

Fourth Trimester Podcast

Episode 11: Guest Beth Berry is a Life Coach for Parents

Sarah Trott: [00:00:49] 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 benefitted 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 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>

I'm here today with guest Beth Berry. She is a writer, life coach, mother of four daughters, she has a site called Revolution From Home and she's currently completing her own book called Mother Wound. Now Beth and I connected because I'm read an

amazing article of hers called In The Absence Of The village Mothers Struggle Most and it resonated with us here at the fourth trimester podcast and she has graced us with her presence today. We're so grateful for that. And Beth I would just love to hear from you a little bit about what it is that you're doing with your site and your book and your life coaching.

Beth Berry: [00:01:29] Awesome thank you so much. I really appreciate being here and being invited. So I have been blogging for some years. My family and I moved with my husband and my four daughters to Mexico six years ago now, and we lived there for four years and when I was there and finally had a little time and space in my life I began blogging and realized that it was something I really enjoyed. My life-coaching practice evolved out of my connection that I was forging with all of these women through my blog. So it's been an evolution in that sense and I didn't know what, you know the concept of a revolution from home meant something really different to me six years ago when I started. I knew that it was something that felt strong in me, that there was a passion there. But it's taken some time to really figure out what that means to me. At first sort of like this alternative. You know it's an alternative movement of mothers. I could feel the fire you know. It was something that I had to sit with for a while and give space to figure out what that was. Now I really see it as you know, the revolution is it's happening within each one of us. I think that there are women across the board, across cultures, particularly within cultures where we're starting to realize that we have the support and time and resources and energy supposedly to be able to create change in our lives but we're still struggling. So many women are still struggling. And so the revolution that's in my heart has to do with how do we shift some of these major cultural stories that are in place that are still keeping mothers, in particular, in a struggle that that is disproportionate to where we are as a culture. So I work one-on-one with women, I offer groups and I'm just about to lead my first retreat, that's next week. So it's exciting and and really beautiful thing to get to witness so many women in their process of sort of awakening to their own true sense of power and stepping into motherhood or allowing motherhood to change them into somebody entirely different and getting to support them through that process has been really beautiful.

Sarah Trott: [00:03:57] That's such a wonderful offering. Moms need so much support. Do you find that the women who are coming to you are who you are finding for your

services are women who are about to become moms for the first time or are they moms with babies or moms with older kids or what's the spectrum looking like.

Beth Berry: [00:04:20] It's been a pretty wide variety of mothers. I'm finding really that most people don't actually reach out for the kind of support that they actually need until they've sort of had their butts kicked for a while. You know that's what I'm finding. You know that's what most of the time seems to be happening is that women go down this path of motherhood for a while and they're trying their very best to be independent and forge on and prove to themselves prove to themselves, to the rest of the world that they have what it takes. Kind of a thing. There's that air and then years down the road they recognize that they are becoming more and more frustrated sometimes or feeling like a lot of isolation. It's a pretty common theme, a feeling of disempowerment; it's kind of rampant. I see a lot of that particular set of feelings and are really ready to reclaim a sense of self and figure out what does it mean to be a conscious minded woman and mother but also have have a sense of self that isn't entirely based on motherhood because we are mothers and women you know and I really think it's so important that our that our children see us as both. And so that's what I'm finding is that most. It's a very small percentage of women who actually sort of give themselves permission to get the support they need. You know pre-baby-having and then postpartum. It tends to be the women down the road who are like at the end of their rope going I can't do this anymore. I need help. So that's the theme so far.

Sarah Trott: [00:06:12] And so important to be able to recognize that in one's self and have that awareness. Because it takes a huge degree of vulnerability to admit I need help.

