

Infertility? Eww. Isn't that where someone is sterile?

It can't happen to me.

Not *another* book about kids. Not another book teaching women how to get pregnant. Not another preachy, self-help pseudo mantra tome on the benefits of uncluttering your life to make way for children.

Believe me, I've read them all. I've tracked my basal body temperature. I've had regulated, calendar-timed intercourse. I've had three IVF's. I've taken herbs, had acupuncture, massage, and ionic cleansing. And we're still a family of two.

This book is about all of that and more. It's a story of our lives for the last seven years of trying to have children. I'm not telling you how to get pregnant. That's not the point. If I knew, I'd be pregnant already and to hell with the book. So here's what brought me here.

I'm a diabetically overweight brunette with a gorgeous face who has struggled with self-esteem and weight problems--including bulimia and overeating--since I was in my teens.

I have a Master's degree and became a top executive by the time I was 32.

I have a genius IQ and am a rapid-cycling manic-depressive.

I love my husband and hate myself. Well, not totally. I mean, I love my husband totally, but don't totally hate myself.

At 34, I married to the best man on Earth.

At 35, I switched careers and lost half my salary.

At 36, we decided to start a family.

And...that's where the bus stopped. And not just after you've missed one stop. It's like when you fall asleep and the driver wakes you up in Kansas City when all you wanted was a ride to Pasadena.

I've wanted children for as long as I have had memories. I doted on my parents and all my school friends and was only happy when everyone was taken care of, whether that meant they were fed, remembered on birthdays, tended to when they were sick, or given a caring shoulder to cry on.

People would then as they do now tell me "Oh, you'll make such a good mother." But it wasn't for that praise that I want to have children. No one ever forced me into choosing between college and the Peace Corps or career versus marriage and children. I just always knew that I'd work at my career until I met the man I loved and we could have our children. That's always the picture I had for my life.

When I did meet my husband, he was also as eager as I to have a family. And so our journey began.

And let me share with you this important discovery: the journey of trying to conceive is not always fun with a nudge and a wink over beers at a bar. No amount of education, upbringing or social caste can prepare anyone for the emotional devastation of trying time and time again to get pregnant only to be met by failure.

As children, girls are warned against taking candy from strangers or talking to strange men. As teenagers and young women, we are warned against getting pregnant. We're bombarded with the pill, the sponge, IUDs, diaphragms, cervical caps, vaginal films and, if these fail, there's always the morning-after pill. Or abortion. There, I said it.

So imagine the horror when you look back on your development, having obeyed the rules and stayed out of trouble and finally when you decide to have children, you find that nature has other plans that might not involve them. And after a few failures you can become fretful. And after a few more, desperate.

When I was 11, I saw a news report of a forty-something woman in Dallas who was a highly regarded nanny and much sought-after by the ladies who lunch. One day, things just snapped in her head and she kidnapped the baby she was caring for. The police found her, the baby was left unharmed, and the nanny was promptly thrown in jail.

I stared at the TV in disbelief. "What a complete idiot," I thought. How could anyone be so desperate? Why doesn't she just have a baby herself?

And I never gave it a second thought until 25 years later when I nervously admitted to myself that I might end up on that very same road if I wasn't careful.

There are very few challenges in life that mirror the one you're about to learn about. I am an educated, successful woman who at times throughout this journey has become that nanny in Dallas...or at least I've come to understand her motives and the emotions that drove her to her actions. The only difference between her and me is at least I, to this point, have had some level of conscience that's prevented me from stepping over that line.

The journey to have our baby has rendered me crazy, delusional, irrational and brokenhearted. But there have been joyous times as well.

I wrote this book in order to blow the door open on the long-hidden topic of infertility and how millions of women worldwide suffer in silence. It's also for their loved ones. It is nothing to be ashamed about, it doesn't mean you're a failure, and in my experience, the ordeal only brings out the true person in each of us, for good or bad. If you're lucky, you'll find how strong you can really be in the face of devastating adversity and societal judgment. If you're not, well, that's another book.

Everyone needs to understand this problem. Even if they think they'll never be affected by it.

I used to be one of those people.

But not anymore.