



## **EP 005: Other People's Pregnancies**

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 back to episode 5. So today we're talking about other people's pregnancies today – we're not really talking about their actual pregnancies, but how they make us feel. When you're trying for a baby it can seem like everywhere we look there are pregnancy announcements, gender reveals, baby showers, pregnant bellies and newborn babies. It sucks I know, it really does, when you're trying so hard to conceive, and it feels like everyone else has got there before you.

You might wonder why it's so easy for them and so hard for you, and get especially angry when someone falls pregnant "accidentally" when they didn't plan or even want to have a baby.

This issue comes up so much with the women I support, and it triggers so many strong emotions, and alongside are often feelings of guilt and shame as well as they think they're the only ones feeling this way. First of all, if you're feeling that way you're definitely not alone, it's just that it's hardly ever talked about. When women tell me how much it affects them to hear about someone else's pregnancy, they often tell me that I'm the first person they've ever told how jealous, angry, or sad they feel.

I know how it becomes normal to hide these feelings. A friend announces that they are pregnant, and you plaster on a smile and say "congratulations!" just as you're expected to do, and the pain is hidden inside, only to be released in floods of tears once you have a moment to yourself.

Now, if this is your reality, and you feel like you're constantly navigating your way around pregnancy announcements and bracing yourself for the next one, then this episode today is for you.

We're going to shine a light on these very valid feelings, bring them out of the shadows and talk about how to look after yourself and your emotional wellbeing.

So, first let's talk about how surprising these strong emotions can be.

Announcing pregnancy news is typically a time for celebration, and this may have been how you felt quite naturally before you started to try for a baby yourself. You may have been excited for friends as they shared their news. But once you've started trying to conceive and it's taking longer than you hoped, the next time someone shares pregnancy news with you, it can feel literally like a punch in the stomach. You may not have even realised how strong your emotions would be until that moment. And by then it's too late because the emotion is unexpected and overwhelming. Once you realise how this baby news makes you feel, it can feel like you're on high alert waiting for the next announcement.

Women tell me that they avoid seeing friends in groups in case of any surprise announcements. Or they've approached family gatherings with caution when they knew their sister, cousin or whoever could be about to announce that they're pregnant. Even now when we may not be meeting up in groups in person, I know there can be wariness around group Zoom meetups or WhatsApp group conversations.

It's such a hard situation to find yourself in. You're suddenly being told this supposedly happy news, maybe others around you are celebrating and happy, but you can't even speak for fear of crying. If you manage to squeak out a small congratulations, it's likely that you then can't get away quickly.

Other people's pregnancy announcements can truly feel bittersweet. You want to be happy for your friend, and part of you really is happy for them – but it triggers such deep sadness in you too. I heard someone recently called it a “complicated happiness” and I thought this was such an accurate description. It's like there are many layers of emotions that you feel maybe all at the same time. The happiness for them is there, but also a sense of unfairness, injustice, jealousy, anger, and sadness.

It's understandable that you want to avoid this onslaught of emotions as much as possible, so you may find that you're distancing yourself from people that you know, or suspect may be trying for a baby.

And social media gives us additional challenges too because you never know when the next pregnancy announcement or update, or scan picture, baby photo or anything else is going to appear on your feed. These announcements are at a distance, so you're not face-to-face with the person telling you their news, looking to you for a reaction, but they can hurt just as much, I know. It's the same as just taking a walk or go into the shops. You know it's likely that you'll see someone who is pregnant or with a little baby in a pram. Because now you're trying for a baby, and it's the focus of many of your thoughts, none of them go unnoticed. You notice and may feel triggered by absolutely everyone you see who is in a place where you desperately, heart achingly want to be.

During my own time of trying for my first baby, I clearly remember a day when I was out walking and saw a very pregnant looking woman. And I remember feeling a smile appear on my face and reflecting on how she was carrying precious cargo. I felt so calm and at peace and connected with this vision for myself. “One day that will be me” I said to myself.

Now this brings me to an idea of choosing or discovering your most supportive perspective or mindset when you are around other people who are pregnant and have babies. Could there be an alternative emotional reaction that is actually supportive and comfortable for you to experience? Ask yourself, what would be the most healthy way to look at this? How does my mind and body WANT me to react?

Now this may seem like a stretch if you can't possibly imagine ever feeling ok about other people's pregnancies. I understand, I really do. I've seen so women torn apart emotionally by the strong feelings they experience. But having experienced it myself and now having seen it happen for many, many women, I do believe there's a way to reframe these

situations – or indeed any challenging situation – so that you can feel more resilient and even strengthened by what you're experiencing.

There are a couple of things to remember that can sow some seeds in our minds to help us look at things differently. One is that when we compare ourselves to someone else – a woman you see who is pregnant or has a baby – the jealousy or sadness we feel is only about one aspect of their life. The one that we're most focused on. But we never know what someone else's life is like exactly, even with our closest friends. We may not know what it took for them to get to where they are, whether they've had fertility struggles too, or some other struggle in their life that we're not aware of. It's like our mind is playing tricks on us, saying that "that person's life is perfect and if only my life was the same". When in reality there are probably many aspects of their life that you wouldn't want to swap for.