Beth Berry: [00:06:22] Right. Yep. And I think that's really based on some deeply seated cultural stories around independence and autonomy that really are unfounded. I mean they are based on sort of antiquated ways of thinking about things. They're not based on a social model that I think is really supportive of where we are and where we're headed. I think support is essential for every human being at every stage in life. There should be no exception for mothers. And I actually think that this particular, you know the postpartum period, early childhood is a time in our lives we need more support than ever, that we actually find ourselves with less support than ever and that's a dynamic that I think is a bit of: You can see it cross across the culture. How pervasive

that message is that we hold within ourselves even. And and the damage that it's causing you know this sense of isolation and frustration and you know along with that women feeling as if they have to be in one camp or another. I mean they're a stay-at-home mom or a working mom or I'm either you know sort of crunchy alternative thinking mom who's doing all the things within the alternative mindset or I'm not. It's really unfortunate that there isn't a greater sense of "Here's who I am as a person and here's me, here's what I need in order to thrive as a woman and as a mother." And then how do we parent through that who we really are instead of who we should be.

Sarah Trott: [00:08:01] Becoming a mother for the first time is a huge life change and it's one where I think that identification of self, of who I am, changes a lot. And so I think what I'm hearing you say is that there's a bit of a balancing act that has to happen with that.

Beth Berry: [00:08:19] Yeah I think so and really an opportunity for us to hold that as a really sacred transition. And you know culturally that's not really happening so much. There are even messages out there that I think are really destructive: just this idea that we're meant to bounce back after babies. I don't buy it. You know, I think we're meant to transform into a different version of the women we are. Motherhood is an incredibly powerful experience that if held as something powerful and sacred and beautiful and wonderful, then we get to step into an evolved version of ourselves really. But that takes it takes feeling supported. It takes feeling like your needs aren't always being compromised. There's only so much that we can do and feel good about doing as women or any human being without having some of our basic needs met. And I find that many many women postpartum and well into motherhood until they decide to shift the story for themselves, hobble around with tons of unmet needs. Anything from sleep, obviously, to time with their girlfriends just kind of getting out of the kids space for a minute, taking a breath, to alone time. I can't tell you how many women come to me and just say, "I feel so guilty about this but I have to get a break." Amazing that there's so much guilt around these things because yes of course we do need breaks, you know. I mean our nervous systems are constantly engaged when we're with our children. There is no break physiologically because we're wired to protect them and to nurture them and to be caring for and meeting their basic needs. So in the absence of any kind of a break for ourselves you can see why there's so much of a sense of burnout.

Sarah Trott: [00:10:17] And I know speaking from my own experience I felt very wired towards meeting my baby's every need, when I was in my fourth trimester and I think that's right. And I think that's part of what makes this so hard as a transition is that I identified as a mom. And I guess I'm possibly having a pretty common experience but I felt happy to be sacrificing my own needs in order for someone else's. It's also important to know that there is a way to balance yes sacrifice, but then also making sure my needs are met because if they're not then I'm not going to do a great job of looking after other people; not just my baby but my husband my other children.

Beth Berry: [00:11:05] Absolutely. Yeah I think that's a really critical point and so essential for for each of us to recognize that as mothers, yes there is a there is an amount of sacrifice built in. That's part of it. I think that's actually part of our evolution as women is that we're learning to be more giving. And but I think we're also meant to be learning to be more comfortable with vulnerability and leaning in when we need help and support and asking for the things we need. I think that's a learning curve that comes along with motherhood. But I think it's so essential. What you said about you know needing to meet our needs so that we're capable of meeting people, other people's needs and doing so without feeling resentful and frustrated and losing our temper or or whatever. It's not an easy thing. A little bit of my back story for perspective in that regard. I have four daughters. They are now nine. Let's see 9, 11, 15 and 21. And when I was very in it, when it came to early parenthood that I was a stay home mom I made some money from home but was primarily focused on the kids. So when my kids were little I was so in it with motherhood that I had a hard time seeing things clearly, in particular when it came to my own needs. Because truly their needs seemed more important than mine. Because they're good at expressing their needs. Kids are really good at that. So we when theirs are constantly being expressed and they're so clear to us and we're biologically wired to meet them. It's a really easy time to lose touch with what we need. And some women are not accustomed to considering their needs in that way before motherhood. You know it's hard to meet our needs when we're not being compromised in that way. So it takes a shift in the way we think about that. But you know what happened for me is that I had a bunch of kids and felt like I was you know able to handle things fairly well. And then another one came and I was like OK this is getting...I'm in it and kind of just kept adding tools and coping strategies. After my fourth daughter was born, I'll never forget the moment, actually, I was sitting in my living room in this tiny little house that we could barely afford. You know I was staying home with the

