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~Introduction~

I decided to collect stories for this book because I needed help, comfort and reassurance. I figured there had to be other families experiencing similar difficulties and as you will read, there are. If you are reading this book then you have probably been through miscarriage, multiple miscarriages, second or third trimester loss, stillbirth, loss of a child after birth and/or infertility. Sadly, I have experienced six miscarriages.

Sitting at home one day I started thinking about a book with true stories of women like myself going through loss and infertility. I headed to the bookstore only to find books on miscarriage but none with real stories. Then, I thought to myself, “Why couldn’t I write a book?” Then I thought, “I can’t write a book because I am not a writer. I am an accountant working as a secretary because I can’t hold down a job.” All my mind would allow me to do was to think about having a baby. “Why is this happening to me?” Soon, I thought to myself, “I can do this, maybe I am supposed to do this.” So, I began brainstorming of how I should begin.

Before doing anything, I told my husband of the idea. I was waiting for an “Are you crazy” reaction but I didn’t get that. Instead, he said it sounded like a good idea and to go for it. I then called my mother and to my surprise she said the same thing. However, I decided not to tell anyone else about the book because I didn’t want the criticism if it failed. Also, most of our family and friends weren’t aware

of the miscarriages and heartache we suffered over the last two and a half years. I guess now they will know.

I began posting messages on bulletin boards and web sites through the Internet in search of women who had experienced my similar heartache. Luckily, the Internet has many sites that help women cope with these situations. You can find all kinds of information and even make many friends who share your problems. Personally, I didn't have anyone to talk to about my miscarriages except my mother and husband because I wasn't ready to express my sadness with the rest of our family and friends. Questions and pity were all I figured we would get, therefore; I felt it was better to keep it close to home.

After posting on all the web sites I could find I anxiously sat back and waited for responses. Within twenty-four hours, I started receiving ten to twelve e-mails daily from women and men all over the world who were interested in donating their real life stories to me. I was completely shocked at the number of responses I received. Within two weeks, I had nearly fifty stories, within a month I had over a hundred and by two months I had over a hundred-fifty stories sitting on my desk. I read them instantaneously and replied to everyone who sent me their story. Some, I am glad to say have happy endings, but most of them did not. All of these stories have a face, a heart, and a soul that had been through terrible tragedy. Many nights I spent crying wondering why tragedies like these happen and why would so many couples deserve to encounter such despair, yet I still cannot come up with an explanation.

One of the many things I learned from my friends who shared their stories was that we all share the same feelings. I always questioned why I felt the way I did, but as you

read these stories you will understand that the way we felt was quite normal. I often caught myself thinking, “Why me and why would I deserve to go through this?” “What have I done wrong in my life to be punished like this?” After each loss I wondered why God would inflict such pain to such a goodhearted person.

The comments I received from others were simply unbelievable. “Something was wrong with the baby.” “You are still young and you can always have another.” Obviously they had never had a miscarriage. Quickly after my third miscarriage I stopped letting anyone know I was even pregnant. I couldn’t take the comments anymore and then things had really turned bad. I quit my job and believe me we couldn’t afford for me to be unemployed. I woke my husband up at 4:00am one morning and told him I mentally couldn’t hang on any longer. Being the supportive and wonderful man he is, he just said do whatever you need to. I accepted other jobs after my accounting job, but quit them shortly after I started. My lack of concentration kept me dreaming of when was I going to be pregnant again and would it be okay this time.

Deeper depression set in as I continued to miscarry, so my Doctor prescribed me medication to help me cope. The medication made me feel so strange and me being stubborn, I refused to continue taking it. Even television commercials reminded me of having a baby and seeing maternity stores while shopping only made things more difficult. Worst of all, I would see babies or pregnant women and get jealous. I began to resent seeing pregnant women and listening to how easy it was for them to conceive or how easy their pregnancy has been. Again, I couldn’t understand why every time I got pregnant, I was getting poked with needles, only to hear them say my hormones levels were not rising properly and I would surly

miscarry. The women next to me went to the Doctor every four weeks and were told congratulations, your pregnancy is normal and you are carrying a healthy child. Hearing such good news about someone else caused me not to want to be around anyone who was pregnant.

My sister-in-law used to work in a Neo-natal unit at a hospital. I would hear stories of women who were on crack getting pregnant and delivering babies. I didn't understand how women on crack could conceive so easily and carry to term, yet I still could not have a child of my own. How can you make sense of this? Even more baffling, a teenager walking into an abortion clinic and me begging God to grant me my only wish. Nothing I did kept my mind off of having a baby. Eventually I started reading a lot of books and searching the Internet for answers but not finding any. I did meet and chat with some wonderful women who became great friends. I don't know if I just started to accept the fact that I was probably not going to have children of my own or if I just started having more faith in God. Finally, I told God to lead me through the best path possible still hoping and praying for the best. Once I put my trust into God's hands, I began to find courage and regained much of my confidence back and my depression soon subsided. In time, I found a part-time job. Even though it wasn't my dream job, I could relax. The environment worked out really well which alleviated some stress because I was able to go to my Doctor appointments.

As far as why we feel this way, I believe it is normal. If we didn't feel this way, we probably shouldn't be having children. Most of the stories in this book talk about these feelings and knowing you are not alone sure make you feel relieved.

This book is not a medical book, but I hope it will serve its purpose. It is truly meant for the heart and soul. I hope the many men and women going through loss and infertility find some peace and comfort knowing that they are not alone. Reading all the stories helped me tremendously, so I hope it does the same for you.

~Robyn~

I met my husband on July 20, 1996. I knew a week after we met that I would some day marry him. He was so sweet, kind and sensitive, that I couldn't imagine ever needing anyone else. I am thirty and he is thirty-two. He has two beautiful children from a previous marriage. Kyle is eight and Nicole, otherwise known as "Niki", is six. At first I wasn't sure if I wanted a ready-made family, but after I met them I fell in love with them. They immediately accepted me into their lives and a family started to grow.

Everything seemed to be going great until December of 1996. I had begun trying different birth control pills. We had talked about having children, but wanted to wait until we decided to get married. I had tried several different brands of pills and never could find one that didn't make me crazy, sick, or break out like a teenager. I just figured I had to deal with the side effects. One month I got really sick at the beginning of my cycle and I passed it off as possibly the flu. After finishing my last pill I waited for my period, as usual. A few days passed and I started noticing that my boobs were very sore. I was nauseous and very moody. I started to get nervous. I went to the store and bought a pregnancy test. When I got home I took it and it was positive. It was a faint line, but definitely a line. I started shaking and got very scared. I was thinking, "We hadn't been together that long. What was Russell going to say?"

I don't know why I didn't wait until he got home, but I picked up the phone and called him. I told him that I was

pregnant. He got very quiet and said, “Are you sure?” I told him that I had bought a home pregnancy test and that it was positive. He didn’t sound happy. I asked him what he thought and he said, “It probably wasn’t a good time to have a baby.” Immediately I got defensive and told him that I would have the baby on my own and that I didn’t need his help. A few minutes later he realized that I would never consider an abortion. The word “abortion” never came up, but I’m assuming that he might have been thinking about it. The conversation ended and I just sat in bed thinking. My mind was racing. I said to myself, “I want this baby. I will do this on my own if I have to.”

He came home later that evening and gave me a big hug and said, “Well, I guess we are having a baby.” I was so happy. We didn’t talk about marriage. I wasn’t even sure that I wanted to get married.

The next day I called the Doctor and he scheduled an appointment for my eight-week visit. We were really looking forward to it. We went to my mother’s house and told her. She was so happy she was finally getting a grandchild. I then went to tell my father. The first thing he said was “When are you getting married.” I told him that I wasn’t going to get married just because I was pregnant and he gave up trying after a while.

After a few happy weeks of being pregnant the dreaded day arrived. Russell and I both loaded up in the car and went for our Doctor’s appointment on February 10, 1997. When we got there the Doctor did a pelvic exam and then an ultrasound. The first thing he said was “Well, this isn’t really what I want to see.” He then asked if I could have miss-calculated my period. I told him that I didn’t think so. He said it was possible that I may have ovulated late. I was supposed to be eight weeks and there was only a six-week

fetus, with no heartbeat. He ordered a Beta HCG test and told me I would need to take another forty-eight hours later. He said that if I had lost the baby he didn't want me to have to wait another week for an ultrasound. I instantly agreed, I wouldn't have been able to make it without knowing. The next forty-eight hours were horrible. Finally, I got the call and my HCG levels were going down. I had lost the pregnancy. I had no spotting and no warning.

We went to the hospital the next day for a D&C. My mom, Russell and my friend Terra went with me. I am so glad they were there. We hadn't told Russell's family yet, only because we hadn't been together that long and we wanted to wait. There was no point in telling them now. I cried the whole time. They finally gave me something to help me relax because I was hysterical the whole time. Everyone was very supportive, but they basically said that it was normal and I could try again. That wasn't really what I wanted to hear. I wanted to hear that they had made a mistake.

Soon after the miscarriage we got engaged and talked a lot about getting pregnant again. We tried off and on, but it wasn't really trying, we just weren't preventing it from happening. The wedding was planned for April 4, 1998. We were busy getting things ready and I ended up pregnant again. This time we were sure everything was going to be okay. We told my mom and a few of my friends, but no one else.

On February 5, 1998, at five weeks pregnant, I started spotting. I called Russell at work and he came home immediately and we went to the emergency room. They did an ultrasound and found nothing in my uterus. They took blood for a Beta HCG test and the results were 180, so we knew that we had been pregnant. They thought it might

be ectopic, but they didn't do anything but refer me back to my Doctor on Monday.

When I got to my Doctor's office he did another ultrasound and found the same thing. My uterus was empty. He did another Beta HCG test. It came back the next day and it was going down, but very slowly. By this time I had really started to bleed, but he didn't want to do surgery to see if it was ectopic because there was a chance of damaging one of my fallopian tubes. Instead, he monitored my HCG levels until they were down to 0. My wedding was two months away and we were again devastated.

We got married on April 4, 1998. It was the happiest day of our lives. The miscarriages were still in the back of our minds, so when we got back from our honeymoon we decided to make a call to my Doctor to see if there were any tests that he could run to find out if something was wrong. He said that normally they wait until after the third miscarriage to test because insurance companies usually won't cover it and the tests are very expensive. The nurses called the insurance company anyway and they agreed to pay for the tests.

The first test was a Hystero-salpenogram (HSG) to see if my tubes were blocked or damaged. It was the most painful test I have ever had, or I had a really bad Doctor. My husband and two nurses had to hold me down. The pain was so bad I felt as though I would pass out. We got the results the next day and everything looked normal.

I was supposed to have an Endometrial Biopsy done on July 13, 1998, but when I went to the Doctor I told him that I was having pregnancy symptoms and asked if the test would hurt the baby if I went through with it. He said,

“Yes, it would abort the baby.” I told him to give me a pregnancy test and he did. He said it was negative and wanted to proceed with the procedure. I looked at the test about five minutes later and it was faintly positive. I told him that I thought the test was positive and he argued with me that it wasn’t. I refused to take the biopsy and I went home. A few days later I did confirm that I was pregnant.

I called a friend of mine who works for a Gynecologist. I explained to her what was going on and come to find out the Doctor that she works for isn’t just a Gynecologist, he is a Fertility Specialist. She scheduled me an appointment with him on July 29, 1998. They did an ultrasound and said everything looked normal. There was no heartbeat yet, but I was only five weeks pregnant. I went back again on August 5, 1998 for another ultrasound. The heart was beating and we were ecstatic. We were told that there was only a 3% chance of something going wrong after a heartbeat was detected. We went home and told everyone. We thought for sure that everything would be all right this time. This just couldn’t happen again.

They still had me come in once a week for an ultrasound because of the past miscarriages. The next week we load up in the car again and went back to the Doctor. An ultrasound was done and the heart had stopped beating. I literally couldn’t believe it. There was no way this was happening to us again. We had to go home and tell everyone what had happened. The worst thing was that Russell’s family didn’t know our history with the other miscarriages, they thought it was the first one.

The comments I received, even from friends and family, were unbelievable. I was told that it wasn’t uncommon to miscarry. “It was God’s will”, and “There was something wrong with the baby.” I felt like screaming. How did they

know how I felt? They didn't. They had never had a miscarriage. The next day, I had to have another D&C. The Doctor sent us home and told us to consider having genetic testing done. We went home and cried. I just knew there was something terribly wrong.

I cried more than ever this time. I was trying to stay strong, but at that point I didn't feel I could. My mother and Russell were the only ones who knew all of what was going on. My mother called me everyday and cried with me. Finally, we made the decision to go for the genetic testing. It took us three months to finally get the courage to go, but we went. Now they tell us we have to wait four to six weeks for the results. That was the longest month and a half of our lives. There was no question that if we had a genetic problem, who the problem was with. It could only be me. Russell has two normal, healthy children. I knew it couldn't be him. My mother and I were trying so hard to figure it out what could be wrong with me. We don't have any genetic defects in our family. No one else in our whole family has ever had miscarriages. My aunt had a problem with one of her pregnancies, but it was because she had a fall in her third trimester. Nothing was making since to me.

While waiting for the test results I basically cried every day. My husband didn't know how to even talk to me anymore. I quit a good job. It was too difficult going to work and facing the world. I went into a big depression. The Doctor tried to give me something to help me get through it. I took one pill and then just threw out the whole bottle. I didn't want to feel better at that point. I lived in my own little world and didn't let anyone in.

During the four to six weeks that we were waiting on the test results I missed my period. I was pregnant again. All I could think was, "We can't get happy and we can't tell

anyone.” I had recently found a web site called Baby Center. I met a wonderful woman named Terry who also had a miscarriage and was a great comfort to talk to. We talked every day through e-mail and she knew every little detail about my life. Finally I had someone to talk to. We are still friends to this day. She delivered a beautiful baby boy named Andrew on February 28, 1999. I remember thinking to myself how she never talked about her pregnancy. It was always what I needed to talk about. I figured she thought it would have upset me, but it wouldn't have. She was a great friend to me and got me through a lot of rough times.

Finally the day came when I got the call. I came home and found a message on the answering machine. It was my Doctor. The results of our genetic testing were in. I caught my breath and prayed. I sat down and prepared for the worst. When he picked up the phone he told me that my husband has a genetic defect called a Balanced Trans Location. It is a condition where one of his chromosomes is cut off of one and replaced on another. All of his chromosomes are there and are normal, just reversed. I didn't understand. “What does this mean?” The Doctor said that we have a three out of eight chance of having a normal pregnancy. He referred us to a genetic counselor and she tried to explain everything to us, but still to this day I don't understand all of it. Below is the letter that was sent to us from the genetic counselor.

Dear Mr. and Mrs. Bear:

The purpose of this letter is to summarize your genetic counseling consultation on October 28, 1998. As you know, we met in order to discuss the chromosome results of your previous pregnancy and the parental blood

chromosome studies. We are very sorry to learn of the losses of your previous pregnancies and hope that you find this information helpful.

We began by reviewing that chromosomes are the structures that carry our genes. Each chromosome contains many genes that serve as the blueprint, or instructions, for human growth and development. It is important that each person have the correct amount of genetic information for normal development to occur.

Most individuals have 46 chromosomes in each cell of their body. All of the chromosomes come in pairs. The first 22 pairs are the numbered pairs and the 23rd pair is the sex chromosomes. Women have two X-chromosomes, while men usually have an X and a Y.

When the chromosomes of your previous pregnancy were analyzed, the results indicated a 69, XXX, t (9;20)(q21.1;q11.2) chromosome pattern. This first part of the result (69, XXX) means that all of the cells had 69 chromosomes, or three complete sets of chromosomes. This diagnosis is called triploidy. The second part of the result, t (9;20)(q21.1;q11.2), indicates a rearrangement between the chromosomes #9 and #20. This is called a balanced reciprocal translocation and is designated by the letter "t".

We began our discussion with the triploidy result. Normally, when an egg or sperm cell is being made, the chromosome pairs line up together. When the cells divide, the two resulting cells receive one copy of each chromosome from each pair. In a man, the resulting cells would both become sperm, each with 23 chromosomes. In a woman, one of these cells would become the egg to be fertilized, while the other cell is normally lost.

Occasionally, either the remaining eggs cell fails to disappear, or two sperm fertilize one egg. In either case, the resulting conception has 3 copies of each chromosome, instead of 2 copies. This is known as triploidy and is seen frequently in miscarriages. All the extra genetic information is usually to harmful to the embryo to allow the pregnancy to develop very far.

We then discussed the translocation result. Occasionally, (every 1 in 300 amniocentesis), the chromosome will show a variation in the pattern that is usually seen. In this case, the results indicate that the chromosome #9 and #20 have exchanged, or swapped, material. This type of rearrangement is called a reciprocal translocation. (Quick review of chromosome terminology: each chromosome is divided into two parts by a constriction called the centromere. The part above the centromere is called the “p” arm or short arm. The part below the centromere is called the “q” arm or long arm. Each arm is divided into numbered regions for identification.) When the laboratory identified the chromosome rearrangement between chromosome 9 and chromosome 20, it was “apparently balanced.” In other words, it appeared that all of the chromosome material was present, none were missing or extra.

This chromosome rearrangement was an accidental finding, in that it is not related to triploidy. When such an arrangement is found incidentally during prenatal diagnosis, we recommend testing the parents because often one of them will be a carrier of the same translocation, or rearrangement. The results of your blood chromosome analysis revealed that this is true in your situation. Mrs. Bear’s chromosome analysis indicated a normal female pattern, 46,XX. Mr. Bear’s

chromosome analysis indicated a 46, XY, t (9;20)(q21.1;q11.2) which means that he is a carrier of the same chromosome rearrangement. Since Mr. Bear is perfectly healthy, we would expect the same for a pregnancy that carries this rearrangement.

Current medical knowledge indicates that a balanced reciprocal translocation does not affect the individual's health in any way. A balanced translocation means that no genetic information is gained, lost, or disrupted. Therefore, individuals are not at increased risk for medical or health complications above population standards.

The only time a balanced reciprocal translocation is a concern is when an individual has children. When a carrier of a translocation produces an egg or sperm, there is an increased likelihood that the resulting egg or sperm will have too much or too little chromosome material. This can result in a pregnancy with chromosome abnormalities, or an unbalanced rearrangement of chromosomes 9 and 20. Generally, extra or missing genetic material may cause a miscarriage, a still birth, or a liveborn with birth defects and/or mental retardation.

Please keep in mind that the carrier of the balance rearrangement can also have children who do not inherit the rearranged chromosome or children who do inherit the balanced rearrangement. In either case we would expect the pregnancies to be healthy.

At the time of our meeting, we briefly discussed the options for prenatal testing in future pregnancies. In future pregnancies you may wish to consider either chronic villi sampling (CVS) or amniocentesis. Both procedures can detect or rule out chromosome

rearrangements by examining the chromosomes through a microscope. Sometimes the unbalances or abnormal portion of the chromosome is too small to be seen under the microscope. Therefore, additional testing with specific chromosome probes (a technique called FISH) may be necessary.

We also discussed that other family members may carry the translocation. It is important for other family members to be aware of this information so that they may be tested if they choose. Please feel free to share this letter with your relatives. Also, I am available to answer any questions that your family members may have.

In summary, the results of the fetal chromosome studies indicated a 69, XXX, t(9;20)(q21.1;q11.2) a fetus with triploidy and a rearrangement between chromosomes 9 and 20. These two chromosome findings are unrelated. The triploidy is a sporadic event and does not increase the risk for chromosome abnormalities in future pregnancies. Mr. Bear carries the balanced reciprocal translocation. In future pregnancies, genetic counseling would be recommended to more fully explore the options of prenatal testing.

I hope that you found this information to be beneficial. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any further questions regarding this information.

*Sincerely,
Genetic Counselor*

I couldn't believe it wasn't me and was in complete shock. Russell has two children. How can this be? I asked the Doctor and he couldn't really give me an explanation

except that Russell's ex-wife could have miscarried and never known it. If she miscarried before four to five weeks that is. I asked Russell about her cycles and he said he didn't know. He was never involved with her cycles at all. If she was not on a normal cycle she may have never known that she was even pregnant. He did tell me that they never actually tried to conceive, they just didn't protect it from happening. It was two years after they married that she actually got pregnant. Seems a little long for someone who isn't protecting. Who knows, maybe she did have miscarriages.

We started thinking about his family. Where did this problem come from? I had never heard of his mother miscarrying or having problems. The Doctor said that back when his mother and my mother were growing up, women didn't know they were pregnant until well after two months. She very well could have miscarried and never known it.

After consulting with the genetic counselor we found out what steps could be taken. In vitro-fertilization (IVF) with Sperm Isolation, Donor Sperm, Adoption, keep trying and hope, or don't try at all. I told the counselor that before we got the results from the genetic testing we found out I was pregnant again. This is now the fourth pregnancy. She congratulated us and said she would pray for us.

Not long after, I started spotting. I called the Doctor and he said for us to come in. I was again right at five weeks pregnant. Before I even got to the Doctor I started bleeding heavier. He took my Beta HCG levels and did an ultrasound. By that time I had already passed my baby.

Two months later I missed my period again. I talked to Russell and we decided not to go to the Doctor until after

the eighth week. I felt that if I could make it that far without spotting we would be okay. Sure enough on Christmas Eve night 1998, five weeks pregnant, I went to the bathroom and wiped. Blood. I just fell on the floor and started crying. I screamed, "No! No! No! Please, not again." I woke Russell up and told him. He really didn't know what to say to me. He was just very quiet. My mother was in the other room sleeping and I didn't have the heart to wake her up to tell her. I told her Christmas morning. She was so upset. We had to go to Russell's parents that day and pretend everything was okay. I see pictures now from that day and I was holding my niece, who was born just a month earlier. I was so miserable. Why was this happening to us? We don't deserve this.

I called my Doctor after the holidays to let him know that I had miscarried again. He asked me if I wanted to come in for a Beta HCG test and ultrasound, but I said no. What was the point? I knew what was happening. Was it going to bring my baby back?

I finally had my period on January 23, 1999. I thought it would take much longer, but my period was here and I wanted to try again. Four weeks later I was pregnant again. I knew we should have waited the normal two to three cycles before trying again, but I was desperate. I called the Doctor and they took a Beta HCG blood test and it was only 62. Two days later it was 82. The Doctor said it looked like it never even implanted in my uterus. So again, I eventually started my bleeding and it was over. By this time I was on my sixth miscarriage. I was becoming numb. I hardly cried this time. It was like I just knew I was never going to have a baby. To me, it was all over with. I wanted to give up.

After talking with my Doctor he decided to put me on Clomid to produce more eggs. I asked why, when I didn't seem to have a problem getting pregnant. He said basically to give you more of a chance of having one good sperm and egg. In a way I think he knew how desperate we were to have a baby. We thought it was a good idea. It was at least worth a shot. At this point I was up for anything.

On March 28, 1999 I had my period. I took Clomid on days four through eight. I went to the Doctor on day eleven and he found three follicles (eggs). I took a Beta HCG shot on day fourteen to release the eggs and then we were on our own. Now it is a waiting game. This is when I decided to collect stories for this book. I thought a book of true stories would help women realize that they are not alone.

The next two weeks went by so fast. I was advertising on the Internet for stories for the book that I was creating. I was receiving tons of responses, so I was extremely busy. It was good that I was so busy because it really kept my mind off things. My period was due on April 24, 1999, but I knew about a week before that I was pregnant again. I doubted myself because of the HCG shots I had received. I was told that they give you pregnancy symptoms.

April 24th came and my period did not. I took a home pregnancy test and it showed a strong positive. I called the nurse and asked her if she thought the HCG would cause a false positive. She said probably not, but to come in to do a blood test. The results came back the next day and I was pregnant. My HCG levels were 160. I got worried. I thought they should be much higher, but they weren't. Now I had to go back to see if they were doubling like they should be. That was the longest two days of my life. After a long wait the results were finally in. My hormones more than doubled. We finally had a viable pregnancy.

I still was so unsure about everything. I mean six miscarriages can definitely kill your self-esteem. I just knew I would miscarry again. I had my first ultrasound at around five weeks. It showed a normal sac, but no heartbeat yet. It was still too early. I went in again at seven weeks and there it was, flickering away. My husband and I cried a sigh of relief and went home. But the fear never left. Every week we went to the Doctor. I am sure they got sick of hearing from us. But we were still so terrified.

Finally, the ninth week rolled around. After the nausea, vomiting, exhaustion, sore breasts and awful moodiness, I woke up one morning and all those symptoms were gone. I called my Doctor's office and he was out of town. The nurses were wonderful, they understood my fear and got me an appointment two hours later with another Doctor. I went in and told the Doctor that I had lost all my symptoms. He said that sometimes it is very normal and maybe I am just lucky that they left early. I wasn't convinced. He did the ultrasound and there he or she was, moving around and the heart was just pumping away. I guess I was really paranoid. By the way, the symptoms returned with full force a few days later, so I really wasn't as lucky as we thought.

By this time I finally started to settle down. I had my regular appointment with my Doctor that next week, which I decided to keep instead of canceling. He did another ultrasound and we saw a ten week, five day baby swimming and kicking away. It was a beautiful sight. He released me to a regular Obstetrician and told me to keep in touch. I have a normal pregnancy and there is nothing else he can do for me. He asked me to send him pictures of the baby when he or she is born.

I think if it hadn't been for the care of this man and his nurses we would still continue to miscarry. It never made a difference how silly my question or fear was, they would see me that same day. I remember the day I called and told the nurse I was scared. She asked, "Why." I said, "I didn't know, I just was really scared that something was wrong." I had an ultrasound a few hours later. That is just the kind of office this is. It didn't matter what it took; they were going to get us a baby. And they did. My beautiful baby girl was born January 4, 2000. Her name is Peyton Elizabeth Bear and she is my world.

A year and half later I wanted to try again but I was terrified. I went from having 6 miscarriages to having a healthy baby to infertility. For the next 6 months I tried to get pregnant and it just wasn't happening. I went back to our reproductive endocrinologist and he put me on Clomid again. Still, I was not getting pregnant at all.

He suggested IVF so we called our insurance company and we were allowed 1 round of IVF. We decided this was it. We would try the IVF and if we didn't get pregnant we would not try again. To make a long story much shorter, we did the IVF and we were pregnant with twins.

Brooklyn and Madison were born 12 weeks pre-mature on March 25, 2003. Although very preemie, they were healthy and thriving in the neo-natal unit. They stayed in the NICU for 9 weeks and 5 days until they finally came home to us.

Robyn Elizabeth Bear
2 Stepchildren, Kyle and Nicole
Daughter, Peyton Elizabeth, born January 4, 2000
Twin Daughters, Madison and Brooklyn Bear, born March 25, 2003

6 Baby Angels in Heaven

~Chapter One~

Miscarriage

~Alayna~

I am twenty years old and I lost my baby. I was eleven weeks pregnant. We didn't know the sex yet, but I believe in my heart that it was a little girl and we would have named her Ashlie Tierra.

I found out I was pregnant at six weeks. The first visit was routine; all the tests were done. At my ten-week visit the Doctor wanted to do an ultrasound to see the heartbeat. My heart was in my throat when she said she couldn't see it. She sent me to the hospital for a second opinion and they couldn't see it either. They wanted to schedule me for a D&C the next day, but being 150% Pro-Life I wanted to be ABSOLUTELY sure before I did anything. I kept hoping it was just too early. I asked if I could wait one more week and have them look again. They agreed, so I went back a week later and what I saw devastated me. The perfectly formed little baby I saw the first time was beginning to fade away and blur. My heart was broken.

My Doctor scheduled me for a D&C five days later, but I ended up having to go to the emergency room two days after the visit because of bleeding and cramping. I had finally begun to miscarry on my own. The Doctor said that I probably couldn't do it on my own because I had so much tissue. They did the D&C at the hospital in the middle of the night. I felt so physically and emotionally empty knowing she is gone.

This is a poem I wanted to share:

Forever In My Heart...

*I only had you eleven short weeks
inside of me to dwell.
I loved you more than life itself
I know you knew that well.
Although I never felt you kick
or even move around.
For you I would have given my life
to keep you safe and sound.
I remember the moment she told me
that something was terribly wrong.
I remember at that moment
my heart lost its joyful song.
I wanted to protect you
and make everything okay.
I prayed and prayed and hoped and cried
for you both night and day.
I never thought that it would mean
I'd have to say good-bye.
That you would never have the chance
to grow, to laugh, to cry.
I wish my love had been enough
to see you safely through.
I prayed, I hoped, I wished, I cried
Wasn't there something I could do?
My arms are aching for you now
but deep inside I know,
That you are in a far better place
your new Heavenly home.
Your precious heart stopped beating,*

*your eyes never to see,
For God reached down, took your hand
and whispered, "Come with Me".
I know that you're in Heaven now
dwelling with God above.
I know that there's no sorrow there
just eternal love.
I pray that God will hold you tight
and whisper in your ear,
Just how much we love you
my precious little dear.
Even though I miss you now
and nights are hard to get through,
I know that there will come a day
when I will be with you.
For all the long hard nights ahead
when I feel I can't go on,
I pray that God will comfort me
and help me to be strong.
Even though you're not here now,
we're never far apart.
Because you are a part of me,
you're always in my heart.*

I Love You

Your Mommy

Update:

*Alayna is now expecting again and is in
her fifth month. They believe it is a baby
girl.*

~Angie~

In May of 1998, after careful planning, my husband and I found out we were pregnant with our first child. We were ecstatic. We had only tried for one month and were surprised at how quickly we became pregnant. Knowing that we were going to try to get pregnant, I had visited my Obstetrician in February and began taking prenatal vitamins to help ensure a healthy child.

Of course we were too excited to keep the news to ourselves. Once confirmed by my Doctor we told our families and friends. This would be the first grandchild for both of our families and we wanted to share the joy with them. My Doctor informed me that he had just decided to no longer be an Obstetrician and referred me to a specialist who only handled obstetrics. He felt confident that I would be in very good hands and sent me on my way.

I called my new Doctor right away to set up an appointment. I was told that they really don't see anyone until eight weeks of pregnancy and I was to come in at that time. Boy, the weeks seemed to move in slow motion. Finally, my eighth week of pregnancy arrived and I went to see my new Doctor on a Friday. The nurse took my husband and I into an ultrasound room, and began a vaginal ultrasound. Chris and I couldn't wait to see our child on the

screen. We lovingly referred to our baby by calling him "Our Little."

Silence filled the room. I was waiting to hear the heartbeat. I heard nothing. After what seemed like several minutes I finally said, "What is going on?" The Doctor said, "Well, it seems like we have a miscalculated pregnancy. The baby looks more like the stage of a six week pregnancy." I was shocked. I told him that this was a planned pregnancy and in no way was it miscalculated. The tears started to well up in my eyes when I asked, "What else could this mean?" The Doctor looked at me and stated, "Well, the heartbeat is really slow and the baby is very small. What this means is that it looks like a pregnancy on its way out. We will need you to come back in a few days for a follow-up visit."

I was devastated. My husband was crying, but I particularly was bawling hysterically. How could this have happened? I was so careful. I did everything right. I really wanted this baby. Surely everything will be okay. Just wait and see. When I come back here it will all be okay. This was some sort of a mistake.

On the following Wednesday, after days of agonizing over the situation, we went back in to see the Doctor, praying our child had grown. Unfortunately, this was not the case. The baby had not only not grown, but also no longer had a heartbeat. Our child had not made it. We scheduled the D&C for the following morning. I truly did not want to wait. I couldn't see any point to waiting. The Doctor was going out of town for the day, but offered to do the surgery before he left.

My big mistake was telling so many people about the pregnancy and then having to tell them I lost the baby. I

think it was harder listening to people's comments than I thought it would be. Most of the people would say, "It wasn't meant to be", "It was nature's way of getting rid of things that weren't right", or, "I know so many people that have had miscarriages and now have healthy children." I didn't feel like any of these comments were appropriate because now I had no idea if I could actually have children or not. Being my first pregnancy that ended unsuccessfully, how was I to know if I could have healthy child or not? I felt like a failure. No one, not even my husband could comfort me like I needed to be comforted.

After two weeks of sulking I decided to chalk it up to bad luck and try again as soon as I got the green light. I immediately got pregnant two months after the D&C. Once again we were thrilled. However, this time I was a basket case. My Doctors wanted me to come in at six weeks just to make sure things were going well. I actually was so paranoid that I went in at five weeks. The sac was so small, but there was a flickering of a heartbeat. The next week I went in and the sac and heartbeat were bigger. Each week I would go in and everything was progressing normally.

Even though things were going fine, I was constantly worried. Not knowing what caused the first miscarriage, I had no idea if it would happen again. I would tell myself if I make it out of the first trimester then I would not be as worried. The first trimester came and went and I was still worried. Now if I just make it to the triple screen test. The triple screen test came out perfectly fine, and I was still worried. If I can just feel him kick me then I know everything will be okay. And finally, when he began moving all over the place, I really felt at ease. I wouldn't say that I had completely stopped worrying, but it was close. He moves and I feel great.

I am currently in my thirtieth week of pregnancy with a healthy baby boy. I haven't had any problems with this pregnancy. No morning sickness, swelling, excessive weight gain, etc.

It is true what they say about miscarriages. They are very common and are often unexplained. You can have a healthy child after a miscarriage and I am living proof of it. Sometimes it just happens no matter how careful you actually are and we have to realize that if you do the best you can do, sometimes things are just out of your hands.

~Dawn~

My name is Dawn. My partner and I are both thirty-four years old and live in the UK. We've been living together since 1991. On numerous occasions we have discussed starting a family and at the end of 1996 we decided that we should wait one more year before trying to conceive. In order to give my body plenty of opportunity to get back to its natural cycle, I decided to stop taking birth control pills in January of 1997.

In December of 1997 we abandoned all other forms of contraceptive and hoped that we would have a baby in 1998. I started to get very impatient after only a couple of cycles without success. I tried to consider the feelings of all those people who try for years without success, desperately hoping that I would not be in the same situation.

We were both so happy when April of 1998 proved to be our lucky month. Having monitored my cycles I knew that I had an average cycle of twenty-seven days, so the first pregnancy test I did was on the evening of the twenty-eighth. I only got a faint line, but it was there. In my excitement, I couldn't resist doing another test the next morning. A slightly darker line appeared. Well, I was now impatient to see a bold line, so I did two further tests on

days thirty-two and thirty-three; as expected, there was that bold blue line staring back at me.

A year earlier I had been convinced that I would be quite relaxed about the whole thing and that I would probably wait until about week eight before visiting the Doctor. However, I was too excited so I made an appointment for the following week, which was week six.

My Doctor felt that after four positive home pregnancy tests there really wasn't any need to do another to confirm the pregnancy, so she just calculated my estimated due date. Then she gave me some advice on foods to avoid and told me to make a "Booking-In" appointment with the practicing midwife for approximately week twelve. I made the appointment and started counting the days.

My local health authority generally carries out the first ultrasound scan at about eighteen weeks, so I had an approximate date penciled in on the calendar. I looked at how many weeks pregnant I would be when we went on holiday at the end of May. I worked out what was the earliest date I could start maternity leave. The list goes on.

After the appointment with my Doctor we told our parents about the pregnancy, but said that we wouldn't be telling anybody else until after week twelve.

I had no sickness or nausea and only noticed that my breasts began to feel heavier during week seven. When I was only seven and a half weeks pregnant my partner and I went for a two-week holiday in Italy with another couple that we've known for a number of years and are very close to. As it would become obvious to our friends as soon as I ordered water, instead of wine, and as it was our intention to do some walking in the second week of our holiday, my

partner and I decided we had to let our friends know about the pregnancy. They were as pleased as we had expected, but understood our concern about letting anyone know before the end of week twelve.

I tried not to bore people by talking about the baby, or fetus, as it's apparently known at that age, but every time the baby was mentioned it made me feel so proud to be carrying an extra life on board. The growing fetus even managed to get a nickname during that week "Benny Bump", or "Benny" for short.

We did a couple of short mountain walks, broken up by a relaxing day trip to Lake Garda. We stopped for lunch and sat for an hour watching school children fighting over their pack lunches. After that we walked on to reach a hillside tavern for a drink before heading back to the cable car.

It was at the tavern when I visited the restroom that I lost a small clot of blood. I tried to be calm, but I couldn't and burst into tears. It was a long time before I returned to the table outside. My friend was about to come looking for me. I tried to quietly explain to my partner what had happened, but burst into tears again. I was so afraid that this was the beginning of a miscarriage.

We didn't have far to go to reach the cable car, which would take us back down the car park. I just needed to get back to the hotel. There was little I could do. Although I had mild cramping in the lower abdomen, I wasn't in serious pain or losing large amounts of blood. I continued to have a pale pinkish discharge. Occasionally I spotted with darker blood during the following day and evening, but spent most of that time lying in bed reading. The next day we returned home.

I spoke to my Doctor on the phone. It was impossible to get an appointment and I didn't want to wait even five minutes. I wanted instant answers and of course there weren't any. The spotting had reduced to almost nothing, but the Doctor said I was to come and see her if it increased or there was any pain.

On Saturday, June 13th, I started spotting again. I basically stayed in bed resting all day with my partner waiting on me hand and foot. I then went to bed early and wore a sanitary towel just in case.

Nevertheless, on the morning of Sunday, June 14th, at ten and a half weeks into my pregnancy, I awoke in pain and knew that my underwear was completely soaked. I walked slowly to the bathroom and sat on the toilet. Immediately, several large clots, including my baby, fell from my insides. I cleaned myself up as best as I could and went to tell my partner. He then phoned the emergency call-out Doctor. At this point the emotional pain was worse than any cramping.

After the phone call to the Doctor I showered, watching more clots continuing to fall out. I then tried to get cleaned up again. So much blood seemed to be coming out of me that I had to visit the bathroom every twenty minutes. My partner then drove me to the accident and emergency department of the hospital where the Doctor cleared out some more clots and booked me in for an ERPC the next day (ERPC = Extraction of the Remains of a Previous Conception).

At home the flow of blood eased a little and I ate a small meal before bed, knowing that I couldn't have anything before the following day's operation.

The next day, once I was out of bed and moving around, the pain became severe. As soon as I was ready we drove back to the hospital. Out of curiosity I timed the waves of pain, which were coming in five-minute intervals and lasting for at least a minute. I was bent over and crying out with each wave of pain. I was trying to concentrate on breathing rather than holding my breath. By the time we got there I was still having the waves of pain and was also feeling dizzy, probably due to the pain, loss of blood and my breathing difficulties.

The medical staff immediately rallied around helping me undress and get into bed. They cleaned me up and took a blood sample from my arm. Shortly afterwards I was put on a drip and I lay there dozing for most of the day. At 4:00pm they performed the ERPC and at 7:30pm I was allowed to go home. They had considered keeping me in overnight and giving me a blood transfusion as my hemoglobin levels were so low, but I'd managed to walk to the toilet and back without fainting. I didn't feel dizzy, only tired.

I had to have a week off from work so I asked my partner to explain the reason why. He bravely managed to do it. Bouquets of flowers started to arrive. It must seem so ungrateful but when the first bouquet arrived, I signed for them and said out loud, "These are beautiful, but if this is what you get for a miscarriage then I wonder how good the flowers would be if I'd had a baby." I cried a lot that week. My partner didn't cry, but I knew he was upset too.

The next upset over the miscarriage came with my period. The pains I experienced with my first period following the miscarriage were more intense than any other period pains I'd ever had and were similar to the pains I'd

felt during the miscarriage, although not as severe. It instantly made me recall every detail of the miscarriage.

I also got quite upset the first couple of times we tried to make love. I just kept thinking about losing all that blood and the baby, it may be known as a fetus, but to me it was our baby.

It took several weeks of iron tablets to get my Hemoglobin count back to the recommended level and I've often wondered if my Hemoglobin count was low before the miscarriage. I wondered whether it was a contributing factor. I guess we'll never know, but if I get pregnant again then I'll request early blood tests to check for such things.

On April 13, 1999, I reminded my partner where we had been the same time last year. He remembered that we were on holiday in Scotland and then I told him that it was a year ago that "Benny" had been conceived. He asked me if I'd remembered because it was marked in my diary. I realized that it wasn't in my diary, it was just one of those significant dates that sticks with me.

My partner and I are still trying to conceive following the miscarriage. I thought my heart was broken when we lost "Benny", but if we can't conceive another baby it could be broken all over again. We'd love to have two children but, in basic terms, how many more fertile years have we got? For now I'll try to be positive and believe that this month could be the one.

Update:

Since Dawn's story she has had another miscarriage. She is hoping to get testing done to find the cause.

~Deon~

In May of 1998, I found out I was pregnant with our second child. We were so excited. I went to my nurse midwife at seven weeks for my check-up. She asked if I had any questions for her. I told her that I just didn't feel pregnant. My breasts weren't tender and it just didn't feel like my first pregnancy. She listened for a heartbeat but couldn't find one. She said that it was just still too small. She handed me the bag with all of the pregnancy freebies and sent me on my way.

On June 14, 1998 I had one small spot of blood when I went to the restroom. I panicked and called my nurse midwife. She said it was probably nothing and to stay off my feet. I think I realized then that I was losing the baby.

That next Friday I woke up with more spotting and called my Doctor. She said that I should go in and see her associate. I had to call a friend to see if she could come over to watch my son. I had to tell her what was happening, even though we hadn't told anyone yet.

When I got to the office I went in and immediately started crying. There were different women in the waiting room in various stages of pregnancy. I couldn't help

myself. I went into the exam room with all of the "How to have a healthy baby" and "What to eat when your pregnant" posters. It was brutal. The nurse came in and asked my symptoms. She said, "It's probably just a bladder infection." I then felt a little glimmer of hope. The nurse midwife came in, examined me and said that my uterus wasn't big enough and that my cervix was open. She asked if I was sure of my dates. Of course I was sure of my dates.

She left me there with the door open and I could here everyone talking, laughing and planning their weekends. Didn't they know that my world had stopped? How could theirs go on? I was sent down for an ultrasound, and a woman heavily pregnant with twins came in to have one as well. She was complaining about how much water she had to drink. Oh poor thing, I just wasn't feeling charitable.

After what seemed the longest wait in my life I was taken back to the dark exam room. I felt none of the joy and anticipation that I had felt when I went through this for my son. Now I just felt scared and alone. She tried silently for about fifteen minutes and finally I said, "Well?" She said, "You just aren't far enough along, let's try a vaginal one." So she did and said, "Oh, its a perfect five week sac." My heart dropped to the floor. I was supposed to be ten weeks along. I scheduled the D&C. There was no way I was going to let Mother Nature take its course. Look how badly she has messed up this time.

I had the D&C done on June 23rd by a wonderful Doctor who assured me it was nothing I had done and that God was not mad at me. Yeah, right. Since then I have had this desperate need to be pregnant again. It is completely consuming me. I love my son with my whole soul and being, and I am so grateful to have him, but I want another child so badly. I want him to have a sibling. I am

so scared that I will never get pregnant again or worse yet, have another miscarriage. Two of my good friends are pregnant and due within days of my due date. I am trying to avoid them. It is just too painful.

Finally, we decided to try to conceive again. In October I took a home pregnancy test and it was positive. The very next day I started spotting and cramping. I just couldn't believe it was happening to me again.

I went for all of the blood work and exams to find the problem. I was diagnosed with a "Threatened Miscarriage" until thirteen weeks of my pregnancy. Finally, all seemed well. Growth and everything is normal. We found out in January, ten days after my due date, that we are having a little boy. I am currently twenty-five weeks and three days pregnant. Yes, I count every one of them. I have worried every day of this pregnancy. This will be our last child, as I cannot put my family or myself through this emotional roller coaster again. I am so grateful to be pregnant and God willing will have my son in June.

Update:

After all Deon went through she gave birth to a healthy, baby boy named Maxwell Emerson.

~Eva~

My name is Eva. When I got pregnant with my oldest child on my honeymoon, I assumed everything I had heard about how easy it was to get pregnant and have a baby was true. When Preston was one, my husband and I decided to start trying to have another child. Four months later, I had my period for eleven days and went to the Doctor because I knew something was wrong. They sent me home and said that I just had a strange period, and to keep an eye on things next month. They told me if things were strange again then to come back.

The next few days I noticed that I was spotting and none of this was normal at all for me. I just usually get my period for three to five days and then wait another twenty-eight to thirty days for the next one. I went out and got a home pregnancy test. It came back positive. I called the Doctors office and they made an appointment for a month later for my first pre-natal visit.

Over the next week I kept spotting, but it was always red and the Doctors office said to just take it easy. Then one day the spotting changed from red to brown, so I called the office. They had me come in the next day for an ultrasound. I went in and the technician did an ultrasound on my tummy. She then said, "Okay, now I need to do a

vaginal ultrasound." After all was said and done they told me they couldn't find a baby, just a bunch of liquid pooled up outside my uterus. They told me that they wanted me to go in to the hospital the next day for a Laparoscopy. A Laparoscopy is when they take pictures of your insides by putting a camera in beside your belly button. In the end they came up with the conclusion that I had a tubal pregnancy.

Now let me skip back a few years. When my husband and I were dating he gave me a heart shaped ring with seven rubies in it. We joked at that time that there was one ruby for each child we would have. This was our family secret just between us and had been through the time we dated, and up to the point I'm at in my story now.

When the Doctor discovered that the pregnancy was tubal, he gave me a shot of Methotrexate which stopped the cell growth and the baby was absorbed back into my system. About three days later, while I was still recovering from surgery, I looked down at my ring and one of the rubies was gone. There was no way I would have not missed that ruby because I had never taken the ring off my finger since the day my husband gave it to me.

Eight months later I conceived and now have a beautiful son.

~Heather~

My name is Heather. I had been on Depo-Provera and stopped in July of 1996. We thought we would like to have a baby soon and decided not to use birth control. In August of 1997, I still had not had a period so I went to the Doctor and she prescribed me provera to bring on a period. I spotted for a few days, but nothing else happened.

We moved within the next month and I asked my new Doctor for provera. At the same visit I had complained of weird pains. They decided to give me a pregnancy test and it came back negative. I also had a bladder infection, so they prescribed me some antibiotics. They did not help, so two weeks later I went back to check the bladder infection and had my annual exam. They gave me another pregnancy test to make sure I was not pregnant before I received the provera. The test came back positive.

I was in shock and so happy that I immediately went and told my husband during his lunch break. He was ecstatic. Because I didn't have a period in so long the Doctor thought I should have an ultrasound. The ultrasound revealed I was five weeks pregnant. I thought by my calculations I was seven, but I didn't give it much thought.

I went on November 28th for my second visit to see my Doctor. When he tried to find the heartbeat, he couldn't. We just dismissed it, thinking, maybe it was still too early. Later that evening I started having some cramping that felt like gas. I decided to lie down and finally I fell asleep.

The next day I woke up and had to go to my father-in-laws consecration. I went to the bathroom and I was bleeding. I started screaming. My brother-in-law called 911 and the ambulance came and took me to the emergency room. My mom was in town so she met me at the hospital. I was told after a horrible experience that I lost the baby. I went home and cried. Two days later I had a D&C done to remove the tissue. The Doctor told us we should wait one cycle and then we could try again.

We waited one cycle and started trying again to conceive. We had no luck so I was put on Clomid in February. I am now on my second cycle of Clomid and still waiting to see if I am pregnant. It has been sixteen long months of trying, but we have not given up yet.

