

**00:00:00 Speaker 1:**

One of the things that really struck me in hearing your story had to do with Covid, of course. And so, one aspect I'm curious about, and I'm gonna see if I can say this clearly, is how it felt to you to not be actually seen, like in the literal sense as a pregnant person. [Tamar S affirmative], Right? Like, lots of people love the belly growing and showing people how they're progressing and, and not everybody does. So it may not have been important to you, but I'm curious how it felt to literally not be a pregnant person out in the world and be seen as that and be sort of, um, responded to from that position.

**00:00:36 Tamar S:**

Yeah. Yeah. It, um, it was interesting. I've like definitely thought about this because in some ways I was definitely one of the people who was like, oh my God, I hope that, like I don't have strangers touching me. You know? And like asking, ['cause they do] all kinds of inappropriate questions and just like, like, I don't love that. You know, [yeah] I didn't love the idea of that. So, [yeah] I think in some ways it was kind of like, yeah, definitely thankful to not have to go through that [laughter]. But it did sort of feel like some things were like, you know, taken away from me. Then not being able to see like family and friends and [S1 affirmative], and, um [S1 affirmative], you know, again, maybe get some of the whatever sympathy or some of the nice things that come along. I'm sure that there are nice things that come along with being seen as like a pregnant person in the world and not just annoying things. So,

**00:01:17 S1:**

Yeah, of course.

**00:01:19 Tamar S:**

um, yeah. Yeah, I think I, it was both, I think in some ways it was nice. I, I had a virtual baby shower, um, [S1 affirmative] which, uh, you know, was its own yeah kind of like weird thing, not super personal, although we, we made it fun. But, um, I was, part of me was sort of dreading it 'cause it's like I knew like my friends wanted to do one and my mother-in-law wanted to do one, and my fa and our families are spread out all over the place too. So it's like, we don't even know anybody here. So I was like, well, no, you know, nobody's gonna like come to nobody's even like in Michigan, you know? And, um, so there was, there was part of me that was like, relieved that I didn't have to plan anything like hard [S1 affirmative], you know [S1 affirmative] 'cause I was just like, I don't, we were trying to buy a house at the time and I was like, I don't have time for all that, but [S1 affirmative]. But it definitely was like, yeah, there's definitely, you know, a part of me and I had like two friends, two of my very close friends who were pregnant at the same time and we didn't get to like all see each other and [S1 affirmative]. So, um, yeah, it was, it was definitely, it was a very different [laughter].

**00:02:11 S1:**

Yeah, because there's some community I think that comes from some sense of community, I should say that comes from, yeah, like being out in the world pregnant and having someone come up and be like, oh, I remember what that felt like, or [Tamar S affirmative], oh, I'm only four months, how long are, how far are you? Or [yeah] there's, there is some community building that's, that's maybe brief. Like, it's not like you stay friends with these people [yeah]. But you're

sort of accepted into motherhood before your, before the birth, right? [Tamar S affirmative] before you actually even have a baby in through these kind of communal things. And I imagine that you missed out on some of those things.

**00:02:47 Tamar S:**

Yeah, totally. Yeah.

**00:02:48 S1:**

Yeah. Yeah. Do you think that that put, um, do you think that changed sort of your sense of being prepared for when the baby came? Or your sense of, um, community once the baby arrived?

**00:03:00 Tamar S:**

I think, um, that's a good question. I, I definitely feel like it made me like feel very, like whatever about the whole pregnancy experience [S1 affirmative], because it was like, other than like growing a human and all that stuff, it was like nothing, nothing even changed. Like yeah, like my, my relationships with people, like, were not, you know, I feel like they would've been somewhat different because of this [S1 affirmative] and I was just like, yeah, everything was kind of the same, you know? Um, so yeah in terms of preparedness, I mean, I think I mentioned this, but you know, I, I figured I would like, you know, take Lamaze classes and just other things to sort of prepare [S1 affirmative], like, for the idea of like giving birth and all of that. And, um, and then I didn't, and I think, you know, like I could have done it virtually or whatever.

