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[MUSIC] This is, Tell me Your Story Special Edition, where we address relevant topics for our community. The topic for this special edition is about Mothers at Work. And in description of each episode, we will provide a content warning in resource for support to our listeners. Hello everyone. My name is Edgar Kley Filho from HLS Human Resources department. My pronouns are he, him, his, and our guests today are Carolyn Hubbard and Sasha Tulgan from the Accessibility Services at Human Resources. Hello, Carolyn, hello, Sasha, how are you?

[00:00:59]

Hello, Edgar.

[00:01:00]

Hi, Edgar. [LAUGHTER]

[00:01:02]

The idea that you have here, this project to talk about Mothers at Work comes from awhile. It's something that I really care and I think we take for granted all the co-workers that you have here, but sometimes you just don't think much in terms of everything that they go through, why these two are our co-workers. One thing that always bothered me because I have been around so many women that I work with, when we talk about four months maternity leave, and it feels like okay, when that's done, the mother comes to work and everything is fine. You just need four month and you're totally fine about this. [LAUGHTER]

[00:01:47]

Exactly. Then they raise themselves.

[00:01:49]

Exactly. Is just let the baby there is going to be walking around, eat my food, go to the microwave, heat up and everything. Nobody sees everything in between that happens, that I have witnessed and bothered me in that way. I think in a sense, you should be thankful or grateful for the time that's given the opportunity to support that somehow the work provides. But I just want to tell more about this to say that, there is more into it that some people might know, some people do not realize and how much and maybe bring even more empathy for when a mom needs to leave earlier because a child care situation, a school situation, someone called, the babysitter could not come, and I have been through all these watching this happening, that you have more empathy towards that as co-workers as giving support. Let's start from this. How was pregnancy for you and how did that happen in your life with you people?

[00:02:54]

Would you like me to start?

[00:02:55]

I think you should start. [LAUGHTER]

[00:02:58]

I'll start. Edgar knows that. You know this. I had a really difficult time getting pregnant. I think my husband and I got married. We tried naturally for awhile, maybe after a year or so, we started seeing a reproductive endocrinologist, which is a fertility specialist. I didn't even know that that specialty of medicine existed, it was just like it wasn't working the way that it should and we didn't really know why. We then received a diagnosis of unexplained infertility, which is super-helpful because what that means is like you can't get pregnant and they don't know why. They did a bunch of tests and everything was fine. But then the reproductive endocrinologists, they have a way of trying different things to control the circumstances to help people get pregnant. We did a series of what are called IUI, so intrauterine insemination. We did a number of IVF. Let's say we did basically every fertility treatment in modern science at a significant cost. This is when we were both living in New York City and working very demanding jobs, so we were often going for blood testing at seven o'clock in the morning and the process of IVF is also like so detailed and time intensive. But essentially what they do is try to really test tube baby creations. They manipulate the biological material and put it in a test tube and grow it and then transfer it, rather than the natural process. Maybe I'm like giving too many details to this. [OVERLAPPING]

[00:04:41]

No. I think that's important to know.

[00:04:42]

Anyway, there's more to it than probably shouldn't be sitting directly on a podcast. But basically, they help facilitate all the circumstances of helping you get pregnant. Then it didn't work for a long time. Then we got really lucky, when I finally got pregnant with Ben, which was after we had moved to Rochester. But that was just an incredibly fraught pregnancy because after so many challenges and losses, and we got pregnant the first time from an IVF and then everything looked great, but the blood work, they make you crazy and it was like, oh, the hormone level isn't doubling, or isn't doubling enough, and let's check it the next day, and then that goes on for a couple of weeks and then you see a heartbeat and that's really exciting, and then we came for our graduation appointment and there was no heartbeat. It was that's when we were supposed to be discharged to our OB and it was like celebratory and then they were like, I'm so sorry, it's going to be miscarriage. Then there was like, well, the good news is we have an OR and we can do the DNC today. Then we move to Rochester literally the next day. Then, I'm going forward and backward in time. But when we did get pregnant with Ben, who is my older son, who's now seven, it was just a very fraught pregnancy because we had all of these early losses and misses in our minds, and it was very hard to just be comfortable with the idea of being pregnant or the idea that this was actually going to become a baby. I remember having a very difficult conversations with my mom and my sister where they were like, at this point, you need to just be excited about it, you need to not be so anxious, we need to go furniture shopping, and I didn't want to tell people. I said I'll tell people at 24 weeks because that felt to me like that's legal viability. It was 24 weeks and zero days when my water broke, like a week or so after this big fight with my mom, my sister, that was like, you got to just leave me alone, and they were saying, well, at this point, you have to just understand that it's going to be fine, and then that happened.

