



EP 001: Eat, Sleep, Breathe Fertility

This is the Fertile Mindset Podcast, where we explore all the emotional aspects of fertility to support you on your path to parenthood. My name is Sarah Holland. I'm the Fertile Mindset coach and a mother to two children after my own fertility challenges. I hope you find all the support and inspiration you need within this podcast, to carry you forward on your fertility journey towards your own successful outcome.

It's also my wish that through listening to these episodes, you rediscover how to enjoy life now and live it to the full while you wait for your baby.

Now let's begin today's episode.

Hello, and welcome to the very first episode of the Fertile Mindset Podcast. I am so pleased that you're here and I'm so happy to be here with you too. This podcast has been a really, long time coming. In fact, as far back as 2006, when one of my clients at the time said, I should start a podcast. I didn't even know what a podcast was at the time, but the seed was planted and now I'm a huge fan of podcasts.

I love to listen to them when I go out walking. And I love that ritual of putting good stuff into my ears during the otherwise empty time. And I know how helpful it can be to have a regular support and inspiration when you're on a fertility journey. So, I really hope that this podcast becomes a source of both, for you.

There will be a new episode every week on Thursday. So do subscribe to be notified as soon as they go live. And once a month, I'll be inviting some amazing guests to join me for interesting conversations on the mindset piece of fertility. Because that's why we're here, to acknowledge, explore and transform all the emotional aspects of fertility challenges.

There's no doubt that facing fertility issues is stressful. And many women are concerned about the impact of stress on their fertility and health too, as well as the effect on their emotional wellbeing and their mental health. This podcast aims really to get to the heart of the fertility experience and give support solutions and guidance that really helps.

I'm looking forward to doing that with you as I share my Fertile Mindset approach to fertility, coaching and support, and along with my guests, sharing their own unique approaches to fertility support too, it's going to be fascinating and I'm so pleased that you're here.

Now we're in launch week right now, and I have a huge giveaway happening. I'm going to give details of this at the end of the episode so stay tuned and learn about how you can take part and have a chance of winning a brilliant prize.

But first let's get on with this first episode, which is Eat, Sleep, Breathe Fertility.

We're talking about how and why fertility can take over literally every area of your life and what the impact of that can be, and what you can then do if it's feeling like it's just too much.

So first, let's look at how to tell if fertility could be taking over your life.

So you could start to notice the thoughts that you have when there is empty space. Now, this could be when you wake up, what do you first think about when you open your eyes, or maybe when you go to sleep at night? What thoughts keep you awake or perhaps when you're driving or any other empty time? Just thoughts about your fertility start to intrude into your mind.

It's like your mind is given some space and thinks, "well, this is a good time to worry about my fertility" It's often really not constructive thinking, but it's like a cycle of worrying and stressful thoughts. Also notice if you start to look at everything in your life through the filter of fertility.

What I mean by this is that whenever you think about work, your career, any plans that you're making, your holidays. You always think about them in relation to your fertility.

The thoughts may start with, "well, I can't do this if I get pregnant" or "I shouldn't do that if it affects my fertility" and it may feel like a really kind of constricted way of thinking. I remember myself when I was trying for my first baby, that I was planning a really big party for my husband's 30th birthday and as I was planning it, a lot of the thoughts that I went to were whether I would be pregnant by then, or maybe have a newborn baby by then and what would I do if that happened? Could the party still go ahead if we had a baby? Would it be too noisy to have the baby there? Or would I need to have a rota of relatives babysitting? So no one was away from the party too long.

I even went as far as kind of constructing this rota of babysitting in my head. It took up such a lot of space in my mind at that time and then I didn't even get pregnant until almost a year after my husband's birthday. So, is there anything that you might be overthinking by putting that filter of fertility in front of it? And maybe you don't really need to right now.

Lastly, ask yourself whether this intense focus on all things fertility has taken anything away from you?

You may say, well, of course it has, lots of things have changed and are different, but what's important is how you feel about those changes. Are they acceptable to you, or unacceptable? Has there been an impact on your mental health and wellbeing, or not? This takes us to the next point that we're going to talk about.

Can making everything you think and do revolve around your fertility, be detrimental to both your fertility journey and your life?

I believe that it can be detrimental, but it doesn't have to be. We'll talk more about solutions soon, but first, think about when thoughts of fertility takeover our minds and it soon become really full and overwhelmed. It can be hard to think clearly, or hard to make good decisions about your fertility journey. The added stress and pressure of all these thoughts gives you even more to worry about and it becomes a vicious cycle of overthinking, leading to stress, which leads to more overthinking. And it's completely exhausting too.

Also, many women tell me that they feel like they've lost something of themselves to their fertility challenges. It's like they lose touch with who they really are, and they become someone that they don't even recognise.

Similarly, they lose touch with the things in life that used to bring them joy, hobbies, activities, connecting with friends, a focus maybe on their career or business or whatever else used to bring happiness and excitement into their life. But now all of that has been sidelined and replaced by all things fertility related, and this can even feel like grief. We often talk about fertility grief, related to any losses experienced, or grief for the baby who hasn't yet been conceived and born. But also, there can be grief for the life that we've lost along the way for the 'who' we used to be before fertility issues took over. It doesn't have to be this way though. And we'll soon talk about how we can turn this around.

Next though, I want to touch on why this intense focus around all things fertility, felt like the right thing to do and maybe it still is the right thing to do. So why do we do this? Why do we let fertility intrude on every thought we have? And every action we take?