**00:03:47:**

I remember like asking, I was like, are there, they're probably, you know, I'm sure you can find this on YouTube, you know [S1 affirmative], but I was like, I don't really wanna do that. And so I ended up, you know, just kind of saying, can I just go to the hospital and they'll tell me what to do? And she was like, yeah, that's fine. And I don't think I would've done that otherwise. So it definitely gave me a sense of like, because I wasn't, I was like barely even seeing, you know, like my doctor until the end. And I didn't even have the same O- I didn't talk to the same OB every time or anything, so I just didn't have like, yeah, I had like no relationship with that, like just my, a medical team of any kind or anybody. I wasn't like seeing anybody consistently who was [S1 affirmative], um, who knew the position I was in, so, um, I don't know about preparedness, but it do, I think it definitely was like, it did make me feel emotionally different about the whole process. [S1 affirmative]. Yeah.

**00:04:37 S1:**

I'm struck, um, from listening to your first interview and even just from what we've talked about so far today. So I get the sense, and I could be wrong, that you quite like a plan. Like you, you're a planning person [yeah] and you've said you are right? [S1 affirmative].

**00:04:50 Tamar S:**

Yeah.

**00:04:51 S1:**

And yet I'm struck by your story is so, um, like, it's like there is no plan in the sense that like the things that usually framework those plans for people [Tamar S affirmative] or a consistent, you know, provider or at least a provider's office, you get to know the, the person at the front desk and you get to like, and you know, consistency of getting your, getting weighed every week and getting this done every month or whatever. You didn't have any of those things. And yet you seem very relaxed about that. And I'm wondering if that's a retrospective like, well it turned out great, so it was fine. Or if at the time you actually felt like, okay, now I'm taking my own blood pressure, that's fine too.

**00:05:28 Tamar S:**

Yeah. I feel like there were so many things, it was like suddenly nothing was going to plan. You know, it was like you had the plan and then it's like March, 2020, like nothing was the plan anymore. [S1 affirmative] And, um, there was sort of, I mean, I mean, I guess we did kind of get into like our own routine and there was almost like, it almost like was somewhat comfortable to just be like, okay, well the plan is just, we're just not going anywhere and we're just not doing it, like not doing anything. So it's like, I feel like it would've actually been like a much more, like much more of a thing, you know, if I'd been like out in the world. But it was like, because everything was shut down, I was like, okay, well this is the plan. I just like sit here and do my prenatal yoga and work my job.

**00:06:14 S1:**

Take your blood pressure

**00:06:15 Tamar S:**

And right, take my blood pressure, do a little zoom, you know, five-minute zoom call with some random OB and, um, and then [yeah], it'll be fine. And, but I did have anxiety like, you know, cuz I'd never been pregnant before and like, um, I definitely was very nervous throughout the pre- pregnancy. You know, again, I'm definitely like my numbers person I read, um, are you familiar with the book? Um, expecting Better by Emily Oster? [S1 affirmative] Okay. So, yeah, so she's data scientist and just, just gives like lots of different numbers about various risks and stuff like that. And I clung to a lot of those things 'cause there were things I just like, I don't know. And I remember like googling stuff [sure], and feeling like I couldn't really, I didn't really have anybody to like, you know, ask about them even though I could have, you know.

**00:06:55:**

But, um, and just that, and I had like, um, my placenta I guess was like in the front. And so, um, I didn't feel a ton of movement and like, even like late, like, even like once she was like, definitely moving, like, you know, they said like, oh, you know, you wanna make sure your baby's moving so many times a day. And it was like, it felt like she wasn't like moving a whole ton. And so like that was [S1 affirmative], I was, I would get very nervous. I was like, I mean, I'm not even that old, but I was just like, I was, I still was always convinced that something was gonna go wrong, and so I was definitely kind of nervous the whole time [S1 affirmative] and I think I would've felt more comforted, um, you know, having like just a little, just somebody to kind of talk through it with.

**00:07:33 S1:**

Sure, sure.

**00:07:35 Tamar S:**

Um, although to be honest, I've like heard since that, like, I kind of thought this was a Covid thing, but I've heard that like U of M actually kind of provides a lot less of that than other, some other [oh, interesting] systems anyway, so, um, yeah. I don't know. So yeah, it was like, it was, it definitely upended the plan, but it's like, it's almost like there was, like, my job was super busy at the time, and again, all virtual, so that was all very different. And we were trying to buy a house. And so I feel like there were so many other things to focus on that it was like [S1 affirmative] Okay. The plan is just to get through all of these things and just like do the best I can. And yeah. And it worked out.

