you have stitches because you're not using toilet paper.

Esther Gallagher: [00:10:00] You don't want to rub that area.

Serena Saeed-Winn: [00:10:02] Exactly. You don't want to rinse it. So you rinse it with water. But for this woman, she felt like, you know, she wasn't prepared, that that was something that she was going to have to do. And she felt she said that she felt like insulted, that like a nurse was standing there watching her wash her bottom with this water. And then she felt really dirty and all these things. Right. And because she had never even heard of it, she, like, kept questioning if this was like even a thing that people did or was this just some weird, you know, she never had experience with mysterious.

Esther Gallagher: [00:10:34] It was.Mysterious.

Serena Saeed-Winn: [00:10:35] And then on top of mysterious, you have no sleep and your life has just been blown up and you're in pain. Right? So like. It's mysterious. And you're questioning if this is even something you have to do, but then you don't even have the capacity to really think about it, you know? So anyways, her telling me that was like, okay, there needs to be a class where like, I pull out all the gear of like, everything that you need for postpartum, like hemorrhoid cream and tux pads and, you know, the little ice diaper they have to wear and the hospital panties that are like big and stretchy and great.

Serena Saeed-Winn: [00:11:08] You know, I pull all that stuff out and I'm like, This is what you are going to have to use. And like, this is why. And I think knowing why sometimes can just be so helpful. And if you've seen it before, you're like, Oh, cool, got it. I'm going to be wearing these really stretchy pants, you know?

Esther Gallagher: [00:11:22] No, why bother bringing my thong underwear to the hospital?

Serena Saeed-Winn: [00:11:25] Oh, my God. I had a woman one time bring her pre-pregnancy jeans. Jeans. I'm like, Listen, we're going to have a talk. Let's sit down. Yeah. Don't be bringing your pre-pregnancy jeans to the hospital. No, that's not happening for you for a little while, You.

Esther Gallagher: [00:11:40] Know, you'll just humiliate yourself. Yeah, well, there's no need. There's no.

Serena Saeed-Winn: [00:11:44] Need. And it's also unrealistic expectations of what it's going to be like. Your uterus is actually around, like, five ish months pregnant. You know, when you're at the 24 hour mark, that's. That's up to your belly button. Yeah, that's actually a big uterus, right? Plus, you have all of the excess skin and, you know, fat and everything else that's kind of collected over pregnancy, not volume.

Esther Gallagher: [00:12:04] Blood flow not gone yet.

Serena Saeed-Winn: [00:12:06] Yeah, it's Doubled in pregnancy, so there's a lot. Plus you might have a lot of third spacing from maybe you got an IV in labor, you know, and just the normal third spacing that happens postpartum. So yeah, the point is you're not fitting into your thong and your postpartum jeans right now.

Esther Gallagher: [00:12:22] Nor will you want to try, right? Don't torture Yourself.

Serena Saeed-Winn: [00:12:27] I show people tux pads and I tell them how like a lot of people don't know that you don't just wipe it, right. You actually tuck it in and leave the pad next to your hemorrhoid. And women are always like, What? And I'm like, Did anyone wear a thong? Yes, we get used to it. And what would you rather have? A big swollen, itchy hemorrhoid or maybe like a little thing? Relief? Yeah. Or relief. So anyways, it's those little things that I talk about that I think is invaluable and so important in terms of preparing, right? Especially since so many people have never seen a woman.

Esther Gallagher: [00:12:56] And getting to see the actual stuff. Yeah, you know, it's one thing to talk about these things. It's another thing to actually hold some of It in your hand and pass It around.

Serena Saeed-Winn: [00:13:06] Everyone holds it. Yes.

Esther Gallagher: [00:13:07] Yeah. That's brilliant. Yeah.

Serena Saeed-Winn: [00:13:09] And it's important, right? And you should see some of the phases, like the sitz bath one. Oh gosh. What was. I have a couple of of things in there that represent different things I'm trying to think of like Anyway, some of the I have people guess what they're for. Yeah, it's just a game that we play. But some of the dads come up with like the best things ever where I'm just like, Oh, that's what you think that's for. Okay, cool. Guess what? Not for that.

Serena Saeed-Winn: [00:13:37] Anyway, so I started the that the postpartum prep class really for that just to help women to prepare for it. And then in that class I also do a

newborn care which like I said, I do it from the perspective of like what's going to make your life easier? Like even really simple things like get the zipper pajamas, not the button ones. I mean, it seems really simple. Baby Gap has all those crazy, weird buttons like definitely not created by a mom, right? So it's like maybe get 1 or 2 cute outfits you can take a picture in and after that, like, go with like, whatever, zipper, anything easy, you know, your kid doesn't know and they're probably going to spit up on it, right?

Serena Saeed-Winn: [00:14:11] Oh, they will. Yeah. Yeah, they will. Right. And poop and poop. Yeah. Oh, my God. Yes. Um, so the I'll tell you a really quick thing. When right after I had my my oldest, my husband's a fireman. He brought his whole crew over to the house, just like they just stopped by, Right. And I had my baby and I went.

Esther Gallagher: [00:14:30] Nobody prepared Him.

Serena Saeed-Winn: [00:14:31] Yeah, exactly. I'm like, Thank you for stopping by. So I threw on some quick blush or whatever, and I come outside and I've got my baby and I'm like, Does anyone want to hold her? And everyone kind of was like, No, it's okay. And I'm like, Oh, they're maybe being polite because, like, whatever, you know, they don't want to get her dirty. So I was like, okay.

Serena Saeed-Winn: [00:14:47] And I go back inside and I realized that she had pooped and I hadn't realized and she had yellow like that, breast milk, yellow, all of her back and all over like the front of my shirt. And I was like, Lovely. Yeah. That's why no one wanted to. Yeah. They're like, No, thank you, ma'am You go ahead and hold on to that baby. I was like, Oh, God. But that's being.

Serena Saeed-Winn: [00:15:11] Right. That's postpartum is all unexpected. Yeah. Um, anyways, so yeah, so in the newborn part, I do it from that perspective of like, you know, how can you make your life easier? And then I do an infant CPR part which is taught by Chris from in-home CPR. He's a wonderful instructor and I think he also keeps it like really good information, but not super scary.

Esther Gallagher: [00:15:35] If that makes sense. Overwhelming.

Serena Saeed-Winn: [00:15:37] Not overwhelming. And he does he does a really good piece on like calling nine. And one like things that I had never thought of. For example, always writing your address down and putting it on the refrigerator. So if anyone's watching your kid because sometimes people don't know the address, especially when they're panicking, I'd never thought of something like little simple tips like that. So anyways, I think he's amazing and great. So he does an hour of kind of infant CPR first aid, and then I do another section on like relationships, like what's going to happen afterwards. Yeah.

