



Infertility: Balancing Science, Spirit and Infertility Concerns

by Terra Wise

When it comes to treating infertility, the anxious anticipation each month of hoping for a joyous outcome, multiple trips to doctors, ongoing lab work, calendar notations, hormonal pills, patches, gels, injections, and the overall distress experienced by couples desperate to conceive—the question of balance between science and spirit begs our attention.

It is easy to acknowledge the vital contribution science has made to the field of fertility. For couples yearning month after month for a baby, with no results after twelve months, medical involvement becomes an essential partner. But what is the psychological and physical price paid by those frantic to get pregnant? Alongside the enormous financial burden is the equally costly spiritual and emotional demand, which cannot be measured in dollars.

Prior to a couple's decision to explore a medical route they are optimistic and trusting in their natural attempts to conceive; they are, as they say, "having fun while trying." However, after one year passes and no pregnancy has materialized, the trying becomes less fun and more stressful. A couple begins to feel agitated and fearful that they may have a fertility problem. At this point, many couples are given well-meaning advice from friends and family: "you just need to relax, you're trying too hard, let nature take its course."

Perhaps there is something to the simple advice that says "just relax." Practically everyone is in agreement today about the body-mind connection; science has confirmed the correlation between stress and disease numerous times. Stress is implicated in many illnesses from heart disease to advanced aging, cellular breakdown, premature ovarian failure, and fluctuations in hormones, to name a few. Modern research has clearly proven through multiple studies what Eastern (and indigenous healers) have known, taught, and treated for centuries—that stress contributes to body-mind imbalances, and that the contractive energy of tension, worry, shame, etc., truly has an impact on an individual's overall well-being.

If stress was the one and only cause of infertility, how much easier the solutions would be for all. Couples eager to conceive would find simple and doable methods on their own, and answers could easily be discovered through holistic approaches. Furthermore, these holistic modalities are more affordable than fertility treatments and are considerably less intrusive on the body than the path taken with technology. People seeking a natural stress reduction response to their fertility troubles might consider yoga, nature walks, dietary changes, meditation, hypnosis, bio feedback, herbal and homeopathic support, essential oils, massage, and other bodywork. They could also look inward, working with the interior dimensions of the psyche through spiritual

reflection and ritual.

I had a thirty-nine year old client come to me with a desire to get pregnant. She had been given the 'you're too old to have a baby talk' and was amazed at how fast the doctor discouraged her. She came to me looking for a more optimistic, interconnected way to respect her intention and belief that she could conceive. One of the

methods we worked with was the power of animal medicine through imagery, and also (if she felt comfortable doing so) for her to acquire a fetish (object) or a small piece of fur from a native craft shop.

At our next session she responded that she had loved this work and that it had opened a new doorway, leading to many more doors. It helped her feel better emotionally and less nervous physically. She found focus in actively being co-creative, and felt more in tune by taking steps to treat herself in a nurturing way. She worked ritualistically to enhance the 'medicine' of the different symbols, incorporating cross-cultural approaches through meditation, imagery, and with ceremony, which has since become an important ongoing practice for her. Another very important realization emerged—her partner was not the one she wanted to have a



baby with.

We see the current large scale Western acceptance of an ancient Eastern practice, including the belief in the power of special places, creating tranquil settings, using certain objects to adjust energies, and specific placement of items, such as furnishings, fountains, mirrors etc. This attitude embodies the trust that by attending to certain environmental and energetic details with care, we humans can become more conscious of our interdependent relationship with the cosmos, the macro and micro worlds, a relationship which lends healing support to one another.

There is a nurturing recipe coming together now, a body-mind approach that helps to support infertility challenges in a fully balanced way. This includes the important role of stress and its impact on both body and emotions. Holistic therapies, together with attention to nutrition and exercise will also influence the desired outcome. The reproductive system, glands, hormones, and many other body functions respond well to these protocols. There is also the spiritual and ritualistic ingredient: the influence of energy and intention. There is no denying the contribution of the spiritual element to overall health, which can act as significantly as the physical components.

Excerpt from Terra Wise's forthcoming book. For safe, sacred, unbiased support of womb issues: infertility, miscarriage and abortion, call 415/987-3920 or go to www.terrawise.net.