**00:08:10 S1:**

So I almost wonder because you had a lot of faith in the medical [Tamar S affirmative] um, what can I say, medical facilitation of birth. Right? You had a lot of faith in that. Like, I'm gonna use my OB and my nurse and they're gonna tell me what to do and I'm gonna do it. [Tamar S affirmative] But I almost wonder if doing so much of kind of your own care in your pregnancy gave you more of a sense of ownership of your pregnancy and your birth than somebody else might have had in that medicalized setting. [Tamar S affirmative] Do you know what I mean? [Tamar S affirmative] I wonder if that, if that influenced it because you were like, yeah. I mean, yes, I worked with my doctors, but like, I was pretty involved. Like normally you wouldn't be involved in taking your own blood pressure [laughter]. Right?

**00:08:47 Tamar S:**

Yeah. Right, right.

**00:08:49 S1:**

So by default you were pretty involved even though it was a fairly medical approach [yeah] to your pregnancy and everything. And I just wonder if balanced out a little bit of the medicalized environment once you got to the hospital.

**00:08:59 Tamar S:**

Yeah, yeah. No, that's probably true. And to be honest, it's like, as much as like I did, I certainly had faith in just the standard medical institution for birth, um, which was interesting because in general, I'm not like a big, like, fan of like doctors [laughter] [S1 affirmative]. Like I never go to the doctor [laughter] [S1 affirmative]. Like I, you know, I've had some bad experiences that like, don't trust like the whole [interesting] like establishment. But for this I was like, okay, this is pretty straightforward. Like, for me, this felt like the most practical, like, straightforward thing to do for like a birth and, and, uh, yeah, I guess that was [laughter].

**00:09:40 S1:**

Wow. That's really interesting.

**00:09:42 Tamar S:**

But I didn't really know why. I don't, I'm sorry, I still don't really know too many people who have done like, alternative methods to be honest. So I think that like really, you know [sure]. Changed my perspective too. Yeah.

**00:09:52 S1:**

But even within that setting, you, um, you, you sound like you had a lot of just faith in following the instructions. Right. And even though you're very, it sounds, it seems like you're a very sort of data driven, informative, [Tamar S affirmative] you know, like information driven person. I feel like in this instance you really relied on other people having that information [Tamar S affirmative]. And I'm, I'm interested if [yeah] if you have ever thought like out of all the things to trust to a doctor, and I'm not saying there's anything wrong with it [yeah] at all. But like, if you're already a little untrustworthy [yeah] I'm curious about why this would be the thing that you would

**00:10:28 Tamar S:**

Yeah.

**00:10:29 S1:**

Find your trust for medical, the medical method.

**00:10:31 Tamar S:**

Yeah [laughter]. Well, I, I think just because, because it is so natural, I mean like [S1 affirmative] women have just been giving birth for, you know, thousands and thousands and thousands of years, many of them without hos-, like the large majority of them never in a hospital, you know, like throughout history. And obviously the mortality rate has decreased quite a bit, thankfully. Um, you know, I just knew it was something I was like, it's something that's like, well, I in theory could do this in my living room. So probably a hospital's [interesting] in a better place to do it with people who have delivered children before. You know what I mean? Like, it's just, it's like, you know, it would be very different if it were something like totally unnatural, you know, or, you know, some disease or something where there, like, where it wasn't just like, and I know that every birth is probably a little different, but I think that there's kind of like a lot of repetition in it, you know? [yeah, laughter]. So I assume, you know,

**00:11:21 S1:**

There's a basic pattern. Yeah.

**00:11:22 Tamar S:**

Right, right. It's like you kind of, I got this idea, you know, from reading about labor, it's like, okay, like this is generally pretty, like, pretty much what happens unless something goes wrong, this is how things progress and this is what's supposed to happen. And I'm like, well, okay, they went to school for this. Like, they know, I do trust education, you know, and I, I love, and I love nurses. I've always loved nurses. I just don't like doctors that much. Um, and I still was not a

huge fan of my OB, I mean, she was fine, but just, you know, I felt like she was there as like a technician at like the very end, you know? [S1 affirmative] And, um, yeah, I think that's probably what it was. It felt like, because it was such a routine natural thing that, again, so many millions of women have done for thousands of years by themselves,

**00:12:05 S1:**

[laughter]. That's such an interesting way to think about it Tamar [yeah]. Thank you for, for taking a minute to kind of tease that apart for me.

