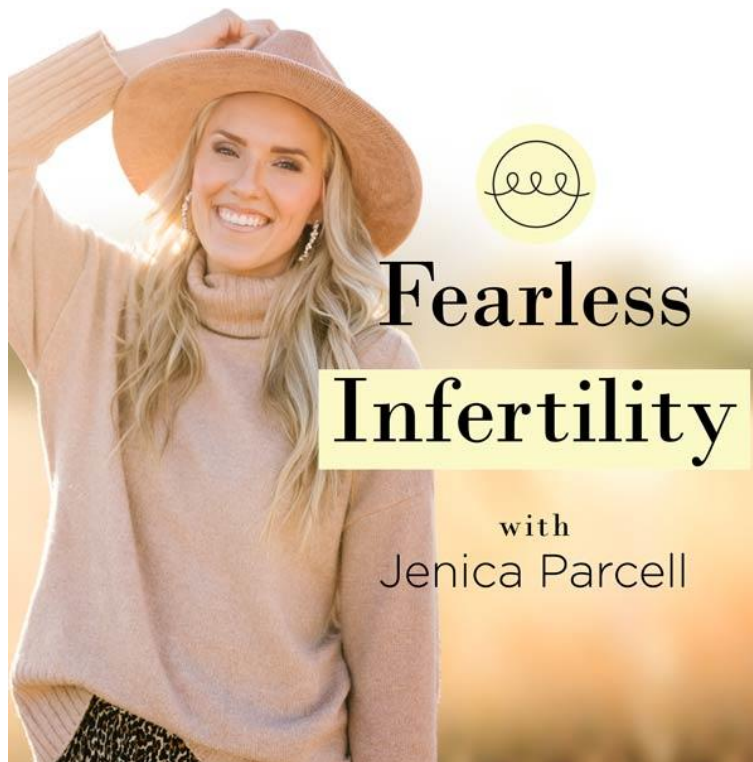


9. Are Your Thoughts Serving You?



Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

Jenica Parcell

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Hi, friends. Welcome to *Fearless Infertility* a podcast for women struggling with the mental anguish that comes with infertility. My name is Jenica and after suffering in silence for too long I was able to pull myself out of the dark, take control over my mind, and create joy during my infertility experience. I'm here to help you do the same, sister. Let's dive into today's show.

Welcome back to *Fearless Infertility*. I am so excited you are here today and I cannot wait to share with you this podcast episode that has been life changing for me. At the end of the episode, you will know the thoughts that seem incredibly helpful but aren't. You will know the thoughts that seem innocent but aren't. You will know the thoughts that are causing pain and suffering in your life that you think right now are serving you.

They are tricky, and it can be hard to spot, and they're very deceitful because they seem very innocent until you get curious about them. And until you can see and examine the results that they are causing for you in your life. And I'm going to show you how.

Hey y'all, welcome back to *Fearless Infertility*. I am so excited you are here with me today. It is a gorgeous sunny day out here in Utah today, which I cannot always say. I feel great about saying sunny Utah. It doesn't really roll off the tongue like saying sunny California. But it's true today, I feel good about it.

Six months out of the year it's cold and, you know, kind of dark here. But I feel like I've done really well this year because I've been very diligent about getting outside, even when it's cold, and going skiing and things like that. I feel like that's key to survival in cold states.

But today it is just a lot simpler for me because for some reason, I'd actually love to know the science behind this, but I feel like when I'm in the sunshine, I feel like the thoughts that cause me to feel joy and peace and like that feeling of carefreeness, they come so much more easily when it's

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sunny outside it's just life just seems easier. I just like myself so much better. I'm such a better person when it's nice outside.

So anyway I am in a good mood, well I mean I can always choose to be in a good mood, right? But for some reason today that sunshine and that vitamin D is just making me feel extra fab. I am so grateful to those of you who have continued to leave reviews. If you subscribe and leave a review through Apple Podcasts, I will choose one of the reviews to send pajamas and socks to from The Slice of Sun.

They are the coziest, softest, buttery bamboo goodness, you can put on your body. And I designed them It literally took me a year because I wanted them perfect. I wanted the waistband to be perfect, it's nice and thick, it doesn't roll weird. The fabric is bamboo and so cozy and soft and washes so well. And I made these incredible socks to be like your little secret token of bravery when you are out and about in the world and want to be reminded that you're brave in infertility.

So I choose one reviewer every week to send a pajama and sock set to, and the winner of this week is Silverstar425. The title is Wonderful. And she says, "I followed Jenica on Instagram for years, I'm so happy she started a podcast. I've looked many times for a good podcast to help with infertility but have been disappointed. Not anymore, this podcast is wonderful. And it's nice to not feel alone in the darkest moments of infertility."

Thank you so much. That means so much to me. And I'm so incredibly grateful that these tools are helping you as much as they are with me currently with infertility as well as any other trials that I'm experiencing makes me so happy that you're using them to really live a more joyful life right now. So if you could please email us at hello@thesliceofsun.com with your size and address we will get those sent out to you.