Update:

I am happy to say that Heather delivered a beautiful baby on January 2, 2000.

~Jenna~

I am twenty-six and my husband is twenty-eight. We have been married for four and a half years. It took us seven months to conceive our first child. I believe the reason it took so long was because during the first few months we were very casual about it and we did not know how to time intercourse accurately. Despite our attitude, I continued to be disappointed each month. I thought we were doing everything right.

I distinctly remember the night we conceived. We were on vacation and it was a special time. I also remember thinking, "Boy, I must be fertile tonight", because I had a lot of sticky white discharge and I at least knew that was a good sign. When my period was five days late, which never happened since I always had a 27-30 day cycle, I decided to take a home pregnancy test. We were completely in shock when it came out positive. After several more tests we were convinced that I was almost five weeks pregnant. We told a lot of our friends and family. We were on top of the world with happiness.

We decided that we wanted to see a mid-wife that specialized in water births. While we were waiting in the lobby to see her, pictures on the wall of women giving birth

in water intimidated us. I secretly wondered if this was the right choice for us or not. I now know my husband was equally unsure. The mid-wife explained her view of birth, which we agreed with, and some of the details of what would happen and how her clinic worked. She was very casual about the whole thing.

As the weeks went by I experienced mild pregnancy symptoms such as fatigue, sore nipples, constipation and gas. I took the herbal prenatal vitamins prescribed by the mid-wife, and began planning and reading about babies and birth. We continued to be overjoyed with happiness.

At about almost eleven weeks my husband and I made love in the morning. For several hours that afternoon I felt slight menstrual like cramps, but thought nothing of it. We went to a 4th of July celebration with a friend that evening. I felt like I had started my period so I asked my husband to come with me to the bathroom. We were surprised and scared to see dark colored blood. We immediately went home and called our mid-wife. She said it mostly likely was because we had sex that day. She said to get in bed and to call her in the morning if it was worse.

When it was worse in the morning I called my midwife and she told us to go to the emergency room. A Doctor did an internal exam and said most likely it was "old blood" and everything is fine. I started to get nervous when the ultrasound technician took a lot of time looking around and when I asked her if we could see, she said, "I can't move the screen." My husband, however, was looking over her shoulder and thought he saw a baby. We were very nervous. The Doctor returned and we were shocked when he said that there was no live baby inside of me and that we should schedule a D&C for the following day. To this day

I do not know what he meant by "no live baby" because my husband could have sworn he saw a baby.

We went home and were completely devastated. We never thought something like this would happen to us. We had no idea how often this happens. The pain and emptiness that we felt is unexplainable. We broke the news to some of our friends and family. Everyone's heart ached for us. I took the following day off of work.

That night the cramping and bleeding became worse and my husband had to buy sanitary napkins. A hot shower seemed to make the pain and bleeding worse. The next morning before the D&C I took another shower and that's when the heavy bleeding and cramping started. The blood was running down my legs and I was crying from fear. My husband helped me get dressed for our appointment with the Obstetrician that my mid-wife referred us to.

At the Obstetrician's office we told the receptionist that I was having a miscarriage and that I needed help, but she ignored us. It was only when I started crying and bleeding on their bathroom floor did she finally get me help. They had me remove my clothing in the room and the blood just gushed and ran all over the floor uncontrollably. A very helpful nurse kept trying to clean me up, but it was pointless. I was in a lot of pain and very scared. The Doctor came in and gave me an internal exam and sent me to the hospital for the operation. Somehow my husband helped me clean up enough to get dressed and to the hospital.

It took awhile to register at the hospital, but the staff was extremely helpful. I was still hemorrhaging and in a lot of pain, but they tried to make me as comfortable as possible. I will always remember the volunteer who

wheeled me to my room. He was an older gentleman who was kind and massaged my shoulders while I waited for my bed.

Some of the nurses had stories of their own losses. They really helped me feel understood and that I wasn't alone. I don't remember being put to sleep or the operation. I just remember waking up in a recovery room in the women's ward. The nurses' there was so supportive and I feel so lucky to have had their care.

We received several calls when we got home, but I was pretty weak from everything and don't remember what I said. I took that week off from work. I dreaded going back and hearing people's well-meant comments. I'm glad I had time to heal before I went back.

People were kind and supportive at work. Only a few said stupid things. Our in-laws were supportive, but they made us feel like we made a mistake by telling people too early. Our friends were very supportive too. We vowed that next time we wouldn't let anyone know since it makes it more difficult for everyone if something bad happens. The weeks after the miscarriage, I just didn't feel like myself. My hormones and emotions were a mess. I would cry for no reason and I felt depressed. I decided that I wanted to be pregnant again as soon as possible. We were desperate to have a baby, so despite our Doctor's orders, we started trying again.

My cycles were extremely long and I had terrible cramps. By my second cycle I had started talking to other women online who were trying to conceive. They were extremely supportive and informative. I learned how to chart temperatures, check my cervical position and evaluate cervical mucus. I was ready to go. Reluctantly, my

husband started wearing boxers, drinking tons of orange juice, eating healthy and not drinking. After we would make love, I would elevate my hips with pillows so that none of the sperm would run out. Lovemaking became a chore. When it came time for peak love making during my second cycle, my husband was on a business trip. So, I took time off of work and followed him 400 miles. My husband thought I was insane, and I was.

Low and behold we conceived on that trip. I have nice memories of it. We were scared that I would miscarry again, especially since we conceived before my third cycle after the miscarriage. We decided that we wanted more medical attention this time around, so we chose an obstetrician. I made the Doctors perform all kinds of tests and give us an early ultrasound so that we could be sure that everything was going well. We saw the heartbeat at eight weeks. I had some early bleeding that put me on one day of bed rest, but all else was well. Also, I had much stronger pregnancy symptoms this time and the Doctor said that it was a good sign.

We decided to tell only a few very close friends and no relatives. At Thanksgiving and when I was fourteen weeks, we gave the family the news. Their reaction wasn't as happy as I would have liked. Maybe they were worried too.

We have nine more weeks until our little girl is supposed to make her appearance and we're so happy. The last thing I want to say is that I wouldn't have been able to make it through all of this without the love and support of my husband. He is an incredible man. Some good did come out of this experience; it made us even closer.

~Lulu~

My name is Lulu and I am twenty-three years old. When I was twenty, the worst and the best thing that could've ever happened to me happened, I got pregnant with my daughter. I was single, reckless, getting into all sorts of trouble and unsure as to who the father was. After a couple months of panic, I got the nerve up to go to my parents and move back home.

During the last few months of my pregnancy I reunited with an old friend that proposed to me, adopted my daughter, and made me the happiest woman in the world. After my daughter was born I thought that nothing in the world could make me happier, until one day we decided to try for another baby.

My daughter was about ten months old and I had been taking birth control pills since she was born. I stopped taking the pill and we began to try to conceive. Two months later I was pregnant and ecstatic. At eight weeks I went in for my first ultrasound. They could not see the baby, but said not to worry. Sometimes the embryo is so small that they hide from the ultrasound and can't be seen. So, perfectly assured that all was fine they scheduled me for another ultrasound in two weeks to try again and I

happily strolled out of the Doctors office with my little ultrasound picture of a black amniotic sac.

When I returned for my next ultrasound I brought a videotape with me because my husband had to work and didn't want to miss anything. The ultrasound technician seemed to be having some trouble doing the ultrasound. Then finally, and very calmly she said, "See here, I am going from one side of the amniotic sac to the other and as you can see I can't find the fetus, where at ten weeks we would expect to see something. Let me go get the Doctor and see if he can tell you what this means."

Confused, I got up and dressed, and they stuck me in an examination room where I waited forever for the Doctor to come in. I had my daughter with me and I started to cry because I thought there was something "wrong" with the baby. My daughter started to fuss because I was crying and by the time the Doctor came in we were both a wreck.

He called it a blighted ovum. The baby had stopped developing at a very early state. Something, something about genetics, and something, something one in four, something, mumble, something, mumble, D&C. That's when I heard what he was saying again. That's when I found out that I would have to go in the next day and get what was left of the baby out. The amniotic sac was still growing even though the baby was gone. All I remember after that is that they brought me a cordless phone to call my husband and how my daughter kept crying and crying.

The next morning I was at the Doctors office surrounded by pregnant women, waiting to have my D&C. Before I went hysterical, they let me wait in the Doctors office so I could have some privacy. My husband sat by my side through the whole procedure. He won't talk about it now. I

guess it was really gruesome. I don't remember it much. I was drugged out on tranquilizers.

The following two days were so awful. I cried so hard. There was this lump, this pain in my chest. I have never known anything that hurt so much. Just remembering it has me weeping. I held my daughter and cried. I had nightmares that I lost her too and this overwhelming fear that something would take her away from me. I had dreams about the baby. That it was sick and dying and needed me. But I didn't even know that it was there, that it needed my help. The nightmares were the worst feeling ever.

I didn't get my first period after the procedure for two months, and only then with the help of medications. We started trying again. Not 100% actively, but trying just the same. I read a lot, I cried a lot, I had some breakdowns, but with time it got easier. Now I think I have come to terms with it, but it still hurts.

Now I feel I have a new battle. My miscarriage was in February of 1998. It is now April of 1999 and I am still not pregnant. My Doctor seems to be blowing me off seeing as how I have a living baby. He assumes I must be fine. I am going to give him one more shot before I go to a specialist.

I have been charting my basal temperature for three months, two of which I don't think I ovulated. Who knows, maybe I am onto something. This infertility stuff is such a stress on my husband and I. Our sex life has definitely been lacking something, and he is still upset about having to have a semen analysis. He worries about me a lot. I have been all over the Internet for support on my miscarriage and trying to find out why I am not

pregnant. I think I am obsessed. Everyone says to relax, it will happen. I can't relax.

I am starting to think I will never have another baby. That alone is a problem. Secondary infertility is kind of a weird thing. People don't necessarily sympathize with you because you already have children. They say, "Well at least you have one, some people don't even have that. You should be grateful." Don't get me wrong, I truly am, but I read something somewhere that put it perfectly. "Only your heart can tell you when you have enough." That is how I feel. If I never have another baby I will truly feel as though I am incomplete.

My first pregnancy was surrounded by so much negativity. I feel like I missed out on so much. On having people around me be excited for what is going on, and not trying to convince me to have an abortion. I really want my daughter to have a sibling. That means a lot to me. So I am now off into the world of infertility drugs and treatments.

Update:

Since Lulu's miscarriage she is still suffering from secondary infertility. She has gone through several procedures, including, Laparoscopy, D&C, Hysteroscopy, and an Endometrial Biopsy. As of now they have found no known cause of her infertility.

~Lynn~

My name is Lynn. I have been married for seven months now to a wonderful man. We dated for almost five years before we got married. We decided that I would go off the pill a month before the wedding, which was in August and we got married on September 13, 1998. We discussed having children for a while, but decided not to try to have children, just to let it happen naturally.

Just after Christmas and into the New Year I began my last semester of College. My husband and I decided that I needed a break from school. We decided to go away for Valentine's Day. Up to this point I still had not had a period. We assumed it was just stress, so I waited until March 17, 1998 and still nothing happened. I decided to go and have a pregnancy test and the result was positive. I began to cry tears of joy.

We began telling our family and friends. We were so thrilled. Well on March 24, 1998, I began to spot. My husband called the hospital and they said not to worry. They said it was normal, so I thought nothing of it. I kept spotting through the next day. That evening I took a bath and then after an hour or so I began to bleed very heavily.

My husband took me to the walk in clinic and the Doctor told me that my cervix was still closed, so I went home. I was to rest and take it easy until I see my Doctor the next day.

That evening before I went to bed I was still cramping and the blood was still really heavy, so my husband took me to the hospital. They admitted me and checked my cervix. It was still closed. I stayed in the hospital over night and the next morning I was to see my Doctor before she did her rounds. Before she came in to see me I went to the washroom. They had been keeping track of my urine in a bucket that was attached to the toilet. Well after I had gone to the washroom and was getting ready to leave, I noticed that there was an object that looked like a piece of tissue. The nurse immediately took the object away.

My Doctor finally came in and said that there may still be hope. They had scheduled an ultrasound for me that afternoon and we would soon know more. I had my ultrasound at around 4:00pm and we still knew nothing. My Doctor was to come to see me around 4:30pm after her office closed. My husband was becoming more furious that no one was telling us anything. We overheard one of the nurses talking while they were changing shifts. She had said that I was going to have an operation this evening. That is when we knew that we had lost our baby.

At 5:00pm my Doctor came in and had to tell me the worst news ever. I had lost the baby. The piece of tissue I had passed that morning was my little one. My Doctor tried to help me understand why this may have happened. She explained the pain I was having, because she had felt it as well. She had two miscarriages before she finally conceived her two adorable sons. I had the option of going

home and letting the rest take place naturally or having a D&C. I choose to have the D&C.

That evening at 10:00pm I went in to the operating room and the next thing I knew I was awake and my baby was gone. All I could do was cry in the recovery room. The hardest thing with being in the recovery room was that there was a young lady getting ready to deliver her first baby. I could hear the Doctor telling her not to push. I was given something to help me sleep that night and the next day I went home. All my friends from school came to see me and made sure that I was okay.

They discovered that the baby died at about four weeks and I was ten weeks along. I carried this little one for six weeks and I thought it was alive. The hard thing was that one week I was pregnant and the next week I lost the baby. I have this empty feeling and it still hurts. I can't cry any more tears, I think I am all cried out. I am only twenty-two years old and I know I have many more years to have children, but it has been really tough. Mother's Day will be the hardest day of my life.

I have to work and I think that will make it a little easier. I didn't have a period for over two months after I had the miscarriage. All we can do is wait and try again which is what we will do.

Update:

Since Lynn's story of her loss she has gone on to have a very difficult pregnancy, which resulted in a beautiful son. If you would like to get in touch

*with Lynn her e-mail address is
mickeyms@nrtco.net and her web site
address is <http://mickey.cjb.net>.*

~Pam~

I'm thirty-six years old and married with one daughter who is seven years old, and a demanding career. I am currently twenty-nine weeks pregnant with my second child. One I was told we wouldn't likely have.

I got pregnant the first time I ever had sex when I was just seventeen years old and still in high school. I chose not to keep the baby at that time and experienced much grief. I was from a low-income family of one parent and one sibling, and grew up on welfare. I started working when I was fifteen and paid half the rent at home from seventeen years of age. I began working full time immediately after high school and ended up being convinced I could go to college by seeking out financial aid when I was nineteen. I went to college for four years at a California State University and got my degree. College changed my life.

While in college, I met my husband. I was always very conscientious about birth control because of my first experience. I'd been dating for quite a while and on the pill for about seven years when I decided to give my body a

break. I went off the pill, got my period and had sex once two days after my period ended. Then we abstained for the remainder of the month. Low and behold, I was pregnant again. I'm thinking, "Fertile myrtle." Once again, I chose not to keep the baby.

I dated my husband for four years before marriage and then had our first baby three years later. I didn't have a problem conceiving, although it did take about five months. It took longer than I thought it would since I had gotten pregnant so easily in the past. My pregnancy was very easy, no sickness. I felt great.

I changed jobs when my daughter was almost two. We decided to wait a bit on the second baby. After another year and a half we started trying again. And again. And again. Nothing. Finally, I went to a fertility specialist for some tests. Just as the test results were due we were returning from a vacation and I discovered I was pregnant, which the Doctor was going to tell me shouldn't have been a problem anyway.

At eight weeks I had a miscarriage. My husband and I were devastated. Three months later we were trying again. And again. And again. Nothing. I was referred to another fertility specialist, different from the first, who did test after test. He did Sperm Count, Fallopian Tube flushing, Fertility drugs and Intrauterine Insemination (IUI). Still nothing happened. The next step was Laparoscopy. I opted out of that because my understanding was that once the problem was identified, In vitro-fertilization (IVF) would be the next step and we weren't willing to commit to that.

The Doctor finally said, "It looks like you're not meant to have any more children." How disappointing it was to

hear that. My husband had a really hard time with that. He really wants a son. It was very difficult on our marriage. Here we had a nice big home with lots of property, good jobs and terrific family close by. We wanted more kids. Being the macho guy my husband is, he wasn't willing to consider adoption either. He wanted his own son.

Anyway, whenever someone had asked me when we were "Going to have another," I'd tell them, "I can't, I have fertility problems." I sometimes felt I was being punished for having abortions in the past.

Another year and a half goes by and guess what? I find out I'm pregnant. It's taken a while for it to be real. The threat and fear of miscarriage again is so scary. But things have gone well overall. There was no sickness, I just feel older and am having difficulty with my back and swelling. I have ten weeks to go and I can't wait. Actually I can because I have so much yet to do. Getting ready for baby and tying up loose ends at work.

My daughter is now seven years old and is anxiously awaiting her new brother or sister. In retrospect, I feel now is a good time for another child and I am happy there's been a bit of time between kids. My daughter has had a lot of focus time for her and is ready to be a "big help" to mommy and daddy. With my busy schedule at work and my husband's as well, I think we'll be able to manage this better than if we had two young ones at home.

I'd love to stay home with both my children because it's something I never had growing up. I also feel as if I'm really missing out. I'm currently looking for ways to make it happen and feel confident in the next couple of years I can definitely do it. It's difficult to survive these times on only one income and I make quite a bit more than my

husband does, so it's not an option for now. We live in an expensive area of the country. I guess I can always move to a doublewide in Alabama, but would rather not.

My point in communicating this to you is that even when it seems as if there's no more hope and you've resigned yourself to the fact that it "won't happen," it just might.

~Stacy~

I got married in July of 1995 and we began trying to conceive immediately. My husband is fourteen years older than I am, so he was ready. I was twenty-six at the time and so excited about the prospect of becoming a mom. I always wanted to be a "young" mom. Seven weeks after the wedding I was having a long period, twelve days long to be exact, so my husband finally said, "You'd better see the Doctor."

The Doctor thought I might be miscarrying. I couldn't believe I could be pregnant. My Doctor decided to refer me to a specialist. Four days later I was having emergency surgery to remove my ectopic pregnancy.

I was devastated. My fears about another ectopic were constant and I was sure I had done something to cause this. I had a lot of guilt over an eighteen-month sleaze spree in college. I was convinced I picked up some awful disease that had destroyed my reproductive organs.

After another eighteen months of no pregnancies, we finally got referred to a fertility center. In the last two years of ART treatment, I have had four Laparoscopies to determine what was wrong. It was Endometriosis. They

decided to cauterize my fallopian tubes, hopefully decreasing the chances for early term miscarriage after In vitro-fertilization (IVF) cycles, to remove and drain cysts on my ovaries, and to remove some of the Endometriosis scar tissue.

I have had one failed Intrauterine Insemination (IUI), two failed In vitro-fertilization (IVF) cycles, and now, six close friends and family members delivered healthy babies during our treatment. I have found myself jealous, resentful, self-pitying and grossly depressed over my failure to become a mother. You don't just grieve the lack of getting pregnant and having a child. You grieve the absence of feeling a child growing inside of you. You grieve the absence of picking out maternity clothes, of seeing your husband's face as he watches you give birth to his baby, of seeing your mother's eyes in your new baby and of breast-feeding.

Coming to terms with the possibility of adoption hurts too. I have so many fears. Will the baby I adopt be healthy, considering its conception and prenatal care? Will he or she want to find his or her birth mother? Will there be psychological or physical problems that won't be disclosed? Will the birth mother change her mind?

We are continuing to try to conceive through In vitro-fertilization (IVF) and praying every day for that miracle called life. This is our story, and it isn't over yet.

~Theresa~

I am thirty-three and my husband Greg is thirty-nine. We were married in October of 1997. Almost a year ago we decided that we were ready to begin a family. I quit taking the birth control pill at the end of June and thus the long waiting game began.

In September I went to the Doctor, as I had not yet had a period. She gave me Provera to induce a period. It worked. However, in October I only had two days of spotting. So, the Doctor once again gave me Provera and this time suggested that I try Clomid to induce ovulation. I decided that I would wait until Greg left town on a business trip to try the Provera.

Greg and I fooled around Wednesday and he left for China on Friday. On Saturday I felt this sharp pain in my side. I did an ovulation predictor kit test and it came back positive. I thought that it was too bad that Greg was gone. I started bleeding about three days later, so I figured that I didn't need the Provera to induce a period. I just waited until day five to take the Clomid, as the Doctor said that I should begin Clomid on the fifth day of bleeding. I was relieved that I finally got my period on my own, but I was a little concerned that it started so soon after ovulation.

Well, about three weeks later, I began to feel weird. I took a pregnancy test on Thanksgiving morning and was surprised to see that it was positive. I thought that Greg and I had missed the chance to conceive. We were both thrilled. We had an ultrasound done in early December, which showed a healthy eight-week pregnancy and a baby with a strong heartbeat.

We went to St. Thomas for a vacation and I was nauseous the entire trip. Needless to say, I was very worried that I had taken the Clomid while I was already pregnant. However, nobody seemed to be able to offer any proof that Clomid causes problems, not even the company that makes the drug, so I figured that I should stop worrying.

I did have some spotting which concerned me beginning at week eight and it got worse with bowel movements. The Doctor told me that it was probably just hemorrhoids. I thought that was a strange comment to make, as I knew where this blood was coming from, but I just didn't want to challenge her. We told our families at Christmas time and we told our friends at the beginning of week twelve.

By the end of week twelve I began to experience some cramping and bleeding. I called the Doctors on call service on Saturday, January 9th. I told them about the strong cramps and the thick bleeding. The on call Doctor said that since I had a healthy ultrasound at eight weeks my chance of miscarrying was less than 3%. She told me not to worry and to call the office on Monday if I continued to have the same problems.

I worried the rest of the weekend and then on Monday told a girlfriend at work. My friend immediately knew

there was a problem and she insisted that I call the Doctor's office again. Luckily, this time they took me seriously. They brought me in for an ultrasound, which showed that the baby had died at nine to ten weeks. They offered me two options. I could wait it out and let the miscarriage continue naturally or have a D&E to end the pregnancy that day. Greg and I chose the D&E.

We had a follow up visit with the Doctor three weeks later. She said that they did tissue testing and that everything looked fine. She recommended that I use progesterone suppositories with the next pregnancy. A week later I got home from work and picked up a message to page my Doctor. It seemed that when she told me all the tests were fine, that was an inaccurate statement. She had ordered chromosome tests, but failed to tell me that.

The chromosome tests had just been submitted to her and had shown that our baby had Turner's Syndrome. This is a common chromosomal problem, which does not correlate with the maternal age. Rather, it seems to be a fluke when it happens. The baby, which was most likely a girl, was missing a sex chromosome, resulting in Turners Syndrome or Monosomy X or 45, x. She would have been short in stature and would have been unable to bear children. She also had a high probability of having heart trouble. Many girls live normal lives with Turners Syndrome. It is also suspected to be one of the biggest causes of miscarriage.

The miscarriage took place on January 11, 1999. I started charting my temperature and doing all the other crazy things that women who are trying to conceive do. I ovulated again in mid February, but Greg was out of town again, so there was no chance of pregnancy. After that cycle I had a thirty-one-day annuovulatory cycle. I

switched Doctors and the new Doctor also believed that I should try Clomid. So, I am now on cycle day eighteen of my first post pregnancy Clomid cycle. I have had heavy bleeding and cramping for the past two days, which is really concerning me. I guess I will just have to wait and see what that means.

Anyhow, I will be thirty-five years old soon and my new Doctor believes that my age, in combination with the miscarriage and chromosome problem makes me kind of a high-risk pregnancy person. Greg and I will be going to the Doctor for genetic counseling next week and any subsequent pregnancies will most likely have an Amniocentesis done. So, as we approach our one-year anniversary of deciding to start a family, we continue to pray that a healthy, happy baby is in the cards for us.

Update:

I am happy to say that Theresa had a healthy, baby girl who weighed 7 ½ pounds and was 20 inches long.

~Chapter Two~

Multiple Miscarriages

~Ann~

My name is Ann and I have loved children all my life. I knew the one thing I wanted in my life was a child, even before liking guys. I just had this great love for children.

When I was eighteen years old I met the man I would marry two years later. We are a great match. We are just so much alike. After being married for a couple of years we felt that tug to have a child. We tried for two years and then I had an unconfirmed early miscarriage. It really broke my heart and I felt like that's it, I can't go through this. So, I adopted a dog to help fill my heart.

I took it to obedience class and was that ever a struggle. This dog was so spoiled from the previous owner. I couldn't control the dog. At the end of the seven-week course I was exhausted and just could not find the energy to clean the house, let alone train the dog. So, my husband took over and that didn't last long. We had to say good-bye to the dog. But the dog must have served her purpose because surprise of surprises, I was pregnant. We were so shocked. I had given up even thinking I was able to get pregnant. It was really fun springing the surprise on my family. This is the first grandchild for my parents and the second for my husband's parents. Right on schedule, I delivered an 8 pound, 13 ounce little boy after forty-two hours of labor and a C-Section.

One year later it was time to start trying for another child. I always wanted two children, two years apart. I knew it would take a little while for us to get pregnant, but it took over a year. Nevertheless, we couldn't have been happier. This baby was going to be just under three years apart from our little boy. I found out I was pregnant when I was five and a half weeks along. Everyone else couldn't have been any happier for us.

When I went in for my first prenatal checkup the Doctor couldn't find the heartbeat, but I was only nine weeks pregnant, so it wasn't a big surprise. The Doctor told me I could spot a little from the Pap Smear, so I wasn't too worried when I did. I started feeling kind of achy and the spotting didn't go away. On the second day I talked to my Doctor's nurse and she put me on bed rest just to be safe.

That night I was going to bed and my world started falling apart. I started bleeding. I called the hospital and talked to the Doctor on call and he said he couldn't do anything for me, but to come in the next day for an ultrasound to see if it was still a viable pregnancy. Well, by morning I was bleeding a lot and the cramps were really bad. I knew there was no need for the ultrasound. I called the Doctor and confirmed what was going on. It was the worst five days of my life. Seeing my body expelling my baby. I was living my worst nightmare. It was beyond words.

It has now been over seven months since my miscarriage. I have had my ups and downs. Seeing my due date come and not having a baby was really difficult, and I guess I haven't gotten through that one entirely. It's like going through it all over again. At times I feel so empty and desperate. It's only been through talking with others

that have experienced this that I've been able to cope with the loss. It also helps to know that in a few months we'll be trying to conceive again. I still would like to have a sibling for my little boy. So, we will see how the next year goes. I feel hopeful.

~Beth~

My name is Beth and I am twenty-two years old. I had my first child in February of 1995. I was seventeen at the time. My husband and I have been married for two years, but we have been together for four and a half years. We started to try having another baby in September of 1996 and by November I was pregnant.

I was going into my second month when I went to the bathroom and noticed that I had started to bleed. My husband and I went to the hospital and they told me that my cervix was still closed, so they sent us home. The next day I had an appointment to get an ultrasound done and my worst fears were confirmed. I had miscarried. I wanted the baby so much and had a very difficult time dealing with it emotionally. My husband, boyfriend at the time, didn't think much of it. He is not really an emotional person and he didn't have anything to say to me except, "We can always try again."

Inside it was very hard to accept, but eventually I got over it. I still think about it from time to time, but it doesn't hurt as much anymore. After my miscarriage my husband and I went on with our lives and got married in June of 1997. We went on our honeymoon and came back like newlyweds. One month later, I found out that I was pregnant again. We were so happy, but only to find disappointment again. I miscarried within two weeks after

finding out that I was pregnant. How could this happen again? I was so confused. I stayed home from work for a while because I didn't want to deal with anything or anyone. I don't think my husband realized how much it hurt me to have it happen again.

Sometimes I don't think I have ever got over losing this baby. It took longer for me to get over this miscarriage than the first, because we were now married and happy, and we were in the process of buying a home. It seemed that a baby just completed our family picture.

After I had my second miscarriage, I went to my Doctor for help. He decided to send me to a specialist in the city. So, I went to the specialist and she told me to come back when I had lost a third baby or didn't get pregnant within a year. I thought that was very rude of her. I have one child who is two years old and I have lost two babies already. Why should anyone have to be sentenced to a third loss, before she can receive help?

After waiting a few months I called the office to see if I could get appointment with her, but she had gone on maternity leave. I was sure happy that I heard that. Her office suggested another Doctor to me. I am glad that they did, because he saw me right away. He did what is called a Hystero-salpenogram (HSG). They injected a dye into my fallopian tubes to see if there was any blockage. There was a little blockage on one side, but that really didn't change anything. I don't have an ovary on that side. When I was pregnant with my daughter I had a cyst on both my ovaries and had to have surgery at five months to remove them. Unfortunately, the ovary had to go because the cyst had completely covered it.

After the Hystero-salpenogram (HSG), the Doctor suggested that I start taking Clomid. The first month I took one pill (50mg) a day for five days, with no success. The second month he put me on two pills (100mg) a day for five days. I was a few days late getting my period, but I didn't really think anything of it because it was Christmas time. I just thought it was all the excitement. Then one day I started to spot. I thought to myself, "This is not my period, I don't usually spot." On December 30, 1998, I went to the clinic to let the Doctor know that I was spotting and that I don't normally do that when I start my period. I thought I could possibly be pregnant, but I knew that I needed to start the Clomid the next day, if indeed this was my period.

He gave me a pregnancy test and I went back into his office to wait for the results. When he came in he smiled and said, "Your pregnant." You could not imagine how happy I was. My husband came to pick me up from the clinic and he asked why I was standing by the desk clerk. I said to make another appointment. He asked me why? I told him, "Because I am pregnant." I don't think I have ever seen him as happy as he was then. He had the biggest smile on his face. But, we still had to deal with the fact that I was spotting.

I had to wait to get an ultrasound until the following Tuesday because of New Years Eve and Day. So, I prayed and I prayed that God would let me keep this baby and carry it to term.

I had the ultrasound done on Tuesday and again, I had miscarried. As soon as I found out, I started crying and couldn't stop. I went over to my mothers house to tell her what happened, and pick up my daughter. I called my Doctor in the city to tell him what had happened also. He

was very nice. He said he was very sorry and recommended that I see a specialist who deals with miscarriage and infertility.

I made an appointment with the specialist on February 11, 1999. He took a chromosomal analysis, progesterone test, antibodies test and a few other things that I can't remember. Anyway, I didn't find out the results until a few weeks later. The chromosome analysis takes at least six weeks to get the results.

I talked to my Doctor when the results came in and he told me that both of our chromosomes were fine. My antibodies were borderline, my male hormone levels were too high, my progesterone level was too low, and that I was not producing enough egg follicles. He told me it was not very likely for me to get pregnant without fertility drugs, and virtually impossible for me to carry a pregnancy to term. He also told me that my chances of having more than one baby at a time was going to greatly improve, because I needed a heavier fertility pill.

So for now, I remain a non-success story. My Doctor is a wonderful man who cares about me and is trying his best to see that I get pregnant and carry a healthy baby. I hope my story can help someone out there. Just know that no matter what age you are, a miscarriage will always hurt. It doesn't matter if you are nineteen or forty. Always remember that even when someone says, "You can always try again", it still hurts and they don't know what it feels like until they have one themselves.

~Charmaine~

My name is Charmaine. I am thirty years old and have always known that I wanted to have a lot of kids, but I lost the desire when I was married to an abusive man for four years. I could not imagine bringing children into my life at that point.

Years after my divorce I met a wonderful man with whom I fell madly in love with instantly. Although I was from Texas and he was in the Marine Corps stationed in California we met in Leesburg, Virginia while we were attending a class. Two weeks later we were engaged and a year later, on September 21, 1996, we were married.

My husband's name is Joe and he is forty years old. After our marriage, for the first time in my life, I got off of all birth control. We did not try to get pregnant, but I knew that I wanted to have a family with him. In May 1997, on my birthday, we found out that we were pregnant. We were in total disbelief and I took three home pregnancy tests before I believed it. That weekend we went to the bookstore and I bought every book on pregnancy and having babies that I could find. I really felt that our whole fairy tale relationship was going to be perfected by having a baby.

I was wrong. Eleven weeks later we lost this precious baby who had already become a vital part of our lives. The day we were supposed to hear the heartbeat we found out that the baby had died. I had a D&C the next day and was totally devastated. I had never known anyone who had gone through this. My mom had five kids without any problems, so there I was, all alone, in a position that no one could relate to.

My Doctor convinced me that 40% of all pregnancies end in miscarriage so I did not lose hope. It was especially hard at the time because I had a nineteen year old single girl working for me who was also pregnant, and the day I had my D&C she called and told me she was having a baby girl. Going to work everyday and facing this young girl who was pregnant and clueless was one of the hardest things I've ever done in my life.

We tried for eight months to get pregnant again before finding out we had succeeded. In March 1998, we found out we were pregnant and were very reserved about the whole situation. Down deep I felt that no one could understand the loss we felt for our first child because they did not have the time to get attached to this baby. They didn't even know we were pregnant.

When I was five weeks pregnant we told my parents. This experience was heartbreaking. My mom didn't even come into the room with us and my dad didn't even look up from the paper. When we told my mom that we were naming the baby after her if it was a girl, she then came in to talk to us. The first thing she said to me was, "Did the Doctor log your weight?" I was in shock. Where did that come from? "Did they log your weight?" What kind of question is that to ask? No matter how hard I try I'll never get over that. I wanted to be optimistic about this baby and

this was the best she could give me? I told her the baby was due November 29, 1998.

Fifteen minutes later my mom got a phone call and I heard her screaming. It was my brother calling to tell her that my sister-in-law was pregnant with their second child, due November 29, 1998. I was in disbelief. I could hear my mom talking about my sister-in-law's "glow" when she saw her last and she just knew she was pregnant because she looked so beautiful. Not once did I hear her ask about her weight. I was crushed and couldn't help myself from running out of her house. Before I left she had a confused look on her face and thought I was upset because my sister-in-law was pregnant at the same time as me. I said, "You just don't get it do you? If I lose this baby I am going to have a niece or nephew as a constant reminder of how old our baby is supposed to be." After my parent's reaction we decided not to tell anyone else about the pregnancy.

As fate would have it I did miscarry about a month later. On Good Friday I went to a new Doctor for an ultrasound and was told that the baby was dead and he wanted to do a D&C. I wasn't comfortable at the time and just went home to grieve for yet another child that we would never hold. The following Monday I went to my regular Obstetrician and he did an ultrasound and saw the baby's heartbeat. Could it be? I knew better than to get my hopes up, but I wanted to so badly. The hospital confirmed the heartbeat and we were on yet another roller coaster. A week and a half later I started spotting and knew that I had lost the baby for sure. At that point I had another D&C.

The second D&C was very hard for me and to top it off the Anesthesiologist who came in to prep me for the surgery was eight months pregnant. I couldn't stop crying. I had lost all hope and here this pregnant woman was

telling me that she understands my pain. Of course I had to ask if she had ever had a miscarriage. I was hoping that she had, which would have given me hope. But, no she hadn't. So, in actuality, she did not understand a thing about my pain.

I guess that brings us to today if you skip all of the details about the countless tests I have had to find out why this is happening to me. It is a year later and I have not been able to get pregnant. I've been on fertility drugs, seen countless Doctors and no one seems to have an answer.

Two of my sister-in-laws and my sister have all had babies within the past year. In fact, my sister got her tubes tied and got pregnant three months later. When she had her daughter she named her Desirae. The name we had chosen for our baby.

Going through infertility is the hardest thing I've ever done in my life. Facing the countless friends, family and strangers everyday that are pregnant has made everyday life a constant battle. The death of my two babies has made me into a different person and I miss the innocent person I used to be. In some ways I am thankful that I never knew someone who had miscarried, because at least I didn't say something insensitive to them afterward. I understand that people want to comfort you in a time like that but I got so tired of hearing that, "It wasn't God's will" or, "God has a way of protecting his own" or better yet, "At least it happened now before you really got attached to it."

I am a very private person now because I hate the pity that I feel from everyone because they know my situation. The thing to remember is if you ever know someone who goes through the loss of a pregnancy; it is not just a miscarriage, a baby has died.

Update:

I am happy to say that Charmaine had her second Invetro-fertilization cycle and is now ten weeks pregnant.

~Dawn~

My name is Dawn. I have had two miscarriages that have been really hard for me. Six months after I got married I found out that I was pregnant. We were so excited that we told all of our family right away. Two days later while at school I started cramping a little, so I went to the restroom and that is when I started gushing blood. I knew something was really wrong. I drove home and called my Doctor. He made me come in to his office for an exam. Sure enough I was right. Something was wrong and I miscarried.

I had to go to the hospital that night for an emergency D&C. I was so scared because I didn't know what to expect. My husband asked the Doctor why he thought this happened and he told him there could have been many reasons why I miscarried. I was devastated. I was almost four and a half weeks along.

We continued to try to get pregnant, but nothing happened for a long time. A year and a half later I found out I was pregnant a second time. I was so excited but so scared at the same time. I had not had a full period but had spotted for about six days. So, I took two home pregnancy tests and they were positive.

I called the Doctor the next day because I had started spotting a little bit and I was scared to death. He told me to come to his office the next day for a work up. When I got there I was still spotting, so he decided to do an ultrasound to make sure everything looked okay. When he did the ultrasound everything was fine. I was four weeks along. I was so excited when he told me everything was fine. He had me come back two weeks later for another checkup since I continued to spot on and off. At that visit he did another ultrasound and again, everything was fine. We even got to see a little heartbeat. He said the baby was the right size for six weeks along. He told me since everything looked fine for me to come back in four weeks.

Four weeks later I went back. At this visit he did another ultrasound and I knew something was wrong. At the other two ultrasounds he would start explaining what we saw right away, but this time he just kept looking around and didn't say anything. Finally he says that there was no heartbeat and that the baby had died. At that point I was ten weeks along. When he told me that my baby was gone I felt like I was going to die. My husband was not even there because he was out of town working, so his mom was with me. I could not think of the best way to tell him that our baby had died. The Doctor told me he wanted to wait and do my D&C the next day when my husband could be there with me.

I could not stop crying all day. My husband came home that night from his trip. The hardest thing I had to do was look him in his eyes and tell him our baby had died. We held each other and cried together. I had to have my D&C done at noon the next day. I just could not believe it happened to me again.

This time when we asked the Doctor what happened he had an answer for us. He said there was a spot of dried blood blocking the blood flow to the baby's heart and that is what caused my baby's heart to quit beating. He said it should not happen again, but he could not guarantee it.

It has been eight months and I am still having a hard time when I see people with their babies. I catch myself thinking that my baby would have been about that age. We are trying, but no luck so far. I could not imagine how much pain some women go through when they are further along or even lose their baby at birth. I still cry sometimes, but everyday gets a little bit easier for us.

Update:

Please feel free to e-mail Dawn and visit her web sites. They are in memory of her two babies that she has lost to miscarriage. Her e-mail address is dawnp22@prodigy.net and her web sites are as follows:

*www.geocities.com/mommy2twoangels/codyspage.html
www.geocities.com/mommy2twoangels/index.html*

~Debbie~

In March of 1997 my husband and I decided to start a family. We had been married almost five years and were ready. I had irregular cycles so it was difficult to determine when I was ovulating. I figured I would need medication to help me along.

In August of the same year I was scheduled with my Doctor for an exam and to discuss getting pregnant. My husband went with me to the appointment in case the Doctor wanted to talk with him as well. During my exam the Doctor decided to do an internal ultrasound to check things out.

He suspected I was pregnant, but didn't tell me about his suspicions. I heard him say, "Well, you're pregnant." Pregnant? Me? All I could ask was if he was sure. I was in shock. Total shock. He showed me the picture on the screen and asked his nurse to get my husband. I asked him how far along I was and he said about five weeks. I was crying and he said, "Bless your heart." I was thinking we'd have problems getting pregnant and couldn't believe how easy it was for me. My husband said there were a few nurses that came looking for him in the waiting room. When he saw them he got worried that something was

wrong. He came in the examination room and walked around the table so the Doctor could show him the ultrasound picture.

When he was told I was pregnant all he could manage to say to me was, "Way to go", while he rubbed my shoulder. He was as shocked as I was. After I dressed, the Doctor told me he wanted to see me again in two weeks. He would know then if it was a "good" pregnancy. What was a "good pregnancy?" The nurse told me there's a chance it was a bad pregnancy and I could miscarry. Miscarry? Her statement worried me, but she told me not to worry. I had no history of miscarriage, or pregnancy for that matter, and unless I began spotting things would be fine.

My husband and I floated up to the front desk to schedule our next appointment. We just couldn't believe it. We were going to be parents. We went to a bookstore and bought a baby name book, and the book "What to Expect When You're Expecting." We began immediately searching out the perfect name for our little one who would arrive in April of 1998. Our families and friends celebrated our happiness.

Two days later I began to notice some brownish spotting. I was a bit worried and talked with a co-worker about it. She told me if it was brownish in color not to worry, but if it became red I needed to call my Doctor. Well, it did become red and I had more bleeding. That night I experienced lower back pains and pressure. The next day I stayed home from work and called the hospital because my Doctor's office wasn't open yet.

The nurse I spoke with was very calm and helped me relax a little. She asked me many questions about cramping and bleeding. She told me if I started cramping

that could mean a miscarriage. She said many women bleed during pregnancy and things are fine. She said if I was miscarrying there was nothing that could be done and it wasn't my fault. During this whole conversation I was crying. She told me if the bleeding got worse to call my Doctor.

After I hung up the phone I just cried and cried. I tried to relax, but all I could think of was my baby and how it looked as though I was losing the most precious thing to me. After my Doctor's office opened I called wanting to speak to my Doctor. All I could do was leave a message and I was told he'd get back to me. I was hysterically crying and the nurse was trying to get me to calm down. I was finally able to catch my breath and we ended the conversation. All I did was cry and sleep.

A few hours later an associate of my Doctor's called to speak with me. He asked me questions about the bleeding and cramping. I didn't have any cramping. He told me basically the same thing the first nurse told me concerning the miscarriage. He was great at calming me down. He told me a million things have to happen to create a baby and if one thing is off it can result in a defect in the pregnancy and the body miscarries. It is nature's way of selection.

I was supposed to watch for any tissue that might pass. He told me to just try to relax. He also said if I was miscarrying nothing could be done to stop it because I was only five weeks along. Once again I was told it wasn't my fault if I miscarried. At the end of the conversation I felt a little better, but I knew in my heart I was going to lose my baby. For the next four days I was miserable. I couldn't concentrate at work and all I did was sleep and cry.

Everyone around me tried to lend their support, but nothing really worked for me.

About three days into the bleeding I passed something resembling a sac. I called to schedule an appointment with my Doctor for later that week. My husband kept telling me I was fine and so was the pregnancy. He really believed what he was saying, but I knew better. At the appointment the Doctor confirmed what I knew to be true. I had miscarried. I cried and cried. The Doctor told me he was sorry and gave me a hug. I was scheduled again to see him a couple months later for a checkup. At that appointment I was told to wait another cycle before we began trying to get pregnant again.

The grieving process I went through was tremendous. Some people think you can just move on after a miscarriage happens, but you can't. You just can't. I cried every day, then a couple times a week, then off and on during the month and now to just occasionally. I went through a difficult period when my baby was due. Time has made it easier to deal with, but the pain is still there. I blamed myself for the miscarriage and still find myself feeling guilty.

I may have been pregnant again in November of 1997, but never was tested because I wanted to get past that five-week mark. I thought if I could make it that far things would be fine. I had the same symptoms, as with my other pregnancy, so I felt sure I was pregnant. Well, half way through what I believe to be the fifth week I started with the brown spotting again and then had more bleeding.

In November of 1998 I changed Doctors and currently take 100mgs of Clomid to regulate my cycles and make me ovulate so I have a better chance of getting pregnant. It's

been two years since we began trying for a baby and my desire to be a mom has only increased. I long to have a child of my own and still have difficulty dealing with others around me having babies. I'm happy for these women and their families. I would never wish harm on any of them. I just can't wait for my chance.

~Diane~

I got married in October of 1996 when I was thirty-six years old. I have never had a problem getting pregnant before, as I have had a couple of abortions, which I will address later. I had been on the pill on and off for ten years. My husband and I started to try to get pregnant in February and in May I found myself with a positive pregnancy test. I was elated.

I had a weird feeling. For some reason I had this dreaded fear of miscarriage, even though I didn't think it could happen to me. I went for a routine check up at ten weeks and the Doctor told me there was no heartbeat. I was devastated. I had to have a D&C in the Doctors office that day and went home to bed.

The next day I went to work and thanked God no one in my office had known I was pregnant. This is where things went wrong. I had started trying to get pregnant at the same time as my best friend and my sister-in-law. Both of them went on to have successful pregnancies, and I miscarried. I could not see either one of them. They would call me and I would not return their calls. I could not look at pregnant women or women with newborns. I missed all

of my family functions where there were kids. I felt, since I had a couple of abortions, that this was my punishment.

I was thirty-six at the time and realized my time was running out. I was completely panicked. I had let myself get fat. I was so depressed all the time. All I wanted was to be pregnant again. My only focus was on having a baby. The more I focused on it the more it wouldn't become a reality.

After six months of trying I went to a Reproductive Endocrinologist (RE). I started on injections of Fertinex. My Reproductive Endocrinologist (RE) told me I was not producing follicles and did not do well on the Fertinex, so I switched to Humegon. I did get pregnant but it was not a viable pregnancy, my progesterone too low. I took two shots of Methotrexate to terminate the pregnancy.

My husband and I went to Europe a couple of weeks later. I needed a break from fertility drugs. I was going to start my first In vitro-fertilization (IVF) cycle the next month. When I returned from vacation I found out I was pregnant. I saw the positive test and started crying, not because I was happy, but because I thought I would miscarry again.

I am thirty-eight years old and am now thirty weeks pregnant with a great pregnancy. However, there is not one day that goes by that I don't look at my underwear for blood. Having lost two pregnancies has made me appreciate this pregnancy and realize how I am blessed. I will not forget what I went through to get here. I still think of myself as infertile. I believe after going through infertility you learn to appreciate your pregnancy and not a day goes by that I don't thank God for this miracle.

There are a few things that I did that I believe helped me get pregnant again. I went to a support group. There were five of us in the group all with different problems. It helped me tremendously. Three out of the five of us are pregnant. I also went on a low dose of Zoloft for my depression, which helped take the edge off. My anger and depression was so much that I couldn't think clearly. I started an exercise program, which helped me physically and mentally. I started going to a chiropractor who really helped me with the chronic back and hip pain that I feel was a result of the stress I put on myself.

~Karen~

My first pregnancy started out with seemingly no complications. My husband and I had been married for three years and were looking forward to becoming parents. At ten weeks I went in for my Doctor's appointment and was able to hear my baby's heartbeat. We were so excited that everything was going so well. I wasn't having any morning sickness, fatigue, breast tenderness or any other of the "horrible" symptoms of pregnancy.

At fourteen weeks, however, everything drastically changed. I went in for what I thought was my routine monthly appointment. When the resident tried to get the heartbeat, he couldn't find it. He went to get his attending and she couldn't find it either. They both said, in effect, that there was nothing to worry about. It wasn't uncommon to not pick up a heartbeat at fourteen weeks. I thought it was a little strange, however, because the heartbeat had been so strong a month earlier. Just to be safe, they said I should go in the next day for an ultrasound. I was being seen in a family practice clinic that didn't have it's own ultrasound machine and had to be referred to the obstetrics department.

