

Miscarriage and Infertility.
What Sue & Darren experienced.
June 2008.

Our Miscarriage.

On the Sunday 30th January 2005, we had our miscarriage. The memory of this event is still very real to us both. That day remains, the worst day of our lives ever and very big emotional challenge.

This was our first pregnancy after trying for 2-years. We were four weeks. We had the pregnancy confirmed one week before our miscarriage. We had been spot bleeding for 3 days, before our miscarriage. We visited our doctor twice; there was nothing our doctor could do to stop the spot bleeding. We felt alone and helpless at this point in time.

Heavy bleeding started at 7.50am on that Sunday. We knew we were having a miscarriage.

Driving very quickly, we arrived at the emergency department of Westmead Hospital at 8.15am. We left the hospital at 5.45pm, without seeing a gynaecologist. The care given to us by the staff of the emergency department was excellent; and given with compassion and concern for our emotional well-being.

We were then referred to the Early Pregnancy Assessment Clinic (EPAC) at Westmead Hospital. The people there were fantastic. They were understanding of our situation and helped us understand what we were experiencing. EPAC ensured that there were no medical complications and helped us understand what would happen over the next few days. This was the first time we felt that we had other person who understood what we were experiencing. EPAC helped us through the time immediately after our miscarriage. We visited EPAC 3 time over the next 3 days.

The Next Two Weeks.

We both took two weeks off work, so we could come to terms with what happened and be together. We never thought that we would be in the situation that we found ourselves; it was something we didn't even consider would happen to us.

We were experiencing a sense of loss that neither of us thought was possible. We had moved from the tremendous joy of being pregnant to a great sadness and aching emptiness in the blink of an eye. We were now facing the emotional part of our miscarriage; this would be the hardest part to handle.

Sue's emotional collapse came after we knew there were no major medical problems. This was three days after our miscarriage. Darren's emotional collapse came four days after our miscarriage, when all our family and friends had been phoned and appointments for ultra-sound and visits to the gynaecologist had been cancelled. These phone calls were difficult make.

We found that we wanted to be with each. This came from a sense that no one else understood our situation. We accepted phone calls but did not want visitors. We then made a decision that after two weeks, we would re-start our life. And that is what we did.

We made that decision because at some point in time, our life had to start again. Were we ready to re-start our life? We think we were. We had a choice; we could allow our miscarriage to send us into depression or we could move forward. We chose to move forward because that was the only choice we really had.

As we started to see our family and friends what became obvious was that they did not know what to say us. We felt that no one understood what was happening to us; this made us feel very alone.

What we didn't want to hear was, "you can try again". While that is true, it was not helpful. The worst incident of this was with one of our neighbours. We meet at the local shopping centre. After we said what had happened, our neighbour said, "that's nothing to worry about, I had one". The words themselves were the hurtful enough, the tone and attitude that came with the words, communicated to us that our miscarriage wasn't any thing to be upset about.

We both understand that there was probably something wrong with our little one and that was the medical reason for our miscarriage. But being told that by our other people did not help our emotional state. The feeling that no one else really understood what was happening to us drew us very close together. Our miscarriage produced a closeness that we would not have felt otherwise.

What has happened since our miscarriage to now?

Probably the first question would be, are we over our miscarriage? The answer to that would be; we still have emotional moments. We will go for weeks without thinking about our miscarriage. Then something will happen to bring the memories back, as though our miscarriage happened yesterday. But, with the passing of time, these moments happen less frequently.

We find that things like family gatherings, such as mother's day and father's day only serve to remind us what we lost. We still avoid mother's day and father's day.

The 24th September and Christmas are particular sad times for us. 24th September was the day our little one was due. It's likely that this will be a sad day for us, for some time to come. Christmas 2005 was particularly difficult. Darren's sister and her husband; brother and his wife both had their little one. Seeing our little niece and nephew at Christmas has been among the most emotionally difficult experiences since our miscarriage. Christmas only served to remind us of how much we lost.

At the end of January 2006, we were showing all the signs of being pregnant again. It would appear that we had second miscarriage at this time. This was particularly distressing, as it happened almost to the day of our first miscarriage. It appeared to be a cruel joke; un-fortunately, it was very real.

So how are we today? We still have emotional moments, we still experience sadness. Our miscarriage is a significant life-changing event, something that we will never forget. And we don't want to forget our miscarriage either.

Our miscarriage changed us permanently. Things that were important before our miscarriage are now not important. What people think of us is now less important.

Our relationship with each other has become very precious. We are both more serious people, we laugh less. It remains to be seen if this is a good thing or not.

Infertility?

Like our miscarriage, infertility was not something that we thought would happen to us. Many people told us, that after our miscarriage we would fall pregnant very quickly. We didn't. We were faced with another emotional challenge.

The hard work and emotion of waiting to see if had fallen pregnant each month, was followed by the disappointment of realising that we hadn't, this was frustrating and emotionally exhausting. As each month passed without falling pregnant, the pressure on us increased making the frustration and emotional exhaustion worse.

Having completed the degrading medical tests, the results showed that there was no particular medical reason for our infertility. This was the result we expected. We would have preferred that there was a medical problem that could have been treated; then we would have been able to have our own little one.

Seeing other pregnant couples or couples with toddlers was a constant reminder that we were infertile. At times we would be envious.

Our life became totally focused on falling pregnant.

The burden of sex.