**00:12:10 Tamar S:**

Yeah. I'm glad you asked because I think that clarified it for myself too. [laughter].

**00:12:14 S1:**

Yeah. That's so interesting. Um, because it makes, it makes sense when you lay it out in that way. [Tamar S affirmative] or sort of [Tamar S affirmative] from that perspective. [yeah, Tamar S affirmative], that's interesting [yeah]. Um, okay. So I'm wondering then where it sounds like you had some sense of how labor progresses, some, you mentioned in your first interview, you know, I knew that you called them the normal things to do, like delayed clamping, which actually are not the normal things to do. [laughter] [Tamar S affirmative] They're actually really informed things [Tamar S affirmative] to do. So I'm curious, I, you know, you've mentioned that you read some material, but, but even before that, where did you get a sense of what birth is about from? Like, was it something discussed in your family? Was it something that friends have shared with you, or no?

**00:12:54 Tamar S:**

No.

**00:12:55 S1:**

did you just not have any sense?

**00:12:56 Tamar S:**

It was not, not at all. Like, I was so, um, unfamiliar with any of it really before I was pregnant. And then I did ask a few trusted people, you know, um, about some opinions about it [S1 affirmative]. But mostly I just read a couple books and, um, [laughter] that was, that was where I pretty much got my information from [laughter].

**00:13:20 S1:**

Nice. Ok.

**00:13:22 Tamar S:**

Yeah. It seems so weird, but no, I just, I, it's always been a little bit strange because I don't, I was never really around babies much, like at all, or like, barely even children. I don't have family nearby a lot of, like, my, my friends and I all sort of had kids later, and, um, and I don't live near

a lot of them, so, um, yeah, I had very little experience with pregnant women or babies, like at all [laughter].

**00:13:46 S1:**

Interesting [yeah]. And yet, I think I remember you saying that you, you felt the, you know, desire or interest in being a parent pretty early on.

**00:13:54 Tamar S:**

Yeah, yeah

**00:13:55 S1:**

Yeah. Yeah.

**00:13:56 Tamar S:**

Yeah. I definitely think it was something that I just kind of always like assumed, you know? [S1 affirmative] Um, I was like, yeah, okay. Like, that's like, I definitely didn't, I wasn't like, I don't, I don't want that, you know? [S1 affirmative] And so it kind like, yeah, I think I was like, yeah, okay, sometime in the future I'll have kids. And um, yeah. And then when it sort of got to the point where I, you know, and I, I, I told you, I like gave a lot of thought to like, when, what point in my life I would feel comfortable becoming a mom. And once I was sort of at that place, I'm like, okay, I'm ready. And, but even then, I feel like it wasn't until I was like actually pregnant that I started like feeling more like, okay, yeah, I really do want this, you know, and I'm sure it's hormones and all that stuff's good.

**00:14:35 S1:**

That's good, that's good tim-, good timing there.

**00:14:38 Tamar S:**

Could have been bad [laughter].

**00:14:41 S1:**

Hold it.

**00:14:42 Tamar S:**

Yeah. But yeah, I wasn't like, I was just like, oh my God, I'm so desperate. It was just like, okay, I think I'm ready. Like, this seems like the right time. And then just the more I thought about it as more, I was like, oh, yeah, okay, definitely feel prepared for this. So, I mean, for as much as you can feel prepared, you know, [laughter].

**00:14:57 S1:**

So you mentioned in your first interview that you were not, as, you put it "super invested" in the birth, right? [Tamar S affirmative]. So I'm interested, if you can tell me a little more about that. Like, what does that mean to you? And, and it's completely, I wanna be clear, like it's completely

non-judgmental [yeah]. I'm curious where the investment was, right. If it wasn't, [yeah] if that wasn't the piece you were super invested in, then I'm curious where, where was the investment?