kids. I was home schooling one of the had one in an alternative school. We could only afford for her to be going there. And then I had a newborn and a two year old, was nursing both of them so I had my newborn in my lap nursing her. She was sick and not feeling well the 2 year old was crying because she wanted to nurse. And just the thought of nursing her again, I just was like so couldn't do it. And then my 6 year old was crying because she was like I thought we were going to do her homeschool thing today. And I was looking at her feeling guilty and my 13 year old time was screaming at me because the house was filthy and I thought we were going to go shopping. And I was I was looking at my life and the feelings that I had at that moment. I thought, you know I just started sobbing and I know, deep down I realized that I had this wonderful beautiful life with all these amazing people. And I felt no joy. I had lost access to the core of who I was because I had had to implement so many coping strategies just to be surviving. I was in survival mode. So I at that point things shifted. I realized I couldn't do it like this anymore because I didn't want to have so much beauty around me and not be able to access it. And so much joy around me and not be able to feel it. And so at that point the shift happened; so that was about nine years ago. The shift in me was pretty simple. It was, I had to stop and stop thinking about OK what's in the best interests of these four kids. And my new sort of mantra was how can we come away from this experience of a life together with five whole women not four. It couldn't be about just my kids anymore. I had to be one of those in line as far as the prioritization is concerned and that changed everything. My path has shifted dramatically ever since that tremendous experience.

Sarah Trott: [00:15:33] Who was looking after you during your fourth trimester?

Beth Berry: [00:15:36] That's a good question. Yeah. I have you know, my husband has always been very supportive and done the best he could but he was supporting us financially. So the pressures on him were pretty immense. He had different roles to be playing. When he was home it was great; he wasn't home very much. So when he was at home you know and I had by that point created some community within our kids' school and things. But everybody's kind of doing their own thing and stressed about their own stuff and so I don't, I wouldn't say that I have and I have family who came a little bit. But as far as that sense of feeling well supported myself you know that happened a little more with each kid. But it was largely, had everything to do with me recognizing that I was worthy of the support. That I did not have to do it alone. And that actually that and giving my self permission to get the support I needed. So with the

fourth child when someone said Hey I would love to make a meal-sign-up-list with kids that are you know from the parents at the school. And by that point I knew better than to be like oh it's OK. You know like I might have with the first or second kid and I was like hey thank you so much. Yes I will except. You know we have to learn to be on the receiving end of support. And so I learned that. But it took a while.

Sarah Trott: [00:17:08] Yeah. And I think that that is why your article is so interesting to me. I'd love to hear your take on how you could compare and contrast maybe our modern experiences of that where maybe someone makes an offer like that which is very generous and very welcome to maybe a time when like village life would have just stepped in and automatically did a few things for women.

Beth Berry: [00:17:35] Yeah. So I think that one thing we forget is that the way that our culture is structured right now it's quite new. This is not the way things have been for very long, relatively speaking. We have needed each other to survive. We couldn't have done as many things as we do alone, back in the day. And so what I have seen you know I've had experiences of more of sort of the village feel the tribe throughout my life. One of the most profound was the time we lived in Mexico. And I just started realizing how unnatural it is. You know the structure that our society has in place right now or you know women and mothers and fathers are isolated in homes, trying to figure it out on their own, with the cultural stories that say you can do it. You know "independence is a good thing". I don't think that that's the natural order of things. I believe we're pack mammals: we're meant to be supporting one another in every regard. So even just looking back to my own experience as a small as a young girl how much more kids were roaming through the neighborhoods. Just that fact alone changes everything. There are so few neighborhoods anymore where you can find roaming packs of children and how much pressure that puts on the mothers and fathers who are home with the kids to not only be making dinner and keeping up with the house work and but also being their children's entertainment and trying to work to make money. That's a lot that's really, it ends up being too much and I think that the prevalence of anxiety and stress in our culture has a lot to do with the way things are structured at the moment. I think in a more natural order we would have the support systems that we need in the way of aunts and friends and cousins and grandmothers in our homes more helping out with the general stuff bringing meals taking other children away, enhancing our experiences.

