

# A PERSONAL JOURNEY THROUGH SECONDARY INFERTILITY

by **SUE DUMAIS**

When I told my son that he would probably not have the younger brother or sister he had been hoping for, he told me, "Mommy, I just want someone to play with me." I couldn't hold back my tears as I looked deep into his sad eyes. It broke my heart because I wanted that too. It is hard to let go of my expectation of what my family would look like by now. It is hard to let go of the dream of having kids close in age, running, playing and growing together. My yearning for another baby is just as deep as it was when I struggled to conceive my son, only this time there are different challenges to face.

Approximately one in six couples struggle to conceive their first child. After my miscarriage it took about two years to conceive my son. Each month felt like a loss. Each holiday was a reminder of what I didn't have and what I yearned for so deeply. Every pregnancy announced by friends and family and the birth of their babies was a reminder of time passing. We have been hoping for a second baby for over three years now. Although I've found ways to manage my emotions so that I can live my life without feeling consumed by my fertility, the yearning never goes away.

When I look at my experience the first time compared to the challenges I face now, there are a lot of similarities. There are days when it is just as much of an emotional roller coaster ride as it was the first time, only now there is the guilt that comes into play. I have had many people remind me that at least I have a son and that I should be grateful. Of course I am grateful for him. He was a gift and I will forever appreciate all that he brings to my life.

But that doesn't change the yearning I have for another child. It doesn't soothe the guilt I feel for not being able to give my son a younger brother or sister. It doesn't change the vision of how I thought my family would look by now. I have struggled back and forth with the decision of when is enough. When is it time to let go? Is it too late to have another baby? These are some of the many questions that fill my mind and if I let them take over I would get lost in the storm of thoughts. When I find stillness and listen to the voice of my heart, I want another baby just as much as I wanted my first.

Recently I found myself needing to step back from my fertility journey and stop "trying." It was getting hard for me to spend time with my family because that is where I felt most of my pain. When I was at home with my family it was a reminder of what I wanted and didn't have. I felt a deep sense of sadness and loss. I felt a distance between my husband and me that I found it difficult to talk about. He has always been so supportive, but when it came to the decision of whether to have another baby or not, he said it was up to me, and he would be happy with whatever choice I made. I know in my heart he really just wants me to be happy.

I needed to take a good look at my life and consider what it would look like if I didn't have another baby. I had to find a way to make peace with the idea that my family was complete just the way it is. I wanted to spend time with them without feeling a sense of loss, sadness and guilt. Last spring I decided to discontinue my fertility journey. I was tired, emotionally and physically exhausted. I let go completely of the

idea of having another baby. I've begun to give away some of the baby things that I had been saving for my next child. By stepping back I could see my life and my future with my family exactly the way it is. I made peace with my fertility. I came to a place of acceptance and trust. I know that I will be OK and my family will be OK, with or without another baby. The deep yearning is still there but I have let go of the need to control this. I will no longer prevent and I will no longer try to get pregnant. I surrender. I choose to live each day and cherish all that I have. My fertility journey has truly transformed my life, and in a way, it has saved me. It has reminded me to love without fear, to live fully and to follow my heart. It feels good to be home.

## About the author

Sue Dumais' own struggles with fertility, combined with a passion for yoga, inspired her to co-found Family Passages Mind Body Fertility Studio in Vancouver, a tranquil spa-like space where women and couples can experience mind body programs, yoga for fertility and self-care designed to support them on their fertility journey. Sue has recently published the book *Strong Core for Life* and has developed several instructor training courses for fertility and pre/post natal fitness. Sue can be reached at 604-266-6470 or visit [www.familypassages.ca](http://www.familypassages.ca).