I took the afternoon off from work and my husband, who was a student at the time, was able to join me. We went in for the ultrasound and the technician didn't say a word. I was able to see the screen, but wasn't quite sure what I was looking at. I kept thinking I was seeing two heads, but just figured that I couldn't decipher one end from the other. The technician kept asking who my Doctor was and went out to try to get a hold of him.

He couldn't be reached so an obstetrician came in the room and looked at the ultrasound. The first thing he said was, "Are you aware that you are carrying twins?" We were completely shocked. There is no history of twins in my family or my husband's. Then came the big blow. Neither one of them has a heartbeat. We sat there in shock for quite a while, during which the obstetrician went over our options. First, we could go home and wait for the miscarriage to happen and come back for a re-check when I stopped bleeding, and if necessary, a D&C would be performed. Second, we could schedule a D&C for the following Monday, but to be aware that I could start miscarrying over the weekend. Or, third, have a D&C that night and get it over with.

Option three seemed the only option for me. I couldn't emotionally handle going home, being pregnant and knowing that I was going to lose my babies. I had the D&C under general anesthesia and there were no complications other than the Anesthesiologist, yet another resident, couldn't get an IV going until the third try. My husband, a third year medical student, could have done a better job. I stayed home all weekend recovering and didn't go into work on Monday.

When I got back on Tuesday many women said, "I know exactly how you feel. I had a miscarriage too." It

didn't help. All of these women had children my age and how could they possibly know when it had been so long ago? Had it happened that exact way? Finding out you were carrying twins and neither one had a heartbeat at the same time.

My Doctor recommended waiting three months before we started to try again. That was the longest three months of my life. It seemed that every other woman was pregnant. Why were they so lucky? Why not me? These questions resounded over and over again in my head. I was very upset that God would do this to me. I turned to Him in my grief and was extremely comforted until I saw another little baby or pregnant woman. It took six months of trying before I was able to conceive again. Only then did I stop asking questions to God and only offered up pleas that this baby would be okay.

I wasn't able to emotionally attach myself to the baby. At eleven weeks gestation I had an ultrasound. We saw that there was only one baby and that his heart was beating strong. I was still hesitant to get attached. I thought that if I did, I'd lose this baby too. At twenty weeks I had another ultrasound, which let us know that it was "most likely" a boy and that everything looked great. I still couldn't get attached.

At thirty-nine weeks I was induced due to some complications from pre-eclampsia and delivered a healthy, happy baby boy. He was 7 pounds, 6 ounces and 20.5 inches long. The perfect baby. Miracles can and do happen when God allows them to. Now my son is three years old.

We have been trying to have a second child since December 1997. Due to a lot of traveling on my part and

the stress of selling our home and moving halfway across the country, I wasn't worried about not being pregnant six months into trying. Based on my previous obstetrician's advice I went in August of 1998 to see an infertility specialist. She was fresh out of residency and wanted us to undergo many, many expensive tests. We told her that our insurance didn't cover any of this and could we go a little less extreme route?

My husband, also fresh out of residency, didn't understand my problem. She's just trying to rule everything out, he said. We waited two months so that I was in town for all of the tests that she wanted to run. My husband finally convinced me that it would be better to get them over with at once. Two days after scheduling all of the tests, I found out that I was pregnant. I was so excited. We figured we had just jumped a little too soon.

Four days later, however, I started spotting. I went in to an obstetrician in my hometown and an ultrasound showed that there was no embryo. I was devastated but figured that this wasn't what God wanted for our lives at that time. Knowing that there are many early miscarriages, I wasn't concerned.

Six weeks later I had another positive pregnancy test. One week after it was positive I started to bleed. I didn't even bother to call the Doctor. My husband said that maybe the test was a false positive. Even though there's a very slight chance of that happening, I thought maybe he was right. I had two miscarriages in two months. But they were both very early and I thought that maybe I wasn't really pregnant. That was the only way I was able to emotionally deal with it. Besides, I had to take care of my soon to be three year old and a new home.

In February I went in for my annual gynecological exam and talked to the nurse practitioner about my history. We'd been trying to get pregnant for over a year. She talked to the obstetrician and they decided that I should have my hormone levels checked. The tests all came back within normal range. As I was getting ready to have my period again I started to feel nauseous. No big deal, that happens with me sometimes before my period. Four days before my period should have started I had some spotting. Then the spotting stopped. So did my heart.

I thought that perhaps I was pregnant again. I did a home pregnancy test and there were two pink lines staring me in the face. Again, we had jumped the gun. My husband and I were so happy, until ten days later when I started to spot. No big deal. That happens to a lot of pregnant women and 50% of the time they go on to have successful pregnancies. Three days later, however, I found myself in the emergency room of our local hospital with bright red bleeding.

The ultrasound confirmed my worst nightmare. There was no embryo, only a very large endometrial lining. Again, my Doctor gave me three choices. This time I opted to wait it out. After all, this was my third pregnancy in six months and I hadn't had any complications with the other two miscarriages. Now I'm waiting to go back to see him to make sure that all of the tissue has passed so that I don't have to have a D&C.

The next step is to figure out why I'm having so many early miscarriages. I'm hoping that we'll be able to get pregnant again. If not, I have to believe that it's not what God has planned for our lives. We're sure that we will add another member to our family within the next two years.

Hopefully, God will bless us with a healthy, happy baby. If not, we will be researching adoption alternatives.

There are so many unwanted children out there. It's hard to believe for those of us who so desperately want to have a child that anyone wouldn't want one, but it's a fact of life. Those children deserve a chance to have a loving home as much as any other child. We pray that God will bless our family with another child, whether through pregnancy or adoption. But we will accept whatever His will is for our family.

Update:

I am happy to announce that Karen has delivered a beautiful baby girl named Emma Claire. She was born on May 5, 2000. She weighed 6 pounds 13 ounces and was 18 ½ inches long.

~Kellie~

My name is Kellie and I am twenty-five years old. My husband and I have been trying to have a baby for two years. In the last year we have had three miscarriages. After the first one, the Doctors were not concerned, nor were we.

Seven months later we got pregnant again, but we had another miscarriage. My Doctor decided to put me on Clomid because my cycles were not regular. Well, we got pregnant again four months after the second miscarriage. This time my Doctor did some blood tests and discovered that I have an autoimmune disease. It causes my blood to clot on the placenta, which causes a miscarriage. The treatment for this is to take one baby aspirin a day as soon as I get a positive pregnancy test. I have to start heparin injections every twelve hours until thirty-four weeks. That is if I carry the baby that long.

There is a risk of high blood pressure, but to me that would be all worth it. The pregnancy will be considered a high-risk pregnancy all the way through. I pray daily to just have one healthy child. Boy or girl it doesn't matter.

Update:

Kellie is now twenty-two weeks pregnant and everything seems to be going fine. She had an ultrasound done and elected not to find out what she is having. She wants to be surprised.

~Klaasje~

My nickname is Klaasje. I am thirty-nine years old and my wish to become a mother began thirteen years ago when my brother had his first child. I have been seeing the same man for ten years and he was very much afraid of having his own children. We had a lot of discussions and especially lots of tears.

When I turned thirty-five I knew I had to make a decision about the problem with my friend, who was still afraid to have children. I decided to go see a therapist. He really helped us out and after some real serious sessions together, my friend agreed on trying to have a child as soon as we moved into a bigger house.

In August of 1995 we began to try to conceive. We had to wait half a year, but in early January of 1996, I conceived for the first time and I felt like the luckiest woman on earth. I felt a lot of nausea all day long and completely exhausted, but other than that I felt great.

At around six weeks I started to bleed. I felt like there was an earthquake going on, like I lost the most precious thing I had ever gained in my life. This was my first

miscarriage and it came as a complete shock. It took me quite some time to be able to see the sun shine again.

Not long after I had become pregnant again. I was happy, but careful, knowing this could end the same way. It did happen again and around the same stage in pregnancy. That same year it happened for the third time and now my regular Doctor agreed on sending me to a gynecologist.

My new Doctor did some tests and found nothing was wrong. As I had no faith in his diagnosis, I started to visit a naturopathic Tibetan Doctor. He told me my kidneys were very weak and he started to treat me with herb medication, a few diet-rules and some rules for daily life.

Although I wasn't cured, my partner and I started to try to conceive again. As I was in my late thirties, I felt I had no time to waste. But I kept having early miscarriages up to nine times. The last time was very hopeful because I was pregnant for nine weeks, the longest ever. This was in the summer of 1998. I haven't been pregnant since then.

A few months ago my Tibetan Doctor told me I was healthy again and my kidneys are cured. Maybe there is a light at the end of the tunnel.

During my last pregnancy I discovered the message boards from Parents Place on the Internet. This was a very good discovery, as it was a place to turn to when I was pregnant, when I had a miscarriage and now when I try to conceive again. There are all different types of message boards for every occasion. It's so good to have buddies around and being able to grieve and vent together. Without it, I would have been lost.

Another thing that helped me a lot is that I did a lot of rituals to say good-bye to my tiny babies. It helped me to start again after a loss. I know I only have a small chance of becoming a mother because of my history and my age. This really hurts a lot. I have been waiting for so long. It would break my heart if I were to stay childless. But I feel my life isn't useless, maybe there is a purpose why this is happening. I pray all childless mothers will get peace of mind one day.

Update:

Klassje has created a beautiful web site called "Our Tiny Stars in Heaven." This web site deals with many rituals that women all over the world have done to say "good-bye" to their lost children.

Please feel free to visit her web site at <http://pages.ivillage.com/pp/klaasje> or e-mail her at klaasje@ivillage.com.

~Kristy~

We have lost four of our precious children to miscarriage. I cannot begin to express the pain and sorrow we feel. Maybe telling our four sad stories will help. It all started about six years ago when my daughter Samantha was almost two years old. We decided we would start trying for a second child, although I had some problems with pre-eclampsia and IUGR in late pregnancy with my first child. I had no problems carrying her in early pregnancy and had actually conceived by accident while I was on the pill.

We tried for a year and a half with no results. I was having irregular periods and my hormones went crazy after I went off the pill. My body had endured so many changes and none of them good ones. My first approach was to find out what had happened to my body and why I was gaining weight for no reason, losing some of my hair, had some acne and hair growing under my chin. I went to three Reproductive Endocrinologists (RE) along this quest. The third diagnosed me with PolyCystic Ovarian Syndrome and higher than normal Adrenal Gland secretions, the others just blamed me for it. But never having had a weight

problem in my life and knowing I was eating hardly anything, I knew there was more to it.

We finally went to my obstetrician to check for infertility. They ran a bunch more tests on me and told us the chances were slim that we would ever even conceive a child. She said a million to one in fact. She said that I would not likely respond to Clomid because of the combination of hormonal issues I had, but would refer me to experts at another Medical Center. The night before Easter in 1996 we thought we had been blessed with a miracle. I was pregnant. We were beyond thrilled and thought our prayers had been answered.

Because of my irregular periods they sent me for an ultrasound right away to get accurate dating on the pregnancy. They said the embryo was in the early part of the fifth week and all looked fine. There was no heartbeat yet, but it was possible it was just too early. However, that weekend I began to spot. We called the Doctor immediately and were told to just relax and come in the next day for tests. I had blood drawn the following day and again forty-eight hours later to see if the pregnancy hormone had doubled as it should have. Talk about stress waiting to see what the results would be. It did not double so they sent me for another ultrasound to be sure and they told us that our baby had died.

I had a D&C at the hospital that night. They understood our pain and we opted to bury our child in the SHARE burial plot in the city we live in. It was soothing to know our child would not end up as biohazard garbage.

We waited three months to start to try again after that, and figured it would not likely repeat itself. Doctors normally tell you most women don't repeat miscarriages.

In August of 1996 we were thrilled to find out we were pregnant again. Two of our closest friends were pregnant at the exact same time and it seemed so meant to be. Only for us, it wasn't. A couple weeks later I started to bleed again. Knowing this was not a good sign I begged the Doctor to do a progesterone test so that maybe if it was low we could save the pregnancy. He said it was not likely, but did another Quantitative Beta HCG and an ultrasound to see how things looked. The HCG level had dropped and the ultrasound showed another baby at five weeks with no heartbeat. The embryo and yolk sac had shrunk in size.

We were again devastated and disappointed. I was in the day surgery at the same hospital as before, only the nurses were crass and insensitive this time. They kept me away from my husband more than I was with him. It was basically McDonalds drive through surgery, it made a devastating experience that much worse. As if that was not enough, the Doctor had a very poor bedside manner.

We switched Doctors and I was tested for progesterone deficiency. It was determined I had it. We thought we had solved the problem and these little pills I would take two times a day would finally mean a baby. I found out I was pregnant again in December of 1996. We were again excited, thinking that this time would be different. Everything went fine for the first few weeks and we really thought we would be okay. I was farther along this time than the others. Unfortunately, on January 1, 1997, I started to bleed again.

The next day we had an ultrasound and it revealed that we had a seven-week embryo with a heartbeat. We were thrilled and worried because the sac looked to be too small. We were sent home to wait and see. We hoped and prayed. I slept with a cross on my stomach that whole night praying

that God would not take another child from us. When I woke up the next morning I began to cramp and without being too graphic, I never got to see my baby, but I held it in my hand. Thankfully no surgery was necessary. Again, we were both devastated.

Jarrad stayed home for over a week unable to deal with work and I was a basket case. Shortly after, Jarrad made the mistake of saying, "It must have been a meant to be thing." My anger over that caused me to turn away from him and everyone else who loved me. I sank into deep depression. I quit my job and avoided everyone I knew. I did not want to live in my world anymore. It almost cost us our marriage, but somehow we managed to find each other again.

In July of 1997 we found out I was pregnant once again. We were terrified and worried. We went to the Doctor's office right away. They did an ultrasound and so far we were okay. The ultrasound revealed the embryo was five weeks and six days with a heartbeat and a sac that was just right. I continued to take my pills and all seemed fine as I counted each passing week. Our next Doctor's visit was September 5th and we expected to hear the baby's heartbeat. We were beyond thrilled. I was supposed to be just under eleven weeks. As the Doctor listened, we heard nothing. He explained that it was possible that it was too early, but ordered an ultrasound nonetheless. We were scared but hopeful. The ultrasound revealed that the fetus had died in the ninth week. It was as if my heart had been ripped out of my chest.

The Doctor asked me if I wanted to go for a D&E, which unlike the D&C, is the same as an abortion. They suck the baby out of the uterus and it is normally dismembered in the process. I loved my child and could

not bear that fate for it, so I refused the surgery and opted to carry my child knowing it was already dead until I miscarried naturally. I carried my baby like this for nine days. On the day it happened I had awoke at 7:00am to get my daughter ready for the school bus and was cramping really bad. Soon after it turned to heavy bleeding.

I woke up my husband who was in bed following a nightshift at work and told him the bleeding was a lot more than before and to call the Doctor's office. He did and they said I should come in. However, no more than a second after he hung up did the blood begin to pour out of me with the force of urine that had been held all day. I had him call back because we thought I should go right to the emergency room. The receptionist told him to still bring me in to the office, assuming we were exaggerating about the blood loss I was experiencing. On the way to the office I bled through all of my clothes and a towel that we had folded on the seat of the car.

When we finally arrived, I started immediately bleeding on their floor. I was taken to the exam room where I removed my clothing and saw all of the blood clots I had passed drop to the floor, and even more blood still pouring out. They put me on the exam table and left for twenty minutes while I hemorrhaged. While we sat there a nurse actually opened the door and saw the bloody mess on the floor and gasped, "Oh my Goodness!" and shut the door never to return.

The Doctor walking in said I should have gone to the emergency room and informed me I needed an emergency D&E. At that time they took my blood pressure and it was low. The Doctor left and another hour passed while they messed around with this and that making arrangements for the surgery, while I sat there and bled. In the meantime, I

went into shock and felt lightheaded and sweaty. A nurse came in after all that time and handed us the paperwork for the surgery and said, "Here, go over and get the surgery done." I told her I was not capable of walking at this point and had no clothing, so she decided to transport me by wheelchair.

Another half-hour passed while they got a wheelchair to wheel me to the hospital across the street. I went to get off the table and almost passed out on my husband. They realized I was in grave danger at this point and finally called for an ambulance. My husband did not think I would still be alive by the time they arrived and spent the time begging me to stay awake, praying for me not to close my eyes. The paramedics arrived and could not put an IV in my arm because my veins had collapsed. My lips had turned blue and I was pale white. My blood pressure was 80/0. I was close to death and had lost a lot of blood. Estimates would later show that over three units of blood was lost.

I ended up getting to the hospital just in time and having the surgery. I was able to handle it emotionally because I knew my life depended on it. I had not done it just to be done with it. I tried to give my baby the best chance. I now have four children buried in the SHARE plot and most of my heart there too. My love for them will never die. We felt hopeless, hurt, cheated and really didn't see any light at the end of all this pain to make it worth it. Everyday was hard to face for me. I avoided all babies and pregnant women like the plague because the hurt was too deep. I did not wish them ill, but I found I was angry that women carry pregnancies with no problems all the time and I couldn't. Not that I wished this on them but I don't understand why us? I had lost all my faith in God and

everything else I ever believed in. I was just to the point where I didn't know what to do.

We decided to try one last time, with a new Doctor. She did many tests to determine the reason for the losses. She did tests on antibodies that cause blood clots, genetic testing, a Hysterosalpenogram (HSG), to check for scar tissue, hormone tests, etc. It was determined that I had low progesterone levels and was given a prescription for Clomid to make my cycle more normal and resolve the progesterone issues. We were still in a lot of pain by that time and were not ready to try again. This was in January of 1998. In May of 1998 we decided to start trying on my next cycle, but my periods stopped and we figured we must not be able to get pregnant again and gave up.

I got a new job, which was to be the first real career job of my life. The next day I threw up in the sink while brushing my teeth. Ironically, August 5, 1998, I found out I was pregnant again. We were terrified because we had not taken the Clomid. I went the next day for an ultrasound and tests. The Beta HCG count was low because it was so early. The progesterone was okay at that time and the ultrasound showed nothing but a sac. They were worried I was going to lose the baby so they ordered more tests for three days later. They came out fine, but they wanted me to come back in another four days to get tested again and have another ultrasound. The ultrasound this time showed an embryo and the Beta HCG levels were normal. My progesterone had dropped so I was put on the progesterone cream.

By the time the first prescription was done I was swollen and bleeding inside from a reaction to it. We decided to start progesterone shots after that point. Jarrad was taught how to give me the shots, and I had to have

them in the back of my hip every night until I was thirteen weeks along, if I made it that far. We lived in fear. Every week we went for an ultrasound and progesterone test. A week later we saw the heartbeat for the first time. Every week I went in and waited to see if the baby would be okay, wondering if the screen would come up and show that my baby had died.

Instead the baby grew. The umbilical cord had attached to a good spot at the back of the uterus. The next week we saw a very active baby. We saw our baby, growing week by week and our hearts were filled with joy, but still fear. Our last appointment was scary for us. Our twelve weeks had passed and the baby was thriving, but would we like the new Doctor we were going to see? She had just completed her residency. We left the hospital and cried for joy because we made it past twelve weeks. We stopped the shots the next week and I was so scared we would lose our baby.

We saw the new Doctor and were supposed to hear the heartbeat. I was so terrified when we didn't. But to reassure me, the Doctor did a quick ultrasound in the office and the baby was fine and active as usual. We did a progesterone test and all seemed fine.

At our next appointment we still did not hear a heartbeat yet so another ultrasound was done. It seems that the baby was just very busy and positioned out of range. I have a tipped uterus to begin with, which played a big part.

I was sixteen weeks when we finally heard the sound of our baby's heartbeat. We were also feeling movement already. He or she was a busy baby. We had four weeks to wait until the next appointment and the waiting was killing me. At that time we had another ultrasound. I felt like

something might be wrong because the technician was very quiet. I left the ultrasound in tears. They said my Doctor would talk with me about the ultrasound.

At my appointment with my Doctor he confirmed that there was a problem. I had low amniotic fluid and was put on immediate bed rest. That was not the best news three weeks before Christmas. I had another ultrasound and it showed no improvement so I was sent back to the medical center for a consult. After the second ultrasound they told us they have seen the baby's kidneys and bladder, so they knew that was not the problem. I read in a book I bought that if it is not due to the baby's bladder or kidneys, it is likely a placental problem. It said that it would often be treated with baby aspirin or magnesium supplements. I started taking baby aspirin figuring it could not hurt. There was improvement by the next ultrasound two weeks later. The level went from eight to ten, which is still low, but not as bad.

I stayed on modified bed rest and took the baby aspirin for the remainder of the pregnancy. After my twenty-eighth week I had a fetal non-stress tests and Doctors appointments every week. The ultrasounds were encouraging and showed improvement each time. We found out at our thirty-week visit that we were having another little girl. I did not repeat any signs of toxemia this time. I think the baby aspirin was what helped there.

We had Sydney Elayne on April 5, 1999 by C-section. When I saw her I could not stop crying. We had lived in fear the entire pregnancy. I was afraid she would be little like Samantha Lynne was from IUGR. Samantha was only 4 pounds 5 ounces at full term and was born by emergency C-section after they started to lose her heartbeat. I cried so much that day. Jarrad and Samantha were so happy as they

looked at little Sydney, who was 8 pounds 2 ounces, almost double the weight as Samantha was. She looked just like Samantha. We finally had our baby. Will we try again? I doubt it, but we hate to rule it out.

I am still not totally healed from the four babies we lost. While Sydney is wonderful, she does not replace them. In fact on Mothers Day I went to visit them and I thanked my four angels for giving me Sydney. How did I get to a point I could bear it? Two things helped me. Online I found a place to meet other women who had been through what we had. I still do a weekly Infertility and Miscarriage Support chat. It helps me get through the rough times and it helps me to reach out to others who are hurting. Sometimes I just give information, others I give emotional help. I did not want anyone to feel alone as I had when I was going through this. The other way, I realized that my babies are not gone forever. I will see them again someday.

Throughout this whole thing I lost my fear of death. I know I will see my babies again in heaven. But for now my place is here, to raise my two wonderful girls. I still miss them every day of my life, but it hurts a little less knowing they are watching over us.

In Loving Memory of "Our Four Precious Children" 4-96, 9-96, 1-97, & 9-97

***We will love the four of you,
our dearest children,
with all of our hearts.***

***When we lost all of you
we lost pieces of us too. We will never forget you***

*and never stop loving you.
All of you came from the love we share for each other
and will always be a part of that love.*

*If we ever do have another child
it won't ever replace any of you,
for each of you are unique in our hearts
and that is where you will forever live.*

We love you always... Mommy & Daddy

Update:

Kristy has lost her fifth pregnancy, this time due to a problem within the egg. She says they are not planning to try again and are handling the decision well. Kristy has created a web site which includes infertility, miscarriage and PCO support links. Please feel free to visit her web site at www.geocities.com/berkihiser or contact her through e-mail at kberkihiser@hotmail.com.

~Krystin~

I am nineteen years old and live with my husband of seven months. When I was fifteen years old I met a young man whom I thought would be the one I would marry. I fell head over heels for him. I had been in love once before and felt the same for this guy that I did with the other. We will call this guy "Jake".

As time went on I figured out who "Jake" really was. He wasn't this great gift that I had thought. He was an abusive beast that I, unfortunately, had to learn first hand. "Jake" didn't take no for an answer. If he wanted it, no matter what it was, he would get it. It didn't matter what he had to do to get it either. No one told him what he could and could not do.

For months I lived in fear. What would he do to me tomorrow? Would there even be a tomorrow? Each day that we spent together, I got a little more depressed and a little more hateful. I was no good, he told me, and eventually, I believed him. I didn't care anymore. I didn't want any more of it and I was ready to do whatever I had to, to get out. "Jake" had his times with me. He had no problem hurting me, physically, sexually, or emotionally.

It didn't matter. "It couldn't hurt me too bad if it felt good to him." I heard that from him too often.

At sixteen years old I became pregnant for the first time. I was scared and kept it to myself until I told him, and only him. He was angry with me, but eventually accepted it. He said this world could use another real man. But, the beatings didn't stop. I eventually lost the baby. He told me that I would never have children until I could give "him" a child. He swore to me that he would find me if I ever got pregnant by another man. I was ashamed of myself and never told anyone. I just let it go. I eventually left him.

The pain would go away eventually, I told myself. And it did. About a year later I got pregnant again. I had unprotected sex. Nonetheless, I was really excited. Soon after, "Jake" found out and kept his word. He tracked me down and beat me up. Telling me over and over he could not allow me to have a devil child. "Jake" wasn't the father; therefore it was a devil child. About a month later, I lost that baby also. And, like before, I let it go.

I met my husband to be in July of 1998 in his hometown. We had met once before. I had a one-night stand with him. We spent the day together before having intercourse, but after the night was over, we said our good-byes and went our separate ways. A month later I was pregnant. We decided that we belonged together and that we had every reason to be together. A month later he came to live with me and we were married that September.

In October I had started feeling a lot of uncomfortable pain in my uterine area. It felt like someone kept flinging a rubber band at me. I started to bleed and continued to do so for over two weeks. My husband was concerned for me and asked that I see a Doctor. I didn't like Doctors, but

agreed to go anyway. The Doctor did an exam on me, my first ever. The ultrasound showed no fetus. I had a lot of open sores, as well as a number of cysts. She said it looked as if the other fetuses had acted like an acid and literally ate away at the lining of my uterus. I wasn't given a good chance of having children, ever. Not something that is easy for a woman to tell her new husband who was very anxious and excited about having children.

It tore me apart because I felt like a failure. It almost ended our relationship. I had become so depressed. After missing my period in January and February, I decided to return to the Doctor. She ran a pregnancy test and it came up positive. The ultrasound a week later showed the fetus had stopped growing around the sixth week. I had another miscarriage and another failure. The Doctor had set up some appointments for me with the nearest Obstetrician. She wanted to see what they could do for me. Even if all it would do was make the pain in my uterus go away.

Not long after, I became pregnant again. Another ultrasound showed a fetus, alive and well. It is now April of 1999 and I am in my second trimester, sixteenth week. I was given several due dates, all in early October. I keep an ultrasound picture of my baby in my wallet at all times. Two arms, two legs, a head and a big pot belly, as I like to call it. He or she likes to move and likes to make me eat a lot. So far, all is well.

~Paisley~

My name is Paisley and I will be twenty-five years old in August. I have been married for five years and have had at least two early miscarriages, although I suspect the number is greater than that. My first two possible miscarriages occurred when I was in high school. I had a positive pregnancy test followed by a very heavy, painful period.

Prior to the second miscarriage I contracted Mononucleosis, so I don't know if that is what caused it or not. I got married when I was nineteen. My husband and I decided to wait about three years before having a baby. I got pregnant on the first try in September of 1996; consequently it was only two weeks after I had to have a Laparoscopy to check for Endometriosis, which I don't have, by the way. My Doctor had told us to wait twenty-one days to resume intercourse, but we only waited twelve days. Our son will be two in June.

In January, we made a New Year's Resolution to have another baby. We conceived on our first try again when we were celebrating our fifth anniversary. I had this strange feeling even before I got pregnant that something was

going to be wrong. My husband dismissed it as nonsense. But I was right; about five days after I got a positive home pregnancy test I started to spot. I spotted during my first pregnancy, so at first I didn't get too concerned about it. The spotting only lasted for a couple of hours and then disappeared. For the next day and a half there was nothing. Then my son fell and hurt himself, and I got very upset about it. That night I started bleeding very heavily. The Quantitative Beta HCG test taken the next morning was already down to zero. I was instructed to wait until my next cycle to try to conceive again. The date of my miscarriage was January 28, 1999. I was four and a half weeks pregnant.

I had a short cycle in February and I suspect that I did not ovulate. I began to chart my basal body temperature when I started my period again on February 23, 1999. Ten days after ovulation I had another positive pregnancy test. I called my Obstetrician hoping that there was something they could do to ease my mind. I was petrified of the same thing happening, but in the back of my mind I convinced myself that the first miscarriage had been a fluke and it wouldn't happen again. My Doctor ran a Quantitative HCG test, which came back at 31. The test was repeated three days later, and unfortunately the levels had only risen to 48.

I had to wait for five hours to talk to my Doctor that afternoon because he was delivering twins. I have never been so anxious, upset and frustrated in my entire life. I just felt like dying and putting my failed body out of its misery. If it weren't for my precious son I don't know what I would have done. My Doctor finally called me back and said there was nothing I could do but wait to miscarry again. He also said that there was a very slight chance that I could carry.

I didn't know whether to be optimistic or pessimistic. That weekend passed and I had no sign of miscarriage. The next Sunday I had to perform in a skit at church, six pages of memorized lines and only two characters. That morning my temperature dropped and I began to spot. I knew it was the beginning of the end. Sure enough March 29, 1999, I had my second confirmed miscarriage in a row, this time at five weeks.

The worst part was that both times no one knew I was pregnant. There was no one to support me other than my husband, and he is the type that doesn't get very upset by anything. Even now, hardly anyone knows and I have only been able to seek comfort from the Internet and support groups for women trying to conceive after a miscarriage. Twice in the past week I have had people ask if I plan to have another baby soon, and it takes every ounce of strength I have not to break down. I believe I am a very strong person and have made it through this ordeal by placing my faith in God.

I went to see my Doctor the week after the second miscarriage. Right now I am waiting for a Progesterone and Thyroid test. I have a family history of Hypothyroidism, but I really think that is okay. I am actually hoping it is the Progesterone because that would seem to be an easy answer. I am wondering if it is based on my low temperatures this month. I will be having my tests next Tuesday and I am very anxious and nervous for them.

Update:

Since Paisley's story she did have another

miscarriage, but has since gone on to have a beautiful, healthy baby boy named Jordan Gabriel. He was born on March 26, 2000 at 1:34am, weighing exactly 8 pounds and was 19 inches long. Paisley says he is a "big-time mommy's boy" and is growing up way to fast. If you would like to contact Paisley, she can be reached through e-mail at wknapp@mail.tds.net.

~Renee~

Everything was going well. I was eleven weeks, a heartbeat was detected on two previous ultrasounds and the chance of miscarriage was less than 3%. We were thrilled. The three prior pregnancies had not gone this well. We shared the good news with everyone, started purchasing baby items and picked out baby names.

My mother, father and husband joined me at the Doctor's office for my third ultrasound. As the image appeared, I could tell something was wrong. The "sac" had grown but the baby had not. As I turned to the nurse, the color from her face had gone, her eyes bulged and her smile vanished. She excused her self from the room and it seemed as if she ran for the Doctor.

The nurse returned almost instantly with the Doctor. He viewed the screen for well over fifteen minutes as the nurse tried to find a heartbeat. I knew what the nurse and the Doctor were looking for. I studied the screen trying to find the heartbeat. I hoped the Doctor was better at reading the monitor than I was because I was unable to see the flutter of my baby's heart.

I am sure my Doctor broke the news to me gently, but

all I heard was my baby lay lifeless inside my body. The medicine was tricking my body into believing it is pregnant, but my baby was motion-less. Although I felt and looked three months along, I will be going to the hospital on Monday to terminate my pregnancy. I was given the option to have the surgery on Good Friday, but I wanted to wait.

After all Good Friday was the day Jesus died and wasn't Easter the day he arose? I believe in that miracle so is it so far fetched to believe that this Good Friday my angel has passed and maybe after the ultrasound on Monday we will find that my angel has arisen. It didn't happen. The pieces are getting harder and harder to pick-up.

~Sharon~

My husband and I are thirty-six and thirty-seven, respectively. We started trying to conceive in late summer of 1994. In the beginning, getting pregnant was easy for us, but staying that way was the problem. We had three miscarriages, all at or before nine and a half weeks, and after seeing a heartbeat on ultrasound. After the second loss, my Obstetrician agreed with us that we should have testing done for recurrent miscarriages. He agreed it is stupid and cruel to "sentence" couples to a third loss before they can be taken seriously. Blood tests and a Hysterosalpingogram (HSG) showed nothing abnormal, but he prescribed progesterone as a precautionary measure.

After the third loss, we had much more extensive testing done by a different Doctor, who was then practicing in our part of the country. We had a complete immunological work up done, plus I had a hormone and physiological analysis. All tests came back normal, leaving us in that great big awful "unexplained infertility" category. The Doctor believed our case bore all of the hallmarks of an immune related cause, but felt it probably involved an antibody marker for which no specific association with miscarriage had yet been identified, and thus no screening

test developed. She recommended IVIG as an "umbrella" immune treatment for this problem.

At the time, our insurance wouldn't cover any of this treatment, and we couldn't afford it ourselves. We opted for an LIT, which is immune therapy where my husband's white blood cells would be injected into me, instead of the IVIG, which we planned to have done with our next positive pregnancy.

Here's where everything suddenly slowed down. Where getting pregnant had been so easy for us the first three times, we just couldn't get it to happen a fourth. We tried for sixteen months before it finally happened. Ten or eleven months into this time, we decided to do the LIT preconception instead and just hope to get pregnant soon thereafter. A couple of Doctors suggested that the same immune factors that cause miscarriages could grow more severe and then interfere with getting pregnant. When we finally conceived the fourth time, we were already at the end of the effective period of the first LIT, so we had it done again. I was taking progesterone, baby aspirin, and heparin injections.

Unlike the first three pregnancies, the fourth was in trouble from the outset. Growth always lagged behind and the Beta HCG numbers were creeping upward, but nowhere near doubling. This was later attributed to the high doses of progesterone, and after eight and a half weeks, there was still no sign of a heartbeat and the embryo was measuring somewhere in the six-week size range. We opted for a D&C.

That was in April of 1997. Within three months two very important events occurred. First, we had additional blood work done, and tissue samples from the last D&C

sent to my Doctor. He analyzed them and provided us what we had lacked for almost three years of struggling with miscarriage. A DIAGNOSIS.

He determined that my natural killer (NK) cell counts were very high, and also that my husband and I share the cell surface marker DQ alpha 4, both of which his research has shown to be high risk factors for immune related miscarriage. He also provided reassurance and resurrected hope for us by saying, "We now know what your problem is, and we know how to solve it." After years of being told we were perfectly normal, just unlucky, it was such a relief to hear there really was a cause.

The second big break for us came when I went to my benefits administrator. I explained that the diagnosis meant we had to have IVIG, or I would only keep having more miscarriages and lose more time from work. The company agreed to allow me to switch insurance plans mid-year from an HMO to major medical, which reviewed my history and my diagnosis and treatment plan, and agreed to cover the IVIG and other parts of the immune treatment at 100%.

I started with preconception IVIG in August of 1997. I took heparin shots, baby aspirin, and progesterone, but again we didn't manage to conceive. We tried for eight months, seeing an infertility specialist nearby. For part of this time, including cycles with Clomid and Fertinex, we then decided we didn't want to wait any longer. We went to another facility in San Francisco in May of this year. The Doctor there had a great deal of success working with my regular Doctor's patients. It worked! We had five embryos transferred. The odds being that even if we had more than two "take", at least one would likely be a "DQ

alpha 4,4" and would probably not survive for long or I would end up pregnant with quads.

This of course presented an entirely new problem having been "too" successful on our In vitro-fertilization (IVF) attempt. There was no way I could carry quads and expect a healthy pregnancy and successful delivery. Every Doctor we spoke to concurred strongly with this view. So, after eleven weeks, when none of the four dropped off naturally, we had to take the emotionally painful, yet necessary, step of reducing. We knew in our hearts that this was a saving act for the twins we would keep, and prayed that God would take the other two into His keeping, joining the four we had lost in our naturally conceived pregnancies. The reduction was in mid-July, and went smoothly with no complications.

It was with overwhelming joy, pride, amazement, and gratitude that my husband and I welcomed our two baby daughters into the world on January 18th, 1999. I was induced at thirty-seven and a half weeks. Marcie Hope was born at 7:55pm by a vaginal delivery and was 4 pounds, 11 ounces and was 18 inches long. Shortly thereafter, it was discovered that her placenta had abrupted, and an emergency C-section had to be performed to deliver her sister, Tess Hayley, who weighed 3 pounds, eleven ounces and was 17.25 inches long.

The girls are both beautiful and healthy. I still feel like someone is going to come over and say, "Thanks for taking care of my babies, I'll take them back now." It's hard to believe that after such a long, hard struggle, I'm finally a mom. I'm enjoying every second of it, even changing dirty diapers and hearing the cries, which sometimes seem inconsolable. I feel that we are truly blessed and we're forever grateful to all the Doctors, as well as to those

around us who believed in our ability to get here. I hope that our story serves to inspire anyone still struggling with losses. There is hope.

~Victoria~

I am twenty-six years old and have been married for two and a half years. We decided to start trying to have a baby in July of 1998. I found out I was pregnant in late September of 1998 and we were absolutely thrilled. I immediately began taking prenatal vitamins and eating more healthy foods. I bought a couple of books so I could make sure I knew what I was supposed to do and even bought a journal so I could give it to my child when he or she got older as a record of what I was feeling. I was feeling okay, but very tired. I wasn't having a lot of morning sickness and my breasts weren't sore, but I thought everything was normal. I was nervous though, since I knew a few people who have had miscarriages. I went for my eight-week visit and everything was fine.

On November 3, 1998, at ten weeks, while I was at work I noticed some light brownish blood on the toilet paper and immediately got very scared and called the Doctor. The nurse assured me that it is common to have spotting in the first trimester and that it was probably nothing. Just in case they scheduled an ultrasound for that day. I called my husband at work and we met at the clinic.

I was still feeling hopeful and optimistic that things would probably be okay. My husband, on the other hand, was extremely nervous and I was trying to make him feel relaxed in the waiting room.

I thought it was weird that the ultrasound technician didn't let him come in with me and she really wasn't too friendly. She also wouldn't let me see the screen, which made me a little nervous. We then went to the Doctor's office for the results. They made us wait a long time in an exam room. They told me to get undressed because the Doctor would want to examine me, which I thought was probably a very bad sign.

Our Doctor finally came in and told us that she had some bad news for us. The baby had stopped growing at six weeks and there was no heartbeat. I just started crying and I can remember the look on my husband's face. He looked so sad. I cried the whole time the Doctor examined me. It turns out that I had had a missed miscarriage. That is where the baby dies and I don't actually miscarry. She explained that I could wait it out and let things happen naturally or I could have a D&C. I wanted this whole thing to be over, so I opted to have a D&C. Unfortunately, we had to wait for two days to have the procedure since the Doctor wasn't working the next day. The Doctor explained that they don't know why this happened and to just assume that the first miscarriage is a fluke. It was nature's way of weeding out the babies with birth defects. She told us to wait two months before trying again, but assured us that the next time would probably be fine.

We went home and cried. I felt so sad. I was mad that I was ten weeks and feeling like I was almost out of the woods when this happened. I wanted this so much and felt so devastated. My husband was so sad too, but was trying

to be strong for me. I knew that he wanted this baby as much as I did. I had a lot of supportive people to talk to, and after a couple of days I was feeling better emotionally and physically. The D&C went fine and I was not in any pain afterward. I just had some bleeding for a couple of weeks, but was looking forward to trying again.

As with any loss, we both had our ups and downs, but overall we were coping very well. We both have the attitude that things happen for a reason and that we should be thankful for the things we do have. We have each other, our families, our health, a home and our dog. That's actually what has helped me get through this is just being able to put this in perspective and be thankful for what I do have.

After I had two periods we began trying again and I was surprised and excited to learn on February 3, 1999 that I was pregnant again. We were both so happy, but I was very cautious this time. We didn't tell anyone except my family and a couple of friends. I was comforted by the fact that my Doctor was checking my Progesterone and Beta HCG levels weekly and at six weeks I began taking a progesterone supplement. My levels were still normal, but a little on the low side. We had an ultrasound at seven weeks and we saw the tiny little heartbeat. We were so happy and I was starting to feel a little more relaxed. A girl I work with was pregnant also and due two days after me, so we were sort of going through things together.

Right after the ultrasound my Doctor's office stopped checking my Beta HCG and Progesterone levels and I was on my own again. I was feeling very nervous and scared. For some unknown reason I had this terrible feeling that the same thing was going to happen again. I went home one night from work and cried to my husband that I couldn't go

through the loss again. That my heart would break into a million pieces if it happened again. It was so hard because last time I carried the baby for four weeks after it had died.

I bought a journal again and was writing to my baby. I couldn't wait until my twelve-week appointment when we would hear the heartbeat again. I thought I'd finally feel at ease and get to enjoy the pregnancy, and look forward to all of the changes my body would be going through. My clothes were feeling tighter and I actually bought a couple of pairs of maternity pants.

One night before bed at eleven weeks I was having my husband touch my stomach and notice that it was really getting bigger and hard feeling. We went to bed so happy. I woke up the next morning and he had already gone to work. I was getting ready to take a shower when I noticed a lot of brownish blood on the toilet paper. I immediately knew that it had happened again. I started sobbing and called the Doctor's office, which wasn't open yet. I called my husband and he came home from work. We both just stared at each other and cried while we waited for the Doctor to call back.

We had our ultrasound scheduled for later that afternoon. When we got the results from the Doctor, our fears were confirmed. This time the baby had died at a little over seven weeks and I again carried for four weeks without knowing. The D&C was scheduled for the next day and relatively speaking, everything went fine. It turns out my stomach was bigger and harder because of the progesterone I was taking.

Our Doctor referred us to a fertility specialist who she said could help us figure out what is going on, since two in a row is usually not a fluke. Believe it or not, the second

miscarriage has been easier emotionally. We are comforted by the fact that we have someone working to help us figure out what the problem is and that really helps. It is still hard, of course, and I find that a lot of people just don't know what to say. They can't say it will be all right this time like they did last time, because they really don't know that it will.

It has been a little over a month since the last miscarriage. We went to the fertility specialist who told us that they usually find the problem 75% of the time, which I think is pretty good odds. We are having every test under the sun done. They say that within six weeks after the testing has started, we can go and have a consultation with the Doctor where they will give us a diagnosis and we'll see where to go from there. My Obstetrician had sent the fetal tissue in for testing after the D&C, and I got those results just a couple of days ago. The results were normal, which I am taking to be very good news. I am assuming that means that my husband and I aren't passing on some genetic defect. They also told me that the baby was a girl, which makes me very sad to hear. I guess knowing that makes it a little more realistic. I never really viewed the baby as a person before, just a "hoped for" baby. But I am getting through it and am hanging on to the hope that they will find the answers that we are looking for.

Update:

I am happy to report that Victoria is now twenty-three pregnant and due around October 5, 2000. Her Doctor was able to diagnose her previous miscarriages. She had a Uterine Septum, which was removed with

two surgeries. She is glad that her ordeal is almost over and is anxiously waiting to hold her baby in her arms.

~Chapter Three~

Second Trimester Loss

~Allison~

I am thirty-three years old and live in Kelowna, Canada. I have been married for three years and am in a completely consuming relationship with my husband. When I first met my husband he assured me that he did not want to have children, and for this reason I was reluctant to consider marriage.

After two years he changed his mind and we were engaged. We had overwhelming financial problems through the first four years of our relationship and decided to put off having children until our situation was more stable. Last summer in July of 1998 we started trying and conceived one month later.

Needless to say, we were both excited. I did not anticipate any problems, primarily because my mother had four normal pregnancies and my three sisters have had six normal pregnancies between them.

At eight weeks I spotted for a few days and was relieved when it stopped. I was reassured that this experience was common and was very surprised at twelve weeks when I started bleeding. An ultrasound five days later showed a "blighted ovum" or empty sac. I was devastated, although I

think part of me knew many weeks before. I had a D&C two days later and cried constantly during the whole procedure.

I was told that I should probably wait for at least one cycle before trying to conceive again, although I couldn't find any sound medical reason for this advice. I was completely surprised a month later, in December of 1998, to discover that I was pregnant again. My Doctor reassured me that he had no doubt things would be successful, and I truly had no reason to doubt this. At twelve weeks I managed to convince him to order an ultrasound because I was having gal bladder problems and needed a diagnostic scan. The ultrasound showed a healthy looking baby with a good strong heartbeat and I immediately announced it to the world.

Three days later I started bleeding, heavily. I rushed to the emergency room and they diagnosed a placenta tear. I was reassured that this would probably heal and I had a 90% chance of delivering a healthy baby. I bled and spotted for two more weeks and finally could not handle the stress any longer. After a discussion with my husband, in which he told me that I was overreacting and had a tendency to expect the worst, I paid a visit to my Obstetrician. He could not find a heartbeat at fifteen weeks and sent me in to have an ultrasound.

At this point I knew what the outcome would be. I was fortunate to be able to get in for an emergency D&C that same day. This loss was much more difficult than the first. I had seen the baby. I had seen the heartbeat. I allowed myself to start fantasizing about names, clothes, etc.

I am now trying to conceive again. Part of me does not have any hope that I will be able to carry a baby to term. I

have trouble visualizing myself giving birth and cradling my newborn infant. I want this more than anything and I know that I will make a great mother. I have many periods of self-pity and feel jealous when I see pregnant women and newborn babies. These self-destructive behaviors are occurring less frequently as time passes. I am particularly grateful that I have had these experiences because I am a more compassionate person, and will therefore make a better mother. While I don't wish these types of experiences on anyone, I know that we will all be better people for them and our children will be the most precious and treasured ones.

Update:

I am happy to say that Allison has gone on to have a beautiful, baby boy named Jack McKenzie. He was born April 16, 2000.

~Amanda~

With this being my first pregnancy, there were definitely some mixed emotions. I felt excited, scared and anxious to know what the future was going to hold. The first month or so was filled mostly with fear. As time passed I saw my unborn child moving around in the ultrasound and I began to feel her moving around inside me. It was the most amazing feeling.

I was so excited to become a mother. I spent most of my days and sleepless nights visualizing my baby at birth. How beautiful she will be and at two years, chasing her around the house, being quite the handful. Being with her on her first day of school. I had everything planned.

Everything was going so well. Then when I was nineteen weeks pregnant, I received a call from my Doctor saying that my AFP test came back slightly elevated. She said it probably wasn't anything to worry about, but I should still go in for a fetal assessment. Considering the fact that I am a very healthy person with no medical history, I wasn't worried in the least.

The next day my sister took me in for the fetal assessment. I'll never forget that day. I was looking at the

ultrasound screen and I couldn't help but notice that my baby looked so still. I remembered my fourteen-week ultrasound, she moved around so much more, but now, my baby is still.

The ultrasound technician said, "I think there's a problem, I'll be right back." I held my sister's hand and started to cry. She finally came back with the Doctor and a box of tissue. All of a sudden, I knew. He said, "I'm sorry to tell you. I have some bad news." I couldn't believe what I was hearing. How could this be? Why me? They must be wrong. I'm a healthy person. I don't drink, smoke or do drugs. Why is this happening to me? What about my plans for her?

From there I went to my Doctor's office where she explained that the baby possibly had Cystic Hygroma, a build-up of fluid in the neck and is often related to Turner's Syndrome. Turner's Syndrome is when one X chromosome is missing in a female. She also said it was "a blessing in disguise." It wasn't a blessing in my eyes.

