Spoil Your Baby Ep 32 - Beyond 6 Weeks: The Real Postpartum Journey with Maranda Bower Transcript

(Transcripts are generated by AI and may contain errors)

Introduction and podcast welcome

It's interesting that I'm watching, especially in the online space, when we're talking about medicating, say, menopause, everybody gets angry. That's not okay.

We shouldn't be doing that. No SSRIs. Let's learn something different. I can't believe the system is doing this. And then when you see the same thing about postpartum, everyone gets rageful the fact that you said that.

No, we need SSRIs. What are you talking about? This is a life and death scenario. Hello, everybody. Welcome to Spoil Your Baby podcast. Today, I'm here with a longtime friend, Miranda Bauer.

She is a biological researcher, a bestselling author, and the founder of Postpartum University, which is an incredible resource and place of learning.

So, welcome Miranda. I am so happy to have you here. Yeah, likewise. It's always such a pleasure speaking with you, girl. Like, I mean, we were just sitting here for like 20 plus minutes chatting about other things, but I love our conversations and I'm so excited to be here.

So thank you. Me too. I feel like we're both showing up in this world for moms as best we can and fun to have as much fun for ourselves and our families along the ride.

Yeah, it was lovely. So your expertise is in postpartum health. which I know so many of our moms are interested in and can also find it hard to find the right places to get that support and information.

Miranda's postpartum origin story

Why don't we start by sort of introducing you and telling us why you're so passionate about postpartum health and how we can change it. Well, I'm a mama for first and foremost.

And I started my journey with, you know, health and wellness and all things postpartum when I experienced post partum, starting with my first. And it was an experience that I did not prepare for.

I had prepared so much for labor and birth and the pregnancy itself. And my background has always been science and research. For whatever reason, this completely skipped my peripheral.

No knowledge, no information whatsoever about this. My son is 15 years old, so he'll actually be 16 later this year. 16 years ago, that was a long time.

We were not talking about postpartum. It was certainly not in any research. There was not very much information, and actually it was a fairly taboo conversation to talk about depression, right?

I think that was just not something that we had a conversation about. We sort of take that for granted now, don't we? Yeah, yeah. It's so much easier for people.

I'm sure it's still hard in many ways, but it is so easier to people talk now. We had Facebook back then, and we had Instagram back them, but there was no conversations about this.

You were not finding an account that had any data, any information, nothing along the sort. So it was very interesting, that paradigm, at that time, where that was occurring and recognizing that I knew nothing about this.

And I experienced extreme postpartum depression and anxiety. It was having panic attacks. I lost my partner, I had to move in with my family. Like I was desperate for support and I terrified that it was going to lose my son in this process.

It was, I still don't understand how people don' recognize that. And I'm so grateful that in today's world that we're having these conversations and it's so much easier to see in others that these experiences happen and that women are experiencing this at such a high rate.

But that's really how I began my research. I was like, i gotta get out of this. i got to get better for my son, not for me. Cause I didn't care about myself.

When you're in that very depressed state, getting out bed for yourself is, impossible, right? But I could do it for myself. And that's who I was doing it or and that where I really started to focus my attention.

Who am I? What am i doing here? Why do I feel like crap? And the research was very few and far in between. There was hardly anything out there. And I started diving deeper into things like anthropological studies, like I wanted to know about other cultures.

Surely, this is just one in seven at the time was the statistic for women who experienced postpartum depression. Now it's around one and three in today's society.

I had to know why, why was that happening? And so that was really the starting point of my journey. I became a postpartum doula. And went back to school, I become a childbirth educator, and I was absolutely enthralled with this whole world of everything related to birth and post partum, like what comes after.

And within a couple of years, I mean, had been working with moms, was attending births, supporting them in their breastfeeding journeys, helping them cook meals.

I was already seeing the difference within my body. By this time I think I had met my husband.

Anthropological roots of postpartum care

Now we've been married 11 years. We had another, our second child. And this was just like an ongoing thing. Then I started having providers come to me saying, You're working with my client, you're with working my patient.

I've seen them for four years, they've been on thyroid medications, antidepressants with me, all of the things. They have not gotten better and then they work with you and I'm having to wean them off these medications.