**00:15:20 Tamar S:**

Yeah. So I think my, yeah, I guess maybe that sounds a little bit weird, but I think I just meant like the literal like process of like pushing out [S1 affirmative] the baby. Like for some people they, they're really invested in a, having a certain experience for that [for sure] with that, you know, and I, and I think that that's wonderful. I think that it's something that, like, if you really want a water birth or, you know, if you, it feels important to you to have an unmedicated birth, or if you want to have certain people there, or if you don't, you know, there's like, obviously so many different routes you can go. If you wanna have a photographer there to take pictures of you and just like, and really capture all of that, I think that's great. But that just didn't feel very interesting to me. Like, to me it was like, okay, I'm gonna go from being this, like growing this human to then having this human, [laughter] and the stuff in between is sort of like, whatever happened, you know, is

**00:16:07 S1:**

What's required to move from one to the other,

**00:16:08 Tamar S:**

What is required to get this human out of my body Yes. [laughter]. Yeah. And I don't know why I did. And I still, even now, like, I, I still don't have this, like, I don't tear up when I think about like, the literal moment of birth, like [S1 affirmative], I'm glad I remember some of it, you know [laughter], um, yeah. And just the experience around it, of course. But it was very much like the point was to create a human, and I was not as like, excited about, like, the pregnancy or like birth portion [S1 affirmative] of it. I was nervous about it, you know? [S1 affirmative] But, um, yeah. Does that, does that make sense? Is that clarifying?

**00:16:44 S1:**

Yeah, no yeah. So in terms of that anxiety that you felt during your pregnancy [Tamar S affirmative], how did you handle it? What did you do with it? How did you get some support with it?

**00:16:57 Tamar S:**

I, I, I mean, like, there were times where I did like kind of talk to friends. There were a few times where I, you know, messaged, you know, my doctor or nurses or something and just said like, "Hey, I'm feeling like a little bit weird about this. I wanted to kind of talk it through." Um, but really, I mean, everything was like, seemed fine again from my, like, I know nothing perspective. I was like, well, I guess everything's fine. Um, but I think I just kept again, like, just maintaining this illusion that I had control and just keep doing the things that I felt like I was supposed to be doing, and [S1 affirmative], assuming that unless I heard otherwise or felt otherwise, that everything was going to be okay. But no, I was just, I was just, I was definitely worried about it because I just felt like I was, I did feel kind of alone in this experience where I like wasn't really sure if what to expect, you know? [S1 affirmative] [yeah, of course]. Um, so yeah, it wasn't like extreme anxiety. And again, I had like, I definitely had a lot of other places to put that energy,



you know, like, again, like the whole house buying process was super stressful and like work and everything. So I think I kind of just focused on other things and [S1 affirmative], um, yeah. And just did what I felt like I could do, like, you know, whatever I could control is what I [S1 affirmative] yeah, that's what I did.

**00:18:08 S1:**

Interesting [yeah]. So would you say that having a pregnancy and a birth during Covid, would you describe it as, um, like I was thinking when I was listening to your first interview, like the difference between feeling isolated and it being isolating [S1 affirmative] do you know what I mean? [S1 affirmative] And I'm, I'm wondering if you, I mean, maybe for you it was, it was sort of isolated, but it was fine. So like, those, those words don't carry a lot of weight in your experience [S1 affirmative], but I'm curious if you have a response to that kind of idea.

**00:18:40 Tamar S:**

Yeah, right. I mean, I think in a lot of ways I sort of become used to being a little bit isolated just because even, you know, pre-Covid we were, you know, we, you know, live far away from a lot of the people, um, that we care about. And so that it, that wasn't like even extremely unusual. It was a little, it was definitely isolating to, um, not to really not see anybody, to not be going to work, to not be doing any of the normal things in some sense. But I don't know. Yeah. I think, I think most of what I think about was like, what happened after, like, having a very young child and a newborn in that still in that environment for quite a while [S1 affirmative], um, that was the part where I like, started to like, in some ways feel isolated more [S1 affirmative]. Um, that was more, more isolating, although it still had it, like, very much had its blessing. So [laughter], yeah.

**00:19:35 S1:**

Yeah. Can you tell me a little about that? The sense of isolation during that time?

**00:19:38 Tamar S:**

Yeah. Like after she was born? [S1 affirmative] Yeah. Yeah. So it was, um, I, uh

**00:19:46 S1:**

Is that your little one? Does she

**00:19:47 Tamar S:**

It is, yeah. She's ok. Scott's with her, but [laughter].