Another thought that can be helpful in a somewhat surprising and even funny way, when we find ourselves thinking "it's unfair that they're pregnant", is that there are more than enough pregnancies to go round!! Just because she is pregnant, doesn't mean you can't be too! She hasn't taken away your chance and there's no limit to the number of babies to be born this year! Now I know this is obvious, but sometimes when we state it out loud it surprises our mind to hear this so simply put, that we can relax a little and focus back on ourselves rather than expending all that emotion and energy towards others and their situations.

And you know I believe that you can get to a place where other people's pregnancies can be a positive prompt. A reminder of what you are moving towards. A reminder that women fall pregnant every day. To even enjoy being around pregnancy and new babies, soak up the energy of them, let a smile grow in your heart or show on your face. You may find you even go looking for them – not in a creepy stalkerish way! – but just to enjoy noticing the pregnant women, and babies in your neighbourhood, and let a secret smile and thought say "that will be me soon".

This was one of my own mantras when I was trying for a baby. It came to me quite naturally, and you're welcome to try it on for size too and see if it works for you. Another thing I would say to myself when things weren't going well on my fertility journey, was "someday, somehow I will be a mother".

Now, wherever you are right now with these ideas I really want to encourage you to acknowledge and work through all the emotions you feel, because once you do this, and it doesn't have to take too long at all, you'll then be able to connect with your own natural, most supportive mindset. And when you see pregnant women and babies, your mind and your thoughts will go to a naturally supportive place.

Now the best way to do this that I know of, and what worked for me, and the thousands of women I've supported with my Fertile Mindset coaching, is using EFT – Emotional Freedom Techniques – also called Tapping. I have a free online class that you can watch now, which will teach you exactly what tapping is, and how to use it to support you on your fertility journey. You may have already watched this, but for this issue, the emotional challenges triggered by other people's pregnancies, this is the perfect area to focus your EFT tapping on.

Now if you just choose ONE example to start – maybe the most recent pregnancy announcement, or the one that has been the most challenging or difficult for you to hear – and you use EFT on the emotions that come up, you'll notice that not only do you feel better around that person, but it could also help you every other time you hear about a pregnancy or new baby that's been born. Why don't you give it a try because you have nothing to lose and a huge amount to gain!

Women have told me that when they've used EFT in these situations, they feel completely different around their pregnant friends. And also, they feel more confident about setting

boundaries if they need to. So that could mean not going to every baby shower, gender reveal, baby naming ceremony or christening, or first birthday party. Yes. The invitations might keep coming, but you can decide if you want to go to any of them and you can make these choices with grace and confidence.

So, let's go over a step-by-step process to help with this most challenging of issues:

First of all, acknowledge how you feel and why you feel the way you do. Don't push down the feelings or deny to yourself that you have them. You're not alone in feeling this way. Every woman who has fertility struggles feels similar to you.

Next don't settle for an emotional state that is unbearable – Use a technique like EFT. If you don't know it already, you can learn it for free with my online class in the free membership level of the Fertile Mindset Sanctuary that's found at [www.fertilemindset.com/sanctuary](http://www.fertilemindset.com/sanctuary)

Next explore, creating a reframe for these situations and maybe a mantra or phrase to say too, that will come forward when you most need it. That could be something like “that will be me soon” “That's what I am working towards and I'm looking forward to being pregnant too” or “Someday, somehow I will be a mother”

Next feel confident in setting boundaries, skip baby showers or other baby centred celebrations if you need to.

And lastly and above all be kind to yourself. No one is experiencing the exact same situation as you, so your emotions and ways of reframing them will be unique to you too. don't blame yourself for anything you feel or slip into those feelings of guilt or shame above all. Remember to be kind to yourself.

Now I have mentioned already about the free level of membership for the Fertile Mindset Sanctuary, and I know that lots of our podcast listeners are signing up and enjoying the class and the free resources. I wanted today also, to let you know that alongside the free membership called BUD, there are two paid levels – BLOSSOM and BLOOM. They start at £29 a month and both give you access to a huge collection of fertility support resources as well as direct support from me in various live sessions each month.

There are EFT videos inside the Fertile Mindset Sanctuary specifically on this topic of Other People's Pregnancies, and if you're a paid BLOSSOM or BLOOM member you can access them within the private Facebook group. Just look under Topics, choose Other People's Pregnancies, and you'll find several tap along videos there!

I also wanted to remind you about our next Sanctuary Monthly Masterclass, which is also available in the paid membership levels. It's taking place on the 21<sup>st</sup> January and it's going to be all about creating a new year fertility plan that works for you. I'm really looking forward to that session, and I'd love to see you there too. Once you're a free member of the Fertile Mindset Sanctuary you can choose to upgrade your membership at any time by logging in, and then going to the account section.

If you have any questions about this at any time, feel free to reach out to us at [support@fertilemindset.com](mailto:support@fertilemindset.com)

Now, I hope this has been a useful episode for you, and I look forward to speaking to you again soon!

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](http://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.