What is happening? What are you going on? Yeah, amazing. And they wanted to know this information, right? I know in my own experience, my providers never had this, information it was called normal.

It was, this is welcome to motherhood. This is what you can experience. Even my friends were telling me that, when I would talk to other moms, it's just how it is, And it's so sad and so frustrating that we don't have the resources, we do not have right testing, the right information to support women's bodies during this physiological, psychological, hormonal, emotional shift in transition.

What I was doing felt really good, I felt right, lots of trial and error trying to figure out, What is it that's going to work for my body and how can I apply it to the women that I was working with regularly and consistently in my in My own work and kind of developing I developed a framework basically of like what it's gonna take to heal our postpartum bodies Um, and and I think the beautiful thing is is it has transformed so much over the last Oh gosh, I want to say almost 15 years of of being in business having this I call it the postpartum restorative method And then we have providers who are now sharing this information, who were teaching this, information who we're certifying through us to get the education that they never received and still to this day.

have never received for their care. If they're a therapist or a counselor, you have to go to a secondary learning

facility to understand the postpartum brain.

Yeah, if you're an nutritionist or dietitian, You're not going to get that information or education through you know, the clinical practices through your bachelors and your masters, there's nothing there for postpartum.

So coming into post partum university is where they're getting that information. And that's changing the world. That's how I see it. Heal the mothers, heal the worlds.

Like that for all those practitioners. I'm curious with the anthropological studies you looked at, what did you find there and has that influenced your approach?

Oh, a thousand percent. I think so much of my research started with the anthropological studies and looking at other cultures around the world because they've been doing this for thousands of years and right.

And we, and in our modern day, we call it anecdotal studies. We call, it, We don't put a lot of value in to this research and to what other culture's have been for a long time.

and oftentimes these cultures don' have the scientific knowledge, right? They're not going to talk about, you know, But erovedic, for example, they talk about digestive fire, right?

And in postpartum, you don't have that digestive. Fire and modern science, that digest of fire which is absolutely accurate. You do not have the enzymes and gastric acids necessary to break down those foods as you once did in pregnancy or pre pregnancy.

And so they use different terms that are more kind of unscientific in our worlds. And we don't necessarily correlate that with actual real evidence to support our bodies.

But what we know from those is that there are very specific rules that these other cultures all have created around postpartum. which they have valued and that they all share.

So you might be, you know, studying a culture in China and you may be studying culture and Africa and all of these different places and they share these similarities, like these universal postpartum truths is what I call them, about how we have to manage and care for our bodies.

And the way in which they do it might be different, right?

Why postpartum suffering is misunderstood

They might, one culture might do fish in their recipes and their meals more than they say chicken, but the concepts, the ways in they cook that food, is the same.

The reason why they do that is same, right? The use of herbs is another example. They might have different herbs depending on where they are in the world, but their use in postpartum period are critical.

All of these other components, they're all the And the reason behind it is the same. And so when we start breaking down those components and looking at it, and then we can start applying what we know from science into those frameworks and being like, this is why it works.

This is what they've been telling us for thousands of years, why this the method to support our bodies. I think that's one of the reasons why my work has grown to what it it because I've help kind of almost infiltrate into the scientific world and these doctors and medical providers who've been trained.

Now, it makes sense to them and it feels a lot more aligned and they don't feel, you know, kooky or, like they're doing something woo-woo. It's putting science into their hands so that they feel safe.

to share this information with their clients and work. It's so exciting. And it also makes me so angry on a level too, because of how many mothers don't have access to this, right?

Like it's, I know from our other, you know, work and things we've done together that so much of the advice and kind of, not even the advise, just the sort of like, common knowledge that, you know, people share postpartum like having smooth drinking a lot of smoothies and, just for example, like, because you mentioned digestion.

you know, that just sort of like what is normal for people and so much of what IS normal, in North America at least, is actually working against mothers, right?

And so that does make me upset too, we're making progress, but there's so many ways mothers are being let down. Yes, absolutely. know, we're going to all feel, you know the feelings of depression and anxiety through as we transition to be a mother and going through that process.

But the severity right is really, really amplified by the way. Absolutely. And is it really depression? Because I think oftentimes, we put this clinical name on it, when really, it's not depression, It's you mourning your previous life.