**00:19:49 S1:**

Okay. Okay. Cause you can, I mean,

**00:19:51 Tamar S:**

Thank you.

**00:19:51 S1:**

You can [yeah] resume another time if you are needed.

**00:19:54 Tamar S:**

I wonde-, I wasn't sure if you could hear her or not.

**00:19:56 S1:**

Well, first I was like, wait, is that my kid [right right right, I know] or the cat, or the neighbor? [laughter].

**00:20:02 Tamar S:**

Um, she'll be ok. Um, yeah, it was like, you know, there were just a lot of things where it's like, I thought I would be able to like, I, I don't know, just like have, like, you know, like, I mean, I obviously went for a lot of walks, you know, and everything like that, but just not like feeling like I couldn't go to any public place or do anything normally in a way that's already difficult when you have a newborn was like even more like, stressful. And, um, you know, like going grocery shopping was stressful and like all these things and like, then trying to like, you know, rush and, and do all these things and, and just having, I mean, you know, we did have visitors and, and some local support, but just feeling like there would have been, um, more opportunities to like, go through that like postpartum experience with people, um, if not for that. But then I was really grateful to get, to spend so much time with my family, you know, afterwards, like [S1 affirmative], you know, Scott and I were both working from home. I was able to breastfeed exclusively for a year. Um, and which I, you know, I would've been back at work. I mean, I was back at work in six weeks [S1 affirmative], but I was home, you know [S1 affirmative]. So, um, so I'm really grateful for that. And that yeah. Was, um, one of the things that I really liked. So, yeah it's interesting.

**00:21:17 S1:**

And your mom was with you right? For a period of time?

**00:21:20 Tamar S:**

She came for like two weeks. Yeah,

**00:21:22 S1:**

Two weeks. Okay. So two weeks [two weeks, yeah]. How did that time go for you with her there? [yeah] I mean, um, I ask because birth can be a really sort of recalibration [Tamar S affirmative] of maternal relationships, right? [Tamar S affirmative] The mother is a grandma, and the daughter is a mother. And [yeah], I don't know, sometimes it includes some recalibration, um, in a, in, in a larger sense that the baby is sort of, um, catalyzed, but it's not necessarily a piece of right? [S1 affirmative] in relationships that don't necessarily surround the baby. Right?

**00:21:54 Tamar S:**

Sure. Yeah. I think in that, like, I think I was fortunate in that way. Like, my mom could tell like, what I really, you know, what the baby really needed was like me and what I really needed was for her to like do everything else. And so, and thankfully she was very like, good with that, you know, she just like, she did all the grocery shopping, and she made his food and she like, made sure I was eating and just like, you know, just like did all like the mom things and wasn't so much like, she wasn't just like, let me hold that baby, you know? So I was like, no, that's my job, you know, [laughter], so

**00:22:26 S1:**

I'm doing it.

**00:22:26 Tamar S:**

Yeah, I'm doing, I'm doing everything [laughter]. Um, so I think it was good. I mean, it went fast. Like it just, the whole period is like definitely a blur. But I was very, yeah, I was really grateful that she was, that she was there, and I didn't feel like, um, I didn't, yeah, I, I def- I didn't feel like it, like, changed our relationship at all, or yeah, I didn't feel unusual, to be honest. Yeah.

**00:22:51 S1:**

And how did it feel when she left?

**00:22:55 Tamar S:**

[laughter] Sad.

**00:22:57 S1:**

Yeah.

**00:22:57 Tamar S:**

Yeah. I was definitely sad.

**00:22:58 S1:**

Sometimes that's a big shift right?

**00:22:59 Tamar S:**

Yeah. Uh, that was, that was hard. I was like, "no, don't leave me, I dunno what I'm doing," you know, and even though she's not

**00:23:04 S1:**

You stuck me with this man and this baby

**00:23:08 Tamar S:**

I know like, everything is like, everybody's counting on me. So, um, yes, I was, I was definitely very sad, but, um, it was okay. And then my dad actually, and my dad and my stepmom ended up coming like a couple weeks later, and so I knew we'd have more, you know, some more grandparents visiting and stuff like that, which was nice. Um, but yeah, it definitely did feel like, it's like, it was just nice to have this like, you know, three to one ratio of like, grownups to this like [absolutely] alien, you know, that none of us really knew what we were doing with So [laughter]

**00:23:43 S1:**

And at least one person has successfully people alive for a period of time.