Well, it's because it's important. That's why. There may be nothing else in the world that feels more important to you right now than having your baby and the longer it takes to get pregnant the more urgent it feels. And the more of your focus it demands. Of course, that is completely understandable.

You're researching, you're analysing, you're reflecting, decision-making, taking action. It's a lot, and much of this focus may be needed. So you don't want to lose it completely, but you probably feel that you need some balance.

So that takes us to this last, but really important part where we're going to talk about how you can escape the fertility tunnel vision, where your whole life revolves around what you can do to get pregnant and what this will give you back if you do.

So first you could try taking a step back and looking at what is driving this intense focus. Are there thoughts, beliefs, or emotions that are making this even more intense for you? It could be a worry about your age, for example. Making everything more urgent and pressured. Recognise and work through these emotions and believe me, it will change everything.

It's so worth investing a little time into doing this, because if you can free yourself of the understandable, but not needed emotions of fear, worry, panic, and more, then you're going to have an entirely different experience on your fertility journey. And what I see when someone does this work on their emotions is that they're able to look at the situation with fresh eyes.

They're looking at the facts, they're looking at it in a much more rational and logical way, they're staying present in that moment. They're not jumping ahead to the what ifs and the maybes and the worst case scenarios. And they have a clearer mind to make really good decisions and importantly, feel much more resourceful and strong.

It's quite remarkable to see the difference, but at the same time, it also feels like the most natural way to approach and think about their fertility issues.

The technique that I recommend and use at Fertile Mindset is called EFT, Emotional Freedom Techniques, also sometimes called tapping. And it's perfect for fertility support because it's really quick and easy to learn. It gives almost immediate positive results, and it can be used as a self-help technique, anytime that you need, you feel stressed and you need to reduce it. Or anytime you want to get back control over your emotional state. There's so much more I could say here, but I'm going to direct you to a free resource shortly to learn more about EFT and get support using it.

So I'll share that with you in a moment. Another thing that you could do though, is to take back control over the time and space you give to your thoughts around your fertility. Know that it's you that gets to decide what you think about. And when you do this, you could set aside thinking time when you allow yourself to focus on your fertility and you could even make this structured, perhaps by using a journal to free write or make lists, get that jumble of thoughts out of your head and onto paper.

Lastly, I'd love you to remember who you are outside of this fertility journey. What did you used to love doing before this? How did you spend your time and who did you spend it with? What brought you happiness? Whether it's going dancing or picking up an old hobby, or even just making sure that you read one fiction book a month, because if you're anything like most people I speak to, your reading list is probably consisting mostly of fertility titles right now. Am I right?

So whatever the thing is for you, whatever your thing used to be, why not make time to do it again now? There is space in your life and your mind for it. I promise you. Mark it on the calendar and give it priority because it's important. You are important.

Okay. So let's review the key points that we've talked about here.

Number one, first recognize if your fertility challenges are taking over your life. Listen to your thoughts in the quiet times. Notice if you have that filter of fertility installed and acknowledge what this intense focus has taken away from you.

Number two, notice how it might be detrimental to both your fertility and your wider life. Check how full or confused your mind feels, how overwhelmed you feel, and if there's added stress and pressure. And if you feel like you've lost yourself or stop doing things that you enjoyed, because everything has been taken over by all the fertility stuff.

Number three, do acknowledge. Please remember to do this while you have this intense focus, because it is important to you to conceive your baby. So be kind and compassionate to yourself and remember that you are doing your best.

And number four, take some steps to escape the fertility tunnel vision. Deal with the emotions that are driving the intense focus and using EFT is my recommendation. Set aside your structured thinking time. And remember who you are and make time for those things that you really enjoy.

Now I hope this has given you something to reflect on, and it's a little nudge in the right direction to make some small, but very positive changes.

Before we end this first episode, though, I want to also tell you about the big launch week giveaway to celebrate the start of the third whole mindset podcast.

There are three ways you can enter this giveaway. Firstly, by subscribing to this podcast, wherever you listen, and this will also mean that you're notified when new episodes go live too, which is a good thing! Also, by writing a review on Apple podcasts. And thank you so much for doing that. And lastly, by sharing about the podcast, anywhere on social media, if you're happy to do so, you can find posts to share on Facebook @fertilemindset and Instagram @fertile_mindset.

Now to enter the prize draw, send a screenshot of each subscription review or share to the email address support@fertilemindset.com. And for each one, you'll be entered into the draw to win a one-to-one package of Fertile Mindset support sessions with me over Zoom worth £360.

Check out all the details with the prize draw and the closing date www.fertilemindset.com/podcast.

Thank you so, so much for any and all support of the podcast in its launch week. It is so very much appreciated and good luck with the prize draw too.

So here we are, now we're at the end of the first episode.

I want to send you so much love. And wishing you all the best on your fertility journey.

Thank you for listening to the Fertile Mindset Podcast. If the topics talked about here sounded like I was speaking directly to you and your thoughts, then I would really love to invite you into the Fertile Mindset Sanctuary.

This is my fertility support membership, where you can free yourself from stress, worry and any emotions that don't feel helpful, so you can then create a naturally supportive mindset, your Fertile Mindset.

In the Sanctuary I'll guide you through using the emotional healing technique I use at Fertile Mindset called EFT, and you'll soon be feeling less stressed and more joyful.

If you're not already in the Sanctuary, do come and join us now, starting with the BUD level of membership, which is completely free of charge.

Go to www.fertilemindset.com/sanctuary to join, and then watch the welcome class, which will give you a fast start into taking back control over the emotional side of your fertility.

I look forward to seeing you there, and at the next episode of the Fertile Mindset Podcast.