The next day I went into the hospital for a D&C. Because I was nineteen weeks there were complications and I ended up staying in for two days. Not fun, especially when you're down the hall from labor and delivery. I broke down going into the operating room. I just wanted to cry and scream, "Please don't take my baby away from me!" From my room I could hear the baby's crying. It broke my heart. For weeks I just cried and screamed, "I want my baby back!" I have never felt so helpless and out of control in my whole life.

It's been six months since my miscarriage. Although it has gotten easier, I still run into those days every now and then where it hits hard. Since my loss I have named my

baby Brooke. I've made a box with angels on it for all of her things, as well as, collected poems. On the days that I'm down, I read through them and cry. Believe it or not, it really helps.

~Amy~

I had gone to my regularly scheduled appointment at twenty-three weeks. I was very excited only to have this be the most devastating day of my life. Everything had been going so well. I had an amnio done on December 3, 1998 to rule out possible chromosomal problems. The next ten days were excruciating to wait out. My husband made the call to see if the results were in because I was too afraid to call. The results were the best we could have gotten. The baby was perfect, no problems of any kind and it really was a girl. I cried for the next hour, out of relief and happiness.

The next five weeks were great. We had a wonderful Christmas and I finally started to relax about the pregnancy. We felt that this was really going to happen, we would really have a beautiful, healthy baby girl. We got the crib, car seat and many, many baby supplies sent by my sister-in-law. On Wednesday, January 6, 1999, we went to my Doctors appointment.

The Doctor said that it was just a routine visit and asked if we had any questions or concerns. My husband explained that I had stated at breakfast that the baby wasn't moving as she usually did. I had felt movement, just not the strong kicks and punches that I had been feeling lately. The Doctor looked at me and said, "No problem." He

explained that sometimes babies just get quiet, exactly what I had read in all my baby books. He was not really concerned, nor was I. He came over to have a listen. He did not pick anything up on the Doppler and explained that he was going to get the ultrasound machine. We still were not concerned, although the Doctor may have been. There were other times when he had to get the machine, usually because she was so active that she'd make too much noise to hear well. When he came back it didn't take him thirty seconds to say, "I'm sorry, I have to tell you the worse possible news, there is no indication that your baby is alive, and it looks as though she has been dead for about twenty-four hours." I yelled out and grabbed my husband as he was questioning, "What?" and "Are you sure?"

After leaving us alone with our tears the Doctor came back to tell us that I would have to be induced and deliver the baby. Deliver the baby? I cried and said that I did not want to do that. He explained that it was the safest option and that I would have to do this. He expressed sincere sorrow. He explained that I could go home and come back to the hospital in the morning or that I could go tonight. I didn't see the point in going home, its not like I would sleep. We went home to pack a bag and call my mother.

I arrived at the hospital and was given another ultrasound. Oh how we prayed they had made a mistake. But it was confirmed that our baby girl had died. They induced labor and we waited. I watched my contractions on the monitor all night. Although they had given me a sleeping pill, I never slept. My mother and mother in law flew down and arrived by 1:30pm the next day. My best friend was also with us. I don't know what we did all this time, but after nineteen hours of labor I delivered at 7:15pm on Friday evening. My husband had his head in my chest the whole time, praying that God wouldn't take us both.

She was a beautiful baby girl. She had mommy's feet, very long legs and daddies little ears. She weighed 1 pound 9 ounces, which was big for her age. She was far more beautiful than I had imagined. I was very afraid to see my little baby. I kept thinking it was too soon for her to be born, she wasn't ready yet. It was so hard for me to push when the Doctor would tell me to. I didn't want to push my baby out. I didn't want her to leave me.

After asking two different Doctors if we should have an autopsy performed, they both told us the same thing. That the autopsy would only be able to check what the amniocentesis had already checked, and since we knew there was nothing wrong with the baby it would more than likely not give any reasons. So, we decided not to have this done. Numerous tests were done on my placenta and blood. The results came back showing everything was normal. Normal? Then how come my baby is dead.

This has been the hardest thing I have ever had to go through. There are times when I have just wanted to die. I wanted to be with Payton, as well as to getting rid of this incredible pain. If we did not have the support of our friends and family I don't believe we would have made it. Trying to make funeral arrangements would have been impossible. We had her cremated by a private company and have her ashes with us. We decided on a private service with only immediate family. It is hard to accept that our little Payton Elizabeth has left our lives.

I feel for all of you out there who have experienced this incredible loss. I wish you strength and love.

Update:

Amy delivered a very healthy baby boy named Collin Francis. He was born January 13, 2000.

~Christine~

Robert and I found each other back in 1995 when we were twenty-nine years old. We were both very picky about who we dated and who we wanted in a mate. When it became evident that we clicked, we were engaged within six months and then married a year later. We gave ourselves about a year and a half before we began to try for a family. Amazingly, we got pregnant on the first try. I couldn't believe it. I was scared and thrilled all at once.

Though, of course, we would take whatever God gave us, we both really wanted a boy. Aside from morning sickness and a bit of sciatica, the pregnancy was going very well. During my eight-week appointment my Doctor did an ultrasound, and we were able to see the baby and it's heartbeat, but not much else. Soon after, it was time for the twenty-week ultrasound. Imagine our delight during the ultrasound when the technician told us that we had a little boy. We both cried for joy, but couldn't quite understand why the Doctor and technician were being rather abrupt and wanted us out of the room.

Then our world was shattered. Our baby boy didn't have a brain. There would be no possibility of his survival outside of the womb and no guarantee that carrying the pregnancy to term would not put my own life in danger. At

that point, life as I knew it ended. We were taken to a Doctor in Philadelphia who performed D&E's. He inserted a laminaria to help me dilate and sent us home to wait for the procedure the next day. Robert and I hugged and cried all night long. How could this happen to us? So many people we know have healthy kids.

Our pastor met us at the hospital the next morning and prayed with us. As they led me out of the waiting room, Robert knelt down, kissed my belly and said goodbye to Ian, the name we gave our son. While I was on the table, before they put me out, I asked the Doctors and nurses if they could please bless the baby when he came out, and they all said that they would.

When I woke up from what was supposed to be a thirty-minute procedure, I had oxygen in my nose, a nasal-gastric tube, a catheter and a hell of a vertical abdominal scar. Apparently, during the procedure it was discovered that I had a perforated uterus. The Doctor was afraid that he had nicked my bowel before he saw the perforation, so they had to call in an abdominal team and open me up. Fortunately everything was okay, but now I was in the hospital for three days and my recovery time was several weeks.

The physical pain subsided, but then the emotional pain increased. Especially when I would see my neighbor, who was due only a week after I was. Anyone who was pregnant or had a baby made me horribly upset. I had a room full of baby things that were already bought, plus the crib was being delivered any day. We decided to keep everything because, of course, we'd be trying again as soon as possible.

The Doctor told us to wait for two good cycles, and then we could try again. This put us in January of 1999. But, I

suddenly began to feel a terrible pain in my left hamstring at night when I went to bed. The only relief I received was when I stood up; the pain would go away. I was terrified of taking any strong painkillers while we were trying to conceive, because we had already lost one baby to a birth defect. My Doctor told me to take Advil, but it really didn't help. He thought that it was just sciatica and that it would go away within two-four weeks.

After four weeks and many sleepless nights, I went back to my Doctor demanding that he refer me to someone who could help. In the meantime, I had seen a chiropractor and an acupuncturist, both to no avail. He finally referred me to an orthopedic surgeon who couldn't diagnose me without an MRI. That's all I wanted in the first place. So, I had the MRI on a Wednesday night, and on Friday he called us in and showed us the abnormality on my sacrum that was compressing the nerves going down my left leg. Not knowing what it was, but obviously being alarmed, the surgeon had already phoned my Doctor and an Oncologist.

An Oncologist is a word that strikes fear in the hearts of all. After a week of every possible diagnostic procedure you can image, from needle biopsies to bone marrow biopsies, I was told that I have Multiple Myeloma, a form of cancer of the bone marrow/blood.

Because the tumor in my sacrum was growing from the inside of the bone marrow cavity and could not be removed, it had to be treated first with radiation. The cancer would then be treated systemically with chemotherapy, and finally with a stem cell transplant. The problem with the radiation therapy is that the radiation needed to be focused in my pelvic region, thereby effectively destroying my ovaries and any chance for children of our own.

The one positive part of this hellish experience is what happened next. My Doctors mobilized and called on the local infertility clinic. Because we had to start the radiation as soon as possible, we didn't have much time. In the course of a week's time, I was able to start on follicle stimulating drugs and do an oocyte retrieval. I was able to produce four good eggs and three of them were fertilized with Robert's sperm. We now have three embryos in frozen storage right now waiting. It's a dash of hope in our gloomy world.

Though I try to stay positive and want to believe that I will beat this cancer into permanent remission, I know that I will never be able to put my body through a pregnancy. The thought of never being able to feel a baby move inside of me again is agony. However, we are working with a woman who has offered to be our surrogate mother, so maybe there will be a baby yet. Of course, I would always consider adoption as well, since Robert was adopted.

My fear lies in the future. Will I survive this disease? Would I want to bring a child into this world when I have no idea how long I will live? Why would I want to leave Robert as a single parent? Is this selfish? It's easy to think this way, but honestly, do any of us really know what's going to happen tomorrow? How long we'll live? Our culture is conditioned to reject disease and death as wrong, but they are everywhere and are a fact of everyday life. I'm going to do everything I can to beat this disease. My life will never be the same.

I wake up each morning and thank God for that day. I go to bed each night and thank God that I had another day to enjoy. I try to enjoy each day and take time for myself. I don't get bothered by the crazy things that used to stress

me out, I am just happy to be alive. I know that my sweet baby boy is up in heaven helping me to get through each day. I am blessed to have such a wonderful, caring husband, and great family and friends. I can't wait for the day when I can stop crying over the loss of my son and the loss of the innocence that used to be my life. I feel like Eve after biting the apple. My eyes are now open and I am all too aware of the pain and suffering of this world. I am horribly jealous of others who have their health and children. What more could anyone want in life? But I am hopeful. No one can take that away from me.

Update:

Christine is now thankfully in remission. She had an autologous bone marrow transplant in October, which wiped out her bone marrow and rebuilt it. She has periodic bloodwork done to monitor a protein in her blood that acts like a tumor marker. She is in a permanent watch and wait mode to see if the protein levels elevate into the normal range again, which means active disease. She has injections three times a week of Alpha-Interferon for the next year in hopes that it will keep her in permanent remission.

I would like to give Christine a special thank you. After naming and renaming the book several times, she suggested "Pain,

Heartache and Hope” and we immediately loved it. It fit perfectly. Thanks again Christine. You are in my thoughts and prayers.

~Jan~

After nearly a year of marriage my husband and I decided to quit birth control and start trying to conceive. That was June of 1998. We became pregnant in August and were ecstatic. Things were going along so well. I was looking forward to my November prenatal visit since I knew that my physician would discuss getting an ultrasound done soon. My husband was good about going to all of my prenatal visits with me. I'm glad he did.

At that November appointment my Doctor was having trouble finding the fetal heart beat. I didn't think much of it. I am overweight and as a nurse with nine years of labor and delivery experience, I have tried to chase down many an elusive baby in early pregnancy. I was a little apprehensive when he sent us over to the hospital for an ultrasound immediately. My husband asked if I was worried, but I told him no. I explained that this could be normal.

Over at the hospital I changed into a patient gown and sat in the cold hall drinking glass after glass of water to fill my bladder so that my uterus and its contents were easier to see. I had to urinate so badly I was starting to shake uncontrollably. I was also starting to get more nervous. Soon we went in. The ultrasound technician had the screen

turned away so I couldn't see. My husband stood behind her and watched everything she did. She didn't say much and I knew that was often a bad sign. When she did say something, it was to apologize for not talking, but she couldn't say much until our Doctor talked to us. That's when I got really worried.

On our walk back to the clinic I quizzed my husband about what he saw. Did he see the baby moving? Did he see the fluttering of the heartbeat? Both answers were no. We were ushered back in to the exam room and when I saw our Doctor's face I knew that our baby was dead. What a devastating feeling. We had everything planned out and now everything had changed. My Doctor was wonderful. My husband and I are both Christians and so is our Doctor. He cried with us and held our hands and prayed for us. It was a comfort.

The next day we checked into a hospital ninety miles from our home with an Obstetrician whom we had never met. The nursing staff was wonderful and very supportive. They were a classic example of patient advocates. When we finally did see the Doctor, he was abrupt, offensive and had my husband scared and upset worrying for my safety. We were in good hands though. Through the nurses' intervening for us and making sure that we received what we needed, the induction went well. I had Cytotec placed near my cervix every four hours. After a fourteen-hour induction and only one-hour of discomfort, our son was born. At the delivery, we knew what had caused his death and the Pathologist confirmed it. He had the umbilical cord wrapped around his neck several times. It was a freak cord accident.

The next months were a roller coaster. We started trying again right away. But month after month I would get my period again and I would get so depressed. I did a lot

of investigating and started charting my basal body temperatures. The next month I started taking a teaspoonful of Robitussin twice a day for the six days before I was to ovulate. The next month my husband decided to switch from briefs to boxers.

Finally, we were successful. Just a week and a half ago I missed my period. We've had a positive home pregnancy test. I am relieved that we are pregnant again, but I know I will have a lot more anxiety during this one, especially when I reach fifteen weeks.

Update:

Holly was born on December 22, 1999 and has been a blessing ever since. Jan says that Mother's Day wasn't the miserable day that it was last year.

~Jenny~

My name is Jenny. I remember the day like it was yesterday, July 23, 1998. I took three pregnancy tests just to make sure the first and second tests I took were not defective. I called the Doctor the next day. He prescribed prenatal vitamins and told me to make an appointment when I was about ten weeks along. The appointment was scheduled for September 2, 1998. Bret and I were so excited to hear the heartbeat for the first time and when we heard it Bret said, "It sure is strong for being so little." Everything in the pregnancy was fine at that point. I had gained four pounds and was feeling really good.

I was also very nervous because my sister had a lot of difficulties carrying a child full term on her third pregnancy, and since this was my third I couldn't help but think I was going to have problems too.

The second Doctor visit was scheduled for September 29, 1998. I took my other two children with me this time. They really enjoyed hearing their little brother's or sister's heartbeat, it made them feel special. At that Doctor visit everything was fine except I had lost one pound. The Doctor said to make another appointment for four weeks later. I was really excited for this appointment, as it was time for the ultrasound. At this visit, October 27th, I had again lost weight. Three pounds this time. I was seventeen and a half weeks pregnant and per the Doctor, everything

seemed fine. The Doctor scheduled our ultrasound for November 11, 1998. We could not wait.

November 11th came and it was time for the ultrasound. We were so excited to see our baby, hoping we could find out the sex of the baby today. The ultrasound technician took all of the measurements needed, the entire time making sure to point out the special things, heartbeat, heart (all four chambers) legs, spine, ribs, kidneys and bladder. Unfortunately, the baby was laying funny so we could not find out what the sex was. The ultrasound was over and we were elated. We got to see our child. The ultrasound technician told us she was going to develop the film and show them to the radiologist to make sure they had all of the measurements they needed. When she came back into the room she said, "Your Doctor will call you tomorrow, he is on vacation today." I looked at her strangely and she said, "He calls everyone after they have had an ultrasound." I knew there was something wrong, how did she know my Doctor was on vacation? She must have called him.

The next day I went to work as normal, feeling very impatient. I called the Doctor to find out what the ultrasound said. I knew there was a problem when the Doctor called back. He said that the amniotic fluid level was very low and sent me to see a specialist that same day. Frantically, Bret and I drove an hour and a half to the specialist. On the drive I remembered that before my October 27th visit I had awoken in the night to a wet bed. Since I did not start cramping or feeling any differently I wrote it off as just having an accident. I could not have been more wrong.

When we got to the specialist they did an ultrasound and then decided that he wanted to do an amniotic infusion. He wanted to do this for two reasons. One, to better see the

baby, particularly the kidneys and bladder, and, two, if I had lost my water, by putting the water in he could inject a dye that would tell me if I lost my water again. After the infusion they seemed very optimistic for our child. It looked like the kidneys were functioning properly because there was fluid in the bladder. Now we just have to wait and see if I leaked any fluid.

We left the specialists feeling pretty good until we got all the way home. I got out of the truck in our driveway and my water was again leaking. We immediately went to the hospital where I was on complete bed rest for four days. They sent me home from the hospital on bed rest and antibiotics, not giving us much hope for the life of our child. They kept saying, "If you can make it to twenty-four weeks, there is a slim chance of survival." So our target date became December 11, 1998, we would then be twenty-four weeks and one day.

The day I was released from the hospital was November 15, 1998. For the entire week my mother came over and took care of me while Bret worked. We had to go in to see the Doctor and for ultrasounds twice a week. Everything seemed to be going along well and the baby was very active. I had no infection and had not gone into labor.

I was scheduled to see my Doctor on November 19th. The baby's heartbeat was 166 beats per minute and I had gained a pound. I was really hopeful. That afternoon the baby was moving and I grabbed my daughter's hand to have her feel him, but before she could get her hand on my tummy he quit moving. I told her, "When he moves again mommy will call you and you can feel him then." The baby never moved again. I waited to go to the Doctor until my scheduled ultrasound on Monday, November 23rd. I

guess I was just hoping he was taking a little nap. Babies get tired too.

Bret and I went to the ultrasound and I knew before we walked into the room that there wasn't going to be a heart beat. The ultrasound technician started the ultrasound and just as I had suspected, my baby had died. My Doctor came over and said it was time to induce labor. I wished I was dreaming and that I would be waking up at any given minute.

Labor was induced at 11:45am on November 23, 1998 and our twenty-one week, five day old son Noah was born at 1:15am, November 24, 1998. He weighed nine ounces and was ten inches long. I miss him. I often think of the things I will never get to see him do or say, but most of all I think of how I will never get to kiss my baby and tell him I love him.

~Julie~

I went home from a Christmas party because something just didn't feel right. I was so panicked that something was going to go wrong with my pregnancy. I kept remembering the miscarriage and the entire trauma I went through. I was twenty-two weeks pregnant. Past the miscarriage stage, yet I could not stop worrying. I called my Doctor. He laughed and assured me I would be fine.

Three hours later I was contracting, strong and hard. I woke my husband so that he could take me to the hospital. When I arrived, they found I was in labor and already one centimeter dilated. They started me on Mag-Sulfate and the pain seemed to ease up. For the next several days I just laid in a hospital bed not knowing what the outcome would be. I cried tears for the baby that was inside me. I had come so far. Did I come this far only to lose another?

Things seemed stable. The Doctors even talked of sending me home at some point. Then the pains started again. I got out of bed to see the snowflakes falling outside. It was December 22, 1992, three days before Christmas. The Doctor came in and announced that he was transferring me to another hospital that had an NICU. I would deliver my daughter today. Shock and fear ripped through my body, which was already crying out in pain.

An ambulance came and took me to another nearby hospital and I was taken to labor and delivery. They came

in, did an ultrasound and told me that my baby was too small to save. The words echoed in my head, “Too small to save.” The Perinatologist explained if I had only carried the baby another week, she might have had a chance. My world crashed down at that moment. The Doctor could not explain why this was happening. He had tears in his eyes as he talked with my husband and me.

Three hours later my baby girl was born. They laid her on my stomach. I had pure joy mixed with pure pain. For a moment I felt like the mother I had always wanted to be. I knew my time with her would be short. We dressed her, held her and sung to her. Two hours later, she died. All I could do was sob. Loud wailing sobs from deep within. The pain was indescribable.

Seven years later, as I write this story, it still hurts within. God has blessed me with sons, but I still long to have a little girl. I know she is safe and warm in Heaven. I know she is totally cared for and that brings me peace in the midst of my pain.

My story did not end there. I got pregnant again almost a year after her death. I decided to see a specialist this time. Twenty-two weeks into this pregnancy, the same nightmare began. This time, the Doctors realized that my cervix was incompetent. They did a procedure called a rescue Cerclage and it was successful. I was started on Mag-Sulfate once again. It felt like losing Ashley all over again. But this time it was different. After spending three and a half months in the hospital, I delivered a healthy baby boy. We named him Joshua. He is now almost five years old now and is a miracle to me. I know how close we came to losing him. A year after Joshua was born I suffered another miscarriage. All around me people were having healthy babies. I wondered what could possibly be wrong

with me. And then, two years later came my precious twins, Jordan and Jonathan.

I found out I was pregnant with twins on January 3, 1998. Seeing those two tiny sacs on the ultrasound screen was the happiest moment of my life. I was also scared, as I had a history of pre-term labor and an incompetent cervix. I had miscarried twice. My daughter had been born at twenty-three weeks and lived for only two hours. My son was born at thirty-six weeks, after a very difficult pregnancy and three months of hospitalization.

Things went smoothly those first few months. I underwent surgery for my incompetent cervix at twelve weeks. I knew that I would be going on bed-rest, so my husband and I started to plan for the twins' arrival. We purchased a mini-van and two car seats. We were so excited about becoming the parents of twins. This was a dream come true for me. My world came crashing down at sixteen weeks during a routine ultrasound. The nurse practitioner said there was a problem and we would need to move to a different ultrasound machine. I knew in my heart that something was wrong.

As I laid down on the table for a Level-II ultrasound, the room began filling up with people. A Perinatologist came in and introduced himself. He then went on to say, "Twin A has anencephaly. This is incompatible with life." It took me a few seconds to register what he was actually saying. The world seemed to stop at that moment. I tried desperately to fight the tears, but they soon came pouring down the side of my face. My chest got extremely tight and I felt as if I was going to have a heart attack.

The Doctor showed me the baby on the ultrasound screen. He explained what anencephaly was. People were

coming and going all around me. I could no longer process all the information they were giving me. My baby was going to die. Nothing else mattered. I remember thinking this was all a bad dream. I had lost one baby already; surely, God would not allow this to happen again. I was confused and alone as I left the hospital. I remember buckling my three year old in his car seat as he kept saying, "Mommy, don't be sad."

I drove the van ninety-mph that day and it is a miracle that we even made it home. My dream of becoming a mother of twins had just shattered. I could not believe I was going to bury another baby. I returned to the hospital later that day with my husband. The Doctor told us that we had options. He explained that anencephalic babies sometimes develop polyhydramnios, which would definitely complicate the pregnancy. He also explained that a reduction would be risky. I felt very helpless at that point. We declined a selective reduction and decided that we would leave things in God's hands. The Doctor told us that twin B looked healthy.

We decided to have an Amniocentesis just to be sure. The waiting was awful but the results were encouraging. One baby was healthy. A few weeks later I was put on full bed-rest. My cervix had thinned out and I was put on Procardia for the contractions. I now had twenty-four hours a day to think about the upcoming birth/death of my twins. Carrying two babies. One healthy and one sick was very confusing for me.

Bonding with either baby became almost impossible. My grief seemed to over shadow everything else. The twins shared a placenta, but were in separate sacs. Soon twin A developed Polyhydramnios and the Doctors were worried about the pressure on my incompetent cervix. We

had to begin therapeutic Amniocentesis to reduce the amount of amniotic fluid. It was an uncomfortable procedure, but gave me much relief. I worried constantly about my Cerclage breaking. I worried that twin A would die in utero and cause death or damage to twin B. I worried that they would be born premature. Emotionally, I was a total wreck. I worried twenty-four hours a day.

As I headed into the third trimester, I began to worry about the birth. With my incompetent cervix and pre-term labor, it is only a miracle that I was allowed to carry my babies so long. I soon became so uncomfortable because of my size that I could no longer sleep or eat. At thirty-five weeks my Doctor did an Amniocentesis to test for lung maturity. We scheduled an induction for the next day. Part of me wanted to stop time at that point. My womb had been a safe haven for our little twins. Delivering them would mean death for one and life for another.

On July 14th, Jordan Michael was born at 8:45pm. My healthy baby boy was taken to NICU for observation. The other twin was breech and we had a difficult time getting him out. It was almost as if he knew life on the outside meant death. Finally, at 9:09pm, Jonathan David was born. From the moment the Doctor laid him on my abdomen, I fell in love. He was a beautiful little boy and I hardly noticed his deformity. At that moment I felt very blessed to have carried those two little boys. I was a mother of twins.

Jonathan David died two days later in my arms. Jordan Michael is now seven months old. My struggle did not end with the pregnancy. I still have difficult days when I am overwhelmed with grief. I not only lost my son, but I also feel I was robbed of the joy I should have had with my survivor. When you are up to your neck in grief, there is very little room for joy. It is very difficult to bond with one

baby while letting go of another. Losing a twin involves very complicated issues. I still look at my survivor and think that there should be two. I can't put him in front of a mirror. The pain is still too raw. Maybe someday the pain will get easier.

I have learned new things about myself this last year. My little Jonathan gave me so much in his short time here. He taught me about the value of a human life. He gave me strength and courage that I didn't know I had. I have made new friends throughout my struggle. These are friends that I will treasure forever. I have learned to trust God no matter what comes your way. I know my Jonathan is waiting on me in heaven. I can't wait to hold him again.

Ashley

*I have carried you in my body for six long months,
and in my mind for over a year.
I have talked to you about my dreams,
the joy, the sadness and fear.
I set up your crib and painted your room,
in hopes of the day you'd arrive.
I feel your little hits and kicks,
they tell me your alive.
The contractions have started way too soon,
they tell me you're on the way.
The Doctor says he is sorry,
you're going to be born today.
I try to be strong and hold back the tears,
but all I can do is cry.
For this child who is inside of me,
will only be born to die.*

Written by Julie

~Katie~

My name is Katie. My husband and I had been trying to conceive for over two years and turned to fertility treatments for help. The usual dosage was not helping, so my Doctors decided to double it. We were told that if we did not become pregnant with that, then we would have to consult a fertility expert for further treatment. We decided that was too big of a mess to deal with and if I did not become pregnant we would just stop trying for a while. To our surprise, I did conceive that month. We immediately told the entire family the big news.

At approximately nine weeks pregnant I began having some spotting so I called my Doctor's office and was told to come in for a trans-vaginal ultrasound. They wanted to be sure that I was not miscarrying the baby. We were astounded to find that we had two very healthy babies in my womb. The Doctor quickly added that most women who become pregnant with twins, especially on fertility treatments, do not carry both twins to full term due to the vanishing twin syndrome. We still told the entire family and began buying two of everything.

By my eighteenth week sonogram and visit we were resting comfortably that everything would be fine. I was cautioned to take it easy, but told that no bed rest was necessary at this point. At twenty weeks I began having braxton-hicks contractions and was assured by the Doctors that everything was normal and fine. I should drink plenty

of fluids and time the contractions to be sure no more than six per hour were occurring. The contractions were not steady, so we did not worry any further.

Upon my twenty-one week visit they discovered that my cervix was beginning to efface and I asked if I was considered high risk at that point. They said that I was perfectly normal but should rest a little bit more. After two or three days I still didn't feel right, so I revisited the Doctor's office. They discovered that I was even more effaced and was told to start partial bed rest at that point, which meant getting up to use the bathroom, shower, eat and I could go to church. Well, on February 8th, I went to church. After I had been home for around two hours, the nightmare began.

I returned from the bathroom with my mucus plug gone and tears streaming down my face. I knew everything was going wrong, but I still felt that if I made it to the hospital the Doctor could fix everything and send me home. When we arrived at the hospital they began monitoring me and discovered that I was having regular contractions. They placed a catheter in and then to our horror they said that my water had broken. They even performed a litmus paper test on the water to confirm that it was amniotic fluid. We were told the Doctor was on his way in to examine me. The Doctor said that because my water had broke there was nothing that could be done. We would have to wait until the babies came that night and no attempt at resuscitation would be made since they were only twenty-two weeks in development.

I remember the horror in my mind at that point was so great and I could not suppress it. It built up inside of me until it came from my body with a horrendous scream that sounded worse than anything from a horror movie. I cried

over and over, "Please let me die too, I just want to die with them." They had monitors on me and on each of the babies, which we now knew to be boys. We could hear their little hearts beating steadily and an occasional kick to the monitor. I had to ask them to remove the babies' monitors; I could not listen to them as they died. We had to make funeral arrangements and have a minister present since they would be dying that night.

After several hours the labor had not progressed. My Doctor said that he would like to do another exam to see what was happening. My family and church immediately went to prayer begging for God to intervene, but mostly for His will to be done in the situation. He discovered that both bags of water were intact and that I was only dilated to one centimeter. They immediately put me on IV Magnesium Sulfate to stop the labor. If you are unfamiliar with this drug, you can only remain on it for a couple of days at a time due to its severe side effects. It relaxes soft muscle tissue such as lungs, eyes, and uterus, causing blurred vision, difficulty breathing, inability to eat or drink most anything and severe grogginess.

The following morning they did a sonogram to be sure and to our surprise, both bags were intact and both babies were perfectly healthy. I remained on this IV until Tuesday night and after it was removed everything seemed to be going fine. In fact, they planned on sending me home on Thursday. I had reservations about leaving. They had me take a shower to see if I would return to labor. That afternoon I did start labor again.

The Doctor did an examination and discovered that the bag of water was ready to burst. They immediately started another IV of Magnesium and transported me by ambulance to a Perinatal/Neonatal hospital in the area.

When we arrived to the new hospital I was assigned a new Doctor, a specialist. She was the best I have ever met. She immediately asked why I had not been placed into trendelenburg position before. I had never even heard of it. It is when they elevate your feet to a position higher than your head to take the strain off of the cervix. Upon my examination they found that I was dilated to four centimeters. My Doctor then also started me on a drug to help stop the labor. She also gave me a shot of steroids to help the babies lungs develop a little faster.

On Friday I had a vision that was comforting and yet disturbing also. I was walking down a hospital corridor, quietly. There was a man standing near the end of the hall. I could not see his face, but I knew instantly that he was the son of GOD. Without saying a word, he held out his hands and I gently gave him two bundles, which were my babies. He looked at me with love and peace, then turned and walked down to the end of the corridor into a light.

On Saturday, Valentine's Day, they took me off of the Magnesium Sulfate. Valentine's Day was filled with hope and prayers. Unknown to me at the time, my father had this same vision that night. Only in his dream the man was my grandfather who had passed away in his sleep early Saturday morning.

On Sunday morning we held our own church service in my hospital room with singing, bible teaching and plenty of prayer. I was anointed with oil for healing and at the same time my church was in service anointing a cloth for each of the babies for prayer. Just after lunch I noticed that I was having regular contractions, although my monitor was not registering them. The nurse came in to move the monitor and sure enough, it picked up strong, regular contractions. Once again they started the IV of Magnesium to try and

stop the labor. The contractions kept getting stronger and stronger. We knew they were on the way. They unhooked the IV and decided it was too late. I was dilated to six centimeters now and in hard labor. Rather than taking a chance at delivering quickly when my Doctor may have gone home, they decided it best to break my water.

At 6:00pm on Sunday the 15th of February, they broke my water and began hard labor. For over forty-five minutes I pushed and Samuel was still not coming. They said that his cord was presenting first and that they had to push him back in and turn him, but they needed to give me medication first. I refused because I needed to be awake for my babies. The Doctor was reluctant but reached her arm in anyway to turn Samuel. Samuel Edward Douglas was born at 6:50pm. The neonatologist immediately attempted to place a tube in his throat for life support. I called out to him, "Samuel, you can do it, be strong, fight!"

I'll never forget the Doctor's words. "I'm sorry, he is too small to sustain on life support. He said they were cleaning him and then I could hold him. They handed me that little bundle. He was perfect in every way, just so tiny. He weighed 1 pound, 2 ounces and was 11 1/2 inches long. I kissed him and told him how much his mommy loved him. I couldn't stop crying. I couldn't believe his life was over. We knew that Samuel was the larger of the two babies from sonograms. Therefore I knew that Isaac didn't have a chance at life. That must have been the hardest thing in my life, to push and labor for Isaac to bring him into death, not life.

Isaac Dewayne was born at 7:10pm. Again, we heard that he was too small to sustain on life support. They cleaned him and I held him. I remember feeling his soft skin. Telling him how sorry I was that I couldn't carry them longer, that I couldn't bring them life. I sobbed and said,

"Go be with Jesus now." My husband held both of the babies, one in each arm. He was dressed in his blue scrubs with the mask pulled down off of his face. He was smiling and looking into each of his son's faces, with tears streaming down his own face. It was like seeing a rainbow during a thunderstorm. I wanted so badly to breathe for them, to give them my own breath. I would have stood over them, giving them CPR every second if I could take away their struggle to live.

The attention quickly changed to me as they realized I was losing too much blood and was already anemic to begin with. I later lost consciousness due to the loss of blood. They kept coming to my room asking if we needed to hold the babies one last time. All I could say was that I didn't need to hold dead bodies. I had understood that they died just after birth. The nurses dressed the babies, took footprints, hand and foot molds and pictures of them. We appreciate these things so much now. On Monday I was getting ready to come home and that is when they broke the news to me about my grandfather dying. All I could say is, "Grandpa met them at the gate and he's holding them now." That is when my father told me about the vision he had with Grandpa holding the babies.

We buried Grandpa on Tuesday and the babies on Wednesday. Their burial plots are almost side-by-side. I think the worst part about Grandpa's funeral was all I could think of was the babies and how I would have to bury them the next day. The worst thing about the babies' funeral was that my breast milk had come in. This made me realize that I would never feed them, bathe them or take them to church. We would not get to do the baby dedication in church that we had planned, there would be no bringing them home from the hospital. I had returned home with empty arms.

Our church made meals and raised money for the funeral costs. They had sat at the hospital almost round the clock in prayer while I fought to keep them inside of my body. They cried and comforted us. We never knew we had so many friends. I never knew how much I needed people until that point.

A few days following I found some documents that the time of death for the babies was listed as 9:05pm. I didn't understand, I thought they died just after birth. Immediately, I began feeling guilt. Had I left them when they needed me most? Had they heard stranger's voices as they died? Did they lay there in confusion wondering where their mommy was? I could have spent two more hours with them. I fell to my floor, sobbing. I screamed out to God, "How could you do this to me? When I needed you most, you left me!" It was then that I heard the voice of God for the first time, he didn't speak aloud, but to my heart. "I came for them myself." I said, "I don't understand!" Then God said again, "I never left you, I held your hand through the pain, when they were born, I did not send another (perhaps an angel?), I comforted them. I came for them myself."

Then the phone rang; it was a lady from the hospital. She said, "The babies technically lived for two hours, that is we were able to get a small detection of a heartbeat for that long. But technically they were brain dead within minutes after birth due to lack of oxygen." I said to her "Well, I held them just after birth" and she said, "Then their mommy's voice is the last thing they heard or knew." Oh how this comforted me. At once my vision changed, I was in the delivery room and instead of handing the babies back to the Doctor, it was Jesus who I handed them to. Also, the Neonatologist had said that much earlier babies are able to

feel pain, clenching their fists and frowning, but he said that ours never did, they remained calm and quiet until the end.

There are so many things along the way that God has given me for strength. See, it is not by my strength that I get through this. I would never have survived, jumped off of a bridge I suppose. There are most days that I cannot get out of bed. It is then that I pray for more strength. Like everyone else, I became angry and had so many questions. I had been in church. We had prayed but God still chose to take them. Was he not listening? Did he not care? Neither. The bible says that he cares for the sparrow and how much greater than that we are. God lost his child too. He knows our pain. The pain of separation that I feel now from my children is the same separation that God feels from us when we leave him spiritually. See, God never leaves us, never. It is us who gives up and leaves him. How easy it would be for me to blame God, but he did not do this to me. He allowed it, for a greater reason than I could ever know. Even if he chose to reveal the reason to me, I could never understand it.

Since our loss we went on to use more fertility drugs and finally did manage to become pregnant again. We have found out we are having a boy and he is due the middle of August. I had a Cerclage (stitches placed in the cervix to hold it closed) in February and have been on bed rest. We are all doing well. Please keep us in your prayers. We have named him Joseph Gary.

Update:

*Katie has created a wonderful web site about trusting in God throughout the loss of a child. Please feel free to visit that site at:
<http://www.angelfire.com/ks/twinbabieslost>*

~Linda~

My name is Linda and unfortunately I had a miscarriage at sixteen weeks. Everything was so perfect, or so it seemed. I went to the bathroom and noticed the slightest pink tinge. When I called my Doctor's office they told me it was probably nothing, but to come in if it would make me feel better, which I did. I can still hear the static from the Doppler in search for the fetal heart sound. I'm surprised they didn't hear my heart crumbling. I was then given a bunch of reasons why all of a sudden the baby's heartbeat couldn't be heard, all just small glimmers of hope to delay the inevitable.

From there I was sent for an emergency ultrasound where once again they smile and tell you nothing. Lying there in the darkened room all you can hear is the static of the machine, no heart beat. They even asked do I feel the baby moving? My response was "Do you see it moving?" Of course the baby wasn't moving, breathing or doing anything else, there was no heartbeat. Why couldn't they just tell me? Instead they let me go home and told me to call the Doctor in the morning.

As a mother you know, I knew since the office visit. That was the start of the most horrifying twenty-four hours of my life. The next day I had a D&C. I was numb and terrified. This is not how it is supposed to be. I never failed at anything before, why now? People don't know what to say and for the most part if they said nothing at all it would probably be better. Unless you have lost, you can't possibly begin to understand the hurt and the despair.

After four days of tears, silence, replaying in my mind over and over again the past sixteen weeks, I just sat back and tried to figure out what I did wrong. Why is this happening to me? I knew that this pain would never end if I didn't say good-bye. I decided to write a letter to my baby.

My Dear 4th of July Baby,

I am so sorry that we will never meet. I know you will never see this letter, but I don't know how else to say good-bye. I will always love you with all my heart and you will be missed. The past few days have changed my life and I don't know if it will ever be the way it was. I hurt so much inside. I wanted you and needed you so badly. Everything was so right and now it's so wrong. How could this happen? Why?

They tell me this is for the best. God made a mistake and this is his way. From all bad comes good. Better now than have a deformed baby. It will be okay. Don't ask why, it just happens. You did nothing wrong, it's nobody's fault. I don't see how this is the best and I don't understand how this is going to be okay. I was so happy when I found out I was pregnant with you. Everything was so perfect. Your big brother told everyone that Mommy has a baby in her belly. But now you're gone. I lay there while they try to find your heartbeat, then they told me you were sideways or they needed a different frequency, it was probably a clot.

It didn't get any better at the ultrasound when they asked if I felt you moving. I lay there alone as they stared blankly at the screen. I prayed for them to see you move,

to see your tiny heart beat. I would have done anything in the world for them to say you were all right, but then they let me leave without telling me anything. It was then that my heart shattered into a million pieces because I knew you were gone.

I am so sorry this happened, it wasn't supposed to be this way. I would do anything if I could just have you back. It's so hard and it hurts so much to know that I will never get to see you, touch you, hold you, hug you, kiss you, see you smile, hear you laugh. I only hope that you were too small to feel, to hurt. May you be at peace. Please know that you will always be loved and always be missed. I don't think a day will go by that I won't think of you.

If you see me smiling or laughing please don't think I forgot you or that the hurt is gone. When they took you away they took a piece of my heart and it can't be fixed. I feel so empty inside, so very sad. I will love you forever,

Your Mommy

About four weeks after my D&C I received the chromosomal analysis. The baby was a Trisomy 13. It never had a chance from the moment of conception. As horrible as this sounds, it was better this way. Three months have passed and not a moment goes by that I don't think of my loss. Yes, it does get a little better with time, you have no choice, the rest of the world keeps going and it doesn't wait for you to catch up. I am now going to try once again to get pregnant. As much as I would like to be pregnant more than anything in the world, I am terrified of another loss or having to terminate the pregnancy.

~Lisa~

My second pregnancy resulted in a loss, my first loss, at seven and a half weeks. My baby had stopped growing at four and a half weeks. My Doctor told me I had the choice of having the baby expel naturally or having a D&C. He wasn't that blunt, fortunately he's very caring. This was on a Tuesday and they were not able to schedule a D&C until Friday. I was very disturbed, I felt like I was flushing my baby down the toilet as the loss occurred over the next few days.

Friday came and the Doctor told me afterwards that the D&C was medically necessary, as the tissue had not completely expelled itself from my body. Again, he spoke very sensitive to me.

I have since come to peace with my three day waiting period. At first I wanted the D&C right away. I was upset having to wait. Over time, it's been a comfort to me that my body had three days to naturally say good-bye to the "Little One" before it became medically necessary. It's important whatever your decision that you are informed and comforted with your decision.

My second Loss, third Pregnancy, my son Jackson died at seventeen weeks in utero. We didn't find out until twenty-one weeks. After finding out my baby had died, in a blur, we were at the hospital checking in. I wasn't sure why. The Doctor said to go and meet him there. My husband went to call my mom and my friend while the nurse took me down the hall. They were getting a room for

me. "Do I have to stay overnight?" I innocently ask. "Oh yes" the nurse says, "You're going to deliver your baby." But my baby's dead!

Yes, I had to go into labor and deliver my son. I am totally out of touch with reality now. I went home and packed some clothes because they didn't have a room for me yet. I went back and settled into my room. I was acting like I was at a Holiday Inn. I have checked in physically and out mentally.

My friend, my mom and our pastor were there. The nurse came in and told me what was going to happen. They would insert a pill into my cervix. This will occur every four to six hours until labor starts. The first pill was at 10:30pm. There can be no gel used, as that will hinder the pills effectiveness. It will be unpleasant to say the least and will bring on cramping. They said they will give me pain medicine but yes, there will be labor.

The cramps started about 7:30am. My second dose of the medicine was 4:30am. We were wheeled to a room to have an Amniocentesis. We wanted every test possible to help us find out why this happened. My water broke on the amnio table. An Amniocentesis would have been helpful had Jackson died recently, but since it had been four weeks it would have been inconclusive.

I was in and out of awareness as the pain medicine was increased. I slept a lot as an escape. It had been four hours since I had used the restroom and it was time to go. I went into the bathroom and they had a strange bucket inside the seat. I felt my son and the afterbirth pass. I felt him, like I was giving him a final hug. I asked the nurse, "Was that the baby coming out?" She said, "Yes, that he was."

Since the afterbirth was delivered I didn't have to have a D&C. A few minutes later the nurse brought in our angel, wrapped in a receiving blanket. She told us he was tiny but encouraged us to hold him, see him and spend time with him. We couldn't physically tell if our baby was a boy or girl, but I knew. He was six inches long and perfect. He had ten fingers, ten toes, two eyes, two ears and a nose. He looked like his big sister.

My husband couldn't hold him at first. He was scared. Later, our pastor came for our final blessing. My husband held our baby then and was so happy he did.

I wish I had spent more time with Jackson. I did rock, love and lullaby him, but nobody told me how much time was "right." I wish I had asked for the receiving blanket. The nurse took one picture for us. I wish I had pictures of me holding him.

We chose to have an autopsy and cremation. I am happy with those decisions. But again, I wish someone could have helped us make those decisions. We didn't have anyone from social services come see us. That would have been very helpful mentally. The Doctor came in and talked to my husband and I about grieving. He said that we would grieve differently, to expect it and know that it's okay.

I wasn't up to calls or visitors. The nurses put a note on my door and I had the operator block my calls. My husband went to go make the funeral arrangements, so I finally had some time to myself. I took a shower, watched TV and called a grief counselor at the hospital. She told me that the next group didn't start until January. January! This is October! I may need more counseling in January, but I know I need something now.

When it came time to leave, I was scared. I felt "safe" at the hospital. I didn't want to leave. As the orderly started wheeling me out I saw one of my nurses and started to cry. She cried too and gave me a hug. Once we were in the lobby we saw lots of other mommy's leaving. They were smiling; their babies were alive.

I couldn't sleep that night. It was 5:00am when I crawled into bed. My husband and daughter were close by. I was up by 8:00am and my eyes felt like sandpaper. Please God, help me stop crying for a little while, my nose can't take it anymore.

Over the weekend people came to visit. On Sunday, my friend took me to Target. I bought my journal and a box for Jackson's memories. I spent the next two weeks getting ready to move.

Within two weeks I had two episodes of waking up in the middle of the night feeling like my chest was going to explode. I woke up my husband and he got me something for my stomach. I was finally able to relax and breathe, so I didn't call the Doctor the first time. After the second time when the feeling didn't go away, I called for an appointment. The Doctor was very thorough. He did an EKG, but my heart was fine, just broken. I was diagnosed with Acid Reflux and a prescription was filled. He also mentioned that he could prescribe something for anxiety. Well, I was insulted. I always have been "in control", how could he suggest otherwise.

Well, two days later after a group counseling session, I realized that I was at a point that if I let go, I didn't think I was coming back. Mentally, I wasn't on a window ledge. I didn't feel I would commit suicide, I felt like I would have a nervous breakdown however and lose my ability to

function as a wife, mom and friend. So, I called my Doctor back and spent \$100.00 on a counselor that my insurance wouldn't cover. I have found a lot of comfort and support through group therapy. Couples talking to couples, woman to woman and new friend to new friend. That has been very helpful to me.

Update:

Lisa has created a wonderful web site called "Infancy Loss Awareness Ribbons." In the joy and memories of her babies she was inspired to make these ribbons and create a pamphlet so that when someone else is faced with the loss that she did, there will be something that a Doctor, Pastor, or a friend can hand them immediately. The ribbons were created so that someone going through a loss won't feel so alone or overwhelmed when it happens. The pain won't go away, but hopefully the ribbon will make it bearable and can point someone in a direction of healing.

Feel free to e-mail Lisa at Infantlossribbon@aol.com or visit her web site at www.childloss.com/ribbons.html.

~Lori~

My name is Lori and I have been through two first trimester miscarriages and one child who was stillborn at twenty-three weeks. My husband and I started trying to conceive two years ago and like most couples, we thought we would have no problems. We had been married five years at the time and since we were both twenty-eight, we thought that it was time to start a family.

My first miscarriage was as unexpected as anything could be, but we were still optimistic and three months later we became pregnant again. This pregnancy also ended in miscarriage. We then decided not to get pregnant for a while and just to let everything get back to normal.

Obviously, that wasn't God's choice, because six months later I was pregnant again. We decided that we were not going to let the other pregnancy disappointments stop us from being joyful about this child. We did everything that newly expecting parents are supposed to do. We told everyone when I finally reached the 20th week. We all breathed a sigh of relief that everything was going to be all right this time.

When I was twenty-three weeks pregnant I had a routine ultrasound and they detected an abnormality. When we finally got to speak to a Doctor she told us that there was a growth at the base of Owens neck that had caused his heart to stop beating. I could not believe that this was happening to us again. I had just heard his heartbeat at nineteen weeks and now there wasn't one.

My labor was induced at 9:00am on April 8th and I had Owen at 10:55pm that same day. He was seven inches long and only weighed five ounces. My husband was wonderful and never left my side the entire time I was in labor. Although now, like many men, he is having a hard time learning how to grieve. When I break down in tears for no apparent reason, he just looks at me and tells me he loves me. He doesn't know how to take away the pain, which is all he wants to do.

Even though not much time has passed since I lost Owen, I know that the pain will never lessen. It may soften with time but will never fully go away. The best thing I have done for myself is to talk to others who have suffered the same loss. They know that all you need is someone to listen. If you open yourself up to it, God will send someone who will listen to your words and comfort you when all you can do is cry.