Esther Gallagher: [00:16:10] Yeah.

Serena Saeed-Winn: [00:16:11] Exactly. And I have everyone write like I give them all thank you cards and then I have them at two weeks postpartum when they're like in it, write a thank you card to their partners. So each partner does sweet. And then really the idea is like, you know, sometimes it's easy to get caught up in like, I've changed nine diapers and you've changed three.

Serena Saeed-Winn: [00:16:30] Like, you know, but actually, like. But you know what? Thank you so much for bringing me the energy bar. When I was feeding. That meant a lot. And like, you know, thank you so much for letting me sleep in and like, taking the baby in the other room for a second. You know, little things like that.

Esther Gallagher: [00:16:43] Well, and so often I think partners in whatever they're doing. Don't have or know to create the moment to actually express those things. They may be feeling them deeply and broadly. I was Mom was sleeping. Dad was holding the baby. This was two days ago and he's just beside himself, just so thrilled with everything. And, you know, things are difficult at times. He acknowledges that.

Esther Gallagher: [00:17:17] But he just started talking to me about, you know, his wife and, you know, all the things about, you know, what got them to have this baby. And then he just started weeping and saying, I'm so grateful, you know, And how often do partners actually they may be feeling it, but to actually express it out loud to anybody, let

alone their partner. Yes. You know, is a pretty huge and beautiful thing. It's beautiful. And to to externalize it, to not just be holding it close, to have your partner hear those things mean a woman who's been through nine months of pregnancy managed to get through birth and now is having to heal and recover, which is not a cakewalk. No. To hear that their partner is grateful to them for doing walking that journey and bringing this child into their lives is huge. It's huge.

Serena Saeed-Winn: [00:18:24] So it's important to Be thankful, right? And to hear you're right to hear that, you know.

Esther Gallagher: [00:18:30] Well, and I Often hear moms saying thank you for every glass of water that somebody brings them, but nobody says thank you to her for having the baby.

Serena Saeed-Winn: [00:18:39] By the way, thank you for.

Serena Saeed-Winn: [00:18:41] Yeah, no, it's true. Having this incredible being and keeping it alive. Yeah. Which is like kind of a big task.

Esther Gallagher: [00:18:48] Yes. Breastfeeding is also not a cakewalk. So that you're doing this thing 12 times a day, you know, for the first two weeks when it's not easy and, you know, and then are willing to continue once it starts to finally seem doable.

Serena Saeed-Winn: [00:19:04] You're like, Oh, wait, we keep doing this.

Serena Saeed-Winn: [00:19:06] Something you need every day.

Serena Saeed-Winn: [00:19:08] Okay, got it, Got it.

Esther Gallagher: [00:19:09] So, yeah, to have that.

Serena Saeed-Winn: [00:19:13] It's important.

Esther Gallagher: [00:19:13] It's huge. It's huge.

Serena Saeed-Winn: [00:19:15] Yeah, I agree.

Serena Saeed-Winn: [00:19:16] And I think on the flip side, so important to thank the woman, but also so important to thank the partner because that can also happen, you know, is that the partner feels like God you know like I am doing things and the mom is feeling like you're not doing anything. I'm doing everything, you know, that happens, that dynamic happens, and then resentment starts to sink in.

Serena Saeed-Winn: [00:19:37] So I think the more you can take a step back to just say such simple things. Thank you. Like just thank you. It doesn't need to be like some huge thing, but like, even if it's small. Yeah, like, thank you so much for closing that window because I couldn't get up. Yeah, thanks. Yeah. You know. I am grateful. Yeah.

Serena Saeed-Winn: [00:19:53] And that just fosters a such a nicer environment. Like we're in this as a team, right? This isn't like you're just helping me do this thing for this baby. No, it's like we're a team and we're working together, and, like, thank you for your part, and thank you for my part. Yeah.

Esther Gallagher: [00:20:07] You know, I Mean, our kids all play soccer these days. If they were instead of high fiving each other, if they were like, you didn't do that, right? Yeah. You know, that team wouldn't be a team for very long. No. Yeah, right.

Serena Saeed-Winn: [00:20:20] You got to be thankful. Yeah, right. My daughter is sitting right here. She's shaking her head.

Serena Saeed-Winn: [00:20:26] She plays soccer in assist is just as important, right? Yeah.

Esther Gallagher: [00:20:29] Yeah, for sure. The goal you Can't get it. Can't get it into the goal without kicking it down the field together.

Serena Saeed-Winn: [00:20:37] Yeah. No, it is. It's super important. So anyways, those are the things that I'm doing for the postpartum, like preparing time. I could go on and on and on. It's like a six hour class, so it's like I do a lot. But then the other part that I'm starting in January that I'm actually like really, really excited about is I'm starting a speaker series of moms or dads, any any parent coming and teaching classes about something they're an expert in.

Serena Saeed-Winn: [00:21:05] So I have three moms already that are signed up and I have a couple more moms kind of in the wings getting ready to to sign up. And the idea is I'm to have a class that you can bring your child to, but the topic is something that you care about and you want to learn about, right? So I'll have toys there. Your kid can play with the toys, especially when they're babies.

Serena Saeed-Winn: [00:21:23] It's a lot easier to put them in the ergo, you know, usually it's pretty, it's pretty simple. Um, but then you get to learn something because I found that staying at home, I was like, All right, cool. I need to get out and, like, you know, talk to adults. Maybe I'll sign up for, like, a baby, like Mommy and me class or something like that, which, by the way, with twins, everything's one on one, so it's really hard to find a class.

Serena Saeed-Winn: [00:21:45] Thank you, Park and Rec for not having so many restrictions. But yes, you go to these classes. I started looking around, right? And what I found was moms would, you know, kind of, you know, be talking to each other a little bit, but we'd be like trying to sing these songs and trying to do the activities. And half the time, like, my babies did not care. I didn't care about these songs. They they weren't they didn't feel it, didn't feel engaging. And I was like, losing my mind because it's like, I already know. I know. I know the words.

Serena Saeed-Winn: [00:22:14] Like, I got that down. I know what a chicken says. I know what a cow says. Like those things I know. And I have learned. But what I would like to learn about is like, I don't know, like what's going on in this world right now, or like, what's the deal with, like, having sex after baby? Like, that's the one thing, one of my topics I have or like, you know, how could I, you know, foster my identity or like a

sewing class, but there's nothing you can take your kid to, Right? Right. Because it's true. There's nothing. And I started looking around. My husband is like, You should take some classes. I'm like, great idea. Oh, I don't have childcare for like half the classes

Esther Gallagher: [00:22:51] And appropriate childcare for a breastfeeding mom is not childcare that where they have to drop their babies off and leave. Yes, it might be if they're at the stage where they would like to pump and leave their children, which is perfectly acceptable, right. If they can find that, it's absolutely

Serena Saeed-Winn: [00:23:10] Also, too, then comes the like, you know, when you're breastfeeding, right. And you're pumping, then you have to basically kind of weigh things out, like, what's my most important? Our that want to take for myself. Don't want to do it to yoga. Do I want to do it to this class? Do I want to do it for a walk? Sleep like what What hour am I going to take for myself? Like, how am I going to use that? Because that's what you got with your pumped milk, right?