Exactly. It is not a depression. it is you being left alone, and that is sending a biological warning throughout your entire body, saying, wait a second, that's Because throughout generations before, we were not left alone.

That's a sign of danger, especially if you have a new baby. Or understanding our intrusive thoughts, which is really the brain patterns supporting us and taking care of our babies.

It's when we panic and we don't understand them that heighten them and make them reoccur. and then we just created a system in a loop that just feeds it rather than helps it understand that, oh, wait a second, understanding this is my body's way of protecting my baby, the more mammalian or even I hear reptilian brain piece, right?

And that's… It's not that it's a bad thing. I just know that I'm, I can trust my body, my buddy. It doing its thing and that's the beautiful thing I don't have to get hyped up, but my nervous system doesn't to ramp up because they had this horrible thought.

Can just that is, it trying to support me and my baby and it great. And then what you do is you send a signal to your body saying that fabulous. That's amazing.

Thank you so much. Any move about your day rather than having more reoccurring intrusive thoughts, because now you're on high alert. Completely. Completely, so I was going to say there's so many aspects to this, right?

We're talking about postpartum wellness, nutrition is a huge one, and actually nutrition and absorption of what you are eating. Yes. Right? Yes, girl.

Thank you. And I see so much moms you know, not intentionally kind of starving themselves, postpartum, how to prepare, what to put in their body, how prepare it for a good absorption.

And then we'll talk about that a little bit, but then there's also that social piece, right? You talk us being so alone, us knowing deep down that we should be cared for and accompanied and witnessed.

through that time in so many ways and that reaction to it. And then that identity, that huge identity change that's coming that no one really prepared us for or supports or talks about.

It's so much that we're doing. I think the typical response, even though things have changed since when you had your first, is like, let's get you on some antidepressants and send you on your way, essentially is what generally happens, right?

It's so sad, but that is, that's what we do. That is our number one method of support and postpartum is antidepressants. Just as, you know, birth control is the number-one support tool for anyone who has any sort of

female feelings and, and you have issues whatsoever, startings and puberty.

Yes. Jane Hardwick Collins, I took a in person workshop with her this summer and she is like a beautiful kind of, you know, just discussion around this, that every part of our womanhood is being medicated and numbed, like you just said, right?

Our periods are being- Medicated. Medicated.

The postpartum restorative method and support gaps

Our births being mediated, our postpartum's being medicated and then our menopause is getting meditated and our death gets medinated too, all right. So we're like missing out on all of these transformations of ourselves and you don't have to, you can turn away from it.

That's so beautiful, that's beautifully said. Yeah, yeah, and we can pick from that too. It's interesting that we do that to ourselves and it's, it is interesting I'm watching especially in the online space when we're talking about medicating, say menopause, everybody gets angry.

That's not okay. We shouldn't be doing that. No SSRIs. Let's learn something different. I can't believe the system is doing this. And then when you see the same thing about postpartum, everyone gets rageful the fact that you said that.

No, we need SSRIs. What are you talking about? This is a life and death scenario, right? And it's such an interesting concept because now we have this baby, and we want our babies to be taken care of, but we also have all of these societal pressures and stigmas around what it means to have depression.

I think in our world today, We've normalized it. is what we've done in the last 15 years. We've gone from this is taboo to guess what? This is normal and it's expected and this what you're gonna have to deal with.

And that's okay, cause we got a pill for that. Yeah. So many moms enter into that phase feeling so depleted, so exhausted, So burnt out, so little support that they couldn't imagine like What else could I do?

I can't do anything. I'm so overwhelmed with life and that this is my only option. This is only my option." And that's sad that is, quote unquote, our only options.

That is the only thing that women feel like is supporting them when they need so much more. Yeah. And I was gonna say too, the pressure of separation from baby.

is the other enormous threat to that postpartum brain for moms, right? So that's another factor on top where they're not getting the oxytocin, they are not benefiting from the relationship with the baby either because of some other, not for everybody, but for some people as well.

And I would wish for every mother for this time of their life to be one of the most joyous, awe-inspiring, celebratory, incredible experiences, not to say it doesn't have its challenges, of course it does, but mothers can also expect, and I think they should expect more than, oh, I'm definitely gonna get postpartum depression and go on an SSRI and it's gonna be terrible.