~Michele~

My name is Michele. When I first got pregnant I was ecstatic. We were so happy and kind of surprised. It happened the first month of trying. I conceived in August of 1995. I went to the Doctor and everything was going fine. Then at eight weeks all of a sudden I started bleeding and cramping. I was told to go home and put my feet up. If I was to miscarry they couldn't do anything about it anyway.

Miscarriage wasn't in my vocabulary at that point. I miscarried that night at home. It was October 24, 1995. It was just horrible knowing there was nothing I could do to prevent this from happening. The Doctor told us there was no reason. It was unexplainable and these things just happen. We wanted to get pregnant again right away. Well, it happened six months later.

I went to the Doctor as soon as I suspected I was pregnant. They confirmed it and again everything was going fine. The Doctor did not want to do testing since everything was fine on this one. I passed the eight-week mark and breathed a sigh of relief. They scheduled an ultrasound at ten weeks to make sure things were going the way they should be. My husband couldn't go so my mom came with me. I wanted someone to be there when I saw my baby for the first time. We went in and the technician told me what we were looking for.

Then his face got a strange look on it and he wouldn't talk to me anymore. I lay there looking at the screen, not knowing what I'm supposed to be looking for. But I noticed there was nothing. No movement. Not even that little flashing spot that was supposed to be the heartbeat. The Doctor came in to take a look and then broke the bad news to my mom and I. I lost the baby. I couldn't believe this was happening again. It just wasn't fair. Thank goodness my mom was there to ask questions because I just sat there and cried. Not knowing what else to do. At this point there was no signs of miscarriage. No spotting or cramping. I had to decide to have a D&C or let nature take its course. I chose the D&C. I needed it out of me. It was hard enough knowing that I again wouldn't have a child. After this happened I put all my energy into my new nephew. He was born at 1 pound, 8 ounces and 12 inches long. I just wished I could have held on so my babies would have had a chance.

The hospital told me to expect my period in four to six weeks. I waited and waited. Nothing happened. I truly thought the surgery had wrecked my insides. They make you sign a form saying they can cause damage to your uterus and such. So, after waiting until my seventh week I called the Doctor. They said I needed a pregnancy test. I assured them that I was not pregnant. We only had sex once and it was protected. They said the Doctor wouldn't see me until I had the test, so I said I'd wait. I went out and bought a home pregnancy test. I was so sure I wasn't pregnant that I threw out the stick without even looking at it. The garbage was full and the stick fell out of the box. That's when I saw two lines. I was pregnant. I wasn't sure how to feel. I immediately called the Doctor's office and set up an appointment. They did some testing and found out that I don't make enough progesterone, so I needed to be supplemented.

Things went well. Finally at twelve weeks we heard and saw the heartbeat. We then announced it to the world. At fourteen weeks I woke up and there was blood everywhere. I just screamed. This couldn't be happening. We already saw the heartbeat. We were told to come in the next morning to his office. I was carrying what I thought to be my baby in a cup. The Doctor didn't think there was enough tissue there to be a baby and did an emergency ultrasound. There he or she was. Looking right at me and waving. I was crying again. They sent the tissue into the lab and found out that it was a baby. I was pregnant with twins and I lost the one, but not the other. I was sad, but yet really happy that I was still pregnant.

It was a long and hard pregnancy. There was only two months that I wasn't in the Doctors every other day or in the hospital. At twenty-nine weeks along my water started leaking. They told me I was in labor. I was so scared. I was put in the hospital and on bed rest. The leak was up high and eventually sealed itself, but during this time they found out I had Group B Strep. It's a bacterial infection that can kill the baby. They didn't know if the infection made its way into the bag of waters or not, so for the next three months they told me to expect a stillborn.

On February 13th 1997 I delivered a healthy 7 pound, 12 ounce baby boy. They induced me three weeks early to make sure they got him out while he was still living. He needed to be put on oxygen right away and was taken out of the room. We had to stay an extra night because he needed antibiotics, but I got to take him home when he was two days old and never let him go. He was truly my miracle child.

I was nursing my son Luke and got pregnant when he was three months old. I was shocked, but happy. When I was eight weeks along, I again miscarried. That miscarriage made me want a child so bad. I loved the one I had dearly, but needed another. We had always wanted a big family. We would like three or four children. It doesn't seem that we will. When Luke was eight months old we got pregnant. They would be fifteen months apart. I was being supplemented on progesterone and all was going well. The heartbeat was strong every time. At thirteen and a half weeks I started spotting. I called the Doctor, who was gone to a seminar, so I saw his partner. He checked me out and said there was no problem. He said that 50% of all pregnancies spot at some point. Well the spotting continued. I went back again. He decided to put me into the hospital thinking I had an incompetent cervix. I didn't. I was released four to five hours later. I went to this Doctor four times and every time was told to go home and put my feet up. I couldn't wait for my Doctor to return.

My Doctor returned on the following Thursday. He ordered another ultrasound to see how things were progressing. The baby was very active and had a strong heartbeat. The technician made a comment on how the baby would be a "wild" one. My Doctor stayed with me through the ultrasound. He said that everything was okay and I should go home. That was at 5:00pm. I started passing huge blood clots by 7:00pm. I called and again was told to stay home. They said that we just saw the baby and he or she was doing fine.

Needless to say I delivered my baby into my hands at 10:05pm. It was a boy. I was fourteen and a half weeks along. He was moving when he came out. They say it was just nerves, but I believe he was born alive for that second. He was four and a half inches long and weighed only one

ounce. After I had him I called the Doctor. He said "What now, I just talked with you." I told him that I had the baby and all he said to me was "Go to the emergency room." I didn't care at that point. I just had my baby. He had ten fingers and toes, ears, a nose, a mouth and everything. We could tell at home that he was a boy. He was so perfect, just so tiny.

After losing Andrew I lost it completely. Everyone told me to look at what I had. Yes, I had a wonderful little boy at home, but he will not replace the boy I just lost. The hardest thing a parent can do is bury a child. It should be the other way around. We buried him and had a private service for our families. Without going into details my Doctor became a total jerk. I ended up writing him up and he went in front of the board of directors. He blamed me for my loss. He said I was trying to make myself miscarry. Him of all people should know how much we wanted another child. I don't smoke or drink and I try to eat healthier when I'm pregnant. I do everything by the book and this still happens.

I finally found a wonderful specialist. She did testing on me, which my other Doctor refused. He said it was a waste of money, I was just having bad luck. Well, the testing did show some fixable things, so we took care of them.

I got pregnant again in March of 1998. Everything was going well. I had some spotting in the beginning of the pregnancy, but it turned out okay. I knew it was going to be a rough pregnancy from the beginning. We then moved and I had to switch Doctors in the middle of my pregnancy. I was terrified.

I found a wonderful new Doctor and hospital. The end of my pregnancy was very difficult for me. It was the one-

year anniversary of Andrew's death and I was having horrible nightmares that this baby was not going to be born alive if I went full term. Everyone just kept saying I was being silly and that it was nerves. I delivered two and a half weeks early on my own. It was hard having her only two weeks after Andrew's "day". I had a healthy 8-pound baby girl.

I now have one of each. I was right though; call it mothers' intuition. We are so blessed for her to be with us. We have traveled a long and bumpy road, but now we have two beautiful children. Miracles do happen. We would love more children, but I don't know if I can emotionally handle another pregnancy. I thank my husband for all the support he has given me. He's not always on the same level of grieving and I had a problem with that. But men and women are so different in those ways. Please keep faith and know that there is hope. Look what I went through to get what I got. I wouldn't trade it for the world, and I'd do it all over again.

~Michelle~

It was Thursday the 24th of August and I was due for the usual eighteen-week ultrasound scan. I wasn't at all concerned. I had no inkling that something could be wrong. As usual, with an ultrasound, you have to drink a huge amount of liquid and your bladder doesn't agree, so I was absolutely busting to go to the toilet. I was only waiting five minutes until the specialist appeared, so I was very relieved he wasn't running late. In the meantime, I was very excited with the fact I was soon going to see my baby on the small screen and would be able to see her move. I was looking forward to the scanned photograph to show the other children. We were so looking forward to the arrival of our new baby. The specialist came in and said I could go use the restroom and let the excess go just a little. I don't think they've ever had to drink that much and let a little go, because once you start you feel like never stopping.

I lay on the couch and waited patiently, because as usual the Doctor didn't speak much. Those guys never do, he didn't have my Doctor's bedside manner. As he scanned her little legs he typed information into his machine so at this stage I wasn't at all worried. I just relaxed and continued to look at the screen. After about ten minutes of him scanning the one place over and over, I was starting to get very worried, as he wasn't typing any information in. He also had a very puzzled look on his face. After a little while he looked at me, put his hand on mine and said, "I'm sorry, it looks bad, very bad." That's all he would say. I

asked him over and over what was the problem, but he just said he couldn't say and he would speak to my Doctor. Minutes later he reappeared to repeat what he'd already told me in his office. I would be able to speak to my Doctor tomorrow at 10:00am and just said, "I'm Sorry."

I left the hospital crying all the way to my mothers in hysterics and explained what had happened. She rang the surgery to find out what the problem was, but my Doctor said it wasn't something that couldn't be explained properly over the phone, as he needed to see me in person. That night was an absolute hell. Andy was working the night shift and I just didn't want to be alone, so I stayed the night with my mother. Of course, I didn't get any sleep that night. I just lie there wondering if she was okay. I didn't even know if my baby was alive.

That morning seemed to take forever to come around, but I was not at all prepared for what I was about to be told. He asked me if I knew what an anencephalic baby was. I said no I didn't and he went on to explain. It was one of those situations that you think will never happen to you. I had to decide what to do, whether to terminate now or go full term. The outcome would be the same no matter what. She would die when she was born. The decision was easy one way, but very difficult in many others.

I knew it was the best thing for Emily, but in a way I wanted to be selfish and have her for me. I wanted her so much, my precious little baby. At this stage we didn't know whether she was a boy or a girl. We discussed her for about one hour and the decisions that had to be made. He said that he didn't want me to decide right away. He said to go home and talk it over with Andy and come back at 4:00pm.

When I arrived home to explain to Andy what was happening, I just cried and cried. This was one of the worst days of my life. All my dreams and expectations were shattered. It didn't take long to decide. At 4:00pm we arrived at the surgery and talked about her for ages. We both had a million and one questions. My Doctor answered them all as best he could. I think Andy doubted the ultrasound results at first, but after seeing it himself on an ultrasound he was convinced. We had decided the sooner the better, so we arranged for the induction of labor to begin at 8:00pm on Sunday.

We were told it would take longer than usual because my body just wasn't ready for labor. I was so scared. I didn't want this to happen at all. It always happens to someone else. My Doctor arrived and started things on its way. The epidural was the most painful thing I ever felt and being terrified probably didn't help. He also had to put up a drip and a catheter inside the vagina into the cervix, which has a balloon to dilate the cervix. After everything was done all I could do was wait. Andy stayed by my side the whole time and that meant more to me than words can ever say. It was his support that pulled me through. I just know I'll never be able to thank him enough in an entire lifetime for that.

My mother came to the hospital at about 9:00am and stayed with me also until the end. At 10:30am my water broke and that frightened me so much. All of a sudden it was very real and there was no turning back. Things started to progress and I started to have contractions. The nurse came in with top ups for my epidural every hour. I started losing blood and a lot of it. Close to the end I was getting extremely weak and still losing heaps of blood. I was floating in and out of it. They gave me oxygen, which

didn't seem to help. I really appreciated Jodie and Auntie Judy being there for me as well.

Andy looked so scared and didn't want to come in with me, which was fine. Everyone in there was wonderful and I didn't feel as scared as I thought I would. The anesthesiologist gave me the anesthetic and asked me if I wanted to be wide-awake or drift in and out of sleep. I said I didn't care. Just let this nightmare be over. Apparently after about one hour I woke to see all these people standing around a table in green. The Sister came to me and told me that I had a little girl. I had imagined she would have been bigger. I finally got to hold her and she was just so perfect. I remember thinking she looked like she was asleep.

When I got back to my room everyone was there. I just looked and touched her for about two hours. I remember thinking she was just like the other children. All the people at the birth were there to see her. She was just so beautiful. We named her Emily Shenae. She was born on Monday, August 28th at 3:00pm and weighed 130 grams and was 20 centimeters long. I remember getting the high you get with a baby born alive and healthy. It was really strange, I wasn't really sad like I thought I would be. She was just so beautiful.

The next few days were absolute hell. I was very sick and was finding it very hard to deal with my grief. I just wanted my baby back. Tuesday was difficult as the funeral director came to take her away. I wanted to hang on to her in a way, but I knew she had to leave. That night my Doctor came in and we talked for ages. He told me that my blood count was very low and if it hadn't picked up by morning I'd need a blood transfusion. Once again, I was very scared.

The next morning my Doctor came to see me. I still couldn't get out of bed. He did another blood test and ten minutes later he had the blood ready to be infused. It felt like ice pumping through my veins. I had three units of blood. As they were putting in the last unit my vein collapsed, which was extremely painful. It was a shooting pain up my arm and across my chest. The Sister had warned me about this. My Doctor was called and another IV was put in my other arm so I could have the remainder of the blood. It was amazing how much stronger I was on the following day. Everyone expected me to be better, but I felt like I was on an emotional roller coaster. I never knew when I was going to crack. My visitors were seeing the brave Shell, but inside I was falling apart.

Now it was time for the funeral and I felt all this emotion trapped inside of me just waiting to come out. My Doctor came to see me once more before I went home. He has been just wonderful. I broke down at the funeral. It was a lovely service and somehow I feel she is safely in the arms of my Dad. I know he is looking after her.

She will always be with me. Nobody knows the pain I feel not having her by my side. She was one very special baby and will never be forgotten. I think of her every minute of the day. The pain is like nothing I've ever experienced and sometimes I feel better than at other times, but I can't get her out of my mind. Not even for a second.

~Patti~

My name is Patti. I had some difficulty conceiving my first child. I had to take three rounds of Clomid, but I was lucky and had a great pregnancy. I delivered a healthy 8-pound, 1-ounce baby boy.

When my son was two we started to trying again for a second child. I again had a hard time conceiving. I had a miscarriage after a year of trying, but at the time, I didn't even know that I was pregnant.

Ten months later, after many disappointments, I found out I was pregnant again. Right from the start everything was different. I was so sick, always dehydrated and I never felt good. On my first Doctor visit I had some protein in my urine and my blood pressure was slightly elevated. They said there was nothing to worry about. I was told the same thing on my next visit. I was then scheduled for my routine ultrasound and the Alpha-fetoprotein (AFP) test, which wasn't even a concern for me.

A week after the Alpha-fetoprotein (AFP) test came the phone call that changed my life. The results were abnormal. Again they said, "Nothing to worry about yet, but let's do an ultrasound to be sure and run another Alpha-fetoprotein (AFP) test." My husband was in New York at the time for his grandmother's funeral. I called him hysterical and he came home immediately, full of assurances that everything will be okay. It wasn't. We went in and as soon as the ultrasound technician saw what

he saw, I noticed a pained look on his face and he said, “Let me go get the Doctor.”

The Doctor also took one look and was very concerned. I was referred to a specialist at UNC Chapel Hill. I had a Level-II ultrasound and an Amniocentesis, which confirmed our worst fears. Our baby had a chromosomal defect called Triploidy, which means he had one extra of every chromosome. In addition, he had a three-chamber heart, an umbilical hernia and spina bifida. We were told that I should never have gotten this far in my pregnancy. I was twenty weeks along. They said that this baby would probably not make it to forty weeks and even if he did, he would not survive long past birth.

We made the painful and difficult decision to terminate the pregnancy. We went back up to UNC to begin preparations for a routine D&C, where we then found out that I was suffering with severe pre-eclampsia and I had to be admitted to the hospital. Further testing revealed I had a partial molar pregnancy and ovarian cysts the size of grapefruits. So, not only was I losing my son, I had my own health at risk.

What was going to be an outpatient procedure turned into a weeklong hospital stay. I was also told not to try to get pregnant for a year to make sure my HCG levels were safely down. My husband and I decided that maybe we were blessed with one healthy child and we were not going to try again. But we also did not prevent pregnancy, thinking that it was so difficult to conceive before, why bother.

Almost six months to the day of losing our son, I had a peculiar feeling and took a home pregnancy test, which was positive. We were both happy and terrified at the same

time. I immediately called my Doctor and we went for a seven-week ultrasound, which showed a normal pregnancy. We went back at fifteen weeks for another ultrasound and an Amniocentesis. We were afraid to let ourselves be happy until we knew this was going to be okay. We saw a perfectly healthy baby boy.

He was born by C-section weighing 9 pounds, 5 ounces last June and he is such a sweet blessing. It has been two years now since I lost my son and the pain is still there. It is so hard to know how it feels unless you have been there yourself, and for me it helped to know and hear of others sharing similar pain.

Update:

Patti's little miracle has just had his second birthday. If you would like to contact Patti her e-mail address is bps_67@yahoo.com.

~Paul~

We have two healthy young boys, Selwin who is four and Elout who is two. We were waiting anxiously for the birth of our third child, due on the 20th of July 1999. The future looked bright and nothing could go wrong. I would become a father and a godfather in the same year, because my wife's sister is also pregnant and is expecting to deliver in the beginning of June. We had already made many plans for the baby. We secured a place in the daycare center, we had foreseen an extra three months leave for my wife from work and were just very much looking forward to holding another tiny baby in our arms and loving it with all our hearts.

The pregnancy went without any problems. We had seen the baby with an ultrasound and Dagmar had heard the heartbeat at sixteen weeks. At nineteen weeks we had to visit the hospital for a routine ultrasound and because after two boys, we wanted to know whether we had a girl this time. We went together to find out. We were a bit nervous, because in the next few minutes the Doctor would tell us what we were going to have. Nothing worried us, as our two boys were heavy weights at birth, both weighing four kg.

The ultrasound started and we could see the baby on the screen, nothing moved, except the Doctor, who was staring at the screen, zooming in and out, trying again and not saying a word. It must have been only minutes, but that short time seemed to last for hours. What was going on, why didn't he say anything? Finally, without taking his

eyes off the screen he said, "I'm sorry, but I am afraid I have some terrible news for you." It was a shock. This couldn't happen to us. What had gone wrong and more importantly, what did we do wrong?

On the 23rd of February 1999, the next day, we checked into the hospital early in the morning and Dagmar delivered our baby boy at 10:00pm that evening. There was only silence at that moment and not the cheerful crying of a newborn, as we associated a delivery with before. We didn't have the courage to look at our son, who was only 16-cm long and weighed 60 grams. We were afraid to say goodbye to a baby that didn't look like one. Fortunately, the hospital took some pictures of our son and we cherish these pictures very much. The pictures of a perfect baby boy, because this is the only thing that our 'Engel', a name meaning Angel in English and given a few weeks after his death, has left for us to hold and kiss.

We don't know yet what caused the miscarriage. The results from the first tests show that everything was fine. We have been told that the chance of finding out what went wrong is also not very big, but that most likely it has something to do with the chromosomes and lies completely outside our doing. It's like a natural disaster striking you and you standing by watching.

We have difficulty coping, all in our different little ways. Our oldest son Selwin was so much looking forward to having a little brother or sister and stops whenever he sees a baby to just say hello. We told him that his little brother won't be coming, but is in a better place now and waits for him in heaven. He talks to him now and again and waves kisses to the sky.

Our youngest son Elout doesn't know what is going on, but feels that his parents are very sad. He clings to his mother like glue and tries to comfort us as much as he can. Dagmar is devastated and wants her baby back. She is remembering Engel with all kinds of things, like a handmade doll with the same weight and length as our son, a medallion with an angel depicted on it and the date of his birth. She is planning to send cards to close relatives in remembrance of Engel and still cries every day.

Myself, as the father, am completely at a loss. How do I comfort the rest of the family and go on with our lives? I don't know, maybe cry in silence and try to survive. The future will bring difficult times. The birth of the baby of my sister-in-law and the 20th of July that Engel was expected to be born. We must however keep hopeful towards the future, because after reading so many sad stories, we know that we are not alone and we can overcome this tragedy. Most of all the love for our little boys Engel, Elout and Selwin will help us get through it.

Update:

I am happy to report that Paul and Dagmar have had a healthy baby boy named Iason, who was born February 18, 2000.

~Shirley~

My name is Shirley. In January of 1996 I found out that I was pregnant. I was so happy. Two weeks later I started spotting, dark red blood. I called my Doctor's office and the nurse asked me the color and amount of blood. She wanted to know if the blood filled a pad in one hour. It didn't and as I had an appointment scheduled for the next day they told me to just rest and come in for my regular appointment.

After being examined by ultrasound I was pronounced fine and sent home. I was told to avoid heavy lifting, but I could still walk as much as I wanted. The spotting continued but didn't get worse until the tenth week. The Doctor told me to rest with my feet up for about a week and everything should be fine. He said if I was having a miscarriage there was nothing that could be done about it.

At this time I started suffering from awful bouts of morning sickness. I was unable to keep anything down. The Doctor told me that this was a good sign. This went on until I started losing weight. Every appointment I would lose from three to seven pounds. By the eighteenth week I had lost around sixteen pounds. My Doctor told me that if I didn't begin to gain weight or stop losing they would have to do something at my next appointment.

At twenty weeks I was walking through a mall with a friend of mine when I started having an uncontrollable urge to go the bathroom. Every few minutes I had to use the restroom. My friend took me home so I could lie down. I

decided to call my Doctor and was told to come in to the hospital immediately. When I arrived I was immediately taken to an exam room where a resident examined me. She performed a vaginal exam. During the exam she let out a gasp and immediately left the room. She came back with another resident and a vaginal ultrasound. She put the tip of the probe in while looking at the monitor and stopped. She was afraid to continue the exam. She informed me that my membranes were bulging out of the cervix and she was afraid that by using the probe or her hands that the membranes would rupture.

A specialist was sent for. I had dilated to one and the baby's foot was actually outside of the cervix. I was so afraid. The Doctors put me on total bed rest in the trendelenburg position. Every day the Doctors would take me to ultrasound to see if the membranes went back to the normal positions. During these exams I was told how the baby was going to come no matter what I did and that it would be for the best if I would just allow them to induce my labor, in essence to have an abortion. I would refuse and would always end up in tears after one of these sessions. I would call my Doctors office to complain and was told to do what I felt was right. I would ask then what could be done if I went into premature labor and was told nothing could be done. Twenty weeks was not far enough along to take anything and that the medications would just cause harm to the baby.

After a few days in the hospital I got a urinary tract infection from the Foley catheter. They treated it with IV antibiotics. Three days later the contractions started. I asked again what could be done to stop the contractions and was told just an IV. I asked the nurse what they would do for the baby and was told that nothing would be done. It was against hospital policy to save babies less than twenty-

three weeks. I asked for an epidural and was told that it would just slow things down. After eight hours of labor my son was born without a Doctor or nurse in attendance. When he was born he was still encased in his membranes; my water had not ruptured. The Doctor had to come into the room and ruptured the membranes. He was alive. I was able to hold him and pass him all around to my family to be held and loved. He lived for almost four hours. I felt so guilty and so hurt. It was at this time that I was told I had an Incompetent Cervix.

Eighteen months later I became pregnant for the second time. Everything seemed to be going great until the seventh week when the bleeding started again. I again called my Doctor. At this time I was placed on partial bed rest and had to see the Doctor every other week. In my ninth week the bleeding became worse. My Doctor did an exam and noticed a polyp on my cervix. We also saw the baby's heartbeat on the ultrasound. One week later I was lying in bed when I felt a pop and a gush of fluid down my legs. I ran to the bathroom where I noticed blood streaming down my legs. I showered and called the Doctor. She told me the polyp most likely caused the blood. The baby is fine, but if I wanted to come in to get checked out, that was up to me. I decided I wanted to be checked so I called a cab.

An hour later still no cab and the bleeding increased. I was now losing so much blood that I had to stand in the shower. It was at this point that I called an ambulance. I was not experiencing any pain or cramping at this time. That didn't start until I reached the hospital. In the emergency room I was told to get undressed, my Doctor would be right in. I stood up to get undressed, took off my clothes, and got so hot and dizzy that I thought I was going to pass out. I was unable to breathe. A social worker came

in and told me I was hyperventilating. She called for a nurse. The nurse came in put me on oxygen and took my blood pressure. It was 60/0 and going down.

Two IV's were inserted and IV bags were being squeezed into my arms as they rushed me to the operating room. I did not want to be put to sleep because I was afraid I would die. In the recovery room I was asked if I wanted to see the baby. I said maybe later. I was so tired and in so much pain. They never offered this again, and to this day I regret not seeing my baby.

After this miscarriage I was sent to a Reproductive Endocrinologist (RE). The only thing that we found is that I do not ovulate every month. I was put on Clomid to help me ovulate and after one month I got pregnant again. I was sent for blood work in the sixth week and after doing a series of blood test the Reproductive Endocrinologist (RE) noticed that my Beta HCG levels were not increasing as they should. She did an ultrasound and nothing but an empty sac appeared.

I was told I would miscarry within two weeks. Two weeks later I was still pregnant. At ten weeks we did another ultrasound and again just an empty sac was there. While waiting at the hospital for my cousin to have her baby (I was going to adopt her baby, so I was staying with her during the delivery) I started bleeding. I was in my thirteenth week. I had a miscarriage at the hospital in my cousin's bathroom. I scooped up the tissue that was in the toilet and put it into a plastic container. I then walked down to the emergency room where I was examined and sponged out. I gave the Doctor the tissue for testing. Some of the tissue was very dark. Weeks later I found out the parts of it was necrotic. My cousin kept her baby after all and it was like losing two babies on the same day.

~Yolanda~

My name is Yolanda. In June of 1997, I was thirty-three and had one child by a prior marriage and wanted to have another child with my second husband. I had been experiencing severe menstrual cramps. Actually, I have had horrible periods my entire life, but around June of 1997, they had come to a point where my 800mg of Motrin was no longer helping and the flow was completely out of control.

I decided to go to the Doctor for a basic checkup to see if anything was wrong. I had been a member of that HMO for about ten years and loved it. I always saw the same physician's assistant, Lillie, for all of my gynecological visits. Lillie sent me on an ultrasound. When I returned to their office three weeks later to talk about the results of my ultrasound, I was surprised to find out that my appointment would not be with Lillie. I was told that since they suspected fibroids, I would no longer be able to be cared for her. I would have to be assigned to a Doctor and having never used one of their Obstetricians, I was just assigned one and not given the opportunity to pick my own.

So, there I was in the Doctor's office, not knowing my future and waiting for a Doctor I had no knowledge of and knew nothing about. Unfortunately, it was a man. Personally, I prefer female Doctors and this really bothered me. So, this new Doctor came in and said, "They found one fibroid, golf ball sized and several tiny ones. My recommendation is a Hysterectomy. When do you want to have it done?"

I was shocked, scared, and panic stricken. Then he says well, how old are you and do you have any children?" So I say, "I am thirty-three and I have one child." Before I finish my sentence he says, "Okay, so you do have other children, good, well we can schedule a Hysterectomy then."

He was such a jerk. Already I don't like this guy. How can he just jump to conclusions and decisions like that without involving me? So I say to him, "I have no intentions of having a Hysterectomy, I want more children, this is my second marriage and we would like to have kids together." It really pissed me off that I felt I needed to justify my reasons to him. So, then he says, "Well we do have two other options. We could perform a Myomectomy to remove the fibroid and then you would still be able to have kids. Just be aware that it is possible that something could go wrong in surgery and a Hysterectomy would be necessary. If you really want to have more children, you might consider doing nothing. There are many women who have healthy baby's everyday that have fibroids bigger than this and in a more difficult place in the uterus. Yours is only about golf ball sized and it is up high and out of the way so it would more than likely not affect the growth of the baby. However, this will be a riskier pregnancy because fibroids will grow during the pregnancy and can cause pre term labor and can result in preemies or low birth weight babies."

Let's face it, this guy had me scared to death. I quickly decided to do nothing. I got a renewal of my Motrin prescription and decided to start trying to get pregnant. I was pregnant on my next cycle. I also requested a new Doctor. Unfortunately, very quickly after conceiving, I started to feel very bad cramps in my side. My new Doctor

suspected an Ectopic pregnancy and ordered an ultrasound to rule this out when I was about three weeks pregnant.

They were able to rule it out, but not able to explain why I was cramping so bad. There was no blood, just heavy cramping which intensified when I tried to urinate. They ruled out a bladder infection and vaginal infection too. Then one day the cramping stopped and everything looked fine. I went on vacation to Hawaii for two weeks and had another exam when I came back. On this day, I started spotting and by the time I got to the Doctor's office, it was pretty heavy. During this visit, my new Doctor gave me another ultrasound and found that the embryo had stopped growing. I was having a miscarriage. This was August of 1997. They examined the material and found no explanations why.

My Doctor recommended that I start trying again right away if I wish not to do a Myomectomy. She said she would be glad to do a Myomectomy, but it was definitely my decision. Still being afraid of the Hysterectomy danger, I decided to try to conceive again. It took approximately one year to conceive again. This was due to a lot of weirdness in my ovulation that I didn't realize I had. When I had charted my basal body temperature and cervical mucus for six months with no luck, my Doctor recommended that I start to use ovulation predictor kits. She also told me that if I wasn't pregnant in six months to go ahead and schedule the Myomectomy, since fibroids could lead to infertility problems.

I saw right away that the charting I was doing was falsely predicting ovulation. The kits were revealing that my ovulation dates were much later than I thought. I had almost given up hope and started planning for the

Myomectomy, but was pleasantly surprised when I found myself pregnant in July of 1998.

We had our eleven-week visit. On the initial listen the Doctor could not hear the heartbeat. She said, "Don't worry, as long as I can get a visual heartbeat on the ultrasound we will know that the baby is progressing normally." She took my husband and I down the hall in an ultrasound room and we saw one baby with a heartbeat. Then she said, "I have a suspicion, let's look around. It's twins!"

She got them to both show side by side and we saw two babies, two heartbeats and they were both doing somersaults. My husband and I have been laughing hysterically ever since. We are so overjoyed to have been blessed with two. We have one other child who is a girl, twelve years old and she was so excited when we told her. She thinks that we will have little gymnasts and plans on teaching them everything that she knows.

At my next visit I had another ultrasound with the twins, they could not understand why Baby B was so much smaller than Baby A. I left my Amniocentesis in tears because they were unable to draw enough fluid from Baby B to test her Chromosomes. However the Doctor was positive based on the fact that both babies were in one sac with a thin separating membrane that they were identical. Since the Amniocentesis at seventeen weeks revealed Baby A was chromosomal perfect, we knew Baby B was too. The Doctor was still concerned with the health of the babies. The size difference had increased and Baby B was low on fluid. I was transferred to a high-risk Doctor for the duration of the pregnancy.

When I was only nineteen weeks and five days my water broke. I had gone to the bathroom and then gone to the sink to brush my teeth. As usual, the toothpaste made me heave. On the first heave, my water broke all over the floor. I really felt it was over. I didn't know there was anything that could be done.

My husband rushed me to the emergency room and I was ultimately admitted to the high-risk perinatal ward. My Doctor told us that all we could do is pray and wait. He said that in some cases, the amniotic sac closes back and will fill back up with fluid. Bed rest would then be required.

They checked the heart rates every three hours and my blood pressure and temperature. They monitored for contractions. As long as I didn't go into labor, or develop an infection, they would try to keep me pregnant as long as possible and give the babies time to grow. I was told birth at twenty weeks has no chance of survival and although twenty-four weeks does, twenty-six to twenty-eight would be better.

The babies were fighters and held on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday. Late Thursday night, early Friday morning about midnight, they could no longer hear heartbeats. An ultrasound at 2:00am confirmed the hearts had stopped beating. Since they were identical girls, the Doctor thinks that with less fluid, they could have cut off the umbilical cord by resting against it because it was no longer free floating. I was scheduled to be induced Friday at noon.

My husband was there and I was given an epidural. Because my labor progressed so quickly and the epidural had a hard time being put in, the epidural only numbed half

of my body and didn't work at all on the pain. Within an hour and a half they were delivered, silently. My husband and I got to hold them. We were devastated. They were so perfect and beautiful, just born too early. I have never been one to rush to hold babies because I was always uncomfortable, unless it was my own. Now my arms are aching for having delivered two beautiful babies that I can hold no more. I grieve not only for losing them, but also for all the time in the future I won't have with them. I think sometimes I am all cried out and then the tears start over.

After the delivery, I failed to deliver the placenta. This made a D&C necessary, so I was taken to the operating room for the procedure. They would not allow my husband to go with me and told him I would be back in half an hour. It actually took an hour and a half due to complications caused by my fibroids.

My husband and I cried together. We called the chaplain to bless our babies and then had them baptized. We took pictures and decided to tell our twelve-year old daughter when we got home, as a family. I returned home on Saturday and told her. Although at first she concealed her pain, about two minutes later, she began to sob and we all cried as a family. I think when we are ready we will plant two more trees in our backyard and have our daughter pick them out.

Right now we are just blessed to have each other and though we are grieving, we are thankful for all the love we have and all of those that love us. We miscarried August of 1997 and we are so afraid to try again. Maybe one day we will, just not now.

We elected not to have a formal funeral. We had a private blessing and baptism, and then had them cremated.

Because of their small size and underdeveloped state, we elected not to have our daughter see the babies.

We found out after the pathology reports came back that Baby B had a two-vessel cord. This is a rare condition where two vessels instead of three are in the umbilical cord. This does not necessarily mean Baby B would have not been a healthy baby, it just explains why she was smaller. Often two vessel cord babies are born and are fine. Every now and then the two-vessel cord/low birth weight baby may have a problem in the development of heart, lungs and other organs due to the problem in growth. This explained the size, but it did not explain why my water broke early. I was told they found some infection in my sac, but they suspected it was an infection I acquired after my water broke, not before.

We are back to this point again. Do we want to conceive again? What do we do now? Deal with the fibroids or not. There was no real way to prove the fibroids did cause the problem, but even if they didn't, there was no real way to prove that they would not cause a problem in a future pregnancy, so I had the surgery.

The surgery performed was a Myomectomy by Laparoscopic incision on the bikini line. Originally they thought the ultrasound and Hystero-salpenogram (HSG) results showed four fibroids. In total, seven fibroids were removed. All of them were pea-sized except one, which was golf ball sized. My Doctor had promised me that she would do everything possible to ensure that I would not have a Hysterectomy. She told me this rarely happens anyway, but if she found that I had a fibroid that was near a major vessel and may cause a problem with blood loss and control, she would leave it there, rather than risk a Hysterectomy.

She did find an eighth fibroid which was pea sized and on one of my fallopian tubes, but it was not blocking entry and she felt it would not be worth the risk of damaging my tube to remove it, so she left it there. Unexpectedly, she found a lot of scar tissue. So much in fact, that she thinks it is a miracle that we were ever able to conceive the twins to begin with. She told me she has never seen so much scar tissue on a woman who was not having a problem conceiving.

She removed all of the scar tissue, so now she is confident that if we wait for two regular cycles, we could go ahead and start to try to conceive and the way things look in there, she expects it to be a very quick process. My Doctor also said that my uterus is still enlarged and that there is a rare genetic condition that can cause this. It can only be diagnosed after removing the uterus and examining it in the lab and since she has no intention of performing a Hysterectomy, we will never know for sure. She did say it didn't matter anyway because the size of my uterus would not prevent me from carrying a child full term. Based on the condition of my uterus after the surgery, she sees no reason why I couldn't deliver vaginally and she did not believe a C-section would be necessary.

My husband and I are very pleased to have gotten this procedure behind us. If only I had known about the scar tissue after the miscarriage and before the conception of the twins, maybe I would have elected to do the surgery and could have prevented going through a late term loss with the twins. This saddens me a bit. I mean, why don't Doctors give you more information to go on prior to deciding about a surgery? I don't blame this on my Doctor, but what about that other Doctor who was so excited to give me a Hysterectomy and didn't even recommend any of

these tests prior to determining if a Myomectomy would be better.

Why did I have to have the twins die at twenty weeks before a Hystero-salpenogram (HSG) was even considered? If I had known more, I would have demanded a Hystero-salpenogram (HSG) in June of 1997, before the miscarriage. Maybe I would have decided to do the Myomectomy then. I know that it's too late to change the past for me, but for anyone else going through this I encourage you to ask for and get an Hystero-salpenogram (HSG) and even a Laparoscopy exploratory procedure. I also would say, "Go for the Myomectomy."

I have never met anyone who had a Hysterectomy after a Myomectomy. These are supposed to be extremely rare, but I have talked to many ladies that had fibroids when pregnant and had numerous complications. Preterm labor, premature babies, Myomectomies or Hysterectomies after delivery and some almost died in the delivery room. The fibroids are a lot more dangerous to you and your health during and after a pregnancy than prior to one. I even met a few ladies on line that had to have fibroids removed while they were pregnant. The moral of the story being if the fibroids have to ultimately be removed anyway. Why not now?

Currently, I expect to try to conceive again during early May of 1999.

Update:

After over a year of trying, Yolanda has still not conceived. She was referred to a

Reproductive Endocrinologist (RE), who determined that she tested positive for antisperm antibodies. This basically means that the cervical mucus in her body, which is needed to carry the sperm through the cervix, is full of antibodies. These antibodies fight off the sperm and kill them.

To treat this problem she is being put on a steroid drug and then an Intrauterine Insemination (IUI) will be done. This process will hopefully give the sperm a head start and shorten the time they will spend in her cervical mucus, which should allow her to become pregnant.

~Chapter Four~

Infertility

~Cindy~

Hello, my name is Cindy. I have been trying to conceive my second child for over three years. We started trying when my daughter was eighteen months. We conceived our first child right away and the pregnancy was pretty normal. Neither my husband nor I imagined there would be a problem this time.

After about a year, I started using ovulating predictor kits (OPK). They never showed a positive result. I went to my Doctor and he put me on Clomid. He performed blood tests and had a Hystero-salpenogram (HSG) done. I continued to try for six more months thinking that it was just a matter of time. Finally, I decided to go to a specialist who did some more tests and told me that he believed I had a tubular problem. When I had the Hystero-salpenogram (HSG) done with my previous Doctor, they didn't think it was a problem.

My new Doctor recommended Invetro-fertilization (IVF) or surgery. I decided to go with the surgery and it turned out that he was able to fix one of my fallopian tubes, but the other tube was a mess. He believes I was born with only one good tube, so my chance of pregnancy is greatly reduced.

It has been two months since the surgery and we are still trying. The Doctor said to give it six months and then reconsider Invetro-fertilization (IVF). Not only do I feel like I am living through Hell, but experiencing it without support is what hurts most. I know that there are many

couples out there that don't have any children and my prayers go out to them. I am very thankful to have a healthy child. But I still feel the hurt and disappointment in trying unsuccessfully to conceive a second.

I don't receive the support or understanding like some people experiencing primary infertility have. Coupled with the fact that I am constantly seeing pregnant women, many are having their second or third child. My child's constant request for a sibling breaks my heart daily. Not to mention outsider's questions about "When are you going to have another baby?"

I pray each and every day to have another child. I hope God grants me my request and answers the prayers of all those having difficulty conceiving.

~Colette~

After going through an ill-fated and short-lived marriage, when I least expected it, I met a wonderful man at work. I knew immediately I was so lucky to have found him. We had the same interests and I soon found how kind, gentle and caring he was. I fell right away. It took a tad bit longer for him. I know that I love him and he loves me. It is a perfect fairy tale romance, but you know what I mean.

We started our relationship and moved in together. Right away we knew we wanted a child together. When I was thirty years old I had a Laparoscopy, which indicated blocked tubes. But the Doctor gave us hope that one tube was still functioning and my chance of conceiving was one in four. After two years I went back again for more surgery, seven hours to be exact, to reconstruct the tubal openings, but still nothing.

We married five years to the day we met and immediately started checking into alternative ways to increase our chances of starting a family. I had always heard of In vitro-fertilization (IVF), but did not know all that it entailed.

We sought out a Reproductive Endocrinologist (RE) and had testing done. Soon into the process we also found my husband had a varicocele (enlarged vein in the Scrotum that generated heat and killed off his sperm), so our In vitro-fertilization (IVF) was put on hold and he had corrective surgery, which was a success.

Also at this time we heard that Illinois had a state mandate requiring coverage for infertility and we were elated. I called our insurance carrier to pre-certify and was told that it was covered, up to four cycles. We thought we were finally on our way to having a child. After a few weeks I called to ask about coverage of medications and was told OOPS, we made a mistake, your policy does not cover infertility because your company is self-insured, exempt for mandate and protected under the ERISA law.

Needless to say we were distraught. I wrote and called the insurance carrier regarding this mistake, with very little help from our employers benefit department, I might add. I could not understand why our company would not back us up on this issue, since the insurance carrier had made such a terrible mistake. I eventually found out why. Self-insured meant our employer put aside funds for coverage with limitations which primarily saves them money. Our employer could basically pick and choose our medical benefits yearly, which meant that our employer, not the insurance carrier, had simply denied any infertility treatments. They labeled them too costly. Maybe their story is different but that is how I remember it.

I cannot tell you how many times I went to them for help asking why and leaving work in tears from the emotional stress. I contacted the State Insurance Commissioner to file a complaint, but that is when I found out that a self-insured employer is protected under the ERISA act. I then wrote an appeal to the CEO and the Board of Directors knowing that they vote on coverage every year in March. We had several of the Board of Directors saying that they understood what we were going through and were going to help us get some percentage of coverage. I just knew that we were going to succeed. Soon after came the letter saying, "Sorry, we know how unhappy

you are, but infertility is elective and not medically necessary. We will not cover anything.” UNHAPPY? ELECTIVE? NOT MEDICALLY NECESSARY?

I asked for a meeting with one of the department heads dealing with insurance and he actually compared our infertility to corrective eye surgery and stated he had two kids we could have. As I left the office the vice president came up to me offering support and could not understand why we were not getting help. I asked him why they voted no? His reply was that there was no vote. The CEO just said no. I was so hurt and angered that I asked for a direct meeting with the CEO. I must add that during this time we had proceeded with In vitro-fertilization (IVF), which was a failure and I cannot describe my emotional state.

At that meeting we were told that the employees were costing the CEO too much money and the company simply would not cover infertility. Too many were asking for that coverage, which was untrue, I asked and spoke with everyone. I had been employed there for seven years and my husband for twelve years. We had been paying for insurance coverage every week since we had been there and had only used it once. We also knew that there was a total limit of \$40,000.00 per employee, per year, so why won't they cover this? I finally stated that we could get an attorney to help us fight this if necessary. We were then told we could not afford it.

I resigned that day and left in complete devastation. I realize I sound like a whining child not getting her way, but my emotions were running wild. Others have gone through so much more than we have and we were lucky for what we did achieve. We are not rich people, just your average couple trying to make ends meet with a modest home and

income. We dream of the two children that most middle class couples have.

After taking it upon myself to contact the insurance carrier, keeping up the fight with the aid of one special person employed there, who whispered information to me over the phone, we finally had the Invetro-fertilization (IVF) treatment paid for 70%. I should say, paid for by the insurance carrier for their mistake, not our employer. I had also written several letters to the editor in local papers describing the pain of infertility, lack of coverage, and self insured employers having the right to pick and chose our coverage.

The following year we decided to hire an attorney that handles cases like ours. This attorney tried his best to get us covered and thought our case would win, but we could not afford to continue. In actuality, our employer's attorney only responded once and then ignored other requests. We were told to file with EEOC, but decided against it since my husband was still employed there and feared retaliation. We had also been told that the waiting period for EEOC cases was three years.

We wanted a family desperately and chose to cash in my 401K and try again. It turned out to be another failure. We had seven fertilized embryos transferred and thought this was it. We were left financially drained and emotional wrecks. I found myself a different person, my personality gone, my hopes shattered. All I did was cry. I didn't care about anything anymore.

It took over every single aspect and decision in my life. I had thoughts of suicide and divorce. I couldn't handle jobs. I quit or lost several over a two-year period. My hormones and mental being at that time were something

indescribable. How can I possibly describe what I was feeling?

I felt like a failure. I let down my husband. How could he still love me? I alienated myself from family and friends. I felt they had abandoned me and didn't understand or support me. My favorite holiday, being Christmas, was now a dark period. Mother's day just brought me more self doubt and pain. Baby showers were the worst, seeing the joy of a new mother and child. The realization felt like a slap in the face that this would never be us. I could not comprehend never having a life inside me and experiencing the miracle of birth, or just being a mom.

What had I done to deserve this? I totally blamed and hated myself, searching and aching for answers of why me? We had a nursery all decorated, ready and waiting for a precious baby. I couldn't bear to look at it and kept the door shut except for the few times I would find myself looking over everything. I couldn't go to any stores without bursting into tears if I got near the baby section. I couldn't watch TV, commercials, sitcoms, news or movies. Everything reminded me of what I couldn't have. I hated everyone and took offense over the slightest comment or action. I was losing my mind and my grip on life.

Thank God for the support, love, devotion and understanding of my husband during all of this. How many times did he console me and put up with my emotional outbursts. The saddest day of my life was seeing my husband cry over our second failed Invetro-fertilization (IVF) treatment. Now it is my turn for anger. I will not let this destroy me. Keep fighting I told myself. Don't give up. Get up and take control of your life.

I went back to school for business and computer courses after years of working in a factory and achieved a 3.8 grade point average. I have a new job that does not cover infertility either or offer adoption assistance. It seems difficult to find an employer who does, but yet so many claim to be “family orientated.”

We started adoption proceedings and have officially been on a waiting list since August of 1998. Before contacting a licensed agency, we had a private adoption fail. We were very naive as to the legalities and situations that can occur while doing this. The birth mother chose us and then changed her mind. It was her right. I pray that that baby boy is in the loving arms of great parents. I would like to add that adoption is not a second choice. It is a major decision that not everyone considers. We just want to be parents and this will be our child.

We have found that adoption is not as easy as we thought either. Everything that has happened has been one big learning experience after another. The cost associated with adoption is overwhelming. To me, and I might be chastised for saying this, but we have to prove to the agency, the government, the birthparent(s) and family services that we would be fit parents. Sometimes I find myself discouraged over this process too. It will be two years in April of 1999, that we sent our adoption application. We are still hoping, wishing and praying with our hearts and arms open for a child. I truly admire the strength and courage of birth mothers choosing an adoption plan, but waiting is taking a toll on us also.

I kept up the fight for infertility coverage in hopes that someday people would understand the heartache and the need for insurance coverage and adoption benefits. I wrote yet another letter to my former employer when the A.D.A.

(Americans with Disabilities Act), through the Supreme Court, determined that reproduction is a major life activity, with copies of The Civil Rights Act and The Family Building Act.

As of April 9, 1999, I now hold in my hand a letter from my husband's new insurance carrier. His employer is no longer self-insured. We are covered for In vitro-fertilization (IVF) and injectable medications up to four cycles, at 90% coverage. I try to be optimistic. Who knows, maybe we will only be covered for one year. Deep inside I want to try again, but I am afraid. I would like to think that my letters gave us this dream come true, that my former and husband's present employer had a change of heart. But I have heard it was possibly over a lawsuit that the company lost a substantial amount of money and decided it was not worth it to be self insured any longer.

