Are You Ready To Start Trying Again?

by Ann Douglas

It takes courage to try again when your previous pregnancy has ended in miscarriage, stillbirth, or the death of an infant. You know that there's a chance that you may experience another loss, but you're willing to risk it all for a shot at the ultimate prize: a healthy baby that you can call your own. As committed as you may be to having another baby, it's perfectly normal to feel a bit nervous about planning another pregnancy. After all, you already know that not all pregnancies result in picture-perfect happy endings. Like it or not, the innocence that you enjoyed when you found yourself pregnant for the very first time is gone forever. You can't get it back.

Don't be surprised if you find yourself experiencing a smorgasbord of different emotions when you first make the decision to start trying to conceive - everything from joy to worry to outright panic. Some days, you may feel convinced that becoming pregnant again is the only thing that will bring joy back into your life. At other times, you may wonder if you're crazy to even think about exposing yourself to the possibility of heartbreak again.

You may also find that your partner has mixed feelings about trying again, whether or not he's actually willing to express these emotions to you. After all, he's not just worried about the well being of any future babies you may conceive: he's also worried about the impact of any subsequent losses on you.

If you're having difficulty deciding whether or not the two of you are actually ready to embark on another pregnancy, you might find it helpful to consider the following questions:

1. Have you had a chance to work through some of your grief for the baby or babies who died? Grief can be an exhausting emotion - one that demands far more of your time and attention that you want to give it. If your baby died recently, you may still be going through a very rough time emotionally and you may not be able to embark on another pregnancy just yet.
How would you cope if you were to experience fertility problems? If you don’t think you’d be able to weather the emotional highs and lows that couples typically experience when they are having trouble conceiving, you might want to postpone your baby making plans a little while longer. While the fact that you managed to conceive in the past means that you have an excellent chance of conceiving again this time around, you have, at best, a 20% chance of conceiving in any given menstrual cycle. That means the odds of being disappointed during the first month or two of trying are extremely high. Are you emotionally strong enough to cope with that disappointment?

How would you cope if you were to experience the death of another baby? While you may not want to even consider this possibility, it’s important to go into your subsequent pregnancy with your eyes wide open. If you’re still feeling emotionally fragile, it may be too soon to jump back into the fire again.

How would you cope with the stress of a subsequent pregnancy? The worry doesn’t end when you manage to conceive. If anything, it’s just beginning. That’s why it’s important to be sure that you’re up to coping with the stress of what could very well be the most nerve-wracking 40 weeks of your life.

Are you expecting too much of your subsequent pregnancy? If you expect a new pregnancy to wipe away the grief you are feeling for the baby or babies you lost, you are setting your expectations too high. No other baby can possibly take the place of that other baby in your heart.

While there are a lot of factors to weigh in deciding whether or not you’re ready to start trying to conceive again, your best bet is to listen to your heart. Most couples instinctively know whether they’re ready again or not. Consider these words of wisdom from Cynthia, 35, who experienced a series of miscarriages before giving birth to her second living child last year: "If you have to consciously decide, then it’s probably the wrong time. It’s kind of like being in love. You always wondered how you would know when you were, but when you were, you just knew it. I think it’s the same. When you’re ready to try, you’ll want to try. It’s really that simple."

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