**00:23:46 Tamar S:**

Correct. Yes. Yes. [laughter]

**00:23:49 S1:**

I, I remember feeling like, that's fine. Like that she, she would be stopping me if I was doing something really wrong [laughter].

**00:23:55 Tamar S:**

Like really, really wrong or just like reassuring. Yeah. Cause I was like, I, I mean, I still am like probably unnecessarily nervous about like, you know, just like being too rough or whatever. And I was like, like, okay, like how do I hold this? You know, this person? And mom was like, it's okay. Like, they're not, they're not as breakable as like they look, you know?

**00:24:13 S1:**

Right, right. Um, I think I just had one other Covid question and we touched on it briefly in the first interview, and I'm, I don't mean to focus so much on Covid, but it is a specific setting, so

**00:24:23 Tamar S:**

Totally. Yeah.

**00:24:25 S1:**

Um, I had one other question about that piece in terms of like, for me, and we, like I said, we did mention it briefly, but I think if I imagine myself in that setting at that time in the midst of Covid, like I think it would've been, um, a real change to be suddenly in a room with so many people, right? [S1 affirmative] So many like medical personnel [S1 affirmative]. And I think it, I mean, I wonder to myself, I have no way of knowing, obviously, but I wonder like, would that have been an added anxiety or would that have been reassuring? Like, there's so many people here to take care of us in case something goes wrong [S1 affirmative], or would it be like, oh my God, you all might have covid, you're really near to me and my baby right now [right]. So I'm curious how that piece felt for you.

**00:25:08 Tamar S:**

Yeah, it was weird. Like, it definitely was strange to like yeah, have not have been like in inside with, [right] like anybody, you know, that I wasn't related to for so long. And yeah, then suddenly to be like, in this like public setting, I was like, oh my gosh, there's like just germs everywhere. Um, I wouldn't say I'm like, I was, I mean, I was very Covid cautious, um, but I, it didn't have like a level of like super anxiety about it. And I did feel like, I mean, you know, like I got tested and they were all wearing masks. They, I, I guess I got the impression that they were like, everybody at U of M was being very cautious. You know? It was funny 'cause we'd moved into the point where we kind of realized, oh, it's not like, you know, the hand sanitizer isn't really the thing that's the masking that is like actually useful in a sense.

**00:25:55 S1:**

Whoops.

**00:25:56 Tamar S:**

Like, oh, whoops, well, we didn't know, you know? And, um, so, um, you know, even though we didn't have like, you know, vaccines at that time, like, I, I definitely, I I think that they said that they were like regularly testing and stuff like that, or that they were required to. So, um, yeah, I think I felt like I trusted that there were enough precautions in place that it was safe, that it was a safe environment to be in, and I was comforted like having all of these people around to kind of tell, I was like, well, I don't know what I'm doing. I'm, you know, waiting for you to [laughter] direct me. So

**00:26:25 S1:**

I was told this would come with instructions Yes.

**00:26:28 Tamar S:**

Yes. I was like, somebody's gonna tell me what to do, right? [laughter]. Yeah.

**00:26:34 S1:**

Okay. That's nice. So it's, it didn't add an extra layer of things too, like an extra just like low level anxiety to the situation?

**00:26:42 Tamar S:**

No, I wouldn't say that. Yeah. And I think by that point, like, you know, at the end, like, I think, you know, then I was like seeing a doctor every week, you know, maybe from 35 weeks on, I can't remember exactly. And so then I felt a little bit more integrated into like, okay, like I would actually like seeing the same OB. Like she ended up actually being the one who was there again, even though it wasn't sort of till the very end. Um, and so I think I felt a little bit more comfortable with the whole setting of like, okay, like this is where I'm gonna be, um [S1 affirmative] so that probably helped too.

**00:27:17:**

I guess the one thing, and this is sort of more related to just like, just this suddenly, you know, becoming a, like a, like truly becoming a parent overnight, you know, to, like a, a live in the, out

of your body child [laughter], um, which is just like a, such a crazy transition. Like it's like one day you're not, and then the next day you are. And, um, you know, obviously everyone has this idea, like, your life is gonna totally change, but I didn't think I would, I didn't think I understood how much, like I would change. Like I knew like my life would be very different, but I didn't realize that it would be like a complete shift of like, my like priorities. Like maybe even my personality, like the things that I like cared about at all. Like, there were so many things that like used to interest me, and I know I just like don't even care.