We are undecided as to what is in store for us. We have scheduled an appointment with a Reproductive Endocrinologist (RE) to find out what our chances are for another In vitro-fertilization (IVF) attempt. We are still on the adoption waiting list and we have "won" our quest for health benefits. Will we have a happy ending? I don't know. What I do know is that we need to count our blessings and fully understand what others have gone through trying to build a family. Whether through the miracle of biologically conceiving or the wonderment of adoption, hopefully one day soon we will all have families. Anyway, this is sharing a small piece of our story and I can only wish that it will help someone else enduring the frustration, anger, sadness and utter devastation (and hopefully happiness) the impact of infertility and adoption has on all of us.

Update:

On April 11, 2000 Colette's fourth In vitro-fertilization (IVF) attempt came back negative. She said she was about to give up when a call came in from their adoption agency. Her son, Shaylor James, was born April 14, 2000 and is now in her arms. They are in the process of finalizing the adoption.

~Hillary~

My name is Hillary and my husband's name is Amos. I was twenty-one years old in 1989 and decided to do my student teaching abroad. I was placed in Stockholm, Sweden and fell in love with the city at once. The principal at the school offered me a position to teach in the fall. My dream was to go to Israel after my three months in Stockholm, but I figured this was a chance of a lifetime, so I accepted it.

I went home to New Jersey and waited for my work permit. It finally arrived on August 1, 1989. My stepmother thought that maybe I should go to the gynecologist before going, so I got an appointment for the day I was supposed to be off, August 8, 1989. It was one of the worst days of my life.

The Doctor, an older man nearing retirement, felt my abdomen and said, "Oh my, you have a cyst." I had no idea what that meant except that I could tell I wasn't going to Sweden. I cried all the way home. When I got home I drank two liters of water and my sister drove me up for an ultrasound. By the time I got home I was scheduled to have this orange sized cyst removed. I spent five days in the hospital. My dad kept saying, "Just think, every step you take is a step closer to Sweden." I finally did get to go three weeks later. I feel that was the start of all my infertility problems that came later.

During that year, little did I know that Israel would come to me. I met my husband to be who was from Israel.

We married in July 1994 in Israel. My husband had always been saying to me "Let's try to have a child" even before we were married, in one way I'm glad he did. In 1991 I went off the pill. At that time I thought as soon as you went off the pill, bingo you were pregnant with little effort. Yes, I guess I was naive.

After it didn't happen so quickly I went to the Gynecologist and mentioned that we had been trying for quite some time. My mistake was I told her the truth. Anyway three months later when we were still not pregnant she finally decided to do some blood work on me. She found out that my ovulation was not strong enough. She prescribed Clomid. The first month I took one pill, no pregnancy. On the second month I took two pills, I continued like this for nine cycles. I finally asked the Doctor if we could please check my husband in the meantime. My Doctor agreed.

My husband made his deposit two times with one week in between. I called for the results. He had no sperm. What? I've heard of a low sperm count, but no sperm. We were both shocked. The next day we drove to the Doctor to get more information. She asked if maybe he had the mumps when he was a teenager. He said he didn't think so. I figured he would remember the mumps if he had them after puberty.

After one year of different tests that my husband went through, we finally got the answer on May 26, 1996. He was 47 XXY, Klinefelter's Syndrome. In Sweden, donors are not anonymous and we thought we really wanted a donor that looked more like us and not blond hair with blue eyes. We wanted to go to another country from the beginning.

At that time we didn't have the Internet at home but a friend did, so I looked it up and found some interesting sites. Then we decided that the only option was to have a donor. I was still young enough that all the Doctors said that I would have a very good chance of Insemination working.

We tried one time in Israel without hormone stimulation, but with no success. Then I got tired of dealing with the Doctors in Israel because my Hebrew is not the greatest and he wouldn't answer my faxes. My husband got fed up and said it's better that you go to the United States where you can talk to them in your own language. So, I decided to call my dad. He asked a friend who the best Doctor in New Jersey is for infertility. His friend gave us a name of a Doctor that he recommended. It was only later that I found out that I should have been going to St. Barnabus.

In the summer of 1996, without my husband, I went to New Jersey. My stepmother gave me the injections as I prepared the syringe. We thought it would work on the first try and thought if we needed to be separated to do this, well so be it. Well, it didn't work on the first try so I stayed and tried a second time. Needless to say, no luck on the second try either. We decided to wait and do In vitro-fertilization (IVF), the following summer. I am a teacher so I have the summers off.

In December of 1996 I finally got a time to have a Laparoscopy. The result was scar tissue from the cyst that the Doctors now say I probably didn't need to have removed. My left ovary was stuck to the side of my uterus. The Doctor tried to remove it but when the bleeding started, he stopped. This now made In vitro-fertilization (IVF) our only real choice. The other finding was some

mild Endometriosis. I didn't even know what Endometriosis was. I did some research, started taking vitamins and watched what I ate.

On May 25, 1997, I woke up in the morning and started my period. I boarded a plane for Paris. I then missed my connecting flight to Newark and called my sister in New Jersey. I boarded a plane for JFK instead. My brother-in-law picked me up and I was on my way. I decided to give the injections myself except the big one, Profasi, at the end. No problem I thought. They retrieved fifteen eggs. I was so excited. Three days later, I was left with two very good embryos and two pretty poor ones. They transferred all four.

On July 24, 1997, I thought I could call my husband and give him a great anniversary present. But I couldn't, I could only give tears. He was great though, he said, "Don't worry, some people have to do this a couple of times. Please try not to think about it and just come back home." I made an appointment with another Doctor in New Jersey, against my father's wishes. My stepmother went with me to the appointment because I didn't want to be alone. The new Doctor had some plans to do some things differently. It sounded great. He was very much into doing his own testing and would not rely on the lab and tests done in Sweden.

When I got back to my husband in Sweden I was a bit depressed. I called the infertility organization. Of course if you didn't have any money, they wouldn't give you any information. I was looking for a therapist that deals with infertility. Well, I found out that in Denmark the donors are not really Scandinavian looking, but are much darker than Swedes. I looked into it more and I found five clinics. I wrote to them and got some brochures that answered

some of my questions. Then one night I was talking to an American friend of mine who is married to a Danish man. She told me that a good friend of her husband's father is a Reproductive Endocrinologist (RE) in Copenhagen. I contacted the clinic and made an appointment. We were off to wonderful Copenhagen in November.

Perfect timing I thought. My period started before going to the airport. I guess I know what triggers my period. When we got back I went to a hospital to get all the necessary tests done, thinking that I could start Lupron on day twenty-one. I had no such luck. The clinic at home would not process the tests so quickly. Next month I tried again with a new Doctor, who was an absolute jerk.

The next month, the sentence that still rings in my ear is, you've got a cyst. Now everything is delayed again. The next month is all ready to begin, no obstacles as of yet, except one. The clinic would be closed over Christmas for three weeks, just the time that I needed my blood work and ultrasounds to be done.

I finally got to start mid February, and had my retrieval and transfer the third week in March. It worked out perfect. I was on Easter break afterwards to rest and only had to take off five days of work. Well the two-week wait afterwards is the absolute worst. I went back to work but I was very tired, so I ended up going home. Thursday, still with hopes of being pregnant in my eyes, I met a friend at a cafe. Just before we left I said, "I'm going to the bathroom." When I got there I was spotting. I came down the stairs and my friend could tell something was wrong. I told her in a choked up voice that I had to leave. She was with her eight-month old baby and her seven-year old, so I didn't want them to see me cry.

My period came the next day as I was going to get my Beta HCG test. The tears started rolling down my face, because I knew it was negative. This is the history of our infertility, but definitely not the end. I spoke with the nurse in Denmark today and she said there could be an egg quality factor as well. As of now we would like to try again. We have not given up hope yet.

Update:

Hillary has been exploring alternative options, such as donor insemination, although there is an eighteen-month waiting list. Because of many Intrauterine Inseminations (IUI), scar tissue, mild Endometriosis, and her age factor, chances of inseminations working are slim. She is currently speaking with a Reproductive Endocrinologist (RE) to discuss their next and last In vitro-fertilization (IVF) cycle. Hillary and Amos are also currently enrolling in a three-session support group before starting home study for an adoption process.

If you would like to contact Hillary you may do so by e-mail at hillarybrown@hotmail.com.

~Jill~

My name is Jill. I married my husband when I was thirty-five years old. Neither of us had children. I decided to toss out the birth control pills about a year later. Nothing happened, so I went first to my family practice Doctor who told me to learn how to chart basil body temperature (BBT) and "go home and have a lot of sex" for six months. I still hate him for that comment.

After six wasted months I was referred to an Obstetrician who specializes in infertility. He looked at my basil body temperature (BBT) charts and decided our problem was my ovulation. From that point on, some things happened in an order I still don't understand. Here's a quick review of what's happened so far:

Basil body temperature (BBT) x 16 months (so far)
Blood work (Thyroid tests - normal)
Serophene x 8 months. Some anovulatory cycles. No conception.
Husbands Sperm Analysis - normal
Pelvic and transvaginal ultrasound - normal
HSG in February 99 - normal, tubes open
Abdominal Lap on March 4, 1999. Some Endometriosis found & lasered out.

At this point my Doctor announced he could do no more for me. I asked about doing a post coital, or any kind of ART, but he doesn't do any of that. He offered to refer me to a specialist. I am sure it will be a Reproductive Endocrinologist (RE).

He referred me to two Doctors that he liked, and advised me to review my insurance coverage. My insurance covers everything that is diagnostic. It will not pay for treatment. I knew that from this moment on that it could get expensive. He also told me that there weren't very many Reproductive Endocrinologist's (RE) in the Kansas City area, and I could expect to wait at least two months for an appointment. Well, that was the good news. If I didn't have a referral, I could wait four or five months for an appointment.

My Doctor's office set up the referrals around the third week of March. One Doctor wouldn't see me without having proof that I had Rubella antibodies. If the antibodies were present, I could get an appointment in eight to ten weeks. If I had no antibodies, the Doctor required immunization. This would be followed by a mandatory three month waiting period, during which I would actually have to use birth control. The other Doctor didn't have such a requirement, and gave me an appointment for May 20th. I arranged to have my medical records copied to both offices, and had a Rubella antibody screen drawn. No matter what the test results were, I decided I would not get a Rubella shot. The test was positive for antibodies. I decided to see whichever Doctor could see me first.

I called the Doctor's office on April 21st. All I got was the run-around. He is out of the picture as far as I'm concerned. My case records are "under review." If my records were already reviewed, their first appointment would be in mid June. Nope, no way. I've had Doctors waste enough of my time already.

It's worth mentioning at this point that I turned forty on April 13th. My biological clock is ticking pretty loudly

now, and the sense of too much time passing is impossible to ignore. The frustration of doing nothing aggressive is mounting. After the call to the Doctor's office, I immediately called a new Doctor. I was greatly reassured to learn that my appointment for May 20th at 11:00am was still good, and that I had been added to a cancellation list. I would be called if anyone canceled an appointment earlier than mine.

The nurse that answered the phone added that this was her Doctor, and that she "just loves him." I told her that I had just turned forty, and didn't have a lot of time to waste. I wanted to know if he would be aggressive with me? Would he take me seriously? She reassured me again that he would listen carefully to what I expected and how aggressive my husband and I wanted to be. He would certainly take my age into consideration. He wouldn't waste any more of my time. I thanked her somewhat profusely and said a silent prayer of thanks to God as I hung up. It was the first encouraging thing I'd had to grasp in a long time. At this writing I look forward to my first visit with my new Doctor and I have renewed hope.

Something I haven't covered much in my story is the rocky emotional journey that infertility has been. Over a year ago, I discovered Babycenter on the Internet when I clicked on an ad banner. I subscribed to the newsletter and quickly learned how to navigate the bulletin boards. I was surprised to find so many others struggling with infertility. I felt less isolated than before and started trying to learn all I could. I bought books and learned how to chart my temperature. The friends that I made gave me questions to ask and encouraged me to be aggressive with my Doctors.

I have learned that it is all right to be mad at God. I've been a Christian since I was little and I couldn't understand

why infertility had to happen to me. My emotions have run the gamut of extremes, and my husband, has unfortunately been along for the ride. I have been furious enough to throw my favorite Bible across the family room, which tore a chunk of leather from the binding. I have often cried myself to sleep and have had long marathon prayer sessions where I've begged God to have mercy on me and open my womb.

Sex became nothing more than a step necessary to reach a goal, and the stress of infertility has taken a heavy toll on our marriage. Roger started feeling like he was important only to "provide a service." I reassured him that he was still attractive to me, but there have still been times when we just couldn't complete what we started. I silently felt resentful that all that was required of him was an orgasm and he complained about that. Because the problem was within my body, I felt especially alone in infertility. I tried to bridge the communication gap between Roger and myself. Roger clearly didn't feel the pain of infertility as deeply or as intensely as I did. I tried without success to explain the pain of empty arms and constantly being surrounded by pregnant women and babies. He repeated that he was unable to feel what I felt. My attempts to communicate my feelings failed miserably and ended with huge fights, lots of tears and me feeling more alone than ever. I wondered if we would last long enough to get pregnant.

Talking with others didn't help much. My best friend had twins without trying and told me, "That's not the worst thing that can happen to you!" Another friend jokingly says, "You want kids huh? Want mine for a while?" I respond, "Yes, but you may not get them back." He stared at me in shocked silence. My older sister who had two babies in her twenties talks to me more for new gossip than

out of concern, and is full of myths. One is more painful than the others to hear, "Start adoption proceedings, then you'll get pregnant." Not only is that not true, but it treats an adopted child as a means to an end and not as a wonderful end in itself. I decide that rather than actually hurting my sister; I would just avoid her.

Roger and I joined a wonderful huge Methodist church in March and I hungered to hear good things about God's love. I didn't want to hate God anymore. I wanted something good to come out of our infertility. I've always liked writing and teaching. I told Roger that I wanted to start a support group for infertile couples in our church. I prepared an outline, which was presented to the Wellness Committee. They loved it and told me I could start it once it was fully announced in the bulletin, newsletter and web site. That is still in process. It wasn't enough though.

All that still wasn't enough to make me feel much better. The church started healing services on Monday evenings and I wanted to go. Roger went with me. We had communion and had prayer with a minister. I begged for my womb to be opened. Turns out Roger prayed for me to be released from the anger I felt.

The next day, I didn't feel any more fertile, but the anger was noticeably diminished. I am still quite sad about my infertility, but I am calmer now than I used to be. At least I'm not throwing things anymore. I have become more efficient at work and am starting to be able to actually think about something other than infertility for oh, sometimes minutes at a time. Our visit with the Doctor can't come too soon and I still question God every day. What possible purpose can come from my suffering?

I wish I had lots of faith and hope to see me through this, but I don't. I have a few fleeting moments of faith and hope, but they're not enough to sustain me. All I can focus on is that I am forty, my house is too quiet and my arms are painfully empty.

~Lisa~

My name is Lisa. My husband and I always knew we wanted to have kids. He even wrote that he wanted to have a family in a biography as a freshman in college. After five years of marriage, dual careers and graduate school for me, we began what we thought would be a short path to parenthood.

We tried to conceive for twelve months without the assistance of Doctors. We were both twenty-eight years old at the time. I finally went to my Doctor and I began charting my temperature every morning for months and months. Every morning being reminded of what was not happening in our lives. My Doctor put me on Clomid, unfortunately for eight cycles. I had a Hysterosalpingogram (HSG) that showed my tubes were clear.

I called my sister and mom at that point to share what was going on in our lives. My husband had the standard tests and he was fine. Finally, we were referred to a Reproductive Endocrinologist (RE). I was put on Fertinex and began the daily shots in my thigh. Shortly thereafter, I had a Laparoscopy that discovered Endometriosis. I never had any warning signs. I was in a fair amount of pain recovering.

I continued on the Fertinex and Intrauterine Insemination (IUI). By this time my sister, younger than I announced she was pregnant. Shortly after that, my sister-in-law, younger than me also, announced she was pregnant as well.

We were to travel to my father's house for Thanksgiving and I didn't have the emotional strength for the trip. As it worked, I had been monitored by ultrasounds prior to Thanksgiving and couldn't risk leaving the state in case I surged. My husband and I spent a quiet Thanksgiving alone.

A few weeks later I got my period. As usual I sobbed on the bed, questioning "why me?" The Doctor's office insisted that I come in for the blood work anyway. They called me at the office to say that there was no way I could be given more Fertinex because I was pregnant. My husband and I were cautiously elated. My hormone levels continue to rise, as they should.

Nine months later Sara Morgan came into this world. She has brought more joy to our lives than we ever imagined. Although I would not go through that experience again if I could choose. I do believe we appreciate the miracle of our daughter due to our experience with infertility.

~Lisa~

My husband, Brian and I got married December 2, 1995. We were both twenty-six about to turn twenty-seven in January. We were married about one year and started talking about having a baby. After one year of unprotected sex and no pregnancy, I started to get concerned. In December of 1997 I started to feel terrible, physically. I was terrified to go to my Doctor fearing the worst. My ankles were swollen; I was extremely shaky, had severe insomnia and had lost a quick twelve pounds eating McDonalds three days a week. All in all I feared for my life.

From my Primary Care Physician to a Vascular Doctor for the swelling in my ankles, and then back to my Primary Care Physician, I finally had blood drawn to find out I had Hyperthyroidism. Once they knew my thyroid was the problem, I had thyroid scans which showed Graves Disease. By March 1998, I was treated with Radioactive Iodine in a capsule formula, one dose. I could not sleep in the same room as my husband for three days and could not be around small children for the same period of time. I was told to wait to try to conceive again so that the radiation was out of my system.

In November of 1998, a Hystero-salpenogram (HSG) was performed and found out that both my tubes were blocked. I was horrified. My Doctor told me the best bet would probably be to go for Invetro-fertilization (IVF) since it bypasses the tubes. I went for a second and third

opinions. One said go right for Invetro-fertilization (IVF), the other said to have a Laparoscopy.

My Obstetrician and Reproductive Endocrinologist (RE) performed a Laparoscopy in February of 1999. The result was one tube was removed and the other cleaned up. When I woke from the surgery my Doctor said that one of my tubes looked beautiful now. He gave us the go ahead to try to conceive on our own and to postpone going for Invetro-fertilization (IVF).

We tried to conceive for two months with no luck. I had a Pap Smear done in April of 1999 and finally told my Doctor, "No more fooling around." She suggested Intrauterine Insemination (IUI). I am currently on day twelve of my cycle and haven't seen a surge yet. We are doing Intrauterine Insemination (IUI) this month without any drugs. I know the success rate is not so high without drugs, but you never do know. If we don't have any luck this month, we will do Intrauterine Insemination (IUI) with injections next month. We are scheduled for Invetro-fertilization (IVF) in July.

Every month when I get my period I get so depressed. My husband plays softball in a league. His first game was last Tuesday and I'm so glad I didn't go. All his teammates have babies ranging from pregnant to two years. I'm sorry, but I would be so depressed sitting there with those girls. I try not to be bitter, but I'm sure others in this situation know how it is. Most of my friends are having children left and right, and it is very hard to deal with.

My husband and I decided to go away for Mother's Day weekend, because I just can't deal with one more year of not being a mom. It must be so terrible to do to my mom,

whom I love very much, as well as my mother-in-law, but this year I don't want to subject myself to that misery.

Update:

Since Lisa's story she is still trying to conceive. In April of 2000 she had another Laparoscopy to have her remaining tube removed. She has been on Lupron since June 1st and is getting ready for her second In vitro-fertilization (IVF) cycle. Last time we spoke she said, "I cry and keep repeating to myself how miserable I am from this poison I am injecting into my body. The quest for a baby is so great, but why do I keep doing this to myself."

~Lisa~

In my first marriage, my husband and I tried to have a baby for five years but it never happened. I never was tested because we were only half-trying and he wasn't interested in having kids anyway. Needless to say that relationship did not work out. I was fortunate enough to find a wonderful husband who wanted children.

We started trying to have a baby in April and May of 1998. It didn't work. We took some time off because I had an abnormal pap and had to have surgery. In December of 1998, we decided to try again. I prayed to God that he would let me get pregnant, even if I miscarried. I just wanted to see if my body could get pregnant. I was ovulating around Christmas time. It was a joyous time. I am a fifth grade teacher and it was a much-needed break. I know I ovulated on the 28th of December. My husband and I tried to conceive on that day.

I knew I was pregnant right away. My breasts started hurting, I had headaches, I had more cervical mucus and I was going to the bathroom more often. I was supposed to start my period on January 12th, which is my husband's thirty-third birthday. I decided to take a home pregnancy test and found out it was positive. I couldn't believe it. I was in a state of shock. However, I knew right away something wasn't right because that day I had terrible cramps.

The next day I kept going to the bathroom to check if I was bleeding. Around 2:30pm I noticed some spotting. I

called the Doctor right away and they said to take it easy and that spotting is sometimes normal. I spotted again the next day and decided to go in for a blood check. My Beta HCG was 70. Two days later it was 92. The Doctor was concerned because it wasn't doubling. I was completely devastated.

Meanwhile, I kept spotting off and on. On January 21st, I started bleeding like a normal period and the Doctor said it sounded like I was miscarrying. I went in to the Doctor the next day and my Beta HCG level went down to 66. I continued to bleed for about five days, but then kept on spotting. I had another Beta HCG level check done and it went up to 123, and then to 195 four days later. Everyone in my Doctor's clinic was confused. They decided to do a D&C. I refused unless I had an ultrasound done to make sure I didn't have a viable pregnancy. We did the ultrasound and they didn't find anything.

I went home and cried. I had a small hope this pregnancy would still be okay. That night I started cramping and bleeding heavily again. I bled tons of blood. I called the Doctor and she said I was either letting go of the rest of the placenta or I was miscarrying twins. The D&C was scheduled for February 9, 1999. I was scared out of my mind, but it wasn't as bad as I thought. The Doctor found nothing and said I must have miscarried it all over the past weekend.

I continued to bleed after the D&C. My period came fast and then it wouldn't stop. I bled for twenty-two days. I started bleeding on January 13th and did not stop until March 21st. I have since had my second period and now I am trying to conceive again. I am very scared but this time I have prayed for a full term pregnancy.

I always thought it was so easy to be pregnant. I never thought there could be so many complications. I have a hard time hearing women whine about being pregnant or cry for days that they are having a boy and not a girl. I think they should be lucky that they were given the gift to carry this baby to full term.

Update:

Lisa found out on May 19, 2000 that she is expecting again. Her Beta HCG levels seem to be rising normally and she is praying that this will be a success. She said something really nice in her last e-mail to me, which I thought I would share. "Take time for the important things in life...someday there will be no tomorrow."

~Mary~

Our names are Mary and Randy. We were married on September 3, 1988 and started trying to have children after about one year of marriage. When we didn't get pregnant after the first year of trying we went to our family Doctor who ran some tests to find out why. Our Doctor said that everything was just fine with both of us and to try and relax.

Well, we relaxed for another six months and then we decided to get a second opinion. This Doctor did another Semen Analysis on Randy and found him to have a low sperm count and low motility. We asked for a copy of the original Semen Analysis from the family Doctor and it said the same thing. We were just floored. How could our family doctor make such a mistake? Rather than to call him on his mistake, we chose to find another Doctor. We had already wasted so much time already.

After much heartbreak in finding out about my husband's diagnosis, we took it easy and tried to heal. This was so hard on him. He said that he was so sorry. I have always told him that I didn't marry him for children. I married him because I loved him. We both always thought we would have children and he was worried that I would leave him. I told him that I loved him and that he was stuck with me.

After a year or so we decided to see a Reproductive Endocrinologist (RE). We started treatment in 1994 and did four Intrauterine Inseminations (IUI) that failed. The

Reproductive Endocrinologist (RE) suggested a Laparoscopy to rule out Endometriosis. We did the Laparoscopy and everything was fine. It seemed we had one heartbreak after another. We have always had a strong marriage and just held each other each time we were knocked down.

But, this was just the beginning. We took a break and saved some money, and went on to try In vitro-fertilization (IVF). I responded very well to the medications and they retrieved thirteen eggs. The fertilization did not go to well. Out of thirteen eggs, only four fertilized and they were a lower grade. After the two-week wait I got the call. I had left work so that I could be alone if we had bad news. At 4:30pm that day I called the nurse and it was a big fat negative. I was devastated. I really hoped this would work for us and it didn't.

Now we have no money and I have to tell Randy the bad news. When he came in he knew immediately because I was crying. He held me for the longest time and we just cried together. We both had to go back to work the next day, as life doesn't stop for your grief. It took us a long time to get over the latest disappointment.

We decided to leave treatment and try adoption. We started with a meeting in October of 1997. We had to wait almost a year before we could start our home study. In the meantime, we told all our friends and wrote a profile of us with our picture in hopes we would make contact with a birth mom ourselves.

Well we did. In late July of 1998 we were told of a woman through friends that was going to put her child up for adoption. Our friends gave her our profile and we met with her shortly after. She was thirty-five years old and

had been divorced for about one year with three kids. She had two teens and one preteen. She had been seeing a man in her town and he happened to get her pregnant. She said from the start that she knew she couldn't handle having this child and wanted to give it up for adoption.

Our meeting went very well and she loved Randy and I. She said that we were the ones she wanted to adopt her child. We were so happy. She was due in September. Since we hadn't yet completed our home study the agency started right away and we were approved in about three weeks.

We were about three hours from the birth mom so she had to go through counseling up north. Well, the counselor that was supposed to help her refused because she didn't pick a local couple, so our agency tried to handle the counseling long distance. We went to a few Doctors appointments with her and saw the baby's heartbeat. It was so beautiful. The birth mom asked Randy and I to be in the birthing room and we were delighted. Most all of her family was supportive except her oldest daughter, who was about seventeen years old. She wanted to raise the child herself. She lived in Texas and wasn't around when the birth mom chose us.

We received the call from the birth mom saying she was close to going to the hospital. Randy and I checked into our hotel and went over to be with her. We had dinner together and it was very chaotic. All her kids and her sister were already there. Her mom and her oldest daughter were coming in from Texas. We felt so alone and completely out of control. The next day was Thursday, September 24, 1998. We left our hotel and went back over to the birth mom's home and prepared to go to the hospital. We then met the older daughter who was very short with us. Who

could really blame her? The hospital was only three blocks away, so Randy and I drove the birth mom there. Her family followed. All of them.

We were totally out numbered. Once she was in the hospital everything went really fast. Before the birth she said she didn't want to hold the baby and for the Doctor to hand the baby to us. Her whole family, along with Randy and myself, were in the birthing room. It was so special. We all cried as they handed the baby to me. It was a girl. We named her Emily Elizabeth.

Randy and I were so happy, yet so alone. The hospital staff gave us our own room and Emily slept with us that night. The next morning the birth mom said she was ready to see the baby. Randy and I wheeled Emily down and the birth mom held her for the first time. She said that Randy and I will make wonderful parents. She kissed her and handed her back to me. This was such a wonderful gift she had given to us.

All I could think about was going home. I wanted to be happy and be with our family. Our friends did come to the hospital for a short visit and that was some comfort. We all went home about 5:00pm on September 25th. The birth mom left first and we followed. Before we left the hospital the birth mom asked if we could stop by her sisters house on the way out of town so she could see the baby. She was recovering from minor surgery and couldn't be at the delivery. We agreed with much disappointment, as we really just wanted to go home. I cried to Randy and said that I was tired and I wanted to go home now. But we had to go over there; we felt we didn't have any choice.

We were there for about an hour and her sister held Emily. The birth mom also held her one more time. We

then said our good-byes and we were on the road. Randy and I were both so tired. But, finally, we were going home with our baby. We pulled onto our street and my family put one of those big flashing signs in our yard. It said, "Welcome home Emily Elizabeth." We were so happy to be home.

We spent the next few days caring for Emily and having tons of visitors. I called the birth mom to assure her that we were fine and to see how she was. She said she was doing okay. I said that I would send her pictures as soon as I got them developed and I would talk to her soon. After one week she called the agency. It seems she was having a hard time and wanted to come get Emily. The agency called us and explained. We were totally devastated. I couldn't believe she was changing her mind. She was so sure.

Our happiness was so short lived. I had Emily's first Doctor's appointment the next day and I was a wreck. The Doctor came in and I explained what had happen though all my tears. He was very comforting. He noticed what he thought was a heart murmur and referred us to a specialist. I thought it was better to get her checked before she was returned to her birth mom, as the care is better here. Turns out she was totally fine. I just gave her big kisses and we went home.

On October 9th we had to bring Emily back to the agency. They brought us into this room where the birth mom, her mother and sister were waiting. I could hardly stand up. Randy had to hold me. I asked if we could be alone with her to say good-bye. We went into another room and said good-bye to our daughter. Randy and I each gave her kisses and cried so hard. We returned to the room where they had to examine Emily for liability reasons. I

was so distraught that Randy again had to hold me up. After they examined her Randy and I left in tears. This was the hardest day of our lives. It is really like a part of us died.

Over the next several weeks we just stayed at home and kept to ourselves. This was so hard on our family and friends as well. They knew how long we had been trying to have a family. It was a really bad nightmare.

Randy and I went on with our everyday lives thinking about our loss. It was so overwhelming at times. We struggled with our next step. Should we give up on our dreams altogether? Should we try to adopt again? I didn't want anything to do with adopting again after what happened. I was just about to turn thirty-five years old and feeling like we should try another Reproductive Endocrinologist (RE). When we started looking into adoption in 1997, a friend told me about two couples she knew that this Reproductive Endocrinologist (RE) had helped to get pregnant. Both couples got pregnant on their first try.

We chose to stick with our decision to adopt and put the Reproductive Endocrinologist (RE) out of our minds. Soon after, I asked Randy if he wanted to look this Reproductive Endocrinologist (RE) up and get a second opinion? He said, "What do we have to lose?" Maybe this was God's way of telling us to try again for our own children. He agreed. We set an appointment for December 18th.

I gathered my records from our first Reproductive Endocrinologist (RE) and sent them along with a letter to the new Reproductive Endocrinologist (RE). We met with him and instantly we felt comfortable. He was very understanding and wanted very badly to help us. He

suggested ICSI/ZIFT and we went along. We started treatment again in March of 1999. I responded well to the medications and they retrieved eleven eggs on March 25th.

We had eight fertilize this time. The Reproductive Endocrinologist (RE) considered them grades A to C. We agreed to transfer four via Zygote Intrafallopian Transfer (ZIFT) on March 27th. We went into the hospital for the surgery and the nurse was going over everything with Randy and I. She held our hands and said a prayer for us. Randy gave me a kiss good-bye and they wheeled me in. When I woke up there were different nurses. I never got to say good-bye to the nurse who prayed for us. We went home for my bed rest and a two-week wait.

My sister came over on Sunday and took care of me. She made me lunch and brought me flowers. Basically, she spoiled me rotten. My Mom came on Monday and did the same. It was so nice to have them take care of me and keep me company. I took one week off from work and returned on Thursday. We could hardly wait for our pregnancy test. I was supposed to test on April 7th.

I called the nurse on April 6th and she said I could test early. I went in that morning and tested. I then went back to work until 2:00pm. Randy didn't know that I was testing early. I called the nurse back and to my surprise we tested positive. I was in tears. I asked her if she was sure? I just couldn't believe it had finally worked for us.

I ran up to the store and bought Randy a card. Inside I wrote, "It was always my dream to surprise you like this. YOU'RE GOING TO BE A DADDY." He was just shocked and surprised. We held each other and cried. We have finally made it after all these years.

Today as I write, I am five weeks and two days pregnant. We are the happiest people on the planet right now. We have our first ultrasound on April 22, 1999 and expect our baby to be born around December 17, 1999.

Update:

Samuel Robert was born December 29, 1999 and weighed 9 pounds 12 ounces. She had a very rough first trimester. On Mother's Day weekend she began bleeding very heavily and was terrified that she was losing her baby. After three days of bed rest and a trip to the Doctor, an ultrasound showed a healthy baby with a strong heartbeat.

~Nancy~

My name is Nancy. I always knew that I would have trouble conceiving. I was diagnosed with polycystic ovarian syndrome as a teenager and had been on birth control pills for years to regulate my periods. When my husband and I got married, I went off all contraception, and always hoped in the back of my mind that it would just happen, even though I didn't take any concrete steps to try to get pregnant.

Five years went by. My husband and I were both working hard and under a lot of stress due to our jobs. We moved every couple of years to a different country in Europe. Occasionally, I tried to use an ovulation predictor kit, but I could never get any positive results. In the rare occasions when I'd get my period, I would feel disappointed.

When we finally moved back to the United States, I determined that if I was going to get pregnant, I would actually have to work at it, and that meant I would have to devote a lot of time that I normally used for working. I arranged to step off the "fast track" in my job and made it clear to my boss that I needed to work flexible hours to have time to try to start a family. I knew by doing this that I was risking giving up an edge in my career, but there was something inside of me that was starting to feel empty without a child.

I got the support of my husband, went to a fertility specialist, and started the tests and oral medications. The

first cycle was unsuccessful, but I comforted myself with the thought that the Doctor and I just needed to find out the right dosage of medication, and once we got that right, things would work.

Four cycles later, I still wasn't pregnant. It was beginning to be terribly painful to see children everywhere, on TV and in the neighborhood, even in the waiting room at the fertility clinic. I deeply resented the women who I felt were so callous and insensitive as to bring children to such a place. I was also having problems with my Doctor. I felt as though all his explanations to me were by rote and very brusque, and he wasn't interested in really answering my questions. I wanted to understand exactly what he thought the medication was accomplishing, how he was monitoring it to see if he was right, and what my other options were.

Finally, I got up the courage to ask to transfer to another Doctor in the same clinic, who I heard was very good with his patients. Once I transferred, I had another exam, and he started me on injections. That added another burden to my life, as I had to spend more time in the Doctor's office, getting ultrasounds and blood tests every few days. I also had to carry the medication and syringes around with me in case I was away from home when it was time for my shots. By this time I was simply going through the motions, I was too afraid to hope and be disappointed, and I tried not to think too hard about why I was doing all this work.

My first cycle on injections lasted forever, and my husband and I were getting ready to move into our first house. After we moved in, I went to the Doctor for my usual pregnancy test. I had done a home pregnancy test that morning, but it was negative. So, I brushed off the

usual good luck wishes from the nurses as they took my blood.

In the late afternoon, I came back to my desk to find a message on my voice mail. It was the nurse, explaining, "I usually don't like to give out test results in voice mail..." "Yeah, yeah," I thought to myself, "Just get it over with and tell me it's negative; I'm used to it." She went on, "But this time I'm happy to, because you are pregnant."

I was stunned and began to cry. It was absolutely the last thing I had expected. It was a good half an hour before I could compose myself enough to call my husband and ask him to come over to the office. That night we went to my company's Christmas party, and although we didn't tell anyone our good news, I'll never forget how dazed and giddy we were.

I'm now five and a half months pregnant with a confirmed healthy baby girl, and while we're working on choosing a name, we're calling her "Marriott", because that's where we were staying when she was conceived, in the middle of moving into our new house.

~Chapter Five~

Third Trimester Loss

and

Stillborn

~Alise~

It has been almost six years, but I remember it as if it were yesterday. Let me start from the beginning.

We had just married and my husband wanted to start our family right away. I was nervous, because I had already had two miscarriages. He had a daughter from a previous marriage and wanted a big family. So, I agreed and in August we started trying and by September, I was pregnant. I was so happy, but nervous at the same time. My sister was pregnant with her second child. I was due in May and she was due in February.

We were very close and called each other after each appointment. Well, on my husband's birthday we went to the park with his family to have a picnic and I started spotting when we got home. At first I thought maybe my test was wrong, I hadn't gone to the Doctor yet to confirm it. I went to the emergency room and they took a blood test. It was positive and I was indeed pregnant. Then they did an ultrasound and its little heart was just beating away.

I went to my first Doctor's appointment on my birthday. He examined me and said everything looked good, but that I should come back on October 20th for an ultrasound. In the meantime, my sister had just found out she was having a boy. I told her that I had a feeling that I was having a boy too. She smiled and said "That would be great, we could dress them alike." We couldn't wait.

October 20th came and I was getting really nervous. As the cold jelly went on, their he or she was at ten weeks, two days, just moving around. I hadn't even gained an ounce. I was worried. I was so thin and thought for sure I would see some sign of my pregnancy by now, but the Doctor said, "Don't worry, you will." My pregnancy was great. I had only been sick one time. My November check up went fine and I got to hear his heartbeat on the Doppler. I was so excited, but still I had only gained one pound and was not showing at all. Again, the Doctor said, "Don't worry, you are lucky." I then asked when would I start feeling movement? He said, "It varies, just be patient."

On December 15th my husband's, cousin's baby died of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS). He was only four months old. I felt so sorry for them. I remember thinking I don't know what I would do if my baby died. Then on December 17th I went to the Doctors office for an ultrasound. My husband had to go to work later that day and wanted to sleep in, as we were so exhausted from being at his family's house to support them. I took a friend with me, because I didn't want to go alone.

I was so excited to get to see my baby again. I was nineteen weeks and the technician asked if I would like to know the sex? I said, "Yes please!" She said, "He's a boy." I just about fell off the table, I was so happy. Then the Doctor came in and checked me. I told him I had only felt the baby twice. He said, "Well maybe you are just not noticing it, because his heartbeat is 160bpm and he is fine." I thought I was just being impatient. I just wanted to rush home and tell my husband and sister the good news.

When I got there he was just waking up. I said, "Guess what it is?" He says, "A girl." I said, "Nope, a boy." I showed him the picture and he was so happy. I called my

sister and told her the good news also. We just couldn't wait for them both to be here. We then started picking out names. I told my husband that I wanted him to be a Jr. He was so thrilled and agreed.

In January, my perfect pregnancy was getting irritating. I kept getting yeast infections, bad enough that my private area swelled up and felt as if I was leaking something. I thought something else was wrong, but the Doctor said, "No, it is just the yeast infection." By now I was twenty-two weeks and the baby still didn't move much. The Doctor finds the heartbeat and says it's still 160bpm and everything is fine. He never did a stress test or any other tests to see if maybe my water leaking. I never asked because I thought, "He is the Doctor, he knows what he is doing."

The whole month of January I was in and out of the emergency room for the same two reasons and still no tests were run to see what was wrong. I always got the same answer. Everything is fine. I just thought I must be paranoid. My sister's pregnancy is fine and she wasn't having any of these problems.

On January 29th, for the last time, I went to the emergency room for bad pains in my abdomen. They checked his heartbeat and said I was having small contractions. The emergency room Doctor gave me a shot to stop them and sent me home. Me, being so young and naive, never thought anything about it. I know now that I should have been up in labor and delivery, but I wasn't sure how things worked. My Doctor never told me to go to the labor ward after twenty-weeks, in fact, he never told me anything.

Well, my yeast infection was clearing up and I was still not showing. This is where my nightmare really begins. I had a regular Doctors appointment and my husband didn't have to be at work until late that day, so he went with me. This would be his first time going with me. I remember thinking I would love to get an ultrasound today so he could see our baby.

We get there and the nurse weighs me. I have only gained a total of four pounds now and I am almost twenty-seven weeks along. The nurse smiles at me and says, "You are a lucky one." Finally, we are off to the room. The Doctor comes in and finally gets to meet my husband. He gets the Doppler out and tried to find the heartbeat. He searches and then asks me where he found it last time. I showed him. He then says, "Well, he must be moving around near your back." I told him I didn't know; I can never feel him move. He try's to lighten things up and says, "Let's go see the little guy on the screen." I am not even thinking anything's wrong at this point. There is no way I can lose a baby this far; I am past that magical twelve-week mark.

We are in the ultrasound room and the Doctor walks out leaving the technician to check it out. She is very quiet. She then walks out, leaving my husband and I just starring at the screen. When the Doctor walks back in with her, he says, "I'm sorry, he is gone." I lost it when I actually heard it, even though by that time I knew deep down something was really wrong. He took us into his office and tells us how we need to deliver him. He told us to go home and he will call us when it is time for us to go to the hospital.

When we got home the phone was ringing. I knew who it was. My husband hands me the phone and I hear my sister say, "So, how'd it go?" I just couldn't do it. I started

to cry and the phone fell, so my husband told her. I could hear her screaming as she hung up. The phone rang again and it was my father wanting to know what is going on, so again, my husband told him. I then asked him if he would call the Doctor and tell him that I needed to have our baby now. I just couldn't keep him inside me knowing he was gone. The Doctor agreed and told us to be at the hospital at 3:00pm.

In the meantime, I got cleaned up. My husband had to call his employer and his mother. I then had my dad call my mom at work to let her know what had happened and that I needed her at the hospital with me. When we got to the hospital I asked the nurse to check for a heartbeat one last time. She tried and tried, and was even willing to get another machine, but I told her I was sure now and not to worry about it. She put the suppository in at 3:25pm and told us it could be twelve hours before I delivered.

My husband went home to put the crib and some of his things up. By 3:35pm, I was already having bad pains so the nurse gave me a shot of Demerol. My mom finally got there and I just grabbed her and hugged her. I just couldn't stop crying. The shot started to work and I was getting groggy. I kept dozing on and off. Around 4:25pm, I thought I needed to use the restroom, so the nurse gets a bedpan and makes everyone leave except my mom. Well, it was my water that broke and I was so out of it that I didn't even know it. I just thought I went potty on myself.

My mom and the nurse delivered him at 4:38pm. He weighed 1 pound, 9 $\frac{3}{4}$ ounces and was 12 inches long. They brought him to me and I held him just staring at him. He was so beautiful and small. So perfect looking. He had dark hair and his mouth was open. Then my husband held him and he just broke down in tears. They took one picture

of him with me holding him, his footprints, and a nun made him an outfit with a matching blanket and two roses, one to bury him with and one for me to keep. They also made him a beaded bracelet with his name on it.

We had his funeral on February 11th. I remember how cold it was. I could barely look at the little white marble casket. My sister had her baby on February 12th. It was so hard for me at first, but he was so cute and I was happy for her. We had an autopsy done and found out that I had a rare infection called Choromionitis, which caused me to leak some fluid. That's also how I got my yeast infection. I miss him so much.

~Amy~

My name is Amy. April 8, 1993, I went for my annual Pap Smear and spoke to the Doctor about infertility. After all, my husband and I were both young and we had been trying for a year to conceive. She gave me some suggestions and the next day he flew in for the night. He is in the military and only came home on weekends at that time. We had our night together and on May 1, 1993, I found out that I was expecting our first child. He was so thrilled when I called him. He said to me, "See I told you that it wasn't broken."

I began having very severe morning sickness. I still don't understand why they say morning, as mine was twenty-four hours a day. I lost ten pounds in one week, became dehydrated and had to spend some time in the hospital. The Navy was so great. They flew him home right away. I was released one day before our wedding anniversary and spent the next six weeks on Reglin to control the vomiting.

The pregnancy progressed right on track and we were happy to find out that our first child would be a boy, due January 4th 1994. In October, we went to visit family out of state. That night I started bleeding, so we were off to the hospital again. I had tests and was monitored closely, but nothing could ever be found to be wrong. The bleeding stopped as quickly as it had begun. By now our son was no longer just ours. Every man on the ship that my husband was assigned referred to him as "ours". They even shared in our sonogram photos.

I was scheduled for my next Doctors appointment on December 30th, but the due date was close and the Doctor needed to go out of town so she asked me to come in on December 28th instead. I had an NST the previous visit so we just did urine and weight this time around. She told me that the baby had a very strong heartbeat. She wanted to let me go one more week and then we would schedule induction. I left there excited and nervous all at the same time. My cervix was dilated one centimeter, so how long could it be?

The baby was moving wildly, so I laid my hand on my stomach and said, "You have one week and whether you are ready or not you have to come out." I drove home to find my husband waiting for me. He left work early, as he had thought they would induce that day and he did not want to miss my call. We ate dinner and went to the mall for some exercise. I could feel tightening and I thought that it was braxton hicks contractions. We got in about 6:30pm and by 7:20pm I shared with him that labor had started. I decided to lie down and try to enjoy the thought of being a mom. At 10:00pm the contractions were at five-minute intervals.

I called my sister-in-law, who is a nurse. I talked to her for an hour on the phone. She thought I should call the hospital, so we hung up and I did. The hospital said to lie down for an hour on my left side and if things did not change to come in. I did just that for twenty minutes, but every time I tried to breathe I had another contraction. There was just no time in between. My husband phoned the Doctor and she said to come in right away.

There had been a terrible ice storm that evening so it took a few minutes to get the car cleaned off. My husband

grabbed our bags and I told him to leave them, as we were probably going to be sent back home because it was false labor. A five-minute trip to the hospital seemed to take half an hour. We were taken right in and the delivery room nurse said that admitting told them that I was definitely a keeper. I got into the gown and they began to hook up monitors.

They could not find a heartbeat for the baby. An ultrasound technician came in and did a quick sweep and couldn't find the heartbeat. We were told that the Doctor was on her way in. She came in, took my hand and gave us the most horrific news of our lives, "I'm sorry, but your baby died." My husband instantly broke down. I just lay on the bed holding him. I couldn't remember the last time I felt my baby move.

I was only dilated to three centimeters so they kept trying to push an epidural. I finally agreed. The contractions were so strong and every time one came on, I died a little more. I lay in the bed staring out the window as night turned to day. At some point my husband left the room to go call the family pastor so he could go to my mother-in-laws when my husband called to break the news. At that time I asked for a phone to call my mother. She felt such a need to come to be with me. At that moment, I couldn't see any of them coming the one thousand miles. A bereavement counselor came in and spoke to us. We had a few visitors from my husband's command, but at our request, they were not let in.

At 11:27am, on December 29, 1993, Patrick Corban was born. He was so perfect except that his umbilical cord was too short and when he dropped down into the delivery position he could not get any oxygen. He was so big, 8 pounds 6 ounces and 22 inches long. We held him and

talked to him. Did he know how much we loved him? My husband went home to get the bags and we dressed him in his going home outfit and he had hospital photos done. After they took him for the photos we never saw him again.

My husband handled all of the funeral arrangements. We had him flown to Illinois to be buried at the foot of my husbands, father's grave. That way no matter where the military takes us, Patrick will never be alone. It was a small family service and my family came from Michigan to support us. It was a nice service, but the whole time I just sat in that chair staring. Why couldn't I hold him just one more time? See him? Touch him?

The night of the funeral my husband held me tight and so badly I needed to make love to him, but I couldn't. I had been given some medication to dry my milk, but it didn't work that well. It just seemed like one more thing to put on the list I had for failure. We stayed away from home for four weeks. While we were gone my husband became ill and I panicked, begging him not to die. He couldn't leave me too. He was my strength. He only had a stomach bug, but for me I couldn't lose another thing or person that I loved.

When we returned, the nursery door was closed and baby books were lying all over my house. I couldn't sleep at night, so I would go and sit in the nursery and hold his hospital shirt or blanket. The next two weeks went by so quickly. I went to visit the delivery nurses at the hospital to say thank you for the great care. One had pretended to remember me, although I know she didn't. She even asked where the baby was buried. A nurse from the Doctors office called me to give her condolences and she shared with me that twenty-one years earlier she had lost a child.

It was now time for my husband to go back to sea and I would be alone. Every night I re-lived the words, "He had died", until one night I in my dream said, "He died", and then it was like some big weight was gone. I still thought of him daily, but it was like he gave me the okay to go on and be happy.

