



We were married in 1987 and within our first year of marriage, we decided to start trying for a baby. I was the oldest of five siblings and my husband was the youngest of four. Most everyone in our family had at least 3 kids and no one (that we knew of) ever seemed to have a problem getting pregnant.

I completely expected to become pregnant within just a few short months. After six months (I wasn't very patient!) I made an appointment with my doctor to see if there was anything I should be doing differently. I'm a very private person (hard to believe since I have several

family columns and tell all our business!), so openly admitting that I wasn't pregnant yet to a doctor I didn't know very well was a very big deal for me.

He assured me if I didn't get pregnant within one year of "actively" trying to conceive that we'd start the usual barrage of infertility tests. Exactly one year to the day of trying to get pregnant, I made a follow up appointment with him, and although I was only 24 years old, he was happy to get the process rolling.

Those tests are not very pleasant or very private! All modesty as I knew was completely thrown out the window once we started with these tests. I can vividly remember how much pressure I put on my husband and I to have sex at exactly the right minute--scratch that, the right *second*--during our "fertile" time. It truly became a chore and it was anything but intimate and fun.

Two years after trying to conceive our tests showed nothing was wrong with either of us—"unexplained infertility" was the diagnosis. I did get pregnant soon after 2 years of trying only to have a miscarriage in the 6th week. **Heartbroken and quite discouraged we decided to take a break and see what happened.**

Now we were at the 4-year mark of having unprotected sex and had no success other than 2 miscarriages. Those miscarriages were painful but they gave me small glimpses of hope because I knew my body could get pregnant—the key now was figuring out how to sustain a pregnancy.

Throughout these four years of trying (even though we took breaks and I told myself I wasn't trying—I really was!) the only medical intervention we had was Clomid. I did ovulate on my own without it, but at this point, we started seeing an infertility specialist at Women and Infant's Hospital in Providence, RI, and he suggested we try Clomid first and then artificial insemination.

The first cycle with Clomid was unsuccessful, not to mention pure emotional torture. I knew I was getting close to calling it quits with the whole process and my husband, who was always super supportive and never gave up, thought it was time to really give it a break. I was finally at the point where I thought I could just chill out and take 6 months off when we decided to investigate adoption. **We knew we wanted a family—how we had one was no longer the issue (although I longed to be pregnant and give birth one day.)**

Now, 4 ½ years into this baby-making process we stopped the medical intervention and decided to pursue a home study for an adoption. We went through the Catholic Social Services in

Cranston. We chose an agency based out of Denver, Colorado, however, because I found them advertised in a baby magazine (I was determined we'd have a baby someday, so I used to buy baby things and parenting magazines even before we had any children)!

Our social worker in Colorado was terrific. She was also very honest with us and said it would most likely take two to three years before an infant became available. We were actually fine with that. **We were exhausted after nearly 5 years of trying to get pregnant and decided we were going to travel, remodel our home and just have some fun while we waited for the adoption to take place!**

Three weeks (not years!) later, we got a call from our agency in Colorado that a birth mom saw our profile and picked us! We were floored! She also told us that she was 9 months pregnant and would be induced the following week! We had just one week to get our jobs and everything at home ready so we could fly out to Colorado. The other interesting part of this story is that the birth mother was with another agency in Colorado for most of her pregnancy but towards the end, she didn't like how she was being treated, so she left that agency and came to ours. We shouldn't have even been one of her choices, but our album was handed to her by mistake (or as we like to say—divine intervention.)

So, on June 11, 1993, we flew out to Colorado and met our infant daughter! We were finally parents. It was probably the most memorable and special 2 weeks of my life. We flew home to RI on June 29 and had a crowd waiting for us at the airport! I still get chills. We had an amazing adoption experience and now, 21 years later, our daughter has connected with her birth parents. It's been such an awesome journey.

Exactly one year later, on June 29 1994, I delivered our first biological child—our son Connor. Now, most people assume that we relaxed and that is how I conceived him, but that is not the case. When our daughter was 3 months old, we decided to try one more cycle of IUI. I got pregnant right away and had a very healthy pregnancy.

After Connor was born, we figured we'd never get pregnant on our own, so we weren't too careful. When he was 3 months old, I got pregnant without any medical help at all, and it was a total surprise. That seemed to open the floodgates because before we knew it, we had 8 kids (including our adoption) within 10 years!

I do believe that there is definitely some type of connection with relaxing and getting pregnant, because we conceived very easily after my first pregnancy that went to term. Once I had our

first son, my body seemed to know exactly what to do, because I got pregnant very easily after that and my pregnancies were all wonderfully healthy.

Today, our children range in age from 9 thru 21. We are blessed 8 times over and although that seems completely overwhelming to most—we wouldn't change a thing.