Serena Saeed-Winn: [00:23:32] It's not like an endless supply of time you have. So. Exactly. That's exactly right. That's exactly why I wanted to have something where you could bring your child with you. Right. And still be able to learn things that are interesting. So right now, I'm at the stage of kind of in January, we'll start our first classes I'm really excited about. And now I really want to get more teachers. I want to get more parents that are interested.

Serena Saeed-Winn: [00:23:56] And the other thing is, you know, postpartum, you could have a baby, but you still have like interest or like really cool. You're an expert at really cool things. I'd love to hear from people. Anyone out there listening that's an expert in something that wants to teach a class and like bring your baby. That's fine. You can breastfeed and teach.

Esther Gallagher: [00:24:12] Doesn't have To be about Parenting.

Serena Saeed-Winn: [00:24:14] No, not about parenting. Yeah. Like a couple of the classes that I have are about parenting, but really, my ultimate goal is to have it be not about parenting. Because we have.

Serena Saeed-Winn: [00:24:24] We have the brain. Yeah, we.

Serena Saeed-Winn: [00:24:25] Have other identities. You know, it's like we should be my the whole, the whole start of mommy mental really was to help parents foster other identities, not just mom or dad. Right? Like we are also people.

Esther Gallagher: [00:24:42] During all my years of parenting and grandparenting, I'm also somebody who's very interested in sustainability issues and ecology and how do you live in a city and try to do things in a environmentally sensitive way? And, you know, that's a huge topic. And parents kind of are doing their parenting choices by default because they don't understand the choices. I mean, not that it has to be about parenting, but, you know, there's five choices in diapering.

Esther Gallagher: [00:25:17] Right. It's so much. And some of them on the scale of sustainability and pollution causing are hideous.

Esther Gallagher: [00:25:23] Yeah. You know, that's going to be a lot of diapers in the landfill. So something as simple as that, which kind of overlaps, right? There's parenting choices, but then there's the larger issue of your kids are going to grow up in this world, in this environment that you know you're currently responsible for.

Serena Saeed-Winn: [00:25:44] Also, too, you know, exactly what you're saying is right in the sense that, like, parents also sometimes don't have the capacity or like the brain space at this moment to make that decision. I mean, can you imagine postpartum trying to figure out which of these five diapers like, no, I'm just going to grab whatever's closest, whoever, whatever someone brings me from the store, like that's what I'm going to use. Yeah, right. And, you know, even when you're pregnant, sometimes you can just feel like a lot, you know, to make these decisions. So you're right. Having some classes, if you want to teach a class on sustainability, contact me. And I would love to have you

teach a class. But it's true. Even like a one hour class where it's like, Oh, somebody already did the research, somebody already thought about it, Now I can learn about it. Yeah, you know what I mean? It's so important. It's so important. So that's what I'm doing. I'm really excited about it.

Esther Gallagher: [00:26:28] It's brilliant. Thanks.

Serena Saeed-Winn: [00:26:29] I'm really. Yeah, I'm really happy now.

Esther Gallagher: [00:26:31] Serena, you. Well, before we started recording, you mentioned and I'm a little sad that we don't have Susan here with us. Maybe I can get her to come on the podcast as well, but do you mind saying a few words about the initiative that you and Susan are undertaking?

Serena Saeed-Winn: [00:26:49] So Homeless Prenatal, which I was talking about earlier, is a wonderful program and a lot of their clients are monolingual Spanish speakers. They do offer a no cost doula program there. So like a volunteer program there. So women will come and volunteer to be birth doulas. And also they don't have a fully fleshed out postpartum doula program yet, but they do do a lot of home visiting. The caseworkers do so, but they would like to have a more kind of regimented, I guess, volunteer postpartum doula program as well. But what they were finding is that a lot of the women that were coming to volunteer as doulas were not in the same demographic as the women that they were serving. Right. Which, you know. Is is you know it has. It's it's. You know, consequences here and there. But one of the biggest ones is language, right? So if you're going to be a doula client for somebody but you don't speak their language, that makes it very challenging to support that person. So both culturally and also linguistically, Right. So Ali Quintos, who is also a dual I don't know if you know her.

Esther Gallagher: [00:27:59] I totally know her. She teaches birthing from within.

Serena Saeed-Winn: [00:28:03] She's amazing. She's wonderful. You should interview her. She's great.

Serena Saeed-Winn: [00:28:07] She's and she's also an owner of community Well, which is a fantastic and actually that's the place where I teach my classes is at community Well so Ali Quintos and she teamed up with some people from Homeless prenatal and they started to create this idea of having a volunteer program for monolingual Spanish speakers in order to serve their clients that are monolingual Spanish speakers. Right? I mean, it's so genius. And then part of it was being able to use former clients of HP as doulas. But the thing where they were kind of getting a little bit slowed down was how to train women in a cost effective way and in their language, because actually out there in the Bay Area, there's nothing there's no Spanish language doula training like complete Spanish language, dual trainings and dual trainings are very costly. Yeah, they cost a lot of money.

Serena Saeed-Winn: [00:29:01] And then you have to be able to kind of read and write well in that language, right? Because there's a certain amount of writing that goes along with getting certified as a doula and all those things. So they came up with the idea and then I kind of jumped on board a few months ago of of creating a volunteer dual program in Spanish and creating a training for women in Spanish. To be able to do doula work. So the idea is that once women get trained, they'll be able to volunteer for homes. And there's other organizations, too, that are interested in kind of teaming up.

Serena Saeed-Winn: [00:29:41] But also they'll be able to be doulas on their own and maybe that could be a source of income for women. It's so amazing, right, as postpartum doulas, because a lot of them will have their own kids being former clients or birth doula work and, you know, having women be able to form teams and meet people in these trainings and form teams and say like, Hey, you know what? We've all got kids. I can take Fridays and Thursdays, whatever. You take Wednesdays and Tuesdays will be like a three person team and make it work for birth doula.

Serena Saeed-Winn: [00:30:11] So that's our ultimate goal. So our trainings are actually coming up really soon. And Susan Arthur also has been working with us. So our little team has been me and then Susan Arthur and then Allie Quintos and then Emily from Homeless Prenatal. Nice. Yeah, it's been great. It's a great team. And the dual

trainings are coming up in March. We start our first ones and the most amazing and wonderful thing is that we've created a bunch of different modules, you know, things that you need to learn as a doula. And people from San Francisco are volunteering to teach those classes. So we have someone from Infant Parent Program general, she's coming and teaching things about perinatal loss and trauma. And then we have somebody else coming teaching about resources in the community. So it's really exciting. It's very fantastic. And it's all at Community Well, which is an amazing community center and a good.