Sarah Trott: [00:19:48] Yeah and I think that there's a sense of what normal is today. In my experience having babies for the first time now in America means an expectation of maybe having help, maybe not. But basically playing all of these roles. right There's the idea of as you said these personas and working moms or stay at home mom or granola crunchy mom and you get to pick which one you want to be but whatever you pick. You're doing everything. And no it's not safe to let your kid run around the neighborhood. You can't just do that today. So it's a lot. It's a lot. And so I think I really liked what you were saying in your article about getting that support that we need.

[00:20:41] Yeah I think that one of the cultural stories in place right now that's really destructive is that if you have support or have the ability to ask for support in whatever way, you're kind of privileged you know. If you have even, just looking at something as simple as having someone come and you know: housekeeping, somebody to come help you clean your house, even if it's once every two weeks or every month that is seen as a huge privilege. When we lived in Mexico even the people in the middle to lower classes who really didn't have a lot of money, lots of them hire people to help them clean or help them take care of the kids because it's, those people need the work and there isn't as much of this sense of I have to do it all myself. There is a more of a familial collective mentality: of course you can't do it all yourself. How in the world would you work and take care of your kids and keep up with your housework. Nobody does that. It's a different it's a cultural story. Those are storylines. And so I think it's really up to us to shift them. I don't think it's going to happen from the top down. It's going to happen when more and more mothers wake up to the fact that we're not meant to live compromised lives, in that sense that that's not necessary. But it really takes us realizing that we are worthy of a higher quality of life.

Sarah Trott: [00:22:14] Do you think women need to give themselves permission.

Beth Berry: [00:22:18] Absolutely. I think there's all kinds of things that when we really look at it that we don't give ourselves permission for. Even the simplest things when we actually get some downtime and we're exhausted, there are lots of people who wouldn't let themselves take a nap and really catch up on the sleep that they needed because they feel like they should be doing something else. And you know this is a big thing that I work with people around a lot. I can't tell you how many times I can just say what do you need to give yourself permission for around this. And then there's the sort of light

bulb that goes off and we realize how much it really is about us being able to say I can do this differently than I have been, or giving ourselves permission to think about something in a different way to try something different and to think outside the box and think outside of the voices in our heads that are coming from other people whether it's other you know mothers, whether it's our mother in law who's got an opinion about it, whether it's you know bloggers who are you know we've been inspired by, that we each have our own way that is going to feel more natural and is ultimately going to be better for our family dynamic than anything created by someone else.

Sarah Trott: [00:23:41] Faced with the decision do I vacuum my filthy floor or go on a walk or do something: read a book, take a bath, do something that's relaxing for me. I think that is tough for a lot of people because ignoring something like housework or a chore even temporarily can create a lot of guilt.

Beth Berry: [00:24:05] Yep it's true.

Sarah Trott: [00:24:06] Or feelings of failure. Like oh you know my standard isn't my house should be clean everything needs to be great for my kid. Otherwise I'm not doing a great job as a mom.

Beth Berry: [00:24:17] Right. Right. And those are the those are the storylines that that I think are most important to break are the ones that attach our accomplishments with our sense of worth or self-worth. Because when we attach our sense of self-worth to our accomplishments we are setting ourselves up. When we allow that paradigm, there's almost never enough that we can do; we can almost never be good enough because if the house is dirty but we've got a nap. You've still failed. If you managed to get some exercise, but you know your kids sat in front of the screens while that happened, you failed. It's a setup. It doesn't work. So I think that there are always going to be compromises within any life experience. But when we compromise our basic needs and really the longings the deeper longings that we have the things that help us come alive those are the things that I think are most tragic to compromise. So for me it's alone time. I don't have alone time. I it's really hard for me to feel joyful and to feel... and that was why I struggled so much at my lowest point nine years ago because I was home schooling and I had babies and I had toddlers and it was... like never ever ever ever got a break and it didn't work for me. I now have a completely different lifestyle where I'm

alone doing my work all day every day and I now see how essential it is to my thriving because I'm deeply introverted and I love quiet and introspection and so being able to recognize the more I really think the more self-aware we become the more we know ourselves and honor what we need in order to thrive the better we can show up in the world for for anyone we care for.