And I just have to like white knuckle it through those years where I have a baby to, this is an opportunity to transform, to heal, learn, expand myself as a human being, and to really be there for another in a way I've never been before.

And with that right support, we can promise that to people in lot of ways. Oh, yes. We've seen it, right? You see it all the time, I see all of the Yes, so true.

Completely. Sorry, go ahead. Just need the right support. And I think that's key, and we've gotten so far away from

understanding what that right, support, quote unquote, is.

What is it? What does that mean? Yeah. Yeah, it's so important. Did I miss any of the root causes? I mean, any other root cause of sort of any sort of suffering postpartum, I feel like.

Yeah, and thank you nailed so much. The post partum restoration method talks about physiological restoration, right? So that's one, like making sure our bodies actually, your pelvic floor, all of that.

That's super important that you have the physical support in at home. Yep. I think that sort the bedrock, Right? Yeah. that you should be able to take a shower by yourself without having to worry about your baby.

Like you shouldn't have to ask that. That is not, that is nothing about it. And yes, right. Right. Somebody else could come in and take care of your dishes, things like that, You touched on nutrition, neurological regulation and so much of comes with, with baby.

And there's so many aspects of that, that we can get in rhythmic recovery is what I call it. But that's also like getting into who we are as, as women and this, this.

rhythm of the way in which we live our monthly cycles, our yearly cycles our circadian rhythms, right, understanding those at the foundational level and actually living in that way because our go, go go worlds are is very masculine and it does not work for women's bodies.

And then that identity integration. Who am I? What does this mean? How am i transforming as a human being and stepping into this new role? what does that mean for my life? What does it mean me as as mother or a sister or as daughter?

You know, all of those things kind of come up in that. So yeah, you touched on everything. I love it. I love it. Yeah. It's really important. And I mean, both of us have been in this field for so long and we've been talking about it for long.

But for new moms, this is all brand new information, right? And we really have not, you know, You've practicing in the area for about 15 years. I've about 10 going on 11. it's still not really out there.

in the way that it should be. And for providers too, right? As moms we're learning and we are constantly learning but there's no providers there for moms either.

And I think that's probably one of the hardest parts is because we need so much support. Mothers need mothering and there is no one to mother us through this period.

No one do hold our hand. I mean, you look back traditionally speaking you had your grandmothers and your aunties and sisters They came in and supported you and they held your hand and taught you how to breastfeed, which was something that you saw all the time.

They helped you walk through things. they made you food, they drew you an herbal bath, made your teas, let you sleep. All of these components was done by the people of your community who knew.

Who knew? And here we are. We don't have any of that. And so we're having to make that happen for ourselves, which is the absolute most hardest thing in the whole world.

This is what I share with moms all the time.

How postpartum lasts for years

You get through this and you support yourself as much as you can, then you build systems for others, Which is I normally see, right? When a mom feels this level of support and she integrates what she sees here, and she feels

so good, like what's the first thing she wants to do?

She wants us to share it with the whole world, right? That's why MLM and network marketing took off because, you know, if there was something amazing moms, moms in particular were like, this thing did it and I feel so much better and have to it share with a world.

And so when you do that, not only helping other moms you're helping the next generation. you're helping your own children, you are helping their children.

And one day, maybe our children but maybe are grandchildren will have that support system. They will those providers and those grandmothers obviously and maybe even those sisters and such to come into their homes and support them in the way in which you so needed to help.

Yeah, and I think if If someone's lucky, they might get a little bit. in the weeks after birth, possibly. Cause we also have this idea that moms might need help for, you know, a few weeks.

Like, that six week postpartum checkup at the doctor somehow is some sort of landmark in ending your post-partem in some places. Which is why I always say too, like you have a baby for three years and actually you really need that care that entire time.

What do you say? I mean, one of my, I always share this. One of good friends when I was pregnant said to me, postpartum was four years for me. And she's like, her child was like five or six then.

She's, like yeah, it was about four and I like what? Are you talking? I was like, Okay, that's all I brain had to like do some gymnastics to figure that out.

I like got it. Cool. Like, thank you for telling me that. But that was the only person. who really told me, I absolutely felt that in some ways. Actually, mine was five years.