Seven months later we were surprised to find out that we would have another. It was a long pregnancy and everything was closely monitored. At thirty-seven weeks we were induced. Jacob Edward entered the world. I remember closing my eyes to push and there were four people in the room and when I opened them there was five, watching what seemed to all of us as the miracle child being born. There was not a dry eye in that room. Jacob was equally as large as his big brother and with the exception of his strawberry blonde hair, the spitting image of Patrick.

When we decided to try to conceive again, we knew that it would not be easy. My hormones just could not get into sync. Two years later I took Progesterone to try to get things in order and right away I became pregnant. It was going to be our Christmas surprise for family and friends. Six weeks into the pregnancy, I began bleeding. A trip to the emergency room would show a strong heartbeat and things were right where they were supposed to be. We were told not to be alarmed, as bleeding occurs in 30% of pregnant women. We had a follow up visit the next day with our Doctor and got the same answers. The very next day Tuesday, December 22, 1998, we lost our third child. The timing is never right, but for us it was exactly one week to the date short of Patrick's fifth birthday.

Four months later we are still coping. I find a lot of strength in Jacob. He has such a great outlook on all of it.

Someday we may have another, but for now we are enjoying the precious gift that we have been given.

Update:

Since Amy's story she went through a period of infertility and while waiting for treatment, she got pregnant and had another miscarriage. After her miscarriage she became pregnant again and now has a beautiful baby girl.

~Angela~

My name is Angela and I would like to share my story with others. I hope it can help someone to realize that they are not alone in such a difficult time in one's life.

My husband and I started dating in November of 1994. From the start I knew he was the one I would spend the rest of my life with. We became engaged in December of 1996. He was going to school to learn a new trade and I was waiting patiently. After finishing his school in November of 1997, we finally set a wedding date in July of the following year. He had taken a job that was an hour and a half away from home, so after two months of driving back and forth he decided to move closer to work and wanted me to go with him. We moved in together on January 1, 1998. After just a couple of weeks we decided to move our wedding to March 7, 1998. The day finally arrived and I felt as I was sitting on top of the world. The only bad thing was I should have been starting my period anytime. I just knew that come my wedding night it would decide to show up.

Well, it never did and I really didn't think anything of it with all the excitement going on in my life. I had a friend at work that kept telling me I was pregnant and I wouldn't believe her. March 16th rolled around and I still hadn't had a period yet, so I decided to take a home pregnancy test so that I could tell her she was crazy.

The way it turned out, I was the crazy one. I didn't have to wait the five minutes before it showed positive. It

changed instantly. I never had been so scared and excited all at the same time. I wasn't scared because I didn't want the baby, I was worried that I didn't just have to watch what I did for myself anymore. I had a miracle inside of me that depended on me to grow. So here I was, newly married to the man of my dreams and expecting our first child. We couldn't have been happier.

I couldn't get in to see my Doctor until April 7th. He figured me to be about nine weeks and due November 10th. Shortly after that the morning sickness kicked in. I was working nights at the time and the whole family didn't want me driving twenty-five miles home every morning at 1:00am so to satisfy everyone, I switched to days. I managed, even with the morning sickness. I still could not believe that I had everything I had ever wanted. I guess you could say it didn't seem real to me yet.

On May 5th I was knocked into the reality of what was going on. I listened to our baby's heartbeat for the first time. At that moment, along with the tears of being pregnant, everything became so real to me. From day one my husband wanted a little boy. It didn't matter to me either way as long as we were all healthy. I started keeping track of dates such as Doctor appointments, the month of pregnancy I was in, family birthdays and grandparents anniversaries to keep in the baby book. I even kept track of the baby's first movements that I could feel. I wanted our baby to know what I was experiencing while I was pregnant.

Everything was going great. We were very happy and preparing to be parents. During my monthly check up in July, my Doctor noticed a slight elevation in my blood pressure. He decided to put me on a blood pressure pill to keep it from getting any higher. The pill brought my blood

pressure back down and kept it down. Both the Doctor and the Pharmacist assured me that the pill was safe both for the baby and I.

On June 2nd, we got to see our first ultrasound. I couldn't believe what I was seeing. Our baby was moving around inside of me. I was so excited especially when I looked at my husband and saw his face light up in happiness. Everything looked fine and judging by the size of the baby, my due date was changed to November 6th. The best part was our baby was moving his arm and hand as if saying, "Look mommy and daddy, I really am in here."

On August 12th, my husband's dream came true. We had another ultrasound to determine the gender. Indeed we were having a proud baby boy. My husband had a name picked from the start. Our little boy was to be Caleb Matthew.

On August 17th, I went in for a normal check up. My Doctor felt that I was starting to retain too much fluid, so he cut my work from eight hours a day to only four. Just starting out, this set us back tremendously. It cut my pay over half. We really couldn't afford that much of a cut, but we were determined to do anything for our little Caleb. After all, the Doctor could have put me on complete bed rest.

During the rest of the pregnancy there were no complications until the very end, which I will get into. On October 22nd, Caleb was in the head down position. Now it was just a waiting game. Soon after, I moved back in with my parents since they live only five minutes away from the hospital, compared to the forty-five minutes away that we live. My husband and our new puppy stayed home

since it was closer to work. They would come stay with me on the weekends. I hated being separated from each other, especially at a time when we were both nervous and anxious.

Well, November 6th came and there were no signs of Caleb. On Saturday, November 7th, we went to the hospital for a non-stress test. Come to find out I was in early stages of labor. Couldn't have proven it by me, I didn't feel anything. I was sent home and told to drink plenty of water, do lots of walking and even have intercourse if I felt up to it. I was told that these things would help speed up labor.

November 10th, I had another check up at the Doctor's office. My cervix was starting to open up. I became very excited and then my Doctor had to remind me that I might still have some waiting ahead of me. I was told if I hadn't had Caleb by November 20th, labor would be induced.

On November 14th, I went in for another non-stress test. When I got there I was having contractions four to five minutes apart and was dilated to a one. This time I could feel it too. My lower back, legs and lower stomach hurt so much from the pressure of Caleb moving down. We were there around three hours and the contractions started to slow down and eventually stopped. However, Caleb was showing no signs of distress, so again I was sent home and told to do more walking. By this time we were all becoming very impatient.

The morning of Monday, November 16th, my husband had me walking all over my parent's property. I noticed that I hadn't felt Caleb moving much, but I didn't really think anything of it because when I was up moving around he wasn't. That afternoon we had another check up at the

Doctor's office. My mom came with us this time. Like normal, when I got in the car I felt Caleb move. He always moved while I was in the car. At the Doctor's office the nurse checked my weight and blood pressure like she always did. Now our nightmare begins.

She couldn't find Caleb's heartbeat. She never had any problems in the past. She continued to try for what seemed to be forever. Then the Doctor came in to try. Another lifetime seemed to pass and he couldn't get it either. He asked me if I had felt any movements and I told him that Caleb was moving on the way to his office. By this time my husband and I were scared to death, and my mother was in the waiting room unaware of what was going on. My Doctor immediately called the hospital and told them we were on our way over.

The hospital was next door to his office so we didn't have to go far. He didn't bother checking me in, he took me straight to X-ray for an ultrasound. My husband had become so nervous that he was becoming sick. I didn't want to look at the ultrasound screen. I didn't want to believe what was going on. The next thing I remember was hearing the Doctor say that Caleb's heart wasn't beating.

My husband had called his mom, who was already there and his father was on his way. My husband disappeared; he didn't want me to see him losing it. They continued to look at the monitor to see if any reason could be found. Shortly after they found a blood vessel in Caleb's brain that had ruptured. Our unborn child had an Aneurysm. I had never heard of that. My Doctor and mother were holding me and crying with me. I couldn't count the times that my Doctor apologized. When my husband came back I was given the choice of taking medicine to induce labor or having a cesarean.

We were being hit with too much at the same time. The lady that works in the hospital admitting office had come in by this time. I had known her most of my life and gone to school with her kids. She is still a part-time nurse and asked my Doctor if she could stay with me. She wanted to take care of Caleb for me and I thank God that she did. I continued to think about my options. I couldn't stand the thought of going through labor pains for who knows how many hours for such a negative outcome. So, I chose the C-section.

This is all happening around 2:30pm in the afternoon. The next thing I know, I'm being admitted into the hospital, and being prepped for surgery. By now my daddy had arrived and was holding me trying to comfort me the best that he could. I didn't want him to let go of me. My husband was calling the rest of the family to let them know what was going on.

By 5:30pm I was taken downstairs to continue getting ready for the operation. The hallway was already full of family and friends. Though I can't remember everything because of the drugs that I was given. I was hooked up to an IV that was giving me medicine to relax me. I barely remember being hooked up to the IV because I was already so out of it. Before they took me into surgery I was asked if I wanted to see Caleb or not. I didn't know what to say. I wasn't sure if I wanted to see him. I guess I was scared that he wouldn't be perfect. It didn't take me long to realize though that if I didn't see him or hold him that I would regret it for the rest of my life. It was now time for the happiest nine months of my life to come to an end.

The last thing I heard my husband say was, "Please come back to me." I was put under for the surgery, which

went with no complications other than the fact that our baby had died. They did however find though, that the umbilical cord was tightly wrapped around Caleb's neck. As he was trying to move down it was pulling him back and eventually strangled him. My Doctor believed that the pressure from it being so tight is what caused the blood vessel in his brain to weaken and rupture. He couldn't be sure without doing an autopsy and I couldn't put Caleb through that. We had all been through enough and it wasn't going to bring him back to us.

My nurse friend stayed with me the whole time. She bathed and dressed Caleb. She took some pictures of him, took his footprints and cut a pinch full of his hair off the back of his head and put on a certificate for me. When I woke up in recovery I was informed that my husband was in the bed next to me. When they had taken Caleb out for our parents and grandparents to see and hold, he couldn't take it. He got such a headache and became so nauseated that they had to give him something. Needless to say he was also admitted into the hospital and stayed in the bed next to me back in our room.

After I had been taken back to my room and the epidural and drugs wore off, Caleb was brought to me. He was the most beautiful 8 pound, 20 inches long baby that I had ever seen. He had my facial features and my hair. I couldn't believe that he looked so perfect, but wasn't alive. I just held him close to me and told him how much I loved him. I couldn't quit kissing his little forehead. In a way, I was still hoping he would start crying. I held his little hand and told him that I was so sorry for not being able to help him when he needed me the most.

My mother-in-law and her sister took some more pictures of him. I have only one picture of him, his daddy

and myself all together. After all of the family and friends except our parents had left, my Doctor came back and talked to us. Due to the drugs that had to be given to my husband, he was out. Caleb was brought back to me one more time before I had to let him go. I never will forget the feeling that I had when the nurse walked out of the room with my baby. Needless to say I didn't get much rest that night.

My parents stayed with us all night, every night. The Doctor bent over backwards for us. Whatever we wanted, he made sure that we received it. There were four food trays brought in with every meal and my parents and husband had a bed to sleep on.

The next afternoon my mother-in-law stayed with me while my husband and parents went to make funeral arrangements. Later that evening, the nurses wanted me to start getting up to go to the restroom. I remember standing up, which took a few minutes, and feeling like my stomach was going to rip open where my incision was. I hadn't felt anything like that ever. While they had me sitting in the bathroom my mom came with me and I remember losing it. I felt like Caleb's death was my fault and that I had let everyone down. I kept telling myself that Caleb was my child to protect and when he needed me the most there wasn't a damn thing I could do for him. That irritated the hell out of me. Of course the hospital had a counselor that had spoken to me, but I just couldn't shake the "what ifs?"

I was released from the hospital on Thursday, November 19th. I didn't want to go home. I wanted to go to the funeral home to see my son. My parents bought a teddy bear to bury with him and bought me one just like it. I wanted to take him his teddy bear. Everything we had for him was in teddy bears. I had him the outfit that I had

planned to take him home in. Across the chest of it said, "Thank Heaven for Little Boys." He looked so peaceful. I just wanted to pick him up and hold him so bad. I couldn't stand leaving the hospital empty-handed. That wasn't the way it was supposed to happen.

I went home to get off my feet and get some rest. My mother took us back to the funeral home that evening for one last good-bye. That was the only time that we got to be alone with our little Caleb. My husband assured me that in no way did he blame me for what was happening and that he loved me.

On November 20th, at 2:00pm, we had graveside services for our little angel. That was the hardest thing that I have ever done in all my life. Our friends and family were wonderful and so helpful. I still couldn't believe that this was actually happening. I just knew that I would wake up and the whole nightmare would be over. So much for wishful thinking.

It's been five months since we lost Caleb. We got a headstone for Caleb's grave and it is also a teddy bear. It's been a difficult five months. At times I feel that it has put a strain on our marriage. I have changed and I don't like what I have become. I have no patience. I feel anger towards other pregnant women or new moms. I don't understand why this had to happen. What did I do to deserve this kind of heartbreak? At one time I had all I had ever wanted and I saw how fast that it could be taken away. I am so scared of losing my husband also. After all, I was the one who couldn't give him what he wanted most.

It's now getting to where I am having some good days, though there's not one that goes by that I don't think of my little guardian angel in heaven. I have come to realize

though that on my bad days, I turn to God and Caleb for comfort. I visit Caleb's grave every week and I talk to him. I know he can hear me, so I tell him how much I love and miss him.

I know it seems like it will never get easier. I still have days like that. You don't ever have to forget someone that touched your life like that. You have to remember them and all the happiness they brought to you if even just for a short time. Most importantly don't ever give up on the dream of having children.

Update:

Since Angela's story she became pregnant and Noah Alan made his appearance on June 8, 2000. He weighed 9 pounds, 12 ounces and is 21 inches long.

~Brittany~

My name is Brittany and I am now twenty-eight years old, but my story starts eleven and a half years ago when I was only sixteen. Finding out I was pregnant was terrifying. I remember feeling nauseated and running out of the clinic. I was there to get on the pill, but had gone only three weeks to late. My boyfriend was quite a bit older and left me when I told him I was pregnant. My mother became my rock, accepting what had happened and helping me with even the littlest of things since I had no clue where to start. I didn't even know how to make a Doctor's appointment. My father on the other hand refused to acknowledge the situation I was in. We still don't talk about it to this day.

I had a wonderful pregnancy, free of morning sickness, heartburn, and all the other things that go along with pregnancy. I had a huge supply of friends and family who were there to help and support me with anything I needed. Pregnancy was great for me even at the age of sixteen.

Then came the day that is etched in my brain. It was a day that started like all the others, eight and a half months into my pregnancy. I woke early and ate a big healthy breakfast. I felt the baby moving like she did everyday. She was always very active in my womb. I then got in the shower to get ready for my Doctors appointment. I didn't feel her moving too much, but she was usually still while I was moving around.

I was finally called into the exam room and my Doctor started trying to find the baby's heartbeat. She was good at hiding her facial expressions and just shrugged at me and said the batteries must be dead. She soon returned with a new monitor and tried again to find the babies heartbeat. She finally tells me to sit up and get dressed so I could go down to the labor and delivery ward. She wanted me to be hooked up to the large fetal monitor. She tries to assure me nothing is wrong, but as I look back at that very moment, I now know that I was in quite a state of shock.

Down in labor and delivery I was put in a labor room and hooked up to the large monitor. For fifteen minutes the nurse searches for that ever so wanted sound of my babies' heartbeat. The nurse then turns to me and asks if I am here alone. I tell her yes, and she asks if I would like to call anyone. My first reply was no, but I soon thought I would just update my mother. I phoned her at her job and told her that they were getting ready to do an ultrasound. My mother said she would be there in five minutes. I really didn't want her to get into trouble at work, so I told her not to leave her job.

Three Doctors and three nurse's wheel in the ultrasound machine, turn off the lights, and turn the monitor out of my view. Approximately five minutes later they turn off the machine and all walk out of the room without so much as a word to me. I lay in the dark for I don't know what amount of time. The next thing I remember is my Doctor and mother walking through the labor room door. My Doctor looks confused as to why the lights are off and turns on the lights only for me to see my mother is crying. Now it's my turn to look confused. I ask my mother why she is crying. My Doctor and my mother look at each other and my Doctor says, "Nobody spoke to you?" I told her "No, they

all walked out and left me in the dark.” She said she'll be right back, and they walk out.

They return a few minutes later and are both crying now. In my state of shock and lack of information, I just lay there staring at them both. Finally, my Doctor says that my baby is dead and they aren't sure why. My mother is sobbing and all I can do is stare at her. I asked my Doctor exactly what that means. I also asked if I could have a C-section. My Doctor tells me I can wait to go into natural labor or pick any day I want and she will induce me, but a C-section is out of the question. My body already knew what was happening and was in enough trauma. I was so confused, scared, angry, and every other emotion you can imagine. I couldn't even cry.

Once my mother and I returned home she began calling all of my family. I left to tell the baby's father what was going on. I was not nice to him and left him just as confused as I was. When I returned home my mother asked me what I wanted to do about delivering the baby. I just lay there staring at the ceiling for what seemed like hours. Finally I told her I wanted this nightmare to end and I wanted to get induced as soon as possible. Mom called my Doctor and I was scheduled for inducement at 7:00am the next morning. That night I slept with my mother for the first time since I was a very small child and she held my hand all night long.

Because I had seen what a person looked like after they had drowned and been in the water for quite awhile, I asked mom what my baby was going to look like. Crying she replied, "I don't know sweetheart, but I do know we can make it through this." Finally I cried, but not enough to make a difference. I was totally numb.

At the hospital the next morning I was taken to my birthing room with my birthing coach, who also happened to be my English teacher. I was hooked up to the IV and the nurse tried to position the mirror above the bed so I could see the birth, but I immediately had her move it away. I didn't want to watch. Mom and twelve of my friends sat in the waiting room nervously waiting. The contractions were getting bad and finally the anesthesiologist came in to give me my epidural. The time to push had come. I pushed and I pushed. The epidural was wearing off, but the nurse told me I had to get the babies' head to crown before they would administer more of the epidural. The only problem with that was the harder I pushed the more of a vacuum it created forcing her to go further in. She couldn't help me by fighting her way out, so I was on my own. At 2:36pm on March 16, 1988, I delivered my baby girl.

I didn't want to see or hold her, even though I was told it would help me heal. I was scared that if I held her, I wouldn't want to let her go. As soon as she was out I closed my eyes and quietly cried. I could hear one of the nurses and my birthing coach oohing and ahing over her in the corner. It got so loud in my head that I couldn't block it out any longer, so I asked them to remove her from the room. It took the Doctor forty-five minutes and one hundred stitches to sew me up. I had priests, ministers, nurses, and other Doctors coming in and out offering words of wisdom and their prayers. Meanwhile, they had wrapped the baby in warm blankets and allowed my mother time in a secluded room with a rocking chair to hold her. Mom rocked and talked to her for about an hour.

I was moved to a private room, but was still in the maternity ward where I lay for three days. The nursing staff felt sorry for me and didn't make me take a shower,

have a bowel movement, or anything else you usually have to do before leaving the hospital. They also kept me pretty drugged up, but on what I don't know. There was always a friend or family member at my side. Remember the boyfriend? He was also there for me day and night. When I was released from the hospital it took two cars to get all the flowers home.

The funeral was a sad one. Mom got to buy her outfit and arrange the whole thing. A wonderfully nice funeral parlor gave us the funeral for free.

Once home, all I did was sleep. I couldn't even stay awake long enough to eat. I had to have somebody at my side at all times. Two days after returning home, I got up to go to the restroom and realized I was hemorrhaging. Mom called the Doctor and she said a lot of bleeding was normal, but if it got worse to call back. I got to the point where I had to be wheeled to the bathroom and wheeled back to the bed. On day five my temperature was 104 degrees and I could no longer keep consciousness. My best friend called mom at work and told her that she needed to come home. They dressed me, carried me to the car and rushed me to the hospital. I was admitted to ICU and not allowed visitors, a phone, or a TV for five days.

Now on to present day.

I have spent years hoping I would get pregnant again. Even desperate enough to not care who the father was. After not getting pregnant for so many years, I knew there was something wrong. I met a wonderful man three and a half years ago, and we were married just over a year ago. Even before we were married I went to an infertility Doctor who did a Hystero-salpenogram (HSG). It showed I had a blocked tube. I went in for surgery to have the tube

removed and see if the rest of my organs were okay. After surgery I was told my left tube had been filled with toxic amniotic fluid and had been removed. My left tube was enlarged and would never function properly. I have scar tissue so thick on all my insides that the Doctor had to cut it away just to find my liver and other vital organs. This was all caused by improper care from my physicians. My infertility Doctor told me that any time anything dies in your body it causes an immediate infection. So, no matter how clean and careful I would have been, I would have still had the infection.

Now the only decision I have to make is when I want to have my next baby. In vitro-fertilization (IVF) or adoption is my only choice. I'm not sure I can handle the pressure of adoption, but we can't seem to scrap together enough money for the In vitro-fertilization (IVF). I will donate eggs, which will lower my cost. If I can help even one woman get the baby so many of us long for, then I am all for it.

~Janann~

At the twenty-ninth week of my pregnancy, on the Fourth of July in 1998, I noticed that my non-stop kickboxing baby had stopped kicking. We had been gone all day to parades and such so I hadn't had a chance to think about it. All of a sudden, right in the middle of supper, I realized that I didn't really feel pregnant anymore. The heartburn and nausea was gone, and it hit me that I hadn't felt him move all day. I decided to lie down for a while, but I couldn't make him move. I had never been so terrified. I called the Doctor and she said for us to go to the hospital and to have them check his heartbeat. I am normally so optimistic, but I knew that everything was wrong. I called my girlfriend to see if she and her husband would be able to pick up my two and a half year old, Garner, at the hospital. She said yes, but she kept telling me that everything would be fine. I told her I would call her from the hospital when it was time to come get him. I knew that they would have to come.

The ride there was long and I didn't say much. I didn't want to scare my child, or scare my husband Earl anymore than he already was. We got to labor and delivery and my poor nurse could not find his heartbeat. I felt so bad for her. The look on her face was so scared and worried. She told me later that it was the first time she couldn't find the heartbeat for someone. My poor husband just burst into tears, he was so shocked. I was trying to comfort him and trying not to scare Garner, but of course I was crying too. My worst fear had become reality. My baby had died.

They called my Doctor who was out at the lake for the holiday. She was on her way in, but it would be almost an hour before she could get there. They wouldn't do an ultrasound without her. Earl took Garner downstairs to call our friends to come get him. He was so scared by all that was happening. I really wanted to be alone. I could tell that my nurse didn't want to leave me, but I told her I needed to call my family. I called my sisters and dad, but no one was home. Everyone was gone to watch the fireworks. I left messages to please call me at the hospital and gave the number calmly. Then I tried to call my youngest sister again. She is notorious for screening her calls, or waiting to check the machine when it is convenient. So I called again, this time I was saying, "Are you there, please answer the phone?" My voice just rose into an uncontrolled sobbing scream. I then hung up sobbing. Earl came back and we just held each other. We couldn't believe this was happening.

My sister told me later that they came home and listened to the messages. Her husband was in the other room. He ran in and asked what was that? She was crying and said "That is the sound of a mommy whose baby has died." She said she knew it wasn't Garner or Earl, but Dawson. My dad finally called me and he would not believe me. I told him to just come now. They had a twelve-hour drive to get to us. He kept telling me everything was fine, I couldn't convince him otherwise. Finally, I told him I would call him back after the ultrasound and tell him again.

My sweet Doctor finally arrived and did the ultrasound. She confirmed that he was dead and could see no reason for his death on the ultrasound. She just sat there and cried with us. My poor husband, it was horrible for him. He too had just hung onto some hope that they were wrong. My dad and mom (really my wonderful step mom, my real mother died when I was pregnant with Garner) started

driving down that night. My sister, her husband and their baby followed behind.

The Doctor told me that I would have to go through induction hell. I was shocked. I didn't want to go home with my dead baby still inside of me. My nurse came in and said that my Doctor had told her that our baby's name was Dawson. I said no it isn't, he will be named Edgar or something awful. My first thought was that if I changed his name it wouldn't be the baby I loved. It would just be a baby. She was so nice and understanding and just said that it was up to me. But I knew that this was our baby Dawson. I couldn't take his name from him. No matter what I called him, he was the same baby that I had carried and felt grow and kick inside of me. I couldn't save his name for another baby. No other baby would be Dawson. I knew that it was just denial.

They stuffed my body with seaweed stuff to get me to start dilating. It hurt so badly. Then we were sent home. I stayed up most of the night crying and reading the information that the hospital sent home with me. I couldn't sleep and I wouldn't take the sleeping pills that they had offered me. I couldn't hide from my grief. I wanted to face it head on. I wanted to cry, wail and be miserable. My baby had died. Garner woke up early and I just held him, wondering how I could be so blessed and so cursed. I went back to the hospital that day to see if I was dilating. I wasn't. So, once again they tortured me by stuffing my cervix full of that stuff again. Those days were horrible. I couldn't and wouldn't sleep until I was absolutely exhausted. My family would stay up with me all night playing yatzee. I didn't want to be alone. When I was alone I would cry, sob and wail uncontrollably. When I was asleep I would have horrible nightmares. The worst was waking from the nightmares to find that reality was worse than any nightmare. I was walking in a fog. It was

all so strange. People would call and want to talk to me. I would talk to them, but I hated it. I didn't know what to say or even what they wanted me to say. Did they want and need me to be strong, or did they want or expect me to be lying on the bathroom floor in a fetal position crying? It was so hard to deal with my own emotions, let alone everyone else.

Then on July 6th we went to the hospital that morning to see if I was ready to induce. They decided that I was ready and admitted me. Earl was there with me. My mom, my sister and Earl's sister stayed with me most of the day also. My contractions started getting stronger and I didn't complain for some time. When I finally did they gave me an epidural right away. I hadn't even thought about it, I didn't have to suffer any pain, my baby was dead. They didn't have to worry about hurting him with the medicine. Then the nurse came in and I told her that I could feel a lot of pressure. She checked and he was right there. I could barely wait for the Doctor. He was ready to come out right then.

He was born that afternoon. Our families had left expecting it to take longer. Dawson was born with the cord wrapped twice around his neck. The cord was so tight they had trouble unwrapping it. As they were discussing the cord and trying to get it off I said, "Please just give me my baby." My Doctor handed him right to me. He was beautiful. He looked just like Garner. Except that he had really big feet. The nurse had argued with me the whole morning that the preemie outfit I had brought wasn't going to fit. I kept telling her that I have big babies and I knew he was big. She took one look at him and finally told me I was right, the outfit would fit him. We held him for four hours. My family came to see and hold him. Garner climbed up beside me and touched his nose, his hair and his toes. Our families all left and we held him a bit longer. It

upset Earl to sit and watch me hold him so we told them that they could take him away. That was the worst part ever. I had never been without him. Now I would never see him again.

We spent the night in the hospital to give us a little alone time before we had to face the world. We made arrangements to have him cremated, we weren't sure that we would stay in Texas forever. I knew that I couldn't bury him somewhere and then move. The next morning we left the hospital and I begged them to let me walk out, they wouldn't. They agreed to take me out the back door though. I couldn't go out the front without my baby. We had several days until his funeral, so we used that time to find fitting music and to make his service as special as possible. We planned how to set up the table with his urn surrounded by the toys and decorations from his room. It was a beautiful service, everyone commented on how special it was. Those days and weeks following were horrible. It was so hard watching everyone continue on with their lives while mine was falling apart.

About six weeks later Earl was laid off at his job. It was pure hell. We made it through the three months that he searched for a job, but it was though we couldn't even mourn our baby properly. We had so many other worries. By God or some strange coincidence he was hired in a town in Iowa close enough to my hometown that we were able to move back to it. In January, we found out I was pregnant. I hadn't thought that I was ready, but you don't have to be ready to be pregnant. I am so excited and thrilled to be pregnant now, but at first it was such a shock. Especially because my due dates were so close together. Garner was born on September 15th, Dawson was due on September 16th and Bronson is due on September 9th.

As much as I love and want Bronson, I also miss and want Dawson. Altogether it makes for a strange feeling. I have such grief, yet I have such love and hope for this baby growing inside of me. I am so scared that something will happen to him. The fear is there and I know that it will not go away until I have this baby and he is alive and well in my arms.

We have bought a headstone and plot here in the cemetery where my Mommy is buried. We will bury Dawson here. We bought two adjoining plots, so if we do ever move away, we will be buried next to him. Now we have a special place to go and remember him. We know that someday we will join him in heaven, but until then my Mother will hold and rock him for me.

Update:

Janann has gone on to have a successful pregnancy. Bronson is nine months old now.

~Jenny~

My name is Jenny. I am twenty-seven years old and have been married for four years. My husband and I found out we were pregnant last September. I was so excited about things to come. My husband was a little more worried about financial things. We went along into the pregnancy, both willing and ready to have a child. My pregnancy was a wonderful experience and I was happy the entire time. No morning sickness or other irritating side effects. I was just happy to be carrying our first child.

My husband started to get excited around the second trimester when I began to show and started working on the baby's room. He painted and I decorated it. He assembled all the furniture and we basically got things ready. At four months we did an Amniocentesis and found out we were having a girl. We were so happy. I started buying all kinds of little girl things and had so much fun with it. We had a couple of baby showers and got a lot of cute little pink things. By thirty-six weeks we had the entire house ready. I work at home, so we had a crib and swing out near my computer. Everything looked great.

Three weeks from my due date, I went in for a heart check. The evening before I had noticed that Brittany wasn't moving. I had a bad feeling about it, but told myself it couldn't be true. I am so young and healthy. I was doing everything right in my pregnancy. When I got to the office my Doctor couldn't find the heartbeat. He was in disbelief and we went immediately for a sonogram just to be sure. I can't express the shock and numbness I felt when I looked

on the monitor and saw her little heart just sitting there, no movement.

I called my husband and gave him the news. I actually can't remember what I said to him, but hearing the tone of my voice and the tears I was crying, he knew without me having to say much. He rushed over to the office right away. Then came the shock. I still had to go through labor. I don't know how we made it through the first few hours of inducing labor. I think we both hoped that the Doctor was wrong. She was in there and maybe she was okay. When I had my first contraction, I thought Brittany was moving inside me again. I felt her push up to the top of my abdomen and I think I began hoping again.

We went through labor and delivered Brittany Marie at 9:30pm. She was such a beautiful baby. She had my lips and nose, and her daddy's ears and forehead. They let us hold her and take pictures with her. I thought the worse part of it was over now, but I was wrong. Labor was nothing. It was hard, yes, but it was nothing compared to having a funeral for Brittany. We went the next day to the funeral home and picked out a plot and a casket for her. Both sets of our parents had driven up to be with us by this time and everyone was so sad. I think I went deep inside myself at this point and hid out in there. I watched everything as in a distance, yet I remember everything that happened. Watching my baby be buried, receiving support from my friends and family, and seeing how it affected everyone differently was so hard.

I love my daughter. I went out every other day to visit her gravesite at first. I took fresh flowers out there, as if anything I could do for her would help me feel better. We still go to visit her now, but not as often as before. I feel like she is still here with me. I talked to her so much in the

beginning about anything and everything. I have spent so much time in her room with her things. It is sad that she never got to enjoy, wear or play with the things we bought for her. It's heartbreaking.

I found a web site while looking for help in grieving for Brittany. It's almost scary, because we had the saying "Forever in our Hearts" placed on her headstone before I knew this site existed. Now we begin a new chapter in our lives. We found out last week that we are pregnant again. I am carrying Brittany's little brother or sister around with me now and I feel like we were destined to be pregnant again this soon. The new baby's due date is just two days before Brittany's birthday. It will be hard for me either way, but maybe with a little baby brother or sister to hold on her birthday, we will begin to heal a bit more. I know that a new baby won't replace Brittany in our hearts. How could it?

We have so much love to give and I can't see waiting too much longer in our lives to start a family. Brittany will always be our first child and I think we will tell any siblings that come along that they have a guardian angel in Heaven to watch over them. I am comforted by the fact that she is up there with her two grandfathers, who I'm sure are holding and loving her. I also know that I will need a lot of support and love during this new pregnancy. I'm quite sure this will be the longest nine months of my life. She is forever in our hearts.

Update:

Jenny has had a successful pregnancy, which resulted in a healthy baby boy named

Kyle. Brittany's birthday has just passed, and this year it hit on Mother's Day. She said it wasn't as difficult as she thought it would be. Having her sweet Kyle to hold has really helped her through a lot of emotional times. She says it has helped her tremendously to reach out to other families in need, so please feel free to e-mail her if you would like. Her address is jennycoffee@home.com.

~Kim~

In the spring of 1998, my husband and I found out that we would be parents for the first time. We were nervous, confused and a bit excited all at once.

The next forty-one weeks came and went ever so slowly. The months were filled with Doctor visits, trips to various maternity warehouses and baby stores. There were baby showers, lamaze classes, and I read every book I could find on pregnancy. I watched videos and spent hours on the Internet learning all I could about the changes that were taking place in my body and with my baby.

I must admit that the last month was the most exciting. I anxiously waited for the moment when my body would somehow be jolted into labor. I'd had a wonderful pregnancy, was rarely sick and seemed to have every reason to believe that I would be no different from every other person I knew who had been pregnant, and the next day holding and cuddling a baby. My Doctor was optimistic that I would go into labor on my own, even when thirty-eight weeks rolled around and still I had not dilated. Finally, at forty weeks my cervix was still thick and I had not dilated past a fingertip. I was scheduled for induction of labor on Tuesday of the following week. Our preparation for the baby swung into full gear. I arranged baby clothes and appliances while my husband shopped for last minute items. I kept thinking to myself, "Next week this time, I'll be holding my baby."

Monday, January 11th rolled around and I was going to visit my Doctor who would administer a tablet to help soften my cervix. Immediately following the vaginal examination she announced that she was sending me to the hospital that evening. My cervix was thinning and labor would be started that night rather than the next day. I smiled in anticipation of what was finally going to happen.

Nonetheless, our nightmare began when my Doctor casually placed the stethoscope on my stomach. For the past several months we had grown so accustomed to hearing the rapid thumps of my baby's heartbeat each time I had visited that office. On this the final day those sounds were not to be heard, not by my Doctor, anyone, or me. An ultrasound revealed a still baby. My Doctor wiggled my stomach as I frantically began to sob. At the time, it did not even register to me that this meant my baby was gone. I screamed and cried uncontrollably as my Doctor quietly told me that the baby had indeed passed away. I couldn't believe this was happening. I wanted to run to the hospital. There had to be a way of saving my baby or bringing her back to me.

Minutes later I lay in a bed on the hospital floor known as labor and delivery. I cried and cried, still not really believing that this had actually happened. Nurses comforted my husband and I, but all we could do was sob. I resented the fact that so much was being done to make sure that I received the best medical attention when nothing could be done for my baby. I wanted to die, just as my baby had. I just didn't have the strength to live or care about anything.

On the morning of Tuesday, January 12th, I delivered a beautiful baby girl, who we named Kayla Yvonne. Through my tears and heartache I was happy and proud of

what I had made. She was by far the best thing that has ever happened to me. All would have been so perfect if only she had lived. Her cause of death was a cord accident. If only I had known, perhaps there was something I could have done.

As I held my little girl for the first and final time, I cried and told her how sorry I was that this had happened. I said a prayer for her soul and told her how much I loved her, and that I would see her again someday. She was so precious, beautiful and strong. I am so proud of my daughter.

~Michelle~

My name is Michelle. I met my husband Bill at work in August of 1993 and we started dating that December. A year later on December 16, 1994, we were married. From early on we knew that we wanted to spend the rest of our lives together. We had both been previously married and Bill had a son from that marriage, but I wasn't so lucky. I had two first trimester miscarriages with my first husband and was in my own mind unable to carry a child to full term. Bill had a vasectomy about a year after the birth of his son because his wife didn't want any more children. It didn't seem to be a problem for either of us that we couldn't have children, but after a couple of years of marriage we knew that something was missing in our lives. We had so much love for each other, but no one else to share it with.

On September 12, 1996, we had a long talk and decided to explore our options for having children. Our options included adoption, surgical sperm retrieval, a vasectomy reversal or donor sperm. We decided to try the vasectomy reversal. After having a vasectomy for thirteen years the odds were against us. The longer the length of time between vasectomy and reversal, the more chances there are for antibody production or damage to the epididymis from pressure and scarring that can not be repaired. If this didn't work for us we figured we could always adopt. The only problem with adoption was that most agencies won't let you adopt a child in your forties, and Bill would be turning forty within the next few years. This put a few time constraints on us.

On November 8, 1996, Bill had his surgery to reverse the vasectomy. After two weeks of recovery things were looking good. Eight weeks later his sperm count was tested and showed a total of eight sperm. Needless to say that is very low. Normal is sixty to two hundred million per milliliter. But at least they were present. Over the next six months Bill was tested on a monthly basis. The test results showed between zero and forty sperm at times and we were getting very discouraged. Then in June of 1997 we got better news. His count was up to approximately seventy-five thousand. This still is not good but it made us hopeful that something could be done. Our options at that time changed to Intrauterine Insemination (IUI), In vitro-fertilization (IVF), or at worse Gamete Intrafallopian Transfer (GIFT) or Zygote Intrafallopian Transfer (ZIFT).

Once we got that news it was time to see an infertility specialist. We started seeing the local specialist on September 25th. After a few further tests we were finally scheduled for an Intrauterine Insemination (IUI). On December 1st I saw the fertility specialist and was given Clomid to boost ovulation. At this time the entire process was also explained. Then on the morning of December 9th we were scheduled for the procedure. About a half-hour before my appointment, the Doctor called. He told me he had to cancel because of diminished sperm count and poor motility. We were very upset. Not only that the results were poor, but also that the Doctor was totally unwilling to try. At this point he suggested ICSI, donor sperm or possible adjunctive therapy with an urologist. Donor sperm was a possibility. Bill's brother and his wife already told us that they would be more than happy to have him donate sperm. We asked the Doctor about this and were told that it would take about a year of testing to get him approved as a donor. Now I know why people use the "turkey baster" method. We decided to try In vitro-fertilization (IVF),

which meant we would need about \$10,000.00 and would have to travel two hours from home each time for treatment. This would take a bit of time to save up enough money for, so we temporarily put treatment on hold

On June 13, 1998, we found out I was pregnant. Believe it or not we conceived naturally. The baby was due on February 14, 1999, Valentines Day. My entire pregnancy was very good; I had no morning sickness and was feeling great. Due to the previous miscarriages, I was a little worried until the first three months were over. I figured we were in the clear, but on September 5th, at seventeen weeks pregnant, I had some spotting. I called the Doctor and was told to lie down with my feet up and rest. The bleeding stopped within a few hours. The next week they did an ultrasound, but they didn't find anything abnormal in my case. They also ordered an Alpha-fetoprotein (AFP) test. The level of the test was a bit high so they sent me for a Level-II ultrasound and Amniocentesis test to rule out Spina Bifida or other birth defects. Everything came back normal. The test also confirmed that we were having a boy, which we suspected from the ultrasounds. Now we could decide on a name for him.

We were looking through many baby name books for a name for our baby boy. We wanted something special and unusual for our baby. Both of us have very common names and wanted our son to be different. We finally came across one, Doran, which means "special gift". It was perfect. He was a gift to us so his name should show it.

I didn't have any pre-term labor, but did have braxton hicks contraction the whole last two months of my pregnancy. At my thirty-seven week appointment my blood pressure started to go up and I was put on partial bed

rest due to mild pre-eclampsia. At my thirty-nine week appointment I was dilated to about one centimeter and was 30-40% effaced and very soft and thin. The baby's head was seated well into my pelvis so the Doctor figured it would be anytime now. My blood pressure had gone back down to normal so she decided not to induce labor this week like she had talked about at last weeks appointment. Three days later I had a terrible backache all day with back spasms. I called the Doctor's office wondering if I was in back labor, but there was no pattern to the pain at all so they didn't figure that it was.

The next day on February 12th, two days before my due date, everything seemed normal. I woke up at 5:30am with my husband. The baby went through his normal routine of stretching and then going back to sleep, like he'd been doing every morning for the past few weeks. I was just lounging around that morning until about 7:30am when I instantly started to cramp severely. I was feeling sick to my stomach so I got up and went to the bathroom. I knew that this pain was not labor contractions at this point. There was no vaginal bleeding, but I was cramping so severely that I had broken out in a cold sweat and was on the verge of passing out. It took me about a half-hour to get back out to the living room, approximately forty feet, to get to the phone to call my husband. He arrived ten minutes later from work. It took me about another thirty minutes to get dressed, with his help. He called the Doctor to let her know to meet us at the hospital. It took another five minutes for him to practically drag me out of the house and into the car.

We were admitted to the hospital at 8:50am. The nurses hooked me up to the monitors and were having a hard time finding the baby's heartbeat. The monitor was not picking up any contractions either. My Doctor arrived five minutes later and did pick up a faint heartbeat of about 107. She

then ordered an emergency c-section. Later we found out that it was an echo of my heartbeat and not Doran's.

I was immediately taken into the operating room where they were putting an IV into each of my arms, inserting the catheter while administering anesthesia and pouring Betadine on my stomach. I was so scared. I knew something was terribly wrong. The baby was delivered stillborn at 9:18am. The Pediatrician and the Anesthesiologist tried to revive him with no success.

When I woke up the Doctor explained to me that our baby was gone and the cause of his death was a complete abruption of the placenta. She said that from the minute she opened up my uterus she knew that it was too late for the baby. My uterus was filled with blood, which was what was causing the pain I felt.

At about 11:00am, I finally got to meet our son, Doran Ancel Phillip who was born at 9:18am. He weighed 6 pounds, 14 ounces and was 20 inches long. He had a full head of reddish-brown hair and dark blue eyes. He was a perfect looking little boy in every way.

Most of our immediate family was there. We had him baptized and everyone took turns holding him and saying good-bye. It was the most painful hours of my life, but also the proudest. It was obvious that he was very much loved and wanted, not only by us, but also by everyone else.

We had a memorial service the following Wednesday evening and were totally taken aback by the many people who came. We were very touched by all the support and love that our friends and family showed for us and for our baby. The following morning we had a small service at the cemetery with family and close friends. We released six

dozen blue and silver balloons at the close of the service. It was the most beautiful and peaceful graveside service I can remember. Although it was sad to leave our son there, everyone walked away smiling at the balloons floating away, sending our Doran to heaven.

Abruptio Placentae is a very rare condition where the placenta separates from the uterus before the birth of the baby. At this point the baby's first instinct is to start breathing and they literally drown on amniotic fluid and blood. This only happens in about 1% of all pregnancies. It is a freak occurrence that cannot be predicted or prevented in any way. The Doctor has assured us that this should not complicate any future pregnancies and that Doran was a perfectly healthy baby.

Thanks to the nurses of the maternity ward and our very supportive family and friends, we have a video and many dozens of pictures of our baby Doran to remember him by. We also have his T-shirt, blankets, ankle band, brush and comb, and a bunny that he had in the hospital. We will never be able to fill the emptiness in our hearts that he has left there, but we plan to keep his memory with us always.

Some days I feel that if I quit hurting, I'll start to forget Doran. I feel guilty that I don't hurt like I used to, like the memory of him is starting to fade. Eight weeks later I realized that I'd already forgotten what it felt like to hold him in my arms, but I'll always hold him in my heart and my memory, which is where it counts.

We know that we aren't ever going to replace Doran in our heart or our lives, but we have known for years now that we wanted children. Bill and I have always had a great relationship and marriage, but we feel that the only thing

missing in our lives is a child. We just hope that we will be able to have more.

At my six-week post delivery appointment we talked to the Doctor about resuming fertility treatment. She suggested a specialist who we saw a few weeks later. We were very impressed with him and the facility. Right off he suggested we try In vitro-fertilization (IVF) and we agreed. The facility there has it's own laboratory which cuts the cost of it from \$8,000.00-\$12,000.00 to \$3,500.00-\$5,000.00, which we should easily be able to afford. They also have very good success rates. We have scheduled the In vitro-fertilization (IVF) for September of this year. We are praying for success. This is a letter I wrote to my sweet Doran.

All I have

All I have is a seven-inch scar, where I carried you. I held you there for 278 days, closer to me than any other living person can ever be, yet I don't have you. I don't have any memory of your first hours in this world. I wanted the memory of your first seconds, yet I have none. I wanted to see the look on your Daddy's face the first moment he saw you. I know he was proud and full of love, but the moment was sad and I wasn't there because I was asleep.

All I have is a few scraps of cloth, that you were dressed and wrapped up in. They hold your smell, that sweet innocent smell that only a baby wears. I take them out and hold them close to remember you. Yet, I don't have you. My heart and my arms fell so empty they ache. I held you in my arms but once, for all to short of a time.

But I'll hold you in my heart for a lifetime. I only gave you one small kiss, one of the millions I wish I could give. I never got to spend a night alone with you, rocking you as you sleep. Do you know how it feels to want me as much as I want you? I know it's selfish, but I hope you do.

All I have are pictures of your beautiful, peaceful face. I want so much to hear you cry. One cry, one sign that you need me, but instead I'm the one to cry. I cry because I need you and you don't need me. I thought at first that it was for the best that you were taken at birth. But now I wish I'd had you for one year, one month, one day, even an hour or minute with you. The hurt could not be any greater to have had time to love you then not to know you at all.

All I have is my love. I only hope that with each tear that falls that the angel who cares for you now gives you one kiss. Because in every tear I cry is one kiss that I wish I could give you.

All I have is hope that you'll be happy there, until we meet someday in Heaven, where we can be together for all eternity.

*To my dearest Doran
2-15-99*

~Monica~

My pregnancy began a few days before Christmas of 1997, and within a week or two, I instinctively knew. On January 19, 1998, I took a home pregnancy test, which verified what I had already been telling my husband. I called the Doctor the next morning and set up my first pre-natal appointment, because I was determined that this pregnancy would be easier than my last.

We have a son who was born on October 12, 1996, six weeks premature. I have what I consider to be a strange defect in my reproductive organs, but one that I am finding out to be more common than you would think. I have a double uterus and cervix, both of which are joined and share a common wall. The main problem that this put on my first pregnancy was that there was not much room for him to grow, so I had premature labor many times. With hospitalization and different medications, the Doctor stopped the contractions the first three times. He then ordered me to strict bed rest. I was only allowed to go to the bathroom and take one shower a day. I was told that if I could make it to thirty-four weeks, with eight steroid shots to develop the baby's lungs, then I could be allowed to get up from the bed and let nature take its course.

On Monday, October 7th, my father-in-law died, and the funeral was planned for that Thursday, the first day of my thirty-fourth week. Luckily, I was able to attend. By Friday, I was in the hospital with contractions, and by Saturday afternoon, I gave birth to a very healthy baby. So, with my second pregnancy, I was determined to do

everything right. My first baby was carried in the right side of my double uterus, so the Doctor was hoping that this pregnancy would also be in the right side. In my sixth week I went in for an ultrasound, which proved that the baby was in the left side. The sound of those words devastated me and I tuned out anything else that the Doctor had to say. My husband told me later after I calmed down that the Doctor had said that the baby looked very healthy and there was plenty of fluid. The Doctor went on to say that he wondered if I was mistaken in which side my first baby was in. I was not at all comforted. First of all, I am positive that he was in my right uterus because I stuck out on the right side, and second of all, I could care less about fluid right now because all I wanted was room enough for my baby to grow. They started me on a hormone twice a day to keep me from having early contractions. This had been proven to work until the second month.