Esther Gallagher: [00:31:03] And a good Area of town for a great area of.

Serena Saeed-Winn: [00:31:06] Yeah, it's in the Excelsior. It's perfect. It's so perfect. But really have to give the credit for the idea to Allie Quintos because she really, I think, was the brainchild of all of this. Yeah, I've just been kind of helping wherever I can, but it's a really it's a really cool thing. And they do accept donations. So if you're interested in donating to that contact community, well, because that's where we're going to hold all of those.

Esther Gallagher: [00:31:31] Here, that listeners, that's a program you can give to.

Serena Saeed-Winn: [00:31:35] Yes, there's a program you can give to. And actually the way we got the initial funding to even start just for supplies, like we just need, you know, like paper and that kind of stuff came from doula clients of Allie and Shannon. Who? Shannon, of course.

Esther Gallagher: [00:31:51] She's my neighbor.

Serena Saeed-Winn: [00:31:52] Is she?

Esther Gallagher: [00:31:52] She's so great. She's so.

Serena Saeed-Winn: [00:31:54] Great. Um, but it came from they're dual clients. We're donating like 50 bucks, 100 bucks, whatever they could, you know, donate. And they

were able to raise tons of money to even start this initiative. It's pretty amazing. Like, it's very grassroots and really cool. They've done pretty amazing work.

Esther Gallagher: [00:32:11] Fantastic. Yeah. So happy to hear about all These wonderful things that are going on.

Serena Saeed-Winn: [00:32:19] And then Emily and Erickson, sorry, I have to say her from homeless prenatal. She's also the person that's like running everything from the homeless prenatal side of it and want to leave her out.

Esther Gallagher: [00:32:30] Of Course. So glad to hear. Boy, you're. You're a busy mom

Esther Gallagher: [00:32:36] I think I. I just. On a more philosophical note, tell me what you think. Like, I think there's something so generative about. Being a mother in the first year to three years, there's something that just. Spurs, you not only is just motherhood so rich a subject perennially, right? Everyone who goes through it is kind of recreating it for the first time in their own lives. But also, I think something you touched on earlier, which is just there's a crisis of of identity.

Esther Gallagher: [00:33:26] And I and I say that in a in a positive sense, like the opportunity of identity, right? Whatever you thought you were prior to being pregnant, prior to having a new human in your family and, and addressing all of the social, emotional, spiritual and physical demands of that, even though it's for most of us, on the one hand, fairly exhausting. At the same time, it's also the thing that says. Makes you say in that crisis of identity? Well, then, who am I? Yeah. What am I? What do I do? How do I think about the world? It's all shifting beneath you in a sense. And so that opportunity to. To rethink your entire self is so rich.

Serena Saeed-Winn: [00:34:27] I agree.

Esther Gallagher: [00:34:28] It can be terrifying, but it can also just be like, okay, well, since I'm a new person, what new person am I?

Serena Saeed-Winn: [00:34:37] Yeah, absolutely. I totally Agree. I think, you know, as a midwife. Right. Of course, I talk to women all the time about this, Right. Postpartum, whatever, birth. And I've had women come to my office and say, like, I think I have postpartum depression. And once I start talking to them, I realize. So I've coined a new term which I call postpartum growing pains. And that's actually more accurate into what it is. It's exactly what you're saying. Like you're growing into a new person. There is no way to go back. And I think that sometimes I hear a lot of terminology of like bounce back or like get back.

Serena Saeed-Winn: [00:35:17] Look, you not just physically, right? But like as a person, a human being, your identity, you cannot go backwards. And like, I don't want to be 12 again, right? No. And I can't actually. Right. So like, we can only move forward in our life. And so you're right, it is a huge shift in your identity and a huge kind of change in every part of you. So I think the idea of trying to go back and recapture old identities is what gets people feeling down and what's so difficult.

Esther Gallagher: [00:35:48] Not only that, but if you're like, well, I just I was this person who I really was familiar with and really liked prior to this baby. And that's that bottom has dropped out. But now the prescribed role, roles and activities don't appeal to me. I don't want to be. The mom. Who? Um, does things a certain way. And yet I don't yet know of another way to do this. So. So if you're balancing like, I'm not who I was, and now there's this prescription for who I'm supposed to be, whether it's stated out loud by anyone or you just have imagined it, right? But it doesn't work for you. Then there's this huge well of mystery that's kind of intimidating, let's face it. And that, of course, can be depressing, right? It's like, whoa.

Serena Saeed-Winn: [00:36:50] Scary. I'm not diving into it. I'm not diving into that pool.

Esther Gallagher: [00:36:53] Or I don't I'm afraid to dive in. Totally. I'm finding myself falling into. Right. And that doesn't feel safe. And so, yeah, I think the anxiety of being a new mother is makes perfect sense. So to be able to reach out into the world for a little bit more resource, you know, those little those little safety lines, you know, of friendship

and communication with other moms and, and, you know, hopefully people who aren't going to tell you this is how you should do it.

Esther Gallagher: [00:37:29] You're broken. If you feel blue every day, you're not broken, you're shifting. You're you're in a process that requires resource. Absolutely respectful. Yeah. And you're growing alongside your child who's gaining.

Serena Saeed-Winn: [00:37:46] An ounce a day. You're also Keeping another Human being alive, right? So there's this huge identity shift. Yeah. You're changing in every part of your life. And then you also are responsible for someone, which is actually a huge thing. I remember postpartum. I was sitting with my twins and they were breastfeeding and I used to tandem breastfeed them like football style, right? So I was holding them both football style. And then I was looking at my my little one sitting at my feet who was like five. And all of a sudden I like burst into tears and my aunt was sitting there. She's like, whoa, Like, what's going on? I'm like, There's so many eyeballs Looking at me like, it's just so many.

Esther Gallagher: [00:38:25] You know? And I think that's part of it, right, is that you have this huge identity, but like.

Serena Saeed-Winn: [00:38:30] People are also watching this crazy change, which is not the way it is when you're a teenager. Right? Not everybody's like picking apart, but when you become a parent, all of a sudden everyone has an opinion about. Right. Everything you're doing. So there's also that, right? Yeah. It's like I'm super scared to dive into this. What kind of mom am I going to be? What kind of dad am I going to be? What kind of partner or whatever. But then everyone also is picking apart and watching it.

