



EP 016: Your Story and Its Impact on Your 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 back to the Fertile Mindset Podcast. Whether you have just found the podcast, are listening for the first time today, or are one of our regular listeners, I am really so pleased that you are here and taking time to pay attention to your mind, your thoughts and the whole emotional piece of your fertility.

I talk about many different topics here on the Fertile Mindset Podcast, and every fourth episode I invite someone who is truly inspiring to speak to us about their experience and insights into fertility, and their thoughts on the mindset and emotional aspects. I have some wonderful interviews lined up for the next few months which I'm really looking forward to sharing with you, and every guest on the podcast is also invited into my Fertile Mindset Sanctuary membership group for a live chat after their interview. And this has become a really popular and much looked forward to part of the membership by our subscription members.

Now, if the mindset side of fertility is important to you, then the first thing I'd love you to do is to make sure that you've subscribed to this podcast wherever you listen in, so you're notified as soon as new episodes go live.

And then I'd also love to invite you to join us in the Fertile Mindset Sanctuary membership where you will connect with lots of support for you on your fertility journey. There are 3 levels of membership within the Sanctuary, beginning with BUD which is the completely free of charge starter level. Then for much more support, directly from me and within our beautiful group of members, the BLOSSOM level is just £29 a month. Lastly, you can add in an hour of private one to one support with me, into your membership with our BLOOM level which is £119 a month. Now, whichever level of support feels right for you, I'd love you to join us at www.fertilemindset.com/sanctuary.

Ok, so on with today's episode now which is all about Your Story and Its Impact on Your Fertility.

This topic is something that resonated with me as I began my own fertility journey, and has also become clear to me how important it really is, as I've supported more and more people, and listened to their unique stories and challenges over the years.

So, what do I mean by Your Story? Your story is what you tell yourself, the narrative going on in your mind, when you think of your fertility, trying for a baby, or even being pregnant and being a parent. Your story may come from your own experience, the experiences and stories of others, or it may be an inherited story from within your family. When we tell ourselves a particular story about our fertility, we hear it as if it is true – we really believe it to be true – and it can influence the whole direction and outcome of our fertility journey.

But what if the story we've been telling ourselves isn't in fact true? What if it's actually a story that started with a tiny grain of truth or fact, but then grew into a complicated tale that provokes fear and worry in us? The more fear we feel, the more we may feel attached to the story and feel like we need to protect ourselves, even if that means protecting ourselves by not getting pregnant.

Let's look at the kinds of stories that could have this potential impact on you and your fertility journey.

I'll start with my story, which was with me all my life and became more deeply ingrained from the age of around 10, and then stayed with me until I recognised it and worked through it in order to be able to conceive a baby and become a mother.

The story that I know for me had a huge impact on my fertility journey was the story of how I came to be in the world – My story of my birth.

This wasn't a straightforward story in any way. My mother didn't know she was carrying me until she was already 4 months pregnant, and then after a few more months she went into premature labour. She was admitted into hospital and labour was stopped with medication, only to then be restarted a short while later when she was diagnosed with a life threatening condition called preeclampsia. I needed to be born quickly and whilst the labour seemed to progress normally, I also seemed to be stuck and just wasn't able to be born. This was in 1977 in a leading teaching hospital in London where they had the latest technology to assist childbirth, and I was lucky enough to be one of the first babies to have a clip on my head to monitor my heart rate throughout labour, this is known as a fetal scalp electrode. This picked up that during labour my heart had stopped, and my mother was rushed into theatre for what's known as a crash c-section. This is different to an emergency c-section, as it needs to happen immediately under a quickly administered general anaesthetic to save the baby's and often the mother's life. This is what happened for us and my mother said the last thing she heard as she went under the anaesthetic was "we've lost the baby, so now we have to try and save the mother". I can't remember when I was first told this story, which as you can tell did have a happy ending as I'm here to speak to you now! But it was always my story, the story of how I came into the world, in a life threatening and truly traumatic way.

Then, as part of our sex education at junior school we were told to ask our parents to tell us the story of our birth, interview style, and then write it up and share with our teacher. I was only 10 years old, it was a long time ago, but I'll never forget the look on my teacher's face as I read the story to her – she went extremely pale and very quiet and with a look of shock on her face. She was a young woman, and hadn't yet had children yet herself. To this day I wonder if my story then was taken on as her story, because this is how it can happen. We hear something, it makes a huge impact on how we see the world, and then stays with us, maybe continuing to have an impact on how we live our lives, and onto our path to parenthood.