Sarah Trott: [00:26:17] How do we separate that notion of accomplishment and doing and self-worth.

Beth Berry: [00:26:24] Yes that's a good that's a good question. Well I think that at the core that comes down to figuring out really believing that our self-worth is not attached to our accomplishment that we are worthy by nature of being human. You know we were born worthy. There's nothing we have to do to prove that we are worthy as human beings and being able to root ourselves in something that is not outside of ourselves. It becomes for me, motherhood has been, has grown into really a spiritual practice. It's something that through motherhood I have been able to recognize so much about myself and my own soul and my heart. One of the things that I think is really important is that we be doing things according to what helps us to feel strong, who we really are at the core, what does our soul really have to express. Instead of just: what do my kids need, what does my boss need, what does my husband need. What does my soul need? Because when we're tapped into that deeper sense of self we then feel lit up by our experiences. So small examples: you know if we are parenting in a way that lights us up, so if I... some of the things that I enjoy doing with my kids. I really really don't like, like when my kids were little I did not like getting on the floor or playing make-believe with whatever things they had. Play in that way was hard for me, particularly when the dishes are piling up and the laundry pile is like overflowing and all the things need to be done. But there are ways that I really love to play. And for me it's more about going to the park with a soccer ball and playing pickup game of soccer. I like that kind of play better so giving myself permission, recognizing that both of these things are important to me. Relative sanity within the house; I've long since let go of you know high standards in housework, particularly when I know I have all these other things going. But it's also important to me that I connect with my kids through play, particularly when they're asking me for that. But I think that when we can hold a sense of self and say no matter what I choose in this moment, it's okay, I'm okay, they're okay and trusting that that shifts things. I think it has a lot to do with our motivation. So if we're motivated from a

place of guilt or what I should be doing it's a very different experience than our motivation coming from: I want to connect with this person or I really want to feel good and therefore I got to get these dishes done first so that I don't feel so crazy. I think checking our motivations is really key and also giving ourselves permission to parent and to show up in the world according to what helps us to feel strong instead of what we think we should be doing. Does that make sense?

Sarah Trott: [00:29:24] That makes perfect sense. Yeah. And going back to what you were saying earlier. I wanted to understand from you what you think would be helpful for women who are about to become moms for the first time. What can they do to help prepare for motherhood in terms of securing that self-worth, securing that identity and maybe start: what questions can they be asking themselves beforehand to prepare for that transition?

Beth Berry: [00:29:51] Right. Yeah that's a great question. So I think one of the things is to really be honest with ourselves about the fact that we have needs. Everybody has needs. This culture has kind of associated needs with the neediness and made it into something that's sort of a sign of weakness. I think that's bogus. I really think that honoring the fact that we all have needs and that our needs are individual as individuals all have different needs is really important. And so before you have babies if you know that you're introverted for example and need alone time being able to start brainstorming ahead of time, how am I going to get those small breaks? And it doesn't have to be long stretches of time because likely when the baby is born you know many women are wired to want to be with their baby all the time. But noticing in yourself that actually getting a break to exhale and just go out, even just be outside for an hour, go for a hike or whatever, asking yourself how can I honor this about myself? And work it into my lifestyle even if it means OK I got it pretty soon in this game. You know, I'm gonna give myself this much time [for postpartum recovery?!] and then I'm going to start looking for somebody to be able to come over you know four hours a week so that I can step out and just take a breath of fresh air and whatever it is or you know even it could be something completely different than that. If you love your job and you don't want to quit to stay home with your baby then being able to honor that and push all the voices out from all the culture and all the people who have an opinion about it and really sit with that and go, is giving this up something that I can do authentically without feeling resentful? Is this a part of who I am? That's really really important to me. If it is then how

can the two coexist and how can you do that in a way that honors your baby and honors you and honors your family dynamic.

Sarah Trott: [00:32:01] Do women ever change their minds after they have their baby?