I went to weekly Doctor visits, which kept me in the office sometimes for three or more hours. It was all worth it because when I would finally get in to see the Doctor, I was reassured that everything was going okay. My Doctor even did a quick ultrasound to show me the heartbeat for the first few months until they could pick it up on the Doppler. He knew that I would feel better if I could see my baby and her racing heart.

Everything seemed to be going fine until April. During Easter weekend I caught a virus, but blamed it on the fact that this is my first year to teach, and everything that my first graders would catch, I would get it too. When I wasn't any better that Monday I went to the Doctor, and once again was put on bed rest. This is the one thing that I had been dreading. I felt so guilty because my eighteen-month old son would have to be virtually without a mommy for three or more months. So, I stayed in bed, read books,

watched television, had an occasional visitor, but most of all, I got to know my baby growing inside of me.

On May 1st we had another big ultrasound and learned that our baby was a girl. My husband and I were so excited. I was told that I could probably start getting out of bed the last week in May, but I really needed to wait until then because my Doctor was taking a family vacation the week before. The week that he was gone, I felt like I might be getting a urinary tract infection, but I wasn't positive, so I decided to wait until my next week's appointment.

On May 26th, my twenty-third birthday, and just beginning my twenty-third week, I began spotting in mid morning. I called the office and talked to a nurse who said it was probably nothing, but to come in for a quick check. The Doctor sent me home with the reassurance that everything was fine, and within ten minutes of walking into my house, my water broke. I knew it immediately and my husband was on the phone within minutes when it happened again. I was rushed by ambulance to the hospital and that is where my pregnancy turned more serious than I ever thought possible.

We had three options. We could deliver immediately and end the pregnancy, wait and see what happens, or to embark on an antibiotic and magnesium treatment that would leave me totally confined to a hospital bed for what we hoped would be eleven more weeks. By doing the last option, we could hopefully keep our baby alive until it was safe for her to be born. We, of course, chose to do all that we could to save our baby. There wasn't even a choice to be made as far as I was concerned; this was our only option. My body was pumped full of the strongest antibiotics that a fetus could handle, in hopes of fighting any infections that may be in my body or more importantly,

in my womb. Then there were the painful doses of magnesium that burned my entire body from the inside, used to keep me from having any contractions. I endured this for my baby. I had to tell myself that it would all be worth it when I could hold my precious baby girl.

My husband stayed at the hospital with me most of the days, and after shuffling our son from friends and relatives, and getting him ready for bed at night, he would return to the hospital and sleep in the chair to be with me. By the third night I begged him to go home and be with our son, because I know how scared and confused he was. He finally agreed and left at around midnight. That night I told my nurse that I felt like I had a bladder infection because I could feel the pressure of my catheter emptying my bladder. She checked my catheter several times and kept assuring me that I was fine and that the antibiotics would kill any viruses. That night I lay in my bed in the labor and delivery ward and listened to five babies being born. As they all cried and the families scurried around to see the new babies, somehow I knew that I would never hear my baby cry. The Doctor had ordered a strip of the fetal heartbeat every hour to be taken since she was so small and could move out of the monitor's reach. 4:00am was the last time I heard my baby's heartbeat.

Actually, I didn't realize that there was anything wrong. At 5:00am the nurses couldn't find the heartbeat, but I figured that she had again just moved out of reach. After several nurses tried unsuccessfully, I felt a peace come over me and I could finally sleep. I had not even shut my eyes the entire night. I awoke by the high-risk Doctor who had taken over my case. A man I might add, who was not as gentle as I would have liked. He entered with an ultrasound, which I expected because we had already talked about checking to see if the amniotic fluid had started

accumulating again, so I still was not alarmed. He turned on the machine and there was silence. As he searched and typed in a bunch of stuff, I knew. My baby whom I had been fighting to save was gone. I told him that we had not heard the heartbeat since 4:00am and he responded that he was aware, and that he had been delivering a baby at another hospital and got there as soon as he could. He ordered a second sonogram from radiology to verify his findings. There was no blood flow in her brain, so yes she was dead.

The Doctor returned and started talking about delivery. By that time my husband had arrived, and I kept telling him that I could not deliver a dead baby. I wanted a C-section, but was told that was not possible if I wanted to ever have children again. The nurse told me to expect labor at least as long as I had with my first child, but it would probably be longer. I immediately asked God for strength and a speedy delivery, and within minutes of the magnesium being turned off, I was in full dilation and ready to deliver. So, without any pain medication and both of my uteruses contracting at different times, I delivered my 1 pound 2 ounce breech baby.

Holding my beautiful baby was one of the most meaningful and memorable experiences of my life, the other being the birth of my son. If I would not have held her and studied her every part, I would not have known how beautiful she is. She is a miniature version of my son with the same nose, mouth, forehead, hands, and feet. We celebrated her life at a service in our church that was attended by many family and friends. Her life, no matter how short means everything to us, and we treasure our every memory of our baby girl.

This poem was written by a friend and given to me after my baby girl's funeral. As I read it on the drive out to the cemetery, I had an answer to my prayers and questions about my baby.

Letter From an Angel

*Jesus; please deliver this message
to the one that I call Mother.
I felt her heart beat through my soul
in a world where I knew no other.*

*Please tell her I'm safe and happy, Lord,
in your warm and loving light.
Please stop her heart from breaking and
hold her through this darkest night.*

*Don't let her spirit feel torment,
let her know I'm in your care.
Make her heart stay strong and full of love
for I'll be dwelling there.*

*Tell her I know how she adored me,
I heard the song that her soul sings.
Just tell her this tiny, precious angel
wasn't quite ready to shed her wings.*

Mommy loves you. You will always be my angel baby.

~Rachel~

My name is Rachel and on August 28,1998, we welcomed our fourth child into the world. At that moment I wanted the world to stand still and time to move backward. Our son was stillborn.

Our third child, born just a year earlier came two months premature due to a placental abruption. Thinking back to her birth, an emergency C-section while traveling on vacation, I thought those days were as bad as they could get. I was so wrong.

I became pregnant only six months after my daughter's birth. We had wanted a fourth child, but this seemed a bit soon. Our family had just been through an extremely stressful time and a huge financial burden. After great thought, we happily decided to proceed. I spoke to my Doctor in great detail about abruptions and the likeliness for it to happen again. I fretted, worried and complained like any pregnant women does. At thirty-seven weeks I went into spontaneous labor.

I was scared thinking back to a year earlier and phoned my Doctor for instructions. The nurse told me to go to the hospital, so I phoned my husband and with our one-year old, nervously went to check in. Upon arrival we did the usual. I peed in a cup, put on the hospital gown, joked and cried nervously. I wanted my husband to make arrangements for the children. My head so was busy. One daughter was at riding lessons, my son was at his grandmothers and the baby was with us. I wanted them to

be together safely and then focus on delivering this new package.

My husband left to gather the children and I hardly noticed the nurse listening at my abdomen for the baby's heartbeat. She spent a lot of time looking and used several different instruments. I never noticed her concern until she phoned for the Doctor. I mean this was thirty-seven weeks and after learning so much about premature babies, I knew things would be fine. I had felt the baby move earlier that morning. I had a prenatal check up the morning previous and heard the baby's heartbeat. I complained about cramping and was reassured. I never considered anything could be seriously wrong.

After my Doctor arrived, things moved very quickly. He went through the same details as the nurse only minutes earlier. He decided to order a sonogram. We grew intensely nervous as we waited for the technician. My husband was still gone making arrangements for the children. Everything seemed to be in slow motion and I was strangely calm. The pace quickened when the technician arrived and voices were raised. I simply did not understand what was becoming obvious. An extreme placental abruption. The unbelievable was actually spoken aloud, and I was alone and among strangers. There is no fetal heartbeat. All of a sudden there were screams, followed by denials and panic. Then the cold reality hit me. The delivery must proceed. The cruelest card, yet dealt for the safety of the mother.

When my husband arrived no one stopped him or prepared him. It was awful. The next three and a half hours went by in a daze. I was given drugs to ease the torture. Sometime during that time my husband handed me a note written by my ten-year old daughter. It read, "Good

luck with the baby and remember it's got to be Austin. Love, Christa.” At 3:50pm our second son slid silently into the world. Austin weighed 6 pounds, 6 ounces and was perfect, almost.

I have spent the time since then searching for answers where there are none, but mostly for some kind of peace. I have a long road ahead. Below is a small piece I wrote shortly after his death.

I will never forget the day Austin came to us. It was also the day he left this world. I continue to relive this day in hopes the outcome will be different, but of course it never will. Our baby was born dead.

You can never imagine the pain, the guilt, or the emptiness. It makes you want to crawl out of your skin. I keep telling myself that he was a perfect soul. I never for one second thought this might happen. I have three beautiful, healthy children. It seems so rare that babies die anymore. Maybe we just don't talk about it. It is just too scary to consider. I am so angry that this happened to our family. Overwhelmed by the sadness that I can't remember his little face and that I didn't hold him longer to ensure that I could. I keep the envelope the hospital gave me under my pillow. It contains his footprints, his hat, a lock of hair and a few photographs. I feel powerful to know that it is there, proof that he was.

So quickly my body has healed and I curse it for doing so. My milk is drying up, the bleeding has stopped, my jeans again fit. It has not been even two weeks. If only you could see my heart. I feel sometimes that this is what will break me, that I don't have the strength. No matter how lucky I am to have a man that deeply loves me and

that we share three living children that need me, it will not be enough.

I look up on the top of the bookshelf at the blue velvet bag that holds all that is left of Austin. The rest is held in my heart and the search to find a place to bury them both continues.

~Rosana~

On July 9, 1998, I did a home pregnancy test and it came back positive. We were so happy because my husband and I had lost our first baby and we were now pregnant again. The next day I went to the hospital for a blood test to confirm the good news. Sure enough the second test came back positive.

In my seventh week I started bleeding and decided to go to the hospital. The Doctor ordered an ultrasound and it showed that the baby was fine. What a relief we felt. After the ultrasound I received a call from the hospital recommending that I should be treated on the fifth floor (OB/Gyn) because I was high risk, due to my asthma and previous miscarriage.

During my entire pregnancy all the Doctors did was measure my belly, listen to my baby's heartbeat and run a few blood tests. I didn't feel as though I was being monitored as a high-risk patient. I felt like any other pregnant women going to a normal visit.

About the fourth or fifth month of my pregnancy, my husband and I requested an ultrasound during one of the appointments to see if the baby was doing okay. The Doctors answer was no. He said that the baby's heartbeat was fine and an ultrasound was not needed. During the first five months of my pregnancy, I visited the emergency room at least once a month and sometimes more because of my asthma. This was the primary reason why my husband and I request the ultrasounds.

By my twenty-eighth week, I began to feel back pain that would move from the back to the front, two or three times an hour. On my next appointment I described to the Doctor what I had been feeling and he said that they were contractions. That terrified me. He did a vaginal exam to make sure that everything was fine, and it was. My cervix was closed.

My next appointment was at thirty weeks. The Doctor did another vaginal exam to make sure my cervix was still closed. I did not receive any other treatment for the early contractions other than to monitor them. He said I should have no more than three per hour and I should begin to schedule my appointments every week.

On February 22, 1999, I began feeling contractions again. The next day I went to my regularly schedule appointment and while waiting I had an asthma attack. The nurse measured my belly, checked the baby's heartbeat, and then sent me to emergency room so that they could treat my asthma. I had wanted to speak to my Doctor about my contractions, but instead they sent me right to the emergency room.

I talked with the emergency room Doctor and I told him that I was having contractions. He did an exam and said that he was sure the baby would come soon, probably in a few days. I was surprised because my due date was not until March 15th and it was February 23rd. I still had three more weeks. When the treatment for my asthma was finished they sent me home and didn't do anything about my contractions or even monitor the baby.

On the 24th of February I was feeling even more contractions, so I called the hospital to find out what I

should do. The nurse said to wait until I had ten or more contractions in one hour, then to come in to the hospital. I explained to her that I had asthma and that I was worried. She said it should be fine and to just wait.

The next day I called the hospital because I was still having contractions and again, was told to wait. I was really worried. I felt I couldn't get any answers from anyone. I didn't know what to do. I decided to just go to bed. Right before I went to sleep I could feel my baby moving around and kicking. That same night around 1:00am I felt a strong contraction with a shortness of breath and pressure in my head. I thought about going to the hospital, but I remembered what the nurse said, so I stayed at home. I finally fell back asleep.

At 6:30am I woke up with a strong contraction. I began to feel them every fifteen minutes. I tried to wait, but they kept getting closer and closer. By 8:00am I was in the hospital with my family. The nurse took me to a room to wait for my Doctor. When he finally came in, he told me that I was in labor and did an ultrasound to see the baby.

After a few minutes she asked me when the last time was I felt my baby move. I said, "The night before." She said, "The baby is not alive, I'm sorry." How can this be, what happened? She couldn't give me an answer. She said it could have been a problem with the placenta or the umbilical cord. We asked her if it was placenta previa, but she said no that the placenta was fine. She again said, "I'm sorry." It was a very hard moment for all of us. I started to cry. I just couldn't believe this was happening.

My Doctor sent me to the labor and delivery floor, and a second Doctor came in and did another ultrasound to confirm that the baby really was dead. The nurse gave me

an IV with Pitocin to induce labor. I felt a lot of pain with the contractions, so the Doctor ordered a dose of Demerol without asking me if I really needed it. He didn't explain the side effects and it made me very sleepy.

At 10:56am my baby was born dead. We had the camera and video camera ready to record that moment when our beautiful baby was born, but nobody was thinking about that. It was a very sad moment for all of us. We all just cried.

Because of the Demerol, I was so tired and sleepy. I fell asleep as soon as I gave birth. When I woke up I felt so mad and angry, because I never had the opportunity to hold my baby. I wanted to kiss her, see her, and touch her. She was gone and I couldn't see her again.

They wanted to discharge me the same day at about 4:00pm, but my husband said, "No." The next day at 8:00am the Doctor came to my room to check on me and then discharged me. She asked me if I had any questions and I said, "Yes, what happened?" She said that she really didn't know. She thought it might be a problem with the placenta, but she couldn't say for sure. The only answer I ever received was that these things just happen.

The hardest moment after the loss was when we had to go home without our baby girl, knowing that I never even had a chance to kiss her goodbye. We named her Maria Paulina.

I pray a lot for a baby. Today, four months later, I am pregnant again. I thank God for this new opportunity and I hope that I will be able to keep this baby that now lives inside of me. All I can do now is wait and pray.

Update:

After Rosana's story of Maria Paulina, she found out that she was pregnant again, as you read at the end of her story. At her first prenatal visit an ultrasound confirmed that she was going to have twins.

When she was four months pregnant with her babies, she decided to move back to her hometown to be cared for by her regular Doctor. After her four-month check-up, which showed active, healthy twins, she started to feel pressure. She went to the restroom only to find something that resembled like a sac.

She rushed to the hospital and found out that indeed it was one of the sacs and that she was four centimeters dilated. They treated her with antibiotics and medication to try to stop the contractions and wanted to do a Cerclage, but it was too late. She was now six centimeters dilated and the babies were on their way. Sandra Ivette and Ana Rosa were born alive, but were too small to survive in the world.

She has again found out that she is expecting and is scheduled to have a

*Cerclage between twelve and fourteen weeks.
She will remain on bed rest for the duration
of her pregnancy.*

~Sara~

My name is Sara. On March 11th of this year, I woke up at 5:00am, having contractions at almost thirty-nine weeks pregnant. I was really excited, it was my second baby. I couldn't wait to meet her, see what she looked like and cuddle with her. When my husband got up to go to work, I got into a bath. I encouraged him to go to work because I had this feeling that it was false labor. I called my midwife and told her what had been happening. I told her I was comfortable and I thought that they might be false contractions, but I wasn't sure.

The baby had moved a lot in the bath that morning, so when the midwife arrived I let her know that the baby was moving a lot. We talked for a while and then she did an internal exam. She said I was about three centimeters dilated and that labor wasn't too far away. She then checked the baby's heartbeat and couldn't find it. She said it must be her machine because she thought she felt the baby move. She said she couldn't leave me, so I phoned my mother-in-law to come look after Caitlin. I then phoned my husband to let him know that the midwife was taking me to the hospital.

We got to the hospital and checked for the heartbeat again. Still no heartbeat. She called in a Doctor with a portable scanner and he confirmed that her heart wasn't beating anymore. I went into instant shock. I couldn't cry or show any emotion. When my husband arrived and found out what was going on, he cried and was so upset.

At that stage we were given a lot of options about what we could do.

I wanted labor induced then and there, but they wanted to do another scan to see if there was a reason. We called our family, then went back in for the scan and induction. My mother came in to stay with me while my husband went to tell my daughter and bring her back to see me. I was so upset for her; she really wanted her sister.

When my husband came back we had a family time together before my mother took Caitlin. My labor with Caitlin was fifty hours, so I was terrified that it would be a long labor again this time. They induced me at 5:00pm with Prostin Gel and thirty minutes later labor was established. I was starting to feel quite uncomfortable. The midwife checked me and said that I was four centimeters dilated and it would probably be another few hours. Soon after, I decided I wanted an epidural. Now we just waited.

I never made it to getting the epidural. I started dilating quickly and before you knew it my daughter was born at 8:20pm. We named her Megan Emma and she weighed 6 pounds, 7 ounces. She was beautiful. We called my mom and dad in with my daughter, so that they could see and hold Megan. We spent four hours with her. She was bathed and dressed in the clothes we had bought to take her home in. The next day we had to leave the hospital without our baby girl, Megan.

After no sleep, at 5:30am it all hit me and I cried for three hours. We met the midwife and the funeral director at the hospital, where we had more time with her before handing her over to the funeral director. We made service plans and went home. On Sunday, after I had written a

long letter, we went to see Megan again. I read it to her and then I just held and hugged her.

We had a beautiful graveside service for her. I read a poem and we released four red balloons, one for each of us. As I write, it has been eight weeks since Megan was born.

After a weeks vacation we're doing better. My sister-in-law had a baby last week, which has brought back some of the grief, especially for my husband who had put a bit away and got on with arrangements. Now it's come back to him, and he talks about Megan everyday. We are trying again to get pregnant. For me it is an important part of healing. To have something of excitement to focus on again, instead of intense sorrow all the time.

Update:

Since Sara's story of Megan, she has delivered a beautiful, healthy baby boy. Please feel free to e-mail Sara at p.raudsepp@netaccess.co.nz.

~Sue~

My name is Sue. When my seventh child was diagnosed during a routine ultrasound at eighteen weeks with Anencephaly and Spina Bifida with Meningomyelocele, my husband and I were in a state of shock. After six healthy children, three of each sex, with birth weights ranging from 8 pounds to 10 pounds 6 ounces, this was the last thing we expected. We had just taken for granted that this baby would be born perfectly healthy like the others.

As I am forty-one years old my only concern was that maybe the baby would have Downs Syndrome, but not that she would be diagnosed as terminal. After recovering from the shock of being told that my baby would die, I asked the radiographer if he could tell me the sex of the baby. Because he assumed I would terminate the pregnancy he said, "Its not particularly relevant." As I was too vulnerable at that stage just being told that my baby would die, I didn't stand up for my rights.

I never considered termination of my pregnancy. To me this was very important. Just before twenty-two weeks I found an Obstetrician who was to care for me for the continuation of my pregnancy. During the ultrasound he performed he advised us that he was fairly confident that I was carrying a girl. From that night on she was named Annalise Maria. I never felt her move until almost twenty-three weeks, which was really hard because even though I knew she would die, it was almost as if I was carrying a dead baby already. So, when she finally moved it was a

miracle and I loved every movement. It was never like the movements of her brothers and sisters, so I never had any doubts that the Doctors were wrong.

My Obstetrician had told us that he was 99% sure that she would be stillborn and that I had a 40 to 60 percent chance of going full term or over. Our family was very open about what was happening during my pregnancy, so no one was surprised when she died. We received a lot of prayer support from our friends, relatives and our church, which gave us a lot of strength. Only a few people found it hard to understand that I wanted to continue the pregnancy, but knowing that God was going to take her from me anyway, I didn't want one day less carrying her than He would give me.

Every day I carried her brought her death one-day closer and I must say this was really the hardest part of carrying her. I could have done nothing less than give her life while God allowed it. I put on a fair amount of weight, but it was nearly all amniotic fluid. On my last visit before she died, I was twenty-seven weeks. She was already measuring thirty-four weeks, so the problem of Polyhydramnios was probably starting. I found the Internet so supportive to me. The readings of other parents who had been through what I was now going through comforted me greatly and I didn't feel quite so alone. Plus looking at pictures of Anencephalic babies prepared me for the worst, so I wasn't shocked, just sad, when I finally had Annalise.

This is the only reason I'm writing of my experience, in the hope that it will be of support to other parents. By knowing in advance that my baby was going to die, it gave me time to prepare psychologically as well as look into funeral directors, cemetery plots, etc., so this didn't need to be done when I was most vulnerable after her birth.

Annalise died in utero when I was twenty-seven weeks and three days. After not feeling her move for a day, I went to my Doctor to be checked with a fetal monitor. He confirmed what I knew in my heart to be true.

When he asked what I wanted to do, I said to have a scan to confirm it 100%, plus find out what position she was lying in (she was transverse) and then to be induced. I wanted to be induced to get Annalise out before her body deteriorated from being dead. We wanted to grieve her as our little girl, not a mess.

That was how we proceeded. Gel was inserted at 4:30pm and a second dose at 5:00am on the following day. Annalise was born at 6.50am. She had turned during labor and was born headfirst. She weighed 560grams, which is 1 pound, 4 ounces and was 10 inches long. I was very lucky because I didn't experience any afterbirth pains and my milk didn't come in, whereas before, I'd always needed Ponstan and Panadine for the pains, plus I had successfully fed the other children, one even up to seventeen months.

We took Annalise home six hours after delivery. This worked extremely well for my family, my children's ages' range from eighteen years down to twenty-two months. To me this seemed a natural progression from having carried Annalise for six and a half months. She was our baby and we loved her. Why should she have been left at the hospital or in a funeral home until her funeral? My children or any visitors could see her at anytime, but people were never forced to see her. Plus she wasn't a freak to be hidden away. Dressed up in her little dress and bonnet she looked like just a premature baby with all her tiny fingers and toes.

Our children were never scared of her and would go in and kiss her or touch her. We took lots of photos and videotape, which we will always treasure. Everyone is smiling in them all. We wanted happy memories of her, not sad ones. We didn't handle her too much, but this was only because of all the body fluids associated with the open Spina Bifida. Three days after her death we had a Catholic Mass where over one hundred friends and relatives attended. This was the final part of the grieving process. She is buried in a cemetery with lots of other little babies and we can put little toys, windmills, etc. on her grave, and it looks really lovely.

Because of my strong faith I truly believe I will see Annalise again after I die and that she will be made perfect after the Resurrection because she was so pure and innocent. I believe my faith helped me to cope better with her eventual death. My husband and children were all supportive of my decision to continue the pregnancy even after we found out what was wrong with Annalise, but to me this was never in question. Plus, I felt a termination would have been a terrible example to my children. It would have said to them that if there'd been something wrong with them I would have terminated them as well.

Everyone grieves when they lose a baby or child, but at least there was no guilt on my behalf, as I hadn't contributed to her death. I don't smoke or drink, and I wasn't on any medications, so I'd done nothing to cause her harm. As my Obstetrician said, "It was an act of God." Even though we lost her, we all say that we would rather have had Annalise to love and hold than to never have had her or never have conceived her. Every life comes from God and when the time is right God will take it away. He knew my time with Annalise was enough at twenty-seven weeks. My faith has increased throughout this experience

and I thank God for the opportunity to carry and give birth to little Annalise, our angel in heaven.

After Annalise, I had a miscarriage on the 26th of March. I was eleven weeks and three days pregnant. This was my first miscarriage. My Obstetrician had warned my husband and I that we had a higher chance of a miscarriage than having another Anencephalic baby. Because I'd had the other six pregnancies hassle free and then Annalise, I honestly didn't think I would miscarry.

I hadn't broadcast the fact that I was pregnant this time because it was always in the back of my mind that I could miscarry. I had only told my children at ten weeks when I was starting to feel confident, even though I had done a home pregnancy test at thirty-one days. So, at least I got to enjoy the pregnancy for a little while. This pregnancy and Annalise's pregnancy are the only times I have felt sick. I was never sick except for these two pregnancies. I felt sick day and night. It was definitely not normal. This was different than the other six pregnancies. Again I thought to myself, maybe my body knows something is going on.

I started to bleed slightly the day before I got to eleven weeks. Then the next day I started bleeding like my periods, not too heavy, but red and enough to have me concerned. I booked to have an ultrasound on that Wednesday afternoon just to see if there was a heartbeat, but the night before when I stood up from tea, I felt a small sensation as if my water broke. This is the only way I can describe what happened. It wasn't a gush, but more the sensation of which I have become quite accustomed. Although nothing obvious had occurred, I cancelled the ultrasound because I thought I was in the process of miscarrying and I couldn't handle another radiographer

telling me this baby was gone too, especially after Annalise's diagnosis.

The bleeding continued with no pain. Then late on the afternoon of May 26th, I passed a few clots, which I presumed was my baby. But unbeknown to me I hadn't really started to miscarry. I started bleeding very heavily that night at 7:00pm as I was just about to go out for dinner with my girlfriends. Well, I bled so much I ended up at the emergency room at 8:00pm. I ended up having an injection to slow the bleeding or else I was going to have to have a D&C. They wouldn't do an ultrasound. I ended up passing my baby at 11:10pm. I never had pain, but emotionally I was an absolute wreck. It was thirty-two weeks to the day since I had lost my Annalise. This miscarriage was much more traumatic physically than the pain of labor and the blood loss after normal childbirth.

My blood count went from the normal of 131 down to 97. It was going back up last week when I had another test, but I still have to stay on iron tablets for another month.

I feel I had just taken each pregnancy for granted, even up to having a normal healthy baby being put in my arms. I would love nothing more than to hold my own live baby in my arms again. I think I would just cry and cry with gladness. Even after having an Anencephalic baby in no way puts me off trying for another baby. I knew that if the same thing happened again, I would do nothing different and that I could have coped. But having this miscarriage has scared me much more against another pregnancy, because I'm more worried that if the blood hadn't clotted I could have bled to death and left my other children motherless. My Doctor said this doesn't predispose me to another miscarriage or that I would hemorrhage again. My

age of forty-two is the biggest thing against me and that cannot be changed.

~Chapter Six~

*Loss of a Child
After Birth*

~Dana~

My name is Dana. I had my first daughter in March of 1995 and she was perfect. She was born on my due date and weighed 7 pounds. I had to have a Cerclage at about five months because I had an Incompetent Cervix, but everything went great.

In December of 1995, my husband and I decided to start trying for another baby. We tried and tried but nothing was happening. I had given up. Finally, I found out I was pregnant in March of 1997. We were so happy to find out that we were going to have another baby. Everything was fine for a while. I went and had an ultrasound done at three months to get ready for the Cerclage.

At four months, I went in to have the Cerclage done and also had my Rh Gham shot for my blood type, which is A-. Everything was going fine until two weeks later, when I started to bleed. I went to the Doctor and found out that I had Placenta Previa. He told me not to worry too much because it was just a marginal one. So, I went home to wait. The weeks started to go by and the bleeding got worse and worse. I spent my time in and out of the hospital.

When I was twenty-four weeks pregnant, I woke up and felt myself bleeding, so I went to the bathroom. Blood was everywhere. It was all down my legs and all over the bathroom floor. I started screaming. My husband woke up and ran into the bathroom. He saw what was going on and called the emergency room to let them know that we were

on our way. I remember thinking; “We have lost our baby.” I had a pad on and I was scared to pull it off because it was stuck to me. I was afraid if I took it off that our baby would just fall out.

I finally took it off and she didn’t fall out. I washed my legs and feet off, and got in the truck to go to the emergency room. The Doctors ran out to meet us with a wheelchair and took me inside. They took me up to the forth floor to labor and delivery and put me on a monitor. They said that the baby was fine, but I was filling those big maternity pads with blood about every fifteen minutes. Finally, they did an ultrasound to see how much the baby weighed. It showed that she weighed about two pounds. They gave me a shot of steroids and said that they were going to try to hold off the delivery until the next day.

About thirty minutes later they decided to do an emergency C-section. The Doctors from the neonatal unit told us that my baby had about a 50% chance of making it because the steroids did not have time to take effect. Several more Doctors came in and told me that it was possible that they would need to do an emergency Hysterectomy, depending on how things went. I was scared to death. I had to sign papers saying that I was aware that I might not even make it through the delivery. I was crying to my husband thinking I would never get to see my baby. I was going into this not knowing how I would come out, or even if I would come out. Soon after, they wheeled me off and put me to sleep.

Later when I woke up they brought the baby in to me. She was in a warmer, all closed in and she was on a respirator along with oxygen. She was so tiny. She weighed 2 pounds 3 1/2 ounces. Luckily, I did not have to have the Hysterectomy, but I did have to have three blood

transfusions. They wheeled her off after just a few minutes and I was taken back to my room where they came in and told me that she was doing okay. She was crying when she was born and that was not ever expected. I then had a glimmer of hope that my baby would survive.

Later that evening they allowed my husband to wheel me over to see her. I felt so bad seeing her in the warmer and on the ventilator. The next morning I received a call from the Doctor saying that they had to change the ventilator. She was now being put on a jet ventilator and was getting 390 breaths per minute. I started crying again. The next day they sent me home and it was the hardest thing I've ever had to do. I didn't want to leave without my baby.

She finally got off of the ventilator after six days, but was still on oxygen. At least she was breathing on her own. She started gaining weight and after being in NICU for a month and a half, she finally was able to come home. She was so perfect and had a head full of hair. She was home for one month before she got off of the oxygen.

One week later, on Christmas day she got sick. At this time she weighed about six pounds. She started to turn blue, so we rushed her to the emergency room. We were out of town visiting our family at the time, two hours away from home. The hospital we took her to rushed her back to the hospital where we lived at the time. She went into the emergency room and was there all night. We arrived in the ambulance at about 8:00pm. She was put on more oxygen and was eventually put back on a ventilator. She was not doing well at all.

Finally, at about 3:00am they got her up to the PICU, where she stayed for a month. At times we were told that

she was not going to make it and to be prepared for the worst, but she kept amazing the Doctors. She seemed to get better every time they would tell us that. Her left lung had collapsed at one time and she even overcame that. She was a miracle baby. The Doctors finally told us that she was getting better and they were able to turn her ventilator down to where she was breathing over it. Her oxygen was turned down real low and she was doing better. They were able to take her off of all of the medication she was on and start feeding her through a tube. She was also taken off of the paralyzing medicine she was on, so that she could open her eyes and look at us again. She was going to be coming home before to long and we were so happy.

But our nightmare was really just beginning. On January 23rd, we received a phone call at about 6:00am and were told to come to the hospital right away. They were doing CPR on our baby girl. When we arrived, we watched for another thirty minutes as they pumped her chest and breathed for her. A Doctor looked up and I could see in his eyes that they could do no more. Our baby girl was gone.

It has been over a year and a half now, but we think about her every day and we know that she is in heaven. There is not a day that goes by that we do not think about our little angel. We still love her very much and always will. We decided to try for another baby, and the Doctor said that it would not be very likely to have those problems again.

Now we are dealing with infertility. It is really hard to go through all that we have been through, but we are both hoping that we will have another baby someday. This is the only thing that keeps us going.

~Kim~

My name is Kim. My husband and I knew we wanted to have four children. Our first daughter was now a year old and my husband had a good steady job. We just bought our first home on an acre of land, five miles out of Roosevelt, Utah. We felt the time was right to have another baby.

Another little girl would have been loved very much, but in our hearts we were actually hoping for a boy. God had revealed to me in a dream that I would have a son. My husband was thrilled at the very thought of having a son and my daughter talked constantly about having a little brother.

Our plans did not include the problems of infertility. We had assumed I would become pregnant right away, but after a year of trying I became frustrated, crying every month after learning I still was not pregnant. My husband had always been there to comfort me and reassure me that he still loved me "baby or no baby", but I knew how much it meant to us both to have another child.

Two years after setting our plans, the long awaited day finally came. I was pregnant. Everyone we knew was ecstatic. My husband and I were overjoyed. Nothing could have made us happier. My daughter was now three years old and could finally begin to include the baby in her plans. She had selected a few toys, some of her own favorites, to share with the baby. Our own excitement would build as she announced things like, "The baby can sleep in my bed and the baby can ride my bike." Being able to finally work

on plans for the nursery helped the days go by faster and the old baby clothes were taken from storage to be mended and cleaned.

In the seventh month of my pregnancy I went to the Doctor, as I did every month. I had always looked forward to my appointments to be sure the baby was doing well. I was scheduled for an ultrasound that day and I was excited to get a glimpse of my baby.

While I lay on the table the radiologist began to observe the baby, checking for all his little baby parts and to see if he was growing well. As he proceeded with the test he began to hesitate. Something was wrong. He had found an absence of amniotic fluid around the baby and my heart crushed as he searched again and again for the baby's kidneys. There were none.

My husband drove me to Salt Lake City immediately. My daughter stayed at her grandmother's house, not knowing what was wrong with her baby brother. Upon arrival to the Medical Center, I felt assured that if anything could possibly be done, it could be done there. I was admitted at once and taken to the maternity ward. The nurses seemed to know we were coming. They appeared to be nervous around me and I could feel their tension. I sensed that they knew more than I had been told.

After repeated ultrasounds and other tests, we were told the words we hoped we would never hear. Our baby was going to die. He was given a five-percent chance of survival. I wanted to collapse. I became totally immobilized. I just knew my heart had shattered and I was too weak to pick up the pieces. I began to analyze my life for anything I had done wrong that could have caused this

to happen. The questions became repetitive. Why me?
Why me?

Our choices were to carry him to full term, giving him his five- percent chance of survival, or to induce labor right then. To us there was only one choice. We knew we had to give him a chance.

In the month ahead, we were still in a state of shock. My husband and I prayed constantly. We wanted to mourn, but felt it would cause us to lose hope. We were not going to give up and just accept the obvious.

Then on the last day of May, eight months into the pregnancy I delivered a four pound, eleven ounce baby boy. He was taken immediately to intensive care where they proceeded to resuscitate him. My husband was allowed to visit him shortly after his birth while I was taken to the recovery room to await his diagnosis.

Then the news came. My son was born with Potter's Syndrome, a rare disease that causes the kidneys to not develop. He was not going to survive. I was transported to intensive care on a stretcher to say hello and good-bye to my son. He was beautiful, he looked normal, and I wanted to pick him up and take him home. He looked like his father and we named him Jody after him.

Jody was now being kept alive by machines, only to allow my husband and I more time with him. He had already begun to suffer and we were soon asked for our permission to disconnect the machines. We were told that once his life support was discontinued he would die within moments. We were given a private room and our baby's respirator was removed. We held him in our arms and rocked him. We begged and pleaded with God to let him

survive. My husband and I were willing to sacrifice our own life to let this little one live.

For two hours my son gasped for breath. He tried to cry, but couldn't because the respirator had damaged his throat. I had never felt more helpless in my life. It felt as though my insides were ripped to shreds as I watched my son take his last breath. The pain is still felt when I think of my beautiful son.

All we have left are pictures, a lock of his hair, and the little T-shirt he wore that day. But I learned something through this difficult time, that I wasn't angry with God because of my son's death, but thankful for the time he had given us together. Most of all I was especially proud to be Jody's Mother. Jody was too good for this old world and he is much better off where he is.

Two years after I buried my son Jody, I gave birth to boy/girl twins. God knew I would never forget my first son, but he found a way to ease my pain.

Letter to other Mother's

On the days that I become overwhelmed in grief it has helped me to remember that I am still a good Mother, even though my little bundle of joy is not living here on earth. I gave my child more love than I ever knew I could give. I held him in my arms only to feel his spirit returned to the One who gave him life. I trusted in My Lord to take him into His care because I knew that only He could give him paradise.

I was willing to give my own life in exchange for his. I was the only Mother that God had selected for my son. I carried him in my womb knowing miracles of life are not guaranteed. I took that chance. I mourned uncontrollably for the loss of my precious baby. I gave him a name. I buried his little body in the ground. I have pushed on in life with that empty space still in my heart. I keep his memory alive by continuing to remind others that he was here but now he is gone. I am still proud that I conceived him, gave birth to him and he was so beautiful. I said hello and goodbye to him and told him how sorry I was to let him go. I will always cherish him.

Everything I did for my son makes me a good Mother. I did not fail. Other Mothers too, should hold their heads high. Stay proud and remember you are the best mom there is.

~Mindy~

My Doctor told me in November of 1997 that I had polycystic ovaries and that we probably should begin trying to conceive as soon as possible. We needed to go on fertility treatment. When I finally got pregnant it was one of the happiest days of my life. Within a few weeks I began spotting and one day I sneezed and felt a gush of blood. I was told that I had broken a blood vessel and not to worry.

My pregnancy was fine after that, except that I started getting really big fast. When I had my first ultrasound, I was told that my amniotic fluid was high. The Doctor again said not to worry, since the ultrasound technician was able to find my baby's stomach. He scheduled me for another ultrasound at my next visit.

Well, I didn't make it to that visit. The day before my appointment I began contracting very heavily. I had dilated to three centimeters, with a paper-thin cervix. At that time I was only twenty-five weeks. The excess fluid had gotten so high that my body thought that I was full term and started to put me into labor. I had an amniotic fluid drain, and was put on bed-rest for the remainder of my pregnancy.

After many ultrasounds the Doctors figured that the baby, at worst, did not have a connection between his esophagus and his stomach. However, they wouldn't know for sure if that was the problem until he was born. I talked to a baby surgeon and he assured me that an operation could be done on the baby when he was born and he would

be fine. They do those operations all the time. I was in and out of the hospital for the next ten weeks. In that time I had six amniotic fluid drains. When I was thirty-five weeks pregnant they did a test on the baby's lungs and found that they were very immature. I was told that because I had too much fluid, the test was probably diluted.

While I was in the hospital on December 24, 1998, my water broke. I was thirty-five and a half weeks pregnant. The Doctors reassured me that my baby had an excellent chance of survival, especially since I had made it this far. He was born on Christmas morning. To the Doctor's surprise and mine, he had no connection to his lungs, just an empty pocket some where in his throat. They don't have the technology to operate on a baby that cannot breathe. So, the reason his lung study was so low was because he was not swallowing any fluid and they were not able to develop.

He was born alive since his heart was beating, but he never took a breath. I never even got to hear him cry. I was told that this is one of the rarest birth defects and that she had only seen two like this in her ten-year career. It's funny that it does not feel so rare when it happens to you. Mommy misses you and you will always be my Christmas angel.

~Sarah~

I had my first child when I was only sixteen years old. I was so happy to have her. Both her father and I wanted a baby. She was tiny when she was born. She was 5 pounds, 8 ounces at full term. My pregnancy went smoothly except that I had trouble gaining weight. She was born in June of 1995. She grew fast and was a joy to take care of. She was such a happy baby.

Just before her first birthday her dad and I got married and within a month I was pregnant again. We wanted another baby just like Juliet as soon as possible. Everything was fine for weeks until one night I started spotting. I was very worried, but I didn't do anything at first. I had heard that it was normal for some women to spot during pregnancy. The next morning it was worse, so I went to the hospital. The emergency room Doctor gave me a check up and said that my cervix was still closed, so I had a 50% chance of miscarrying. It was a Sunday and they couldn't get a technician in, so I had to come back the next day for the ultrasound.

I went home and cried. My husband Frank was out of town so I called him and told him what was going on. He was so worried. My mom took me back to the hospital the next morning. They did the ultrasound and said that I couldn't possibly be eight weeks pregnant because they could barely see anything there. The technician wouldn't tell me anything. She said it was the Doctors job. When I finally got to see the Doctor, he told me that my baby was dead.

It hurt so badly. I had to stay and have a D&C that evening. I don't remember much other than waking up in the recovery room, crying so hard that I couldn't speak. It was a horrible experience. I was so depressed for so long and I was terrified to try again. But we did about a year later. We wanted Juliet to have a sibling and we didn't want them to be too far apart.

I was pregnant again almost immediately. I was excited, but also very scared. I didn't want to lose this baby. I made it almost eight weeks before I lost it. I was bleeding and cramping terribly. My Doctor told me after the D&C that if we still wanted to try that we should start right away because sometimes after the uterus is cleaned out the embryo could attach itself to the wall easier. We talked a lot about it and finally decided to try again right away. We weren't supposed to have intercourse for three weeks so that my cervix would heal. Well, we gave in to passion once after only two weeks.

Well it turned out I was late. I took a pregnancy test and sure enough, it was positive. This time everything went great. When I was thirty weeks I found out we were having another girl. Our sweet Baby Katelin was born in March 1998. Juliet was so excited to be a big sister. I was so surprised she wasn't jealous with Katelin. She loved to sing to her. Katelin was a healthy newborn and she made our family complete. I don't think I had ever been as happy as I was when I gave birth to her.

It was the same as any other night, I nursed her to sleep because she was fussy and didn't want to take the bottle. She didn't feel like sleeping in her cradle, so about 11:30pm I took her to bed with me. She only nursed for about ten minutes and fell right asleep right away. Frank came to bed

around midnight and we all slept right through until 5:00am.

Franks alarm went off, but I never even hear it. He had trained himself to shut it off in like two seconds so that it didn't wake up Katelin. He got up, woke up his uncle who was sleeping on the couch, and then he came back to bed. Katelin was in between us and he slipped right back in without waking her up. He couldn't see her because the sun wasn't up yet. He then went back to sleep, but not real soundly.

He was maybe half awake, when the sun came up. He looked over at her. She was sleeping on her back, as always, and her face was turned away from him. He said she just didn't look right, so he sat up to look at her and that's when I woke up. He was screaming, "Sarah, what's wrong with her?" I just pushed myself up real quick and looked. I was still half-asleep and I swear I was about to say, "Nothings wrong with her."

I then touched her arm and gently pushed at the same time. Only her arm should have moved. She should have jumped a little from the movement and opened her eyes and then I could have said, "Nothings wrong with her." But instead her whole body moved from that little push and she didn't wake up. Frank ran to the door and switched on the bedroom light. I was in the process of grabbing her to pick her up and then I saw the bruising on the side of her face, where the blood had pooled. I just screamed.

I picked her up and Frank started screaming "no" and ran out of the room yelling for the phone. I went into shock holding her. She was so stiff I had to force her arm down at her side and foam was coming out of her mouth. I just wanted it to be a dream. Please, let it be a dream. I knew it

wasn't. I knew she'd been gone for a while and I didn't even try to give her CPR. I knew it was too late. I wanted the whole world to go away so that I could hold my baby.

Frank came running into the room telling the 911 dispatcher that his baby wasn't breathing. The 911 dispatcher wanted him to do CPR. He was asking me to give her to him to let him try and I was telling him "no" that it was too late. The dispatcher kept telling him to try anyway. I grabbed the phone and told the guy to listen. It was too late. She was already so stiff and cold. The blood had pooled on the side where she had been laying. I just wanted to hold her. Frank picked up the phone and the 911 dispatcher was still telling him to try CPR. He asked me to please let him try. I laid her back down on the bed and he tried to get her mouth open but it wouldn't. He got angry and ran out of the room. I just picked her up held her again.

Frank came back in and helped me wrap her in a blanket. We then went out in the living room to wait for the ambulance to get there. Juliet slept through all of it. I'm so glad. Frank's uncle was outside waiting for the ambulance, so that Frank and I could be alone with her. I sang to her, "You are my sunshine" and "When the children cry". She was just so cold. I couldn't warm her up no matter what I did. I got up and sat down and got up and sat down. I couldn't believe this was happening. I was living my worst nightmare. The paramedic arrived and sat down beside me. He checked her pulse, shook his head and said he was sorry.

Frank went in the kitchen and called my parents. Afterward, I asked him if he wanted to hold her and he did for about a minute. He was crying so hard that he couldn't talk. I asked the paramedic to take her out to the

ambulance before my parents got there. I didn't want them to see her unless they prepared themselves first. It was just a horrible morning. The Medical Examiner got there shortly after my parents and took my parents to see her. She looked Katelin over and told us there would be an autopsy, but she was pretty sure it was Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS). Katelin was fine, she did have the sniffles a few days before, but she was getting over that.

I just can't believe it really happened. I can't believe I had to plan a funeral for my baby. I hated it, I felt so detached. I didn't cry much for days. I just sat in shock and tried to memorize everything about her. As I held her the next day at the funeral home, she wasn't the same. She was swollen and she had make-up on. It just didn't seem like my little girl. I looked under her bonnet and saw the huge cut on her head from the autopsy, and then I couldn't stop imagining what the rest of her body looked like.

We picked out a beautiful pink and white lace casket for her and I laid her in it myself. I tucked her in, gave her a kiss, and put her little baby doll in with her. We bought her a tiny gold cross and had her buried in it. At the viewing other people put some stuff in like letters and a rosary. Juliet put a little pink rose in with her. At the funeral we played "Tears in Heaven" and "When the children cry." It was a nice service, except the priest called her Kathy. I was so mad about that I corrected him right away. I felt like adding, you idiot, to the end. I wrote her eulogy and I read it, plus I read her a letter that I wrote to her when I was pregnant with her. The funeral home that we dealt with could not have been better. They bent over backward to accommodate everything we wanted. Especially, our funeral director, who cried at her funeral. That meant a lot to me.

I miss her so much. I just want to relive those four months again. I know one thing for sure; I'll never take a new baby for granted. I don't know how long it will take Frank and I to go on with our lives. It was definitely the worst thing I've ever been through. Losing the other babies at eight weeks can't possibly compare. It's been eight months since she died and I cry for her often. I miss her and don't think the hurt I feel will ever go away. I just want to go to heaven and see her again.

I had a positive pregnancy test two weeks ago. I'm seven weeks pregnant now and I have my fingers crossed. Pray for my Juliet. She really wants to be a big sister again. I really want to hold another baby in my arms.

Update:

Recently I received an update from Sarah with a wonderful ending to her story. This is what she wrote:

“It has been twenty-two months and three weeks since my sweet baby Katie went to heaven. I miss her very much still, but the pain is not as sharp. I don't cry much anymore, but I have family to thank for that. Especially one very special little boy named Adam. Katelin now has a baby brother. He was born nearly fifteen months after Katelin died. The best thing we did was to open our hearts to another child. Adam did not and never can take the place of Katelin, but he sure did fill my aching arms.”

“From the moment we found out he was on his way, we started looking to the future again. We were no longer fixated on rewinding. We wanted to fast forward. I was

so scared when he was inside of me. I thought I would lose him too, but I didn't and he arrived safe and sound. He just turned eight months and I still fear Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) will take him from me. I'm going to enjoy him every day that I have him, and every day he wakes up smiling is one more day I'm thankful for."

"Katelin will always mean so much to me. I wish she were here to give her little brother kisses, and to play with her big sister. It is so hard missing someone that you love so very much, but we are still healing."

Sarah created a beautiful web site to remember Katelin. Please feel free to visit:

www.geocities.com/amanda_bolen/Katelinswelcome.html?948259622270