Esther Gallagher: [00:38:55] There's this implication that you can somehow know those things. Yeah, you cannot know. I have a 40 year old I could not project at all into that. I mean, I certainly had my hippie earth mother, you know, image, right? My idea of how I could be a good mom. And believe me, I spent decades of recrimination on myself for not having met that at all. But I also had a life alongside my children and also

separate from my children. And the two didn't always mesh the way. If I look back and in fantasy I glasses, you know, would have liked everything to mesh and fit together and. And here they are. They've made it to adulthood. They are having full, rich lives. They're having struggles just like you and I have human beings like human beings do. And I'm not always the best person to support them in those struggles either.

Esther Gallagher: [00:40:12] Just because you're mom doesn't mean you have a magic wand for everything.

Serena Saeed-Winn: [00:40:16] Exactly. And I think that's the thing that hits you like a ton of bricks, right? When you become a mom, is that you all of a sudden realize, Oh, shoot. I thought that once I became a mom, I would, like, be this other person. I'd be like this mom and like, I'd bake cookies or whatever. Your image was, right? Like, I only use organic products ever, right? Whatever your thing is. And then you realize like, oh, shoot, I'm I'm still actually the same person I was before. I just have added this new thing on. Yeah, right. I still.

Serena Saeed-Winn: [00:40:48] The same things that used to like, make me insane before my same triggers. Those same things still set me off. Right. There's not some magic reset button that happens when you give birth. You know? So, yeah, you're right. It's like, of course, we all look back and be like, I wish I had done things different or this different or I wish I could do that. But like, looking backwards is so counterproductive. We just do whatever we can do in that moment. Right.

Serena Saeed-Winn: [00:41:14] And I think that giving ourselves permission to foster other parts of our identities, we don't just have to be the stellar parent because guess what? You're never going to be the perfect parent, even if you're like a parent that like, bakes cookies. I don't know why I'm having a cookie party, so I'm thinking about cookies. But, you know, whatever. Your kid might not like cookies. Right, Right. Do you know what I'm saying? Like, your style of parenting might not work for your Kid, but it doesn't Mean you can't like cookies.

Esther Gallagher: [00:41:41] Exactly. Right. I mean, that's the thing.

Serena Saeed-Winn: [00:41:44] Like, it's okay. You can be a human Being like, just be A human being. It's okay. Yeah. You know?

Esther Gallagher: [00:41:49] And I think in some ways that's the best way to model acceptance. And I mean, if it's a core value of yours that your child experience acceptance and love and support, well, give yourself some. Absolutely. Because if they see you being able to feel resourced by reaching out or reaching in and taking that time and feeding yourself while you're feeding them, you know, just the simple, basic human needs for starts. Yeah. That's a deep, abiding lesson for a child.

Serena Saeed-Winn: [00:42:30] And like, how cool is it that you could teach them something that you've learned that's interesting from like reading a book or listening to a podcast or taking a class or whatever. Then like a nursery rhyme that like, is making you insane and they can see it in your eyes and like, you don't care about it, right? Why not? Why not, like, read a cool book while you're breastfeeding and read it out loud to your kids.

Serena Saeed-Winn: [00:42:51] So they hear your voice, they get the language stuff, but then you're feeding yourself because you're going to be a happier person. And so is your kid. Yeah, because they can tell kids, no kids, no. When you're like, you know, doing all this stuff and stressing yourself out and doing all this stuff for them, they're like, Thanks, Mom, but like, you don't seem like like you're so grumpy. It's like, yeah, I'm going to take it all for you. But it's like, no, do something for yourself.

Esther Gallagher: [00:43:14] And do it. Do it with full embrace it fully. I mean, so often and I speak from experience will take that time to say, Oh, I really need to do this thing for myself, but then we don't give it to ourselves fully. We berate ourself the whole time that we're not doing that other thing that would be good for someone else.

Serena Saeed-Winn: [00:43:37] Yes, that's so true. That's such a good. You're so Right. Yeah, that's so true.

Esther Gallagher: [00:43:42] Just dive deep into it and let yourself have it fully, because that's what we want for others.

Serena Saeed-Winn: [00:43:52] Yes, absolutely. Do do you know Amelia Christie is someone you should probably look up? You guys all could look her up. She's this hilarious. She does like therapy and she works with a lot of postpartum moms. But she made these amazing cards, which I can show you later on, But one of them says, Hold yourself like you hold them. Yeah. You know, and the idea just being exactly what you said, Right. Is like, you know. Invest fully in yourself In the same way that you invest in Your kids. Right. You want the best for them, but why don't you want the best for yourself? Right.

Esther Gallagher: [00:44:27] Well, I mean, I think that we grow up with a really ambiguous message. If we grow up in households where the message is, I'm sacrificing for you, like I can't have anything nice because of you.

Serena Saeed-Winn: [00:44:41] Yeah. Yeah. Who wants to grow up like that?

Esther Gallagher: [00:44:45] That's no fun. Yeah, it's no fun.

Serena Saeed-Winn: [00:44:48] Yeah, I agree. Take care of yourself, and then everyone else will be happier. Yeah, Including your partner. Yeah, right. Yeah.

Esther Gallagher: [00:44:56] And. And there's where? Coming back around. If you can take a wonderful class about preparing to be postpartum and learn some basic tips for how to nourish yourself during this period of major, wonderful upheaval. Right?

Serena Saeed-Winn: [00:45:18] Wonderful upheaval.

Esther Gallagher: [00:45:19] Yeah. Then You know, do yourself that favor.

Serena Saeed-Winn: [00:45:24] Absolutely. Well, that's why that's why I teach those classes is because you should you have to prepare for it. There is some prep that goes

along, you know, and if you've never seen somebody postpartum, you better learn like what's going on there so that you and also to people think things aren't normal like 90% of the things that people would come and tell me like oh God, this happened or that happened like, guess what, That's normal. And you're like, It is? Yeah.

Esther Gallagher: [00:45:48] I'm like, Yeah, if only they'd known, if only they'd and they.

Serena Saeed-Winn: [00:45:50] And then what happens is that you feel depressed or you feel sad or you feel like, God, I don't feel like breastfeeding again. I just. I just breast fed you.

Serena Saeed-Winn: [00:46:01] So you have you guys have talked for too.

Esther Gallagher: [00:46:03] Long? No, no, no. We'll just keep Going. But you know what I mean.

Serena Saeed-Winn: [00:46:05] So you've layered, so it's like you have this all these emotions and then you layer guilt on top of it, which is so unnecessary.

Esther Gallagher: [00:46:12] It's like it. Doesn't help anybody. It doesn't help anybody.

Serena Saeed-Winn: [00:46:15] So it's like even just knowing that, like, what you're feeling is normal helps to be like, okay, like I'm not an insane person or I'm not like a not a good mom, right? Or not a good dad or a partner. I'm normal. Yeah, that's actually really cool to know.

Esther Gallagher: [00:46:31] Like, other people felt this way too. Like, okay, cool.