**00:28:03:**

And that, that would just kind of be like, at least as far as I can tell, you know, almost three years in like pretty permanent [laughter], you know, [laughter]. [yeah]. I think it's permanent. Like if there's just like so many of the things that changed, they're just like, yeah, that's still, like, it was just so I think I wasn't expecting to feel like, to personally feel like such a different person [S1 affirmative]. Yeah. Like, you know, you're not gonna sleep, you know, that like, lots of, you know, that things will change. Obviously your life is gonna, like, you're not gonna able to do the same kinda activities. Like, I'm not gonna go out to the club. Not that I was doing that before. Okay. But I couldn't go out and get like 9:00 PM drinks, you know? And that's just like, yeah. Like I would, I'm not gonna go to like the cocktail bar, whatever.

**00:28:42:**

And so like I knew that those things would change, but I, yeah, I just, just did not understand and was not told by anybody how much I would change [laughter] [S1 affirmative] Yeah. And so that, that has been a little bit alarming. Yeah [yeah?]. And not in a bad way, but just like, huh, I, I didn't realize that, and it took me a real, like, a little while to realize, you know, that that is what had happened. And I think, and I know that this is about, you know, the process of birth and motherhood, but I think this was really interesting to me because I talked, I was talking to one of my coworkers who was a man who, whose wife just had a baby [S1 affirmative], and so he became a dad for the first time, and he was talking about how, like, how that experience is kind of weird too, because like many partners, men, whatever, like will also suddenly become a parent overnight.

**00:29:28 Tamar S:**

[yeah] Or you know [yeah] that is what happens. But without having any of the physical, you know, predecessors to that experience.

**00:29:38 S1:**

kind of warning

**00:29:39 Tamar S:**

Right. It's like, okay, like you see, like maybe see your partner becoming like kind of a crazy person and like getting a little bit bigger or whatever, like things hap- are happening, but you don't feel any of that [right]. And so he was just talking about how like ahead of time he was just saying like how he was like trying to prepare for that transition when it was not physically happening to his body. He's like, I, he's like, he's like, I understand like my wife may is going to be a different person and I will be a different person and that I'm suddenly a dad, but like physically nothing has changed. [S1 affirmative] Um, and I was thinking about, I was like, wow, yeah, that would be fit kind of difficult, difficult actually.

**00:30:15 S1:**

But I'm interested with you sharing that, Tamar, then let's think about your experience. Um, do you think that having that physical experience of pregnancy and even the labor itself, do you think that that helped you? Like, like do you think it, when you made that transition to this sort of different person, do you think that, that that physical kind of lead up had any part of that?

**00:30:37 Tamar S:**

Totally

**00:30:07 S1:**

Like did it warn you? Did it prepare you?

**00:30:39 Tamar S:**

Um, yes. I mean, yes and no. Like, I still feel like the ma- the bulk of like the real change to like my actual person happened after the birth, you know [S1 affirmative]. Um, but yeah, I definitely think that there's like, you are able to more easily able to like, take ownership of this child. You're doing all these things like you are parenting in whatever way you can all through the pregnancy process, um [S1 affirmative], it's obviously very different, but yeah, I definitely feel like that that helped and, and you know [S1 affirmative] and I think about other methods of becoming, um, a mom that are, are all wonderful, you know, fostering an adoption and surrogacy and stuff like that, and I just think it would, it, I'm imagine it is difficult to like [S1 affirmative] to do that in a different way. And like, and, and I'm not saying that they would, you obviously have, can have that same relationship, but I think it would be very different [S1 affirmative]. Um, so yeah, for me at least I felt like that physical experience was, yeah, was helpful in preparing me for the idea of motherhood in some sense. But [laughter], I was still surprised. [laughter].

**00:31:45 S1:**

Oh yeah. I mean, no one's saying it's not surprising. Right, right. Still

**00:31:49 Tamar S:**

Right, right, right, still, still surprised though. Yeah. [laughter]. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah.