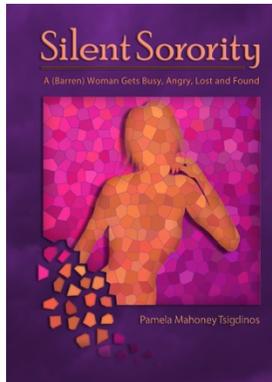


When Is It Time To Move Away From Treatment?

By Pamela Mahoney Tsigdinos



Each of us who confronts an infertility diagnosis has no idea where it will take us.

We launch into what feels like turbulent seas pursuing treatment and answers unaware of when or if we will one day encounter calmer water or find a safe harbor.

Some reproductive conditions are more easily treated than others.

Regardless of where we fit on the infertility spectrum we hold out hope that we will one day succeed with a healthy pregnancy and delivery.

If only...

Sometimes I'm asked why we stopped pursuing fertility treatment after nearly a decade of trying to conceive. There was no epiphany, no dramatic denouement. We were not driven there by a deadline or a master plan or even an entirely drained bank account.

Our move away from treatment and 'trying' was a long, slow often circuitous process that sometimes led us back like a junkie in need of a fix to the reproductive endocrinology clinic for one more attempt. A little voice in my head kept urging me on: just one more IUI; then IVF, then IUI again, then one more IVF combined with acupuncture; one more laparoscopy; one more clinic and new tests to determine if there's a new factor we hadn't considered or addressed — all the while the doctors scratched their heads with no clear explanation for our infertility, dampening our hopes further that we'd ever succeed.

Strung-out and wondering how we would possibly cope with another failed cycle, I started to allow myself to imagine a life not driven by 28-day cycles and endless associated vigils. With the benefit of lots of exhaustive and exhausting conversations, my husband and I finally began to loosen the tight grip we had on our increasingly fragile dream.

As I look back on that difficult period, there were many emotional and practical considerations that led to our acknowledging that it was time for us to find a way to move on. We had seen other people go through double or more the number of IVF rounds without success. We weren't getting any younger. But perhaps the greatest consideration was the realization that the heartbreak of losing

more IVF 'offspring' was just too much to bear — especially when the rest of the world — minus my immediate family and a handful of close friends — didn't recognize our losses or understand how to offer support for our disenfranchised grief. At some point we awakened to the fact that our single-minded pursuit of pregnancy had become destructive to our lives and imprisoned not only our bodies but our hearts and our souls.

Ten years have passed since I began the challenging process of [coming to terms](#) with our unexplained infertility. I've found peace after working through complex emotions, and I'm wiser about the lessons of failure and the heartbreak that accompanies an unfulfilled dream.

Seeing the World in A New Light

Today, novels, films and even television series often stir up memories and show me how far I've come. These words, delivered by the doctor in an episode of *Downton Abbey*, rang particularly true:

“Harsh reality is always better than false hope. My advice to you is to accept the burden that chance has seen fit to lay upon you. Fashion as good a life as you're able... “

That's what I've done, and it's turned out better than I expected.

A *Silent Sorority* reader who was also struggling to accept her infertility and move on with her life once compared the infertility journey I wrote about in *Silent Sorority* to the ideas contained in *The Life of Pi*, writing:

“In the mother-centric world we live in the author is kind of like Pi -- alone on a life raft and left to deal with her own inner struggle.”

As those of us who have been imprisoned by the pursuit of pregnancy and repeated failure know, we face recurring sadness, anger and often bitterness that can render us incapable of finding inner peace.

I remember the sense of sheer exhaustion that resulted in battling my metaphorical tiger and the torment it inflicted. Once I finally surrendered my chronic frustration and angst at living a life different than the one I had hoped for and envisioned, accepted my body for not functioning on demand, and forgave those who inadvertently wounded me with their infertility insensitivity, I reached a state of peace. I embraced the life I have and became committed to seeking truth and transparency about the limits of Mother Nature and science.

After feeling like I was swimming in place and fighting to stay afloat I faced my inner torment and was finally able to see the shore. Today I help other women know that there is a shore. In doing so, I found a way of existing and being in the world and discovered a different sort of meaningful purpose for my life. I realized that **one life path is not of greater value than another.**

I also know the freedom and peace that comes with accepting that which will never be so that life *can* move forward. I wish all who find themselves in the grip of infertility's worst struggles the strength to find wholeness and the priceless gift of peace.

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Read more of Pamela's writing on [Silent Sorority.com](https://www.silent-sorority.com) or on her original blog: [Coming2Terms](https://www.coming2terms.com).

You can also find some of her other contributions here:

Medium: [Saying Yes to a Family of Two Healthier Than Being an 'Infertility Drifter'](https://medium.com/@pamelasorority/saying-yes-to-a-family-of-two-healthier-than-being-an-infertility-drifter)

The Huffington Post: [Infertility Etiquette 101](https://www.huffpost.com/entry/infertility-etiquette-101)

Seleni Institute: [How I Found My Place in a Motherhood Mad World](https://www.seleniinstitute.com/2015/05/12/how-i-found-my-place-in-a-motherhood-mad-world/)