Serena Saeed-Winn: [00:46:35] Like I can just feel it and not have to layer this whole other heap of, like, guilt and questioning and mystery, you know? Yes.

Esther Gallagher: [00:46:44] And so much of our anxiety comes from. That right? That powerful combination of I don't know what I'm doing right. I therefore I must not be doing

it right, which could be patently untrue. You could be doing brilliantly, but because nobody told you it was okay to do it that way, now you're feeling scared that you're doing it wrong and guilty that you didn't know ahead of time. Right? Right.

Serena Saeed-Winn: [00:47:10] Well, I think also Too, a Lot of parents Who are having those Feelings like, oh, God, I feel like I'm not doing well. They're actually like the best parents. Right. Because they're so thoughtful in their parenting. Do you know what I mean? Yeah. I tell people they care about. Yeah, I had one woman one time, a long time ago in a labor and delivery class. We talk about like, what are our fears? And she was like, my biggest fear is I won't be a good mom. And I'm like, Let me let you know I don't know you. But yeah, just by asking that question and having that fear, you're going to be fantastic. Yeah, like you've already thought. You're already thoughtful, you're invested, you're thinking about it. That's great. Yeah. And guess what? You're gonna be a great mom, and you're great. So let that piece go.

Esther Gallagher: [00:47:47] And reach out for support. And reach out. Reach out for support.

Serena Saeed-Winn: [00:47:50] It's so important, like. And talk to other moms in a free and open way, right? Yeah. Like the other day I talked to this mom. I randomly met her. You can tell. Probably. I'm like a talker, right? So I met this woman. She had a baby, and we started talking. She's like, Oh, yeah, things are going great, right? But I kind of see in her eyes like she wasn't. And I was like, Oh, yeah. I was like, Well, good for you. Because, like, I had a hard time postpartum. Like, it was rough. And right when I said it, she was like, Yes, like it.

Esther Gallagher: [00:48:15] I did it and all these things. And I was like, Listen, moms like, don't fake the funk. Don't fake.

Serena Saeed-Winn: [00:48:19] It. Don't go and feel like you got to be.

Esther Gallagher: [00:48:21] Like, everything is so great and.

Serena Saeed-Winn: [00:48:22] He's a miracle. Yes, he's a miracle. I get it. That's fine. But, like, you don't have to feel this like bliss. I think there's this thing where people feel like they have to say, like, Oh, well, at least you and your baby are healthy. And it's like, Well, yes, of course, that goes without saying. But I also feel like crap, like I'm not feeling good.

Esther Gallagher: [00:48:42] There's a beautiful little illustration, kind of a cartoon illustration. I hate to call it that because we always think of the funnies. Right, right, right. And it's it's a mom with a little baby in her arms and then a person who sort of looks to be possibly male and could possibly be that person's partner. And they're asking this mom, you know, do you need anything? Right.

Esther Gallagher: [00:49:09] And the answer, the verbal answer is, no, I'm fine. And then you see this cascade of a list of I could use a bath. I could I'm hungry all the time, you know, like all the things that postpartum mothers, and I'll use a strong word, suffer with. Right. Because nobody knows to just do the thing right. Somewhere in that list, there's one thing that you could do for her. Even if it's just put food on a plate and put it near her. Yeah. Um. Hold the baby while she takes his shower. Diaper the baby while she takes a pee.

Serena Saeed-Winn: [00:49:49] Listen. While she has a cry. Yes. And not have to say, well, at. Least. Blah, blah, blah. No, I want to have a cry. Yeah, I want to talk about it. Yeah.

Esther Gallagher: [00:49:58] That kind of thing starts early. It starts in the hospital when the nurse says, you know, gee, you know, mom saying, Gosh, I'm having pain and breastfeeding is difficult. And I had surgery and, you know, the whole list of disappointments and or pain that she's experiencing now. And the answer to that is. At least you have a healthy baby.

Serena Saeed-Winn: [00:50:22] Oh, God. It's the worst. It just shuts it. Down right there. It's like, done. Okay. You have no space here.

Esther Gallagher: [00:50:27] I have nothing for you. I can't give you one simple thing when the answer might have been. I'm sorry that you're having such a difficult time. I'm going to bring you a snack.

Serena Saeed-Winn: [00:50:40] Or a warm blanket.

Esther Gallagher: [00:50:41] A warm blanket. Something simple. Anything would be better than tough shit for you.

Serena Saeed-Winn: [00:50:48] I mean, no, it's true. You're right. It's true. And it's not fair. Like, why can't I say how I feel. And why can't I feel that way? Right?

Serena Saeed-Winn: [00:50:58] And I think it's so silly that we have to feel like we have to say, I love my baby, but I love my baby so much. But yes, that goes without saying. We know we know you love your baby. We all love our children. Like, you know, my heart is like so big and full because of my three girls. Like it brings so much joy to my life, but it also brings a lot of craziness. Like I did not have this much gray hair. Okay? Like, this.

Serena Saeed-Winn: [00:51:21] Is this is a parenting thing that has happened To my life. Right? But, you know. It's okay to say it. It's okay. It's okay to say it. And guess what? Totally normal. Totally normal to feel that way.

Esther Gallagher: [00:51:34] I have two children. The first was born with a flash of identity and deep love at first sight. The second was born, and I didn't have that same experience. And I thought something was deeply wrong with me. And over the course of the next. Days and weeks. What I realized was no. I'm falling in love with him, sort of slowly and deeply. It was just a different style.

Esther Gallagher: [00:52:09] We have very different relationships. My two children and I, and they have their own relationship, which I barely understand. I mean, and it's brilliant. But the fact is that we don't, you know, every relationship is its unique thing. Absolutely true. And so to allow parents to understand like. You know. Every

relationship is different. Every relationship arises differently. It's okay if you don't feel what you think you're supposed to feel. What do you actually feel? Let's. Let's hear about that. It's okay to express what you're actually feeling.

Serena Saeed-Winn: [00:52:53] And what a gift. To give new parents. Because what if someone had come to you and said, Hey, whatever you're feeling, it's cool. It would have taken off this whole layer of guilt and self like, you know. Recrimination, recrimination and. All that stuff, right? It would have taken that piece off and you could have just fallen in love. Slow. Yeah, right. But instead, all we add all this other stuff on.

Serena Saeed-Winn: [00:53:14] But if someone had just let you talk about it. Yeah. You know. I mean, and you're right, the baby's also different. Like, that's also. A real thing. I think people think like, Oh, you know, I'm a parent, so all my kids, like, it'll be the same. No, Like each kid that I've had, like, when the minute I hold them, I'm like, Oh, you're totally different then

Esther Gallagher: [00:53:34] You Have twins and you know that.