Beth Berry: [00:32:06] Oh gosh yes. I think that most women are shocked by the shift and by how much we shift as women because these things are hardly ever talked about. I hardly ever hear people really giving this space and holding this time as a sacred transition. And it's mind boggling to some women how much they shift. I mean there are there are women who are absolutely certain that they will go back to work in six weeks and then you know three weeks into it they're a mess. They're falling apart inside because they can't fathom it. They cannot. There are other women who you know are totally hellbent on staying home with their babies. And a couple of months down the road they realize they're shriveling up inside. It's not working for them. It's too much anxiety or too much pressure or perhaps their baby is really really really high needs and that it's just too much and then they have to shift there and give themselves permission to rethink what they were doing. I think we've got to have flexibility around this time. I think we've got to hold a huge amount of space for ourselves to be surprised. to be able go, "I have no idea what's about to hit me but I'm going to be open" and to be gentle with ourselves and kind and compassionate with ourselves so that you know whatever happens we are giving ourselves some grace and realizing this is new terrain and this is no small thing.

Sarah Trott: [00:33:45] Yeah. Are there ways that women can practice self love. As kind of an exercise before having a baby so that they're able to recognize those moments when like, oh hey I need a break.

Beth Berry: [00:33:59] Yeah I think one of the things is is being able to recognize just like you know when you when you think about... I was a LaLeche leader for a while and supported women in the breastfeeding relationship. And one of the things we talked about was learning early signs of hunger; that you know screaming and crying on the part of a baby is actually a late sign of hunger. One of the early signs of hunger is rooting around and looking for the breast or the nipple. Those are early signs. Doing the same for yourself. What are the early signs of burnout? What are the early signs of overwhelm instead of waiting until we're, you know the wheels are falling off. When I

had babies and was doing the whole cloth diapers thing was really committed to that for a long time what I realize now looking back is that when I made the switch back you know three babies in and I was so overwhelmed and I reluctantly finally introduced disposable diapers to our lives at least part of the time. Looking back I didn't see it at the time. At the time it felt like a total fraud/sellout. Now I look back and actually see that that was a loving act toward myself. It was saying, I'm going to take some of the pressure off of you. You don't have to be perfect. You don't have to do all the things all the time. Other simple acts of self-love can be anything from looking at your body that's changed postpartum and really honoring different parts of it. You know so many women have embattled relationships with their bodies postpartum and you know even just taking time, drawing a hot bath with essential oils and something that's really really pleasant and candles and you know someone else has got the children for an hour or two and having/ taking some time for self care and not just let it be about I need a break, omg i'm falling apart. I need a bath, i need a break. But actually using that, figuring out what can help nourish you. and some of that is thinking nourishing thoughts during that time. Re-engaging with your your belly for example in this area of our bodies that's so transformed postpartum and thanking that part of your body for this incredible gift that it gave you and the transformation and really reestablishing a new relationship with that part of your body because, culturally now we have you know perhaps stretchmarks and what's this you know unsightly thing... that's just a story. You know I have come to see how absolutely beautiful this transition can be if we're holding it in a different space. So self-love can be you healing your relationship with this part of your body that you've really been critical about and feeling bad about. It can look like getting a sitter or being honest with your partner that you need a break, you know every Wednesday night. You know this is one of the things that I did early on after that kind of breakdown after for my fourth baby was born, that I realized I got to get a break. I have to get breaks and so my husband started watching the kids on Wednesday nights. That was my night. And I went and I knitted with my girlfriends and then I started stretching that a little bit longer and a little bit longer as my baby got older and I joined a rowing club and so I was rowing and knitting and I looked forward to Wednesday nights and that became that self-care of, what do I need to fill back up, asking those questions. What do I need right now? And honoring that I needed connection with other women. I needed not to be needed by other people. I needed to get back in my physical body. I need to be out in nature and on the water. And so I was able within you know I had like

five hours every Wednesday afternoon and evening that was mine to be able to refill a bunch of those needs. I see those as really important acts of self-love.

Sarah Trott: [00:38:14] And it seems possible that we can't actually prepare for that from the baby up. So many things said we can prepare to be proud of our body. You know it's interesting when women are pregnant. It's such a wonderful badge of honor. You know I often see women like walking around pregnant and we're not ashamed of our bellies. We're really happy and proud of our bellies. But then after the babies born it's something that we try to hide.