I think five was my time for re-emerge, like flapping my wings as the butterfly, reemerging from my cocoon of postpartum. Do you wanna talk about that a little bit too, that time?

Yeah, actually, we have studies that show an upwards of six years And why does it take so long? It's not just the current postpartum state, as we know it, which the six-week mark was marked by the uterus returning to its pre-pregnancy state.

So it was developed by a man. You said that this was the deadline because the uterus returns to its pre-pregnancy state is actually just very, actually, I'm fairly certain that if you go, no, they recently changed it.

very, very recently changed the Wikipedia site of what postpartum means. Just last year, it was you're over post-partem in six weeks and your hormones return to their original post partum, right?

And every mother in the world could laugh hysterically to that. But also how many of us myself included felt like, wait, there must be something wrong with me.

Yeah. Why is not happening? Yeah, why? Why am I supposed to be back to my normal self in six weeks? No, totally, Totally manmade, literally by a man is Not accurate information.

We now know that hormones don't generally return to you know, their pre-pregnancy state to the three to four month, three-to-four year mark, especially if you're breastfeeding.

Your brain changes, the neurological changes. And I know that you could speak heavily to this two to three years postpartum, also very dependent on where you are in breast feeding as well.

So we have all of these functional systems within our body that are actually taking many, many years to go back.

But identity, right? And finding our rhythm as a female again, takes an upwards of four to six years.

And that's usually, if you think about it too, that when our children start to get a lot more independent of us. That's when they often go back to school during that time.

Whether it's kindergarten at a local school or homeschool, whatever it is, right? There's this independent space that develops. I was actually talking with someone very recently who works with craniosacral development and myofascial release, fascia, I always get that wrong.

And she was saying that there's actually an energetic component between our fascia and our baby's fasci. That where we will be able to physically touch our children and understand what's wrong if we are really tuned in.

that is, it sends signals through the brain and then our body is able to, oh, this is why my baby is crying. Or just listening to a certain tune, like your body so in tune with your babies and vice versa.

Our babies are so into with us, right? And that separation starts happening right around the six year mark.

Slowing down and finding postpartum identity

Not that we are not in tune with our babies, not that won't know, but that the fascia connection at that time is starting to separate to allow ourselves to be independent human beings from one another.

Yeah. Which is a beautiful thing. That's the life cycle that is. So it is, it does take a long time. We are often postpartum and pregnant at the same time, right?

Like, I know that was in my experience. yeah yeah and and a lot of people say well you're postpartum for life and i also believe that but what i what I speak to specifically is that these physiological and psychological changes specifically take five to six years yeah.

And that completely is evident, right, in the relationship that we see, that you can see that in a physical way too, which is really beautiful. And then we, you know, the last thing I think we should touch on for people listening is like, don't rush it.

Like there's that pressure that's so strong of like speed it up, hurry it out. You know what's going on, your baby's this many months. And that's kind of funny.

I can say it in like with a smile, but actually that makes me really angry. It's so intrusive on that really, really important relationship. And, and that something that we have to pay attention to too, I would say.

So I think you were so right and that we are so rushed in our society. And I Think again, like that's the manmade very, very masculine approach that, we have to get back to work.

We have get our bodies back. That's a very common one. Mm-hmm. we had to lose all the weight and look good and do all of these things. and we to do it very quickly because that very telling of who we as a woman.

and whether or not we are deserving of love and attention and all of the things. And that's not accurate in the least bit. Not accurate, in least, but, and I think in postpartum, we start to come to see that.

And oftentimes during this time, We are confronted with all of these things, like, oh, I don't wanna go back to work, or I Don't want to be this person, Or what does this business actually mean to me?

Or maybe I really like these thing, How do I have relationships with these people? All right. Well, Miranda, thank you so much for sharing your incredible wisdom and expertise with us today.

I know moms will be so, so nourished by this conversation. For people who want to know more about you and your

offerings, let us know where we can find you.

Yeah, you can go to my podcast, Postpartum University podcast. You can postpartumu, theletteru.com. We have so much resources for, mainly for providers and for those advocates with moms, but there's so that moms can learn from tuning into those conversations.

And I always recommend doing just that and sharing that information with your provider, asking the right questions. All of that can be so helpful. Yeah, wonderful.

Thank you so, so good to be with you.