Serena Saeed-Winn: [00:53:36] Right? And they're twins. Yeah, that is exactly. That's like a real, like, nature versus nurture, right? That's like an actual experiment of nature versus nurture. And they're opposite one's a night person, one's a morning person. One was, like, amazing breastfeeder. The other.

Serena Saeed-Winn: [00:53:52] One, like, could not figure out what a nipple.

Serena Saeed-Winn: [00:53:53] Was for. Like, do you know what I'm saying? Like, it's just the one that was like a terrible Breastfeeder She's still a terrible eater. Like, she just hates eating. She's just not into it. Whereas my other.

Serena Saeed-Winn: [00:54:04] One, she'll eat anything. She doesn't care. Like, I mean, you know what I mean? It's just so interesting. Yeah. And they're just people. And you're right. Newborn. I felt the same thing. Like my first one. I, like, pulled her to my arms and was like, you know, like a Lion King moment. But then, like my other two.

Serena Saeed-Winn: [00:54:22] I remember being like. What? Like. I'm not sure. You know. It was like it took me a second. It was also too, at the same time. So I was like, Oh, wait, do I have to also. Okay. Oh, and for twin moms, I have a tip. Tandem, breastfeed, tandem, breastfeed. I know it's. Really difficult, but if you don't tandem breastfeed.

Serena Saeed-Winn: [00:54:43] You spend your entire day breastfeeding. Yeah. Anyway, that's a tip for twin moms. Another twin mom told me that, and it was really hard in the beginning to, like, coordinate that and figure it out.

Esther Gallagher: [00:54:54] Yeah, especially. When, like you say, you've got one who's willing to do it any time you offer and one who's kind of like, I don't know about this. Yeah.

Serena Saeed-Winn: [00:55:02] And like, couldn't open her mouth. I mean it was so hard but what I, what I did was I put the one on that was really good. Breastfeeder So my let down would happen so milk would start coming out of the other breast. Then I would put the other one on. And then while this one was on like really latched on, well then I could kind of mess with the other one. I don't know. To me, tandem breastfeeding was like the only way to go for twin moms just because otherwise you're just breastfeeding all the time.

Esther Gallagher: [00:55:30] And you just speaking from the doula perspective, moms need help finding their way with twins in a special way, I mean. You know, I've worked with with the moms whose baby wasn't going to eat, You know, one of them was just a chow hound and the other wasn't going to eat, was going to scream at that breast the whole time. And survival meant bottle feeding that kid. Yeah. You know, it just I worked with a mom. She taught me the most about breastfeeding in one big epiphany because she she had a three year old and then twins and one throughout the pregnancy had been larger, sturdier, and the other had been kind of failing to thrive, you know, and all of that.

Esther Gallagher: [00:56:15] And she just knew about that little girl. You know, she put the one on the brass. That was fine. She knew the other was too small, not vigorous enough. She pumped she bottle fed that other baby. And then one day I saw her. Weeks and weeks later and because I got her through the first few weeks. And then I saw her out and about and she goes, Oh, I have a story for you. She said, You know, I didn't even offer the breast to the smaller baby. But then one day, about six weeks old, she said, I'm going to give this a try. The baby latched on and she put away the pump and that was it. So, I mean, talk about instinct, right? Like, you just never know.

Serena Saeed-Winn: [00:57:03] It's true. You never. Know. But that mom did. The mom did. But then she also trusted Her, Right. She wasn't trying to force something that wasn't happening. She was like, this. Is going to happen or it won't and we'll know what to do next. And so it was really lovely to just to hear that sort of anything goes. It's all experimental. It's okay to try things don't feel like a failure. You know, it's it's easily half baby and let's face it, it's more like 75%, baby. So just find out who that baby is and try things.

Serena Saeed-Winn: [00:57:37] Try different things. Yeah. No, it's so true. For my littlest one, we had to syringe feed her for the first, like, week. Yeah. Which was. It sucked. Yeah, terrible. But. And you had to keep her alive. Yeah. So you didn't. I guess you got to stay alive.

Serena Saeed-Winn: [00:57:53] Yeah. And she finally figured it out, you know, eventually. But, yeah, you just do what you can do. Do what you can do and get extra help. I was so lucky that I had my mom, my aunts. I have my all my cousins that are teenagers. I know they've gone away to college this year in September. I know I don't. Have any more babies. I know. I was like, Oh my God. I was like, I was. You know, crying. I'm like, I didn't think I'd miss you so much. Yeah.

Serena Saeed-Winn: [00:58:18] But I guess they have their own. Identities and they have to do, you know. Whatever. Um, but yeah, the point is, I had so much support and I think that I tell that to all of my patients and everybody that's about to have a baby get your support when you're pregnant, right? Like if you need to hire a postpartum doula,

like do that if you need if you want, if you have people coming from out of town, maybe stagger it so you get longer time of help, right?

Serena Saeed-Winn: [00:58:46] Like maybe your parents can come first, then your partner's parents can come second, then your brother can come next and your sister can, you know, so that you have a long time because people always I hear parents all the time, they're like, I just want to.

Serena Saeed-Winn: [00:58:58] Have like our little cocoon moment for the first couple of weeks. And I'm like, No, dude, no, you need hands.

Serena Saeed-Winn: [00:59:04] That's what you need. You need hands to help you. Yeah. And people that are useful, right? You know, you know, your aunt is crazy and she's just going to be like a burden. Don't don't invite her over. That's fine. We get that. But you know what I'm saying? Plan for it. Have healthy boundaries. Know what you know about the capacities of your people. Yeah.

Esther Gallagher: [00:59:23] And and don't over stress yourself with management. Yes. You can't you should not put yourself in a place to be managing other people if they either can hit the ground running or they can't. So be don't be in denial about that 100%.

Serena Saeed-Winn: [00:59:39] That's 100% right. Yeah. Get people in there. That who can actually just do something. Yeah. Without having to like

Esther Gallagher: [00:59:47] Is that? I mean, mostly that's cooking and cleaning. Yeah, totally. And making sure you're well fed. Yeah. And not talking to you when your baby's sleeping because that's when you're supposed to be sleeping.

Serena Saeed-Winn: [00:59:58] It's so True. Yeah. We're not asking you to do anything. Like, after my first was. Born, we had a brunch, like, two days after she was born, which was crazy, but whatever. We are crazy. And I remember at one point someone was like, Serena, can you grab me? Blah, blah, blah, whatever it was.

Serena Saeed-Winn: [01:00:16] And my best friend turned around and was like, Excuse me, please do not ask her for anything. Yes, okay. If anyone needs something, you're going to go ahead and get yourself and we're all going to do the dishes. Before we leave.

Serena Saeed-Winn: [01:00:27] Yeah, but like that. That's a friend I know. She's my best friend. and she's like the godmother of my parents. But that is what you need. Postpartum. You need someone to be like, Excuse me. Go ahead and not ask her for anything, you know, or the partner. Like I also didn't want anyone asking my husband for. Anything because he was also. Exhausted, too, like. You know, and you.