My story became what I believed pregnancy and birth to be all about. I believed it was scary, dangerous, and something to be avoided at all costs. It led to me believing for the whole of

my childhood and into early adulthood too, that I would never have a baby. Because why would I do that to myself? It was only later, in my late 20's I started to feel a nudge towards motherhood which I couldn't ignore. I knew this meant I had to revisit, and attempt to rewrite my story, if I was to feel safe enough to try to conceive.

This is something I did, devoting time to both getting clear on my story and the ways it had affected me, and then using EFT – which was a new technique to me at the time – to clear all the thoughts, beliefs and emotions that I knew were keeping me attached to this story and unable to move beyond it.

At the same time I felt drawn to read up on and research childbirth and discover how our bodies are perfectly designed to give birth safely and easily. The more I healed from the trauma from my story and the more I read and learned, the safer I felt to become pregnant myself. This meant that I became fully engaged with my fertility journey, and as issues were found with both mine and my husband's fertility tests, I was extremely proactive in finding solutions and committing to my goal of someday, somehow becoming a mother. This in fact became my mantra -"someday, somehow I will be a mother" - and something I would bring to mind whenever new challenges, set backs or obstacles were put in our way. Now I had cleared the negative emotional attachment to the story of my past, I was ready and excited to begin a new chapter of my story as a mother and know that nothing was going to stop me.

I know that if I hadn't taken the time to recognise and heal the impact my birth story had on me, even if I had still wanted to be a mother, it would have been a journey filled with fear and conflicted thoughts.

I see this often with the women I support. They want to be a mother but there's a big but at the end of that intention. I want to be a mother BUT I'm worried I'll miscarry like I did before. I want to be a mother BUT I'm worried that it will be hard for me to conceive, like it is for all the women in my family.

This is something I hear so often, that either the story of their fertility journey so far has had an impact on how they feel about conceiving, or that it's an earlier story – like the story I had of my birth – or a story that reaches much further back, maybe to previous generations and how they struggled to conceive or had difficulty staying pregnant.

If you have a story from your own fertility journey so far, this is a good place to start in understanding how and why you feel as you do right now. Of course it's understandable to be grieving after a loss or unsuccessful cycles, or to feel impacted by any setback or difficulty on your fertility journey. It's important that you recognise the impact and give yourself time, space and the support you need to heal. What I then want for you, is that your story and what has happened before doesn't continue to define you moving forward, or define the next chapter of your story, which of course hasn't yet been written.

If you feel like past experiences and pain is weighing heavily on you, please look into how you can recognise, acknowledge and then heal this pain. Your next chapter of your fertility story could feel and be so different if you're not carrying forward the emotional burdens of your past experiences.

Using EFT with your story is a highly effective way to separate what is present and needed in this moment, from what is in the past and may be irrelevant to you now. I know this helped me hugely as I wanted to move forward, move past my story and be open to and look forward to having a happy, healthy pregnancy and birth.

And maybe you can see how differently you may feel if you were to clear your attachments to stories – whether they're your own or someone else's – but stories that you no longer need to refer back to.

For me this means that I understood the facts of what had happened, but I used this to inform and strengthen me rather than scare me or hold me back. I knew that my mother had a life threatening condition in pregnancy, and that the reason why I couldn't be born and my heart stopped was due to an unusually short umbilical cord. This knowledge, when looked at with a clear and calm mind, helped me do all the research and preparation I needed to feel safe and confident to become pregnant and give birth myself. And it didn't take a lot of research or preparation – definitely not as much as I would have needed if I was still feeling fearful – but just enough to feel happy and safe to conceive my baby.

This is the power of recognising, acknowledging and healing our stories. Whatever your story is, whether it's that all the women in your family had trouble conceiving and you always thought it would be difficult for you, or it's that you feel you're unable to stay pregnant past a certain week and you're telling yourself this is all your body can do – or something else entirely – whatever it is, take time to get to know your story, understand its origin, where it came from, and then give it the attention and opportunity for another perspective to then release its hold on you.

If you already know and use EFT tapping, then you can absolutely use EFT on your story. Recognise the impact it's having on you now, the emotions you feel, the beliefs you have and the meaning you've attached to it. Then tap on all these elements, until you feel a sense of peace and a new, supportive perspective comes forward.

If you'd like my support with this, feel free to email me directly at mail@fertilemindset.com. Also I have a free 5 day challenge starting soon that will be a wonderful way to learn EFT and discover how you can effectively use it to support you and your fertility. There will be more details in the next podcast episode, which is out next Thursday, so be sure to listen in then.

So as we finish today, I want you to remember you are so much more than your stories, and there is so much more potential for you, than your story may lead to believe. I hope this discussion around our stories and the impact they can have on fertility journeys has been helpful, and I look forward to speaking to you again very 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 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.