Beth Berry: [00:38:43] Yeah exactly.

Sarah Trott: [00:38:45] And that our body just did something miraculous right and shifting that story in our head to be so proud of our bodies. We did something amazing and just loving that body so much feels really important and I think preparing to have that conversation with yourself so that when you're in the bath for the first time and you look at your body you're not thinking oh man I'm so wrecked you're thinking wow I just did something incredible. Yes.

Beth Berry: [00:39:15] And you know where we are, I see us, our generation of women really as pioneers in this regard because we're coming off of centuries of shame around our bodies at all covering anything and not having a sense for I mean there's been so much shaming around women's sexuality and bodies and hiding of those things for so long. And now I feel that we're in a really important and beautiful position to be able to say, now actually, I'm really I am proud of this and that our generation of women has a huge amount of potential to be able to shift some of this stuff. And you see it slowly but surely happening and you know it starts with the relationship we have with ourselves and we're not going to get that permission from other people necessarily. The more we're looking for a culture, our culture to affirm our worth and to affirm our beauty, the more dissatisfied we're going to be and frustrated we're going to become because that's not where it's coming from yet. You know like maybe one day maybe one day we will actually have a culture that celebrates the postpartum body. Wouldn't that be amazing. Not yet. We're not there. So we've got to realize that the truth deep within us is that we are deeply proud of our bodies for what's happened and that we revere and we honor the experience for ourselves and in women across the board. And you know the more

that we learn to honor ourselves, we're honoring humanity, we're honoring you know the sacred feminine, we're honoring women and mothers everywhere by honoring ourselves and I think that thinking of things in those broader terms helps me a lot to realize that these small shifts that we're making in the way that we show up with ourselves is about something way way greater than just us.

Sarah Trott: [00:41:07] Absolutely. And on a practical side we can also prepare for making that time. So maybe before the baby is born before our nerves are shot we can have a conversation with a best friend or a postpartum doula or a parent or a partner to say hey I need my Wednesday night. I need my Saturday morning. Maybe it's just a couple of hours where on a regular basis someone comes to help out and relieve mom. Maybe she doesn't even leave the house right.

Beth Berry: [00:41:44] And to recognize that that will shift and evolve your needs are going to shift. And I think that's one thing people are shocked by too is that after having babies many of us our basic needs even shift and we might need a lot more or a lot less of one thing that we needed before we're different beings, once we become mothers and so again, going back to giving yourself permission to evolve, to continue to evolve and realize you are not the same person you were. And that's to be celebrated. And in six months from now you will be a slightly different version of you, too. And this is in a sense a beautiful evolution. And that when those shifts happen your needs will shift to. So the more support that we can seek out and the more you know I really believe we sort of, we teach others around us how we want to be treated based on the way that we treat ourselves. So the more we learn to take care of ourselves the more we give that message out there that we believe ourselves worthy of being cared for.

Sarah Trott: [00:42:48] Right. It starts with us. I love that. On that note it might be a good time to wrap up unless you'd like to make any final points.

Beth Berry: [00:43:02] I'm just really grateful that you are bringing awareness to to this fourth trimester. I think it's a really important part of the progression that we not skip over. That be given just as much attention and care as we're getting during the other parts of the baby-having experience. This is very much a very very vulnerable time within... it's no less vulnerable, in fact I would say it's more vulnerable than most of the

pregnancy. So I think it's essential and really beautiful that you are drawing attention to how important this time is. So I really have a lot of gratitude for you for that.

Sarah Trott: [00:43:43] Well thank you. And I feel a lot of gratitude for people like you who are doing work. Kind of hands on with moms whatever stage that they're in to help them recognize their value and feel good and be whole people.

Beth Berry: [00:43:58] Thank you. Thank you.

Sarah Trott: [00:44:00] So Beth, you've got your Web site people can contact. You use social media and they can get in touch if they want your consulting services. The Website again is revolution from home dot com. That's it. Thank you so much.

Beth Berry: [00:44:13] Thank you Sarah. I really appreciate it. Bye bye bye.

Sarah Trott: [00:46:35] 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 Play](#). 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.