Sex became something we did to fall pregnant, losing any joy or pleasure. As time passed and we didn't fall pregnant, the pressure to have sex increased to the point where sex became something we both dreaded.

This had the effect of causing Darren to have erection problems. This meant we were not able to have sex as often as was suggested we should at the time of ovulation. This added more pressure to an already emotionally stressful situation by reducing our chances of falling pregnant.

As the stress increased the worse the erection problems became. The cycle of disappointing sex meaning a reduced chance of falling pregnant added to the emotional strain on us both.

What about IVF?

Doctors told us that IVF was our only hope of having a little one. After investigating IVF we chose not to enter the programme.

Why did we make that choice?

IVF did not guarantee that we would have a successful pregnancy or even conceive. The treatment is invasive and degrading.

We believe that to enter the IVF programme would have removed responsibility for creating new life from God and given that responsibility to us. This is something we were not prepared to do.

We also believe that life begins at the point of conception, that means to dispose of un-used fertilised eggs that were created by the IVF treated, would have been taking a life. We were not prepared to do this.

There was concern for Sue's emotional health should IVF not work for us. This was a very important consideration in making our choices.

We accept that by not entering the IVF programme we may never have a little one.

We made choices in relation to IVF after careful consideration. The choice we made to not enter the IVF programme was based on what we believe was right for us. We also understand why people do choose to enter programme.

We've shared our experience with IVF because it is part of what we have experienced and this is not an attempt to comment on the right or wrong of the IVF programme. We made our choice because we believed it is the right choice for us.

Disappointment with God?

We do not believe that God made our miscarriage and infertility happened. We do not believe that God is punishing us for something that we might have done.

Our miscarriage and infertility happened because in this world bad things happen without there being any valid reason.

Did our miscarriage and infertility force us to ask God questions? Yes, it did and still does.
Did we ask God why we had our miscarriage and are infertile? Yes and sometime still do.

The major question in our mind is why didn't God intervene to prevent our miscarriage? Or, why didn't God intervene to fix what is causing us to be infertile? These questions caused us to experience great emotional tension. This happened because we know that God is very powerful and was able prevent our miscarriage or to fix our infertility; but chose not intervene on our behalf.

We have both been Christians for 30-years. Yet, there have been times when we have wanted to scream at God. We felt that God was treating us un-fairly and that we deserved better. We wanted to know why God was doing this to us? We wanted to know why God was not looking after our interests? We became angry and frustrated with God.

We wanted to know why God wasn't doing what we wanted; why wasn't God helping us? We discovered that we were not finding answers, because we were asking the wrong question.

We found that the right question to ask is; what is God's purpose in allowing us to experience our miscarriage and infertility?

Finding answer to questions.

Finding the answer to the questions about disappointment with God has taken 3-years.

We still don't know why God didn't choose to prevent our miscarriage or to fix our infertility. But, we don't ask God the questions out of anger and frustration anymore. We now ask the questions wanting to know what is God's purpose in allowing us to experience our miscarriage and infertility?

We needed to have an attitude change and calm down before we could even consider letting go of our anger and frustration. Our attitude changed when we stopped demanding that God do what we wanted and we started to ask God to show us what He wanted us to learn. And, after we had learnt the lessons, we asked God to show us what we should do with what we learnt.

We are still learning the lessons and waiting for God show us what to do with what we are learning.

What about the future?

We have come to terms with the reality that we probably won't have a little one. It has taken us 3-years to come the point where we no longer feel an aching emotional emptiness when we see toddlers in the street or a pregnant woman. However, being around family and friends with little ones stirs emotions.

In April of 2008, we visited valuable friends who are experience infertility. They shared with us how they had asked themselves, why it was so important to have a little one. They came to the conclusion that it is possible to have a fulfilling life without having a little one.

This was a question that we had not even thought to ask ourselves. When we did ask ourselves why it was so important that had a little on; we came to the same conclusion, that it is possible to have a fulfilling life without having a little one.

For us, and for our valuable friends, having a little one has partly about the fear of being alone as we grew older. Having children does not mean we will not be alone, as we grow older. What appeared to be a very important reason for having children wasn't that important anymore.

There was also the inner feeling of not being complete if we didn't have a little one. This was especially true for Sue. Being a woman and not being able to have a little one was an emotional challenge to Sue on a very personally level. This led to thoughts that our miscarriage and infertility was some how her fault. This thinking put more pressure on us to fall pregnant; this only increased the aching emotional emptiness we were experiencing when we didn't fall pregnant.

We have a choice; we can choose to be crushed by our miscarriage and infertility all our life; or, we can choose to live life to full with what we have been given. We chose to live life to full with what we have been given.

This does not mean that want to forget our miscarriage and infertility; these are both significant life-changing events. They have contributed to shaping who we are as a couple now.

Our miscarriage and infertility still cause us to have times of sadness and emotion. But, we are no longer crushed by an aching emotional emptiness. The aching emotional emptiness was preventing us from moving past our miscarriage and infertility. The focus of our life is no longer what we need to do to fall pregnant.

A positive outcome has been that we now have a genuine desire to help people who are facing the emotional challenges and aching emotional emptiness that life will eventually put in front of all of them. This is because there was no one who was prepared to talk to us about our emotional challenges and the aching emotional emptiness that we were experiencing as a result of our miscarriage, infertility and disappointment with God.

We are thinking about what our life will be like and what we are able to do now we have come to terms with not having a little one. We don't have the answers to those questions yet.

Sue & Darren