Esther Gallagher: [01:00:48] Need him the most. I did. The baby needs him. Yeah. Not random people. Yeah. No, it's true. That's the cocoon. Is the three of you being well cared for?

Serena Saeed-Winn: [01:00:58] Yes, well cared for. Yeah, it's true. Get that? I mean, there's lots of cultures where 40 days you don't go out of the house and people when I tell people that when they're pregnant, they're like, that's so crazy. And I'll see them all afterwards and they'll be like, Yeah, that would have been really nice. Just someone to care for you for 40 and 40 days sounds so long. But like, I did that with my first and it was beautiful. Like, beautiful. You know, once you have an older kid, you can't do it as much.

Esther Gallagher: [01:01:25] Maybe ever so slightly more prepared, you know, too. So I. Exactly. There compensations too.

Serena Saeed-Winn: [01:01:33] You dealt with that identity? Well, yeah. A little bit, yeah.

Esther Gallagher: [01:01:36] You've already made the choice the second time, right? Exactly.

Serena Saeed-Winn: [01:01:39] I heard a comedian. Any second. Children don't repeat this. But she was like, all you first kids. You guys were, like, created out of love. And your parents wanted to create a family and all the second kids. You were a companion, first one. And me being a first child, I'm like, Well, yes. My brother was like, No, no. He's like, When they made me, it was so perfect.

Serena Saeed-Winn: [01:02:05] They stopped. Yeah. I'm like, okay, guess. I guess you could see. It both ways. Oh, God. Anyways, but. Yes, it's true. Get support postpartum and prepare. Prepare and then prepare for like logistical things afterwards. Like who's going to come and clean my house? Who's going to cook my food? Like, who's going to walk my pet? Right? Like, those are some things, right. You know?

Esther Gallagher: [01:02:30] Prepare.

Serena Saeed-Winn: [01:02:30] And then when you are postpartum, hold your hold your boundaries, but accept help also like you might be not into your, you know, your partner's mom. Right? But like, if she can cook and clean, I don't know, maybe she can come in.

Esther Gallagher: [01:02:45] There's a way to. Communicate with her about that. Exactly that. Equal in genders. A good time? Yeah. Yeah.

Serena Saeed-Winn: [01:02:54] And someone else was telling me one time she was like, you know, I always tell people, like, it's cool. Like, be friends with your mother in law because when your kid is sick and your daycare won't take your sick kid, your mother in law. Will Yeah. And it's so. True. Good strategy. Like I. Call my mother in law, I'm like. Hey, I was just thinking. How would you like to hang out with this? By the way, my kid's sick. Yeah, I'm dropping them off.

Serena Saeed-Winn: [01:03:20] But it's so true, right? Like, it's just. It's one of those.

Esther Gallagher: [01:03:23] Well, not that I think on the other side of. Of giving birth, you. You do begin to have a kind of new appreciation for who these people are. Who

raised you and your partner. Now that when I say appreciation, I use it in the broadest sense of the term, right? Like you still you have a new light on what didn't work for you as a kid. Yeah. You also have a new light on. Gee, it couldn't have been easy for these people every moment to just make the right decision. That would be perfect for me. Totally.

Serena Saeed-Winn: [01:04:01] Right. Yeah.

Esther Gallagher: [01:04:02] There are other things involved. And so, yeah, I think that doesn't mean everything is excused. It means not at all that you.

Serena Saeed-Winn: [01:04:11] You just understand it.

Esther Gallagher: [01:04:12] You begin to have a perspective that mediates that adolescent.

Serena Saeed-Winn: [01:04:20] Right.

Esther Gallagher: [01:04:21] Well, the irritation or.

Serena Saeed-Winn: [01:04:22] Just the idea.

Serena Saeed-Winn: [01:04:24] That society has that you were talking about earlier of, you know, parents have to be always self-sacrificing, right? Like that's a thing that parents should be. Right. We think like that as teenagers or as adolescents or whatever. But once you have your own kid, you realize like, oh, they were a person.

Serena Saeed-Winn: [01:04:38] A bottomless pit.

Serena Saeed-Winn: [01:04:40] Yeah, exactly. They were a person before and they're now just a person. So it's like, yeah, you're right, not everything is forgiven, but you do get a a different perspective, I guess. Yeah, right. And it can go both ways. I've heard

people talk about, you know, after giving birth, they're like, God, you know, I feel for my mom now so much like she did whatever, whatever.

Serena Saeed-Winn: [01:05:01] And then I hear the other side where people are like, God, you know what? My parents were didn't do a great job. And now being a parent, I feel like, why couldn't you have just done these simple things like that also happens, right? You're like, you know, So I think it goes both ways where it can be like, you understand, but then you also don't understand.

Serena Saeed-Winn: [01:05:20] Right, Right. So I think that's also less prepared for, you know, is like, yeah, your relationships with people, you know, in your life that were around during your childhood is going to change too. It's going to change a lot. And now before you didn't need your family members, as in like a practical sense. But once. You have a kid. You kind of might you might need them for babysitting or you might you might have had a really hard birth and your healing process, like you're like in bed for a week or two, whatever, you know what I mean?

Serena Saeed-Winn: [01:05:51] So you might Actually need them. So that also changes that dynamic of like not having needed them and now needing them again. Yeah, it's crazy.

Esther Gallagher: [01:06:01] Yeah, Things cycle back in some ways it's true.

Serena Saeed-Winn: [01:06:04] It's true your whole world. But then it's also really awesome because then, you know, the universe has made babies so freaking cute and they smell so delicious that you're like, Fine, fine. Yeah. I'll keep doing all of this. I'll jump in because you're just so darn cute, you know? It's so true. So true.

Esther Gallagher: [01:06:25] Yeah, well, Serena, this has just been lovely.

Serena Saeed-Winn: [01:06:29] Thank you so much.

Esther Gallagher: [01:06:30] Thank you for making the time to chat with us and everybody out there, you can look into what Serena is doing and see how you can support it or or avail yourself of it. And we'll see you next time on the podcast. Take care.

Sarah Trott: You can find out more about Esther Gallagher on <http://www.esthergallagher.com/>. You can also subscribe to this podcast in order to hear more from us. [Click here for iTunes](#) and [click here for Google Podcasts](#). Thank you for listening everyone and I hope you'll join us next time on the Fourth Trimester. The theme music on this podcast was created by Sean Trott. Hear more at <https://soundcloud.com/seantrott>. Special thanks to my true loves: my husband Ben, daughter Penelope, and baby girl Evelyn. Don't forget to share the Fourth Trimester Podcast with any new and expecting parents. I'm Sarah Trott. Goodbye for now.