Why I choose to become a doula.

Like most passions, they often stem from experience. Perhaps an experience evoked by abuse, pain or trauma ignited a fire inside to help others experience something different.

It was 2005, the year I was pregnant with my first-born son Ty. I was an exuberant nineteen-year-old, who had not yet figured out who she was, yet had conceived a child. Like most teens I was unaware of my body, and was unattuned to how powerful, perfect, and intelligent my body was.

I chose to have my son in the hospital, my mind did not at this point consider any alternative options for birth. For my son who turned out to be a preemie at 30 weeks this was a blessing in disguise. The factors for his prematurity were stress evoked lifestyle, living in survival mode without any partner support, in a rocky and turbulent season of my life.

The day of my son’s arrival I was at work when contractions started to get closer and closer together. I had three days of prior braxton hicks but did not think anything of them (hello unaware and not attuned to my own body). I remember not wanting to call the Dr. because I was sure whatever I was experiencing was not labor and did not want to burden him on a Sunday where he was not taking non-emergency calls. A family member of my son’s family happened to walk into my workplace as I was consoling my contractions in the break room and convinced me not only to call my doctor. A few minutes later I found myself loading up in this family members car to be checked in at the hospital.

Labor from that point on was an emergency, I remember not having a voice, feeling like I didn’t have control over my body, and the people who were painted in that background of my birth story were not the supportive people I would of chosen to be surrounded with. I was in a room full of people who I barley knew or didn’t know at all. They sat and watched the most intimate parts of myself laid bare. As I struggled to navigate the reality of which I was living in, I felt surrounded but utterly alone.

A bumpy ambulance ride to a hospital with a NICU unit proceeded several hours that were a hazy blur. As birth happened to me by the nursing staff, I got an epidural that I did not need, the insertion of the epidural to be the most painful part of my birth experience. For years I experienced pain while lying flat of my back. I was wheeled into the emergency room for delivery around 10 pm at night.

The emergency room was full of students who watched me as a random Dr, delivered my baby. I don’t remember being asked if I wanted to let people observe, of course the powerlessness of my state made me susceptible for choices to be made for me that were not in line with my desires. I could pressure of the baby crowning as I shouted to get the distracted Dr’s attention that I thought my baby was coming, he quickly put on his gloves to catch my newborn son. I remember getting to look at my son as he was wheeled away in a plastic heating device and taken straight to the recovery unit for preemie’s. His full head of black hair, his tiny 3 pound body, his precious little face all tubed for oxygen for his under developed lungs, wheeled pasted me as if we were too strangers passing in the night.

In the three months of hospitalization to follow, I had a