[00:06:57]

So in 24 weeks?

[00:06:58]

Yeah, 24 weeks and zero days, which is literally the legal cusp of viability. In this country, there are many Nick use that deliver 24 week babies, even 23 week babies and they have some good outcomes, but it's very dicey.

[00:07:18]

And the way you describe me, if I heard correctly, you had few miscarriage before Ben was, you were confirmed that Ben was on track and was healthy and was okay?

[00:07:36]

We had we had confirmed that. I don't remember all of the specifics, but we had repeated ultrasounds and everything was looking great, and then this happened at a 24 weeks. In a pregnancy typically goes 40 weeks.

[00:07:50]

Yeah. Now, Carolyn, on your side, how was for you?

[00:07:56]

I was not sure if I even wanted to have children. At different points in my life, I wanted different things. I was a nanny for a long time. I baby sat. I had my little students when I was teaching, so I never felt like I'd be missing out. I had a lot of time that I spent with little ones, and I never traveled. I wanted to make sure after I got married that I left room to do those things, and then all of a sudden, you're reminded that your window is closing. The fertility window is rapidly shutting because you're 35 or however old you are. If you want a family, especially more than one child, that you should probably decide quickly if you want to be a mom.

[00:08:47]

Yeah, and Edgar. You may not know this, but 35 is considered advanced maternal age. It's when you're geriatric. [LAUGHTER]

[00:08:55]

What I'm thinking because you were saying that 35 is well. First of all, I knew that we knew each other for so long. She was 35 by the time she was ready, because you are really young, looking young, and for me, I didn't ever think that you were in that too.

[00:09:13]

No, I was [inaudible 00:09:15] [LAUGHTER].

[00:09:18]

Yes. I'm sorry I should have [OVERLAPPING] exactly, I'm so sorry. But I'm always saying because the rationals also my mom, who was already at 44, I know that cases are different and people and then my mom we always always joke around because she didn't expect, she was thinking about menopause and everything and suddenly she feels weird, we're not in our hometown. We were in another city my dad worked with construction, really quick, and we were in a different city. She went to a different doctor that was not her primary doctor in our homestead. The doctor told her that she probably had a cyst, but he recommended her to go back to her doctor and do all the procedures. We were always scared because our family has a history of cancer. So a cyst sounded really close and we were all a little panicky there. She went back to our town, visited her doctor, doctor run all the exams and jokingly when she came to gave her the results, said that yeah, you have a cyst but don't worry in nine month it will be over. [LAUGHTER] We joke with our brother until now because of that, that he's the cyst in the family, it's awful I'm sorry. Then 44 she was and we have other other new so it's still how it works for some people and how it's different for you. You were saying that you were not thinking about having kids because of the window.

[00:10:50]

I feel like you need to decide because my mom had me at 27 and my older brother at 26, and then she had my little brother at 38. I knew that women could have babies older. Anyway I felt like okay, we talked about it, my husband and I and let's just try. No pressure, let's just try. I bought one of those ovulation kits and got pregnant first try. Then I took the pregnancy test on April 1st, which is April Fool's Day, and I was like, Oh do you tell your husband on April's Fool's Day that you have a positive pregnancy test.

[00:11:37]

I can see that being.

[00:11:39]

I'm going to put a PSA here. Don't ever do that as on April Fool's, it's Just very triggering to all the people who are struggled with infertility. Yeah, I'm Pregnant.

[00:11:47]

I was like, Oh my God I took this test on April Fool's Day, like what an idiot and then I was like, no, I have to tell him because I was shocked that the first try it worked. That was April 1st and then on April 5th, I lost the pregnancy so I was walking to work and I just knew I could feel it. There's a very short window of time where you're excited and then devastated and just not a lot of time to process in-between those few days. That was really tough and then you go to the doctor and they tell you how common it is, especially for women to have at least one.

[00:12:34]

Yeah.

[00:12:36]

I said okay, and the doctor was incredible, I was sobbing your hormones are all over the place and I said I'm sorry, I feel so stupid, it's only been four days that I was pregnant. She's like it doesn't change the fact that you had this hope in you and you were excited and now it's gone. Then like Sasha was saying you have to get blood drawn to make sure that the levels are going down so that they can officially call it over. That's another thing you're going through this really emotional experience and then you have to go back to the doctor every day and just get your blood drawn and there's this medical side to it that the feels hard to go through when you're so emotional. Yeah, that was the first time I got pregnant, and then I didn't want to try again for awhile. Then summer started and I was okay, try again we went to Hawaii and that was fun and we were just traveling and living, and I got pregnant again in October and I took about four pregnancy tests, I think and they were all positive and I was pregnant a little bit longer than the first time. I think a week longer than I was the first time, and then I lost that pregnancy as well. Then you go back to the doctor and they say, well two is not as common so maybe there's something going on, let's send you to a specialist. I know my husband and I had decided we didn't have the resources to do IVF and I knew me as a person, I don't think I could handle that process, I know people who have gone through it and I just don't think I had it in me to go through that. We said wherever the specialist says, it's good to know but if we can't do this naturally, then maybe it's just not meant to be. In December we went and I think Rob had to have one vial of blood drawn and I had to have nine [LAUGHTER].

[00:14:43]

Nine?

[00:14:43]

I remember that how Adam was complaining about how awful it was, and they were like we're going to draw 26 vials from you Sasha. [LAUGHTER]

[00:14:51]

Your husband also just had one.

[00:14:53]

Maybe he had five and it was a big deal for him.

[00:14:57]

Of course it was.

[00:14:59]

Then it was literally like 26.

[00:15:03]

He was five, your 26, Rob was one and you were nine. WOW

[00:15:06]

They weighed me and I was like, why are we weighing me?

[00:15:10]

There's going to be a lot of this process, there's different expectation with the difference general partners.

[00:15:17]

Yeah, we had the scale.

[00:15:18]

You could tell them that the contract said you are going to just draw blood from me not weighing, this is not okay, so then?

[00:15:26]

We had the appointment with the specialists and it was right before Christmas, December 19, I don't know why I remember that. But I went, we got our blood drawn and they said okay in a week or two, we should have your results and it was basically looking to see if there was a reason they could pinpoint as to why I kept losing the pregnancy, and they give you these handouts with all it could be this. While we are waiting for the results, it's New Year's Eve, we're about to go to a wedding and I decided I didn't feel right, and I took a test and it was positive.

[00:16:05]

Oh, wow.

[00:16:06]

[OVERLAPPING] I was like, how do I go to this wedding and pretend like I'm not totally preoccupied by the pregnancy tests I just took. Now also you're waiting for results on why you keep miscarrying. You're like, okay this is a really weird place to be, because yes I'm pregnant, but I've lost two pregnancies and I'm waiting for results to tell me why that's happening, and so.

[00:16:32]

So just to be sure, I go to the doctors. They do the tests positive, the levels are all good with my blood. The specialist calls and says, similar to Sasha, we couldn't find any reason why you keep losing the pregnancy. Good luck with this one.

[00:16:53]

They didn't have any idea what could be going on.

[00:16:56]

Everything they tested came out fine. I was incredibly anxious throughout my entire pregnancy with Vivi because was afraid I was going to loose it.

[00:17:06]

You were afraid that it could happen again.

[00:17:08]

I did not tell anybody, not even my family. Until 14 weeks we told our parents, and then I didn't do it on social media. None of that because I was just petrified that I was going to lose it. I would watch other people post on social media their pregnancy announcements at three months and I'd be like, oh my gosh, why are you doing that? Don't you know the risk here?

[00:17:35]

It makes you so nervous.

[00:17:36]

It makes me so nervous for other people. A lot of people don't have the experience that I had. They have a pregnancy that's completely fine from the beginning and that's beautiful, but I was so concerned for every other pregnant person out there because of what I went through. Then the pandemic started.

[00:17:57]

Oh wow. [LAUGHTER].

[00:17:58]

That was a special timing.

[00:17:59]

Which was a good thing in a way. At least you were just yourself at home, and not moving too much because you were concerned that much or not. Was another fear factor coming in?

[00:18:13]

It was a fear factor. It took the ability for me to visit and share. We told people via FaceTime that we were pregnant, and we had come up with these different plans for how to tell my family, his family, really looking forward to doing that in person and we couldn't do it. That was really hard. I spent the whole pregnancy afraid of the outside world, and also afraid of the pregnancy.

[00:18:43]

One thing that I can remember, and I would like to share with you without mentioning too much into it is I remember I think on your second miscarriage that you told me at work.

[00:18:59]

Oh, that was the first.

[00:19:00]

It was the first one. You told me at work. I was devastated with you, of course, complete different dimensions there, but I was really sad for you. Then we go for a staff meeting. One of our co-workers come and say, hey, I have great news, I'm pregnant. I didn't know how to be happy for one co-worker while my next one here on my side was devastated. I was yay, in a way. When to have to talk to her later without saying anything, how happy I was for her and everything else, but I didn't want to leave you alone on your side. I remember you having conversations about this. I witnessed your fear and everything that you went through. Just as a witness to be on the outside, you don't also know how much you can say or do or what else you can, because how can I promised you are now you'll be fine. I don't like to give those false. But you cannot say, given the opposite as well or being neutral. One thing that I wanted to ask you, if you can share, how much tension was because you have the first miscarriage, and trying to get pregnant for both of you. Because you've already mentioned having a discussion with your sister and your mom in terms of how much you were excited or expecting to have a child at same time so much word. What's the heaven and hell in-between these two if you can say, the conflict?

[00:20:46]

You hit on a really interesting concept, Edgar, and it's what you're describing. It's so wonderful that you were able to play that role for Carolyn where you had that empathy for her also holding in the same space that you were excited for another colleague. That tension amplified that people who are in the process of trying to get pregnant or want to become parents feel. There's an interesting phenomenon that you may have experienced where when you've decided that you're going to try to get pregnant and you're in that process, all you see in your world is people who are pregnant bellies and baby carriages everywhere. It's like when you're in the market to buy a car and suddenly you see Honda Civics every road. When we got pregnant the first time with IVF, and then lost the pregnancy was my sister got pregnant almost the same week. It was so exciting that we were going to have babies, she had struggled for a while. It just seemed like this was the way it was going to work out and that was going to be great. Then we lost the pregnancy. Then shortly after that, my husband's brother, his wife had the first grandchild on my husband's side. I think it was two months after that first loss, and then we had this loss, I want to say it was in June. No, actually it was a much shorter period of time. We had this appointment and found out about the loss. That was when we left New York City and move to Rochester. Within a week or two, our nephew was born. Then three months after that, Adams, other brother's wife, had a baby. All of these pregnancies were happening while we were just desperately trying, and then we finally were like part of this club and then we had just lost out and then all the babies were born. Nephew was born in June and then another niece was born in September. Then my sister's baby was born four months after that. It was like we wanted so much to be able to celebrate our siblings and all of these babies emerging but it was agonizing because it was like being on a checkout aisle in a supermarket where you always get on the wrong lane. Everybody else is like leaving the store with their groceries and you're just stuck there forever. We just didn't know if it would ever happen or when it would happen and it fractures relationships, I think because I just felt like I didn't want to go to my sister-in-law's baby shower or baby naming, everything just is triggering. From their perspective, it's like why can't you just be happy for us.

[00:23:47]

For me.

[00:23:48]

To just put your worries aside. It's not the end of the world, but when that's all of your hope for the future you have the beginning of that hope, and then it's lost. It's hard to then recover without knowing where it's going to go or if you're ever going to get there.

[00:24:11]

You are always worried about the date and with you Carolynin, I remember you counting the days or the weeks. The anxiety on my side watching you was also something, oh my God. Generally keep whatever it is that you believe in and praying and thinking the best and send the best energy, all those things. Just go ahead.

[00:24:39]

Because I remember you taking me for a walk.

[00:24:41]

Yes.

[00:24:41]

[LAUGHTER] You're just a very beautiful friend. You said, come on I have to go run this errands. Come with me, and we were walking and [LAUGHTER] basically you said this much more eloquently than I'm going to say it, but it was basically, dude, chill, your energy level is vibrating [LAUGHTER] up here and the soul is trying to come.

[00:25:05]

Exactly.

[00:25:06]

Wherever you went to, this was after the second loss we were just talking about.

[00:25:10]

I think this is the second one.

[00:25:10]

I think it was. I didn't know what to do if she was devastated. I didn't have to go anywhere. I just wanted to take her out just for a walk because you could sense her agony. Didn't know everything that she was going through. I try everything that I read before, and learned before in different research that I did in several religion and beliefs and everything else just to find something would it be possible to comfort her a little bit We went all the way, I think Potter Square or something and came back just chatting and trying to say everything that I could, at least to try to [LAUGHTER] make you come down a little bit. My analogy was, you are thinking too much and being too intense about this and you're not giving a chance for this kid to come to you or [LAUGHTER] to hold on to you. I don't know how I would explain that. One other question that I wanted to, because I think it's important and depends on who is listening and going through the same. How important was the support from your partners?

[00:26:21]

I just think my husband didn't know what to do. With the first loss I was so sad, and no one knew we were trying. Our families didn't know. They weren't the types to be like, where's my grandbaby. [OVERLAPPING].

[00:26:39]

Trying pressuring you.

[00:26:40]

They weren't pressuring us. It was very much under the radar, and I was so sad and I called my mom just sobbing. She had no idea that we were trying, she had no idea that I was pregnant.

[00:26:55]

She was just really great. Rob came home and all he could do was hold me. He didn't know what to say and that was fine. It's so isolating or at least it was for me. Even the trying to get pregnant. He doesn't experience it the same way I do. If we fail, I take that on like, my body failed. You're already down on yourself what the trying process and then you get pregnant and then you lose it. Then it's like, again, there must be something wrong with me. Why can't I do this? I felt isolated with that. Like you're saying at work. I did tell a few people at work because my family, and really close friends, don't live around here and I needed to share that with people. I needed a few people that I was close to to know what was happening. I found my co-workers actually to be a really important support system because they were the ones I was seeing every day. They were the ones when I was going into work and meeting with students who might also be going through a really challenging time were helping. They were checking in on me, asking me if I needed anything. Yes, Rob did what he could with how much he could understand it, but I really found it to be my co-workers who I was seeing every day to be crucial during that process.

[00:28:27]

Interesting. What about your Sasha?

[00:28:31]

I wish I had a co-worker like you who understood things and could get me out for a walk. I was working in a law firm when we started this process and those wasn't really like a particularly warm environment. We moved from New York City to Rochester, New York and everybody there, it's just a different community where I think people have families much younger general, certainly the New York like I had friends who were in their late 30s, early 40s, and it just was people having kids later was just like more of a thing in New York City. Then we arrived in Rochester, New York, like literally maybe the day after we had this first miscarriage. Everybody said, it's so great, you move to Rochester. Rochester is great for families. Do you have a family? [LAUGHTER] I was like, no, we don't. Then the conversation ends because where do you go from there? I had wonderfully supportive, compassionate coworkers, but it's hard to start a relationship with somebody when you're starting a new job and this is all in the background. I wanted to tell people and I thought maybe I'll go in and mention it that I've had this in the past handful of days. But I just felt like that's not the way that I wanted to first be known to people. Had one awkward but also nice interaction with somebody who was a friend of a friend, and she knew my mom's friend somehow and my mom's friend had gotten really excited when my mom and told her that we were pregnant and had told Val, my new co-worker. Val had emailed me ahead of time and said, this is great because we're both pregnant and we know each other, so I can't wait to meet you and then I go and I met her. The first conversation was I'm sorry, that our friend got ahead of herself but yes I was pregnant now I'm not but sorry if that makes you uncomfortable. But anyway, she became a very good friend and it was nice for her to know that. Then I think I might have I just totally alienated myself and created an awkward situation with the one-person that I had, one point of commonality with. But over time I think people in my work environment understood that I was going through this because it went on for much longer after we move to Rochester, before we succeeded. I think by the end of it, everyone knew. Then I ended up writing an editorial in the Motherlode blog in The New York Times just about our experience because I just felt like this is something I want to be more public about it so that people feel like they can talk about it, or people in my life should be able to approach me to ask for guidance or for advice. It's served that purpose really well. I've deepened a lot of relationships with people after the fact, some of whom were open with their friends about it and some of whom were not. But I think a lot of people they're very private about this and it's not something that they want to talk about.

[00:31:31]

That's my worry. I understand the privacy because it is something very intimate. It's something very personal of course. But I wonder how many people are there that goes through the same and I want you to know how Adam react to the news when you have your miscarriage, when you lost the baby. But I think a lot of people out there that goes through the same, even being private, if there was some more information. As coworkers my concern also is, and here we are talking about this and thinking how much you both went through that nobody in general new, not even in our department when you are working together, but let alone the entire community and everything. You are going through all this while you are working. You didn't even reach to the pointer after you've had a baby to talk how much more comes with it. [LAUGHTER] That's the reason that I think is so important for us to be sharing about this, that works for people to understand. There are so much more there. Then sometimes when he perceived someone or imagine why someone has behaved or someone is sad or someone is irritated, someone is anxious whatever reason is, so much that you have to take in consideration as well.

[00:32:59]

That's exactly right. You never know what somebody's carrying around.

[00:33:03]

Because sometimes you always bring it to ourselves to project something or it's me. Did I do something wrong? It's not always at all about you, calm down. Tell me about Adam, how Adam reacted.

[00:33:19]

Carolyn and I are both laughing, I think because we have similar experiences with male partners who just approach these things a little bit differently and I don't want to be gender normative or overly generalized these experiences. I think it's different for men. I think I remember the judge that I clerked for saying to me at one point, you have to take care of Adam. You have to be so careful about his feelings because this is really difficult for men too. I'm like looking at you nodding because Carolyn and I we'd give you a hard time about [LAUGHTER] how hard it must be for your husband. But honestly, I think the experience is in different ways and for Adam, I think he just felt completely powerless. It was like for both of us, for much of our lives, anything we really wanted to achieve with hard work and dedication, we were able to achieve some outcome or success. This was just one thing where it was like we just couldn't figure out how to do it. I think he just felt a sense of powerlessness and my feelings of like, I remember a couple of experiences like finding out one sister-in-law than the other sister-in-law were pregnant and I just completely fell apart like on the kitchen floor just like shattered. He was incredibly supportive and wonderful but just experienced it in a different way. Like it wasn't his body and he didn't experience it as failure. Also, I'll add I don't know if you had this experience, but we had a wonderful reproductive endocrinologist, we actually consulted with many and they were all great doctors. But they had a tendency to really celebrate his sperm count and be like, he's done his piece. Then it wasn't really like that, it wasn't judgmental but I felt like, if it doesn't work.

[00:35:09]

It's on me.

[00:35:10]

My response, but I just can't manage to achieve this thing that everybody around me and everyone in my building, at work and my decade was like somehow just achieving spontaneously and for free. I think it wears on a marriage. I think a lot there are a lot of partnerships that don't make it as a result of that because it's so much stress. As we're talking through this, there's so many different aspects attention to work through.

[00:35:39]

What I imagine is exactly that, that's unique experience that the person goes. Although you are living with someone, you are sharing your life with someone, not necessarily can be at all close to the what you are going through on your own, like we just described, the expectations, sperm counts and everything else. Then if it doesn't happen, it's on you and you feel like it's your failure like Carolyn just described as well. But it is nice as well for people to understand that there is not much really that they can do other than like Rob did holding you.

[00:36:17]

Be present.

[00:36:18]

When you broke down, be present, be supportive, because I don't think that is really much to say.

[00:36:25]

Exactly what you did or like taking a person out to take a walk. I don't know if you've got a lot of unsolicited advice. Bernie Brown is really this concept of, you can relate to somebody in a difficult situation by being present with them, like sitting in the discomfort and feeling the hurt feelings. But that's hard for people, especially when it's like month after month and the arc isn't like you're making any progress, like you're hopeful then you're devastated, then you're hopeful then you're devastated. It's hard for people. I think we got like do a juice diet, go gluten-free and you really need to do sugar-free. I had this problem and then we read this book and then it was magical. Then it's so unhelpful. [LAUGHTER]

[00:37:04]

To oversee [OVERLAPPING] [LAUGHTER]

[00:37:05]

Or you just need to relax and have some chamomile tea. Was like, I'm sure that the scores of doctors we've consulted haven't even come up with the idea of chamomile tea. You just crack the code.

[00:37:18]

Or once you get pregnant do not drink tea. [LAUGHTER]

[00:37:20]

[LAUGHTER] Which one is it? [OVERLAPPING].

[00:37:23]

No bone broth or anything?

[00:37:27]

I think this is a process that makes a lot of people go into fixing. Sasha said that she delivered Ben with 24 weeks pregnancy.

[00:37:41]

Well, that's when my water broke at 24 weeks then came at 26 weeks.

[00:37:46]

26?

[00:37:46]

Yeah.

[00:37:48]

For two more weeks after your water broke?

[00:37:53]

Labor hadn't started. They call it premature rupture of membranes and nobody knows why that happens. But actually we were visiting a cousin of mine that I was trying to reconnect with who I was friends with in childhood and she has a house that was like halfway between where we were on vacation in Cape Cod for the summer and halfway back to Rochester. We stayed with her and her husband and her young child for the evening and hadn't seen her literally years, and then woke up at 7:00 in the morning with just rush of fluid. I was, what is this? Could this be labor starting or is this something else? I wasn't in pain. Labor wasn't starting or anything. I think I called my mom and I was, what should I do? It didn't occur to me to let you call 911 and go to a local hospital. But then I think I ended up calling my OB's office and they said, you really need to go into Strong, which was the hospital that I live near in Rochester and get yourself evaluated. Strong was the Quaternary care center and we were in Ryan Beck, New York, where I think there's a local community hospital that I'm sure is very good, but probably doesn't have a lot of experience dealing with premature babies. I literally looked on my iPhone and realized we were an hour from Albany. We have friends in Albany, the same friend who connected me with a friend and Rochester when I first moved there. But we called her and we said we're going to get in the car with our golden doodle and rush to the hospital in Albany because they were a tertiary care center. We went to Albany and ended up in labor and delivery. They confirmed that it was a rupture of membranes and it was, well, you're just going to hope that labor doesn't start for as long as possible. They gave me magnesium and steroids and basically trying to slow the process of labor and also give the baby's lungs a chance to develop a little bit more.

[00:40:18]

Then you had two weeks for that?

[00:40:20]

Well, then then I mean, it's a whole other story, but I had to negotiate getting myself discharged from Albany so we could get back to Rochester, which was about three-and-a-half hours away. I just did not want to have a premature baby three-and-a-half hours away from where we lived. They did not want to discharge me.

[00:40:36]

Exactly. I was wondering.

[00:40:38]

We were going to have to discharge AMA, which is Against Medical Advice. I then marshaled all of my litigation skills and all of my contexts at Strong Memorial Hospital to try to negotiate with the high risk team at Albany to discharge us. We ended up having to negotiate basically to pay for a private ambulance.

[00:40:57]

To bring you to Albany.

[00:40:58]

Because it was insurance won't pay for a transfer when it's a lateral. I think if we had been in a community hospital, they may have transferred us to a hospital with a NICU, but Albany has a NICU and could manage it. It's just that we didn't want to be three-and-a-half hours away from where we lived.

[00:41:13]

Another question, this is completely ignorance and you can tell me.

[00:41:18]

You don't have to preface anything that way. Nothing to notice at all.

[00:41:21]

[LAUGHTER] But the concept that you have a pregnancy and a baby in your womb is that it's surrounded by water and that goes into determining.

[00:41:35]

That's so ignorant. [LAUGHTER] Why would you ask?

[00:41:37]

Exactly.

[00:41:38]

What happened?

[00:41:39]

It's a really excellent question actually, because it's a [LAUGHTER] real problem. The baby learns to breathe through the amniotic fluid, when it's not in there it's harder for their lungs to develop. I don't know the details, the fluid drains out and then replenishes. But not as much. It was a very limited amount of amniotic fluid. That was not that was not great for his development, but he did stay in there for a couple of weeks and it was better than nothing.

[00:42:22]

That's good to know because I wasn't wondering that might be even more difficult. Then just hearing the whole story, going through all that, the worry that has probably came with all that the history of having miscarried before and then having to move from one hospital to the other one is not being easily because of insurance and all the details that in terms of what goes in with it. It's another heavy load there. Let me breathe for a second. [LAUGHTER] Then Carolyn?

[00:42:58]

Yes.

[00:42:59]

Sasha had been 26. Did you go full pregnancy for 40?

[00:43:04]

Not with either of them. With Vivi at my 38th week checkup, I had high blood pressure. They sent me to the hospital for three hours to be monitored. While I was there, my blood pressure was normal so they sent me home. But they said on Monday follow up with your doctor. Just go to the office so they can check you again. When I went on Monday, [LAUGHTER] we're always, I want Indian food. I'm going to go to the doctor. get checked and then I'm going to go get Indian food. I was like, I'm at the doctor get checked out and it was high again. They call it over to the hospital and they said they want to admit you and also you need to bring the car seat and you need to bring your overnight bag because you're going to leave the hospital with a baby. I was, no, [LAUGHTER] I'm getting Indian food. Just ruins my whole plan today. Also my maternity leave had just started the two weeks before the due date that I was planning for myself [LAUGHTER].

[00:44:11]

To prepare your things.

[00:44:12]

Get to relax and sleep and get everything ready, it was, nope. Sorry. I called Rob and shared the happy news that we were going to the hospital. He came home and met me and we packed and we went. It's still never clicked that we're actually going to leave here with a baby. They kept us there, they hooked me up and there were a lot of people on the floor delivering babies. They said we might send you home depending on how many babies decided to be born today. I was, I'm going to get Indian food on the way home.

[00:44:47]

You're just thinking about Indian food. Send me home. [LAUGHTER]

[00:44:52]

Then at around 7:00 P.M. they said we're going to induce you. They induced me at 7:00. Then I really started feeling the labor pains at 6:00 the next morning. During this entire process did you fear?

[00:45:14]

Of course, because I'm watching the heart rate monitor the baby's heart rate. I'm just watching it the whole time anticipating something because I have the high blood pressure. It's just to be safe, we want to make sure the baby is out. The whole time I'm just tuned into the monitor watching the baby's heart rate.

[00:45:37]

One question before I go to the most important one that I want to know, I'm really curious about more than anything, but how was the time that Sasha has a different experience than you did. The time of pregnancy what people in general say, did you have many desires? Did you want to eat these? Didn't want to eat that? Or what were dreams or what happened?

[00:46:02]

Cereal. I only wanted to eat cereal.

[00:46:05]

Really.

[00:46:08]

Indian food happens when?

[00:46:09]

Well, there were days [LAUGHTER] just rudely missed out on that. There were days that I'd have certain cravings, but throughout the pregnancy, cereal was my go-to choice of food. One day, I ate an entire green bean casserole [LAUGHTER] myself. Because I made it and then I ate it.

[00:46:31]

Not for and you Rob.

[00:46:32]

He was like can I have some of it? But yeah, cereal with both pregnancies was big for me.

[00:46:41]

What about yours Sasha?

[00:46:42]

I don't remember anything. When I was pregnant with Ben it was such a short period between the time I acknowledged I was pregnant and when he arrived. There just wasn't any time to even focus on that. I was so thrilled in a way to be pregnant. I don't think I had cravings. It was a great experience. It was just cut very rudely short.

[00:47:07]

Nice. Then the baby comes. How was having the baby? How you both in different situations experienced having that baby and seeing the baby for the first time after going through everything that you went through, how did you feel?

[00:47:28]

Do you want to go first?

[00:47:29]

Sure, mine is probably short. [OVERLAPPING].

[00:47:30]

Mine is probably typical.

[00:47:33]

Well, we just found out that Carolyn could not have her Indian food. So sad. Anyway, stay tuned. For the second part of mothers at work. Episode 1. The babies are coming. [MUSIC]