

Believe in your Dreams
By Karen Shaper

It was Sunday morning; my husband is still in bed, I am sitting on the couch crying. I feel like life is passing me by. I had a dream when I married we would have children. It's now 11 years later and we have no children – we had two miscarriages and a lot of disappointments. Our marriage was suffering because all I could think about was having a baby and my husband did not understand why I could not get over this emotion. He suffered emotionally from the two miscarriages especially the second that ended up with a DNC at 11 weeks. He did not want to go through all the negative emotions again and had accepted the fact we may never have children.

Every time I saw someone with a newborn it was like a knife in my back. I believed someone could help me and I knew my husband would come on board once he healed. I started my research on doctors, treatments, and options. I found a doctor in the Ann Arbor area who left a "big institution" to practice empowering woman. I found this to be refreshing to find a doctor that would listen to me and started giving me options for my health care. She also listened to my husband and his fears about another pregnancy. She recommended I try acupuncture; I did my research and found many women found success with acupuncture. I tried it but had no success.

I was depressed and my poor husband suffered because of my emotional breakdown. I also spent time seeing a Psychotherapist which did not last long; I wanted to see if this would help me deal with my empty space. The empty space was not going away. Life had become going to work and coming home to an empty house. I don't want this to sound like we did nothing we did vacations and spent time with our dogs and each other. However, we both were empty and knew something was missing from our lives.

The empowering doctor suggested we try an intrauterine insemination (IUI) this required me to go back to the "big institution". I decided under her care I would use the facility, how bad could it be just to have them do the procedure. The procedure day arrived I went in, everything was fine – until the doctor doing the procedure said "Do to your age I don't see how this will work for you." I walked out angry and said I will never go back to this institution again and I never returned.

The procedure failed and my empowering doctor felt my pain I did not know what to do, I was lost; my husband was trying to make me face the reality of what was coming, a life without a child. I did not want him to say these things so I would become angry with him and we would fight. I did not want to give up, I knew I could adopt but was not ready to go down that road. Where do I go what do I do, how do I live with no children, how do I keep my marriage from falling apart.

These things were becoming too much for me. This brings me to...

It is Sunday morning; my husband is still in bed, I am sitting on the couch crying. My husband got up to find me crying. But something happened that day, something clicked inside of him, he overcame his fears and stated "we will do something." He said he understood my pain and he knew we needed to try something – he was on board – for the first time in many years he wanted to try for a baby again.

We changed doctors, which was the best thing we did. The first appointment was a 4-5 hour appointment. Going over all our medical history, all the miscarriages, and test that were done

along the way. It was a very emotional day, reliving our most painful memories and all the hurt we caused each other. We did it and we are better for doing it.

At the appointment, the doctor sat down and gave us options. I had something I did not have for a long time...hope. She gave us choices, which were egg donation, embryo adoption, or testing my eggs. We went home and talked not really sure what to do, and I never thought I would have to make these choices because things like this happen to other people not to me.

In speaking to our new doctor, she opened our eyes to so many options were we never told at the "big institution." I could not believe we were never told of all the options we had, I felt glad we found our new doctor and sad that I almost let one doctor take away my dream. Our first decision was egg donation; we were put in contact with a local agency. This process cost a lot of money, we had to pay the agency for their time working with the egg donors, we paid the donor, an attorney and we had to pay for the donor's medication.

This process moved fast, we were lucky we did cash on hand and we were able to take out an infertility loan to help cover the rest. All was going well, and the day came to retrieve the eggs. The retrieval worked and we made embryos with my husband's sperm. We had to wait three to five days to do the implantation. I received a call saying they wanted to do the implant early, I was sure let's do it. I become pregnant, we were so happy; we saw a future family starting.

Six weeks into the pregnancy I miscarried again. We found out the reason we had to implant the embryos early was so because of the embryo development. The donor had some infertility issues she did not know about. Though we were very sad, we quickly we moved on, I wanted to try one more IUI with our new doctor, so we did and it did not work.

This left finding another egg donor and spending thousands of dollars again or embryo adoption. I could not see us gambling another \$50,000 away, so that left embryo adoption. We found snowflake and I was ready to work with them until I was doing some research and found Embryo Adoption services Cedar Park. This was the best call of my life, I talked to the pastor and he talked me into calling Maria Lancaster.

I called her and found a connection since Maria also adopted her daughter as an embryo. Maria took us on as clients and she told us it may be a long time until she could find a match for us, but it only took a few months, I believe God was helping her. She found a family who agreed for us to adopt their embryos.

Because of the past the entire pregnancy was like walking on eggshells, every month that passed was a blessing. My husband would come home from work and always ask "did you feel a kick today." It was his assurance that things were okay. On June 21, 2014, our son Scott James Shaper was born. It was a day we realized we were giving the greatest gift...our little boy. There is no doubt that God shined on us that day any many days before and after. It took 10 years to bring out son into the world and he is surrounded with lots of love. Today, my husband and I find life much more fulfilling and he is glad that I never gave up and that he finally woke up. We thank God every day for Scottie and I am so happy I found Maria and Embryo Adoption Services of Cedar Park.