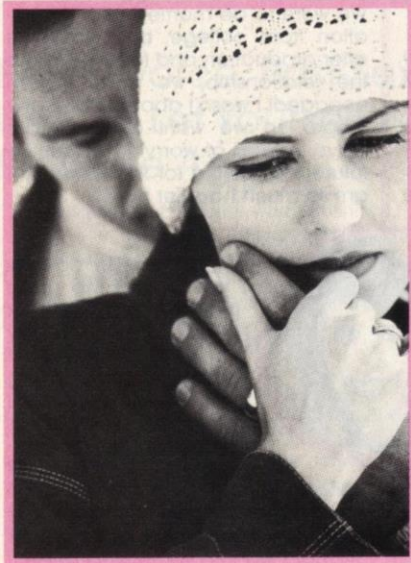


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## “I Lost My Baby”

One Woman's Emotional Journey To Recovery



A miscarriage is not a minor event in the life of a couple—it is very traumatic. Research has not measured the impact that it has, yet studies show one in four women experiences a miscarriage. It is a difficult time for the mother and father—a time when they need to pull together—but all too often, pull apart...

It was a brisk December evening. The kitchen was warm with the smell of baking bread. A fire was crackling in the wood stove. My Grandmother's best china decorated the table while candles flickered in the twilight. The mood was set for the news I was waiting to share with my husband, Herb. I greeted him with a smile, a twinkle in my eye and wearing a T-shirt with the word “baby” embellished across the front.

Herb handed me his coat and said with concern, “Honey, you shouldn't get your hopes up again until you're sure.” All I had to do was give him one of my smiles and he knew we were going to have a baby.

We had waited so long for this moment. Eleven months after our daughter Melinda was born, we experienced our first tragedy of miscarriage. It was difficult but we knew we could have another baby. Months went by, then years, still no baby. Discouragement became a normal monthly occurrence. In the end, patience was all we needed.

We knew in our hearts it was going to be a boy this time. We were sure of it. On Christmas

Eve, we shared the news with our family.

On a cold January morning, I walked sleepily down the hall to the bathroom. My eyes were barely opened when I noticed I was spotting. It couldn't be! I checked again. I was bleeding. I started screaming and crying in horror. All I could think was, “Not again!” I had waited *five years* for this baby.

My obstetrician had me come in right away and ordered an ultrasound. It was my *first* and it was an amazing sight to see the baby's heart beating on the screen. The doctor said, “Some women bleed in their first trimester; your baby appears to be fine. Go home and get some rest.”

Two weeks later, the bleeding started again; this time it was harder. I drove myself to the hospital and the doctor ordered another ultrasound. The room was quiet that day. No one spoke a word. No one was smiling. I couldn't see anything move on the screen. His little heart wasn't beating. Our baby was dead.

I was in shock. I couldn't cry. I drove to my parent's house where Herb tried desperately to console me, though he was grieving himself. He felt he had to be strong, be a man. I didn't cry until my father walked in the door. I became the child again, a little girl that needed her Daddy.

The week that followed was a nightmare. We were not prepared for the anger, guilt and depression. Our relationship was spiraling downward like sands through an hour glass.

*“The hospital room was quiet. No one spoke a word. No one was smiling...my baby was dead.”*

We desperately needed someone to share our feelings with. Our friends and family would say, “It's all for the best,” or “Be thankful—a miscarriage is nature's way of sparing you from an imperfect child.” These were not words of comfort.

Finally, Mike and Pam, friends from church, talked to us. They had experienced a miscarriage before the birth of their twins and it nearly destroyed their marriage. They had been unable to express their feelings in a way that did not hurt the other partner. Finally, they had joined a local support group and gotten the help they needed.

Mike and Pam knew the intensity of our emotions and their comfort was genuine. They were able to show us that we were going through a normal grieving process. They constantly reassured us that it was okay to grieve differently. **CW**

### The Road To Healing

Herb and I took charge of our lives and began taking steps to recover from the trauma of the miscarriage. These steps were an important part of our road to healing:

- **Remember that it's okay to grieve differently.**

Failure to communicate with your partner is the most serious obstacle to overcome. You must be willing to discuss your feelings openly with each other, but don't let them monopolize your conversation. Set aside a time to talk about your grief every day until the pain subsides.

- **Talk to someone who understands.** The best listener is one who has been through the experience. If you don't know someone who has had a miscarriage, check with your clergy, doctor or the Childbirth Education Association for a support group in your area.

- **Name your baby.** Giving your baby a name helps you come to terms with your loss. The child is no longer an “it,” but someone you loved, lost and now grieve for. Herb and I named our son Benjamin Michael.

- **Create a memento or remembrance.** Plant a tree. Trees grow as children grow; they symbolize life and change. Cross-stitch your baby's name and frame it. Plant a perennial herb garden. Create anything you can cherish in years to come.

- **Become romantically involved again.** Make time for each other. Buy cards and put them on the bed pillow. Have candle-light dinners. If you can afford it, take a trip together, alone. Learn to embrace love again without fear. Never give up hope.

Herb and I were able to share the road to healing. It's a difficult road to travel, but a trip that can lead to a beautiful ending. I have made many new friendships from sharing my story—and I have three more beautiful children to brag about! **CW**

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By **Kathy M. Buckert**