Another incredible review is from Alisonreddy81. The title is So Inspiring and she says, "Just listening to these episodes brought joy to my life and gave me another way to think. My IVF twins are almost three. I wish I'd had

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this podcast back in the day. I'd love to have an episode about being at peace with being done with trying to conceive even if you'd still prefer to have more.”

Love that, I think that's a really great podcast episode and I will for sure record that for you.

Another great review is from Alexandra Small. She says, “A must listen, this is a great resource for anyone going through infertility or if you know someone who is. It's a lonely journey but knowing you're not alone is a beacon of hope. Thank you Jenica for all your hard work and dedication to those of us going through infertility and secondary infertility.”

I love you guys so much and it's truly such an incredible joy in my life to be able to share these tools with you that have genuinely uplifted me, and helped me, and really given me my power back in dealing with trials and circumstances in my life that I think I can't control but then I realize I truly have so much power in how I feel.

This leads into today's episode. And this is such an interesting topic I think, because when we are aware of our thoughts and what they're actually doing for us in our lives it is a complete game changer. So today I want to talk about thoughts that seem helpful but aren't. And it's so interesting too because some of these thoughts are very deceitful, because they seem very innocent and they seem like they're really genuinely a hopeful, positive thought.

There are many thoughts that seem helpful and like they're giving us the result that we want. But then when we step back and evaluate what they're actually causing us to feel, act, and as a result, you know, how our life is turning out, they're not helpful. There are thoughts that seem like the truth but aren't. There are thoughts that I genuinely believed were helping me for years and I truly thought thinking them was the right thing to do, but they weren't helping me.

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And I think at first, it's important to understand that our brains are just doing their jobs, they're really doing an incredible job of automating the things that we truly wouldn't be able to focus on. Because if we focused on all of the things that our brains did for us automatically, we wouldn't have enough focus or energy to do anything or accomplish anything.

Our brains love when we are able to find a reason for things that have happened or are happening in our lives. Our brains are incredible, because that's what they do best, they solve things. They look for answers, they look for reasons, and they solve problems.

All of the innovation and beautiful things in the world were created from a thought in someone's brain. It's honestly miraculous to look around and see this beautiful world, and the technology, and the buildings. And what we've created to live, you know, in this advanced society is honestly truly miraculous.

And this is why it's so important for me to take care of my brain with proper nutrition, proper sleep. I genuinely look at my brain as my most valuable asset because if I didn't have my brain, I literally would have nothing. Our brains like to find a reason or solution for why something went wrong. So that's our brain's job and it does it exceptionally well.

The only problem is that sometimes it thinks a thought is helpful until we step back and are really curious about it, to see what that thought is actually causing in our lives. I have an example for you. When I was trying to conceive our first child or children. Now we know it was children, because I have twins. Spoiler alert, if you're new here and this is your first episode.

In February of 2015, I threw a Valentine's party for some of my blog friends for a company. And at this point in my infertility journey we had done three IUIs that hadn't worked, and we had done an egg retrieval for IVF. And we had gotten three embryos that fertilized. We had quite a few eggs that were retrieved, I believe it was around 31, but only three of them had fertilized.

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And during this time in 2015 I had done an IVF embryo transfer with one embryo and I was in my two week wait to see if it had worked. So if you haven't done IVF before you'll do the transfer and then two weeks later, you'll go into the fertility center and they'll do a blood draw to see if the transfer worked and if you are pregnant or not.

So I thought that it was a good idea, with the knowledge that I had at the time, to throw this Valentine's Day party. So to kind of give you a snapshot of my life, I was working full time at a software company. And then it was Tyler and I and we didn't have any kids yet. And so I thought it would be a good idea to kind of keep my mind off of everything to plan this Valentine's Day party.

And I think that whenever, well at least for me, whenever I host at my house it ends up being a lot more than I thought that it would be. And so the thought that, I think, caused me to feel a little bit stressed, and I kind of took on a little bit more than I could chew. But I really, at the time thought that it was a good idea. I made some fun crafts for everybody to do when they were there. We had a gift exchange of favorite things. There was some great food. And all in all, it was a really fun time.

As soon as everyone left the party and Tyler and I were cleaning up, he had walked out to the garage to put away some chairs. And I went to use the restroom as we were cleaning up and I realized that I had started my period. And Tyler walked in, I had tears in my eyes and he just knew. He asked me, you know, "Did you start your period?" And I said yes. And so we just sat there and cried and just felt pretty defeated.

And at the time, I genuinely thought that I was doing a great thing by distracting my brain from maybe these thoughts of, am I pregnant? Am I pregnant? What happens if I'm not pregnant? You know, these things that sometimes we allow ourselves to think when we're in that two week wait, or anytime during infertility. And there are thoughts that actually help us progress and thoughts that keep us stuck and in conflict with reality.

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And there are certain thoughts that I thought at the time that would be helpful, but in reality, looking back at them I see that they weren't, because of the result that I got. One of those thoughts was if I would have rested and not put my body through stress, I would have been able to get pregnant. And this thought seems harmless or even helpful, right?

Maybe I would have gotten pregnant, maybe I would have. But the truth of it is that I chose to have this Valentine's party. I chose the activities that I was going to do. And so that thought had me feeling very, very guilty and shameful.

I was mad at myself that I had made this decision. And then looking back on it, since I wasn't pregnant, my brain wanted to find all of these reasons for me not conceiving. And I was just really mad at myself for the decision that I had made. And I was replaying things in my head but in reality, no matter how many times I thought that thought, it wouldn't have changed the result because you cannot go back in time.

I had made the decision to throw the Valentine's Day party, because with my knowledge that I had at that point, it was because I thought that it would be a great distraction, something to look forward to. I was going through this infertility experience, and still wanted to have joy in my life. And I made the decision based on the experience that I had had up until that point and that was that.

No matter how many times I think that thought, if I would have rested and not put my body through stress, I would have been able to get pregnant, I'm still not pregnant.

And that's the thing that I think is so deceitful about these thoughts as you think it's helpful, right? It seems like a very innocent thought, maybe I would have gotten pregnant, right? But the truth of the matter is I didn't choose that so there's literally no point in thinking that thought because it's keeping me stuck. And I know it's not helpful because of how I feel.

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Thoughts that are helpful will not make you feel feelings of guilt. Thoughts that are helpful will not make you feel feelings of shame. Thoughts that are helpful will not make you feel anger. And that thought was making me feel all of those things. And regardless of how many times I thought that, I couldn't go back in time, I don't have a time machine. If anybody does that will be awesome, but so far, I haven't heard of anyone. And I'd made that decision and it was time to move forward with that, without guilt, without shame.

And absolutely, I think that we can take our experiences to make different experiences for the future. But the reason that I know that that was the right decision for me at the time is because I made that decision, period.

We cannot beat ourselves up for making decisions based on the knowledge that we have at the time. Yeah, if we could look into the future and see all of the different obstacles and the different results, that would be a completely different thing and a completely different life. But we can't, that's not what life is about.

That thought seems like it would give me a reason on why the IVF transfer didn't work, which is all that my brain was trying to do. My brain was just trying to help me out and find a solution because that's what brains do.

Our brains are very good at seeking reasons and solutions and solving problems. And in most situations, it's a really incredible thing. But occasionally our brains will be wrong and there isn't a reason besides the fact that we made that choice. And we know that choice was the right choice because we made it and because it was.

Stepping away from my brain and giving space to see what result was caused, I know that the totally harmless thought wasn't actually harmless. That thought made me feel shame. When I felt shame, I ruminated on it over and over again, I thought to myself, "If only I'd made a different choice. If only I had known that my body needed to rest more."

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And here's the thing, who knows if I would have rested more if I would have actually gotten pregnant, right? But our brain wants to find that solution. And at certain points, it doesn't matter because the solution that we think may have been the solution but we don't actually know doesn't help us to feel peace and calm in going forward with a calm mind in control of making a good decision with the knowledge that we have in that moment.

When I thought that I thought I felt shame and I ruminated on that thought over and over again, I felt physically nauseous, I got mad at myself. And then instead of giving myself the rest I needed at that point that I could have really used, I drained that energy into an endless amount of thoughts and a cycle that caused me to feel horrible. And didn't allow myself to rest after that IVF transfer, which I really could have used.

The thing is thinking that thought wasn't going to magically get me pregnant no matter how many times I tried. And trust me, if you could go back in time and get the things you want by thinking things like I should have, or if only I had done, fill in the blank, I would teach you how to do it because trust me grow, I've tried to do it for years. It doesn't work.

The reality was that I threw a Valentine's Day party because I thought that was the right decision at the time. It was the right decision because that's the decision I made. That's what happened. That's how we know it was right, because it was. And like I've said, you can take experiences and make different decisions next time. But I don't think that it's helpful to say that a decision was wrong because at any given point we make decisions that we genuinely believe are right in the moment, based on the knowledge that we have.

My takeaway for you today is to step back and just be very curious about the thoughts that you are thinking are true. Maybe you've believed them for so long that you think they are true because it's habit. Examine them, are they true? Do they need to be true for you? How are they causing you to feel?

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Another example that I'll give you is recently I was working with my health coach, Amanda Sanchez. Her and I actually met on Instagram years ago when I first started sharing about my infertility experience. And she connected with me because she was also experiencing infertility. And we did IVF around the same time. And we met in real life, we were able to be a support to each other.

And then years later I'm kind of struggling a little bit with overeating, because I'll do a whole other episode on this specifically, but I was starting to buffer my feelings away. When I had a negative emotion, I would want to cover it up and get immediate relief from that emotion, versus just feeling it and allowing myself to be a human.

And so I recognized this in myself last year. And I truly thought that this was something major that was draining my energy in hiding from my negative emotions. And I wanted to reach out to her to see if she could help me with that, because she had shared about her experience with food addiction. And she has been my health coach since.

And going through this coaching program that I have been able to learn to teach you all of these incredible tools has also helped me immensely in being okay with being a human being, right? I think that all of us want to be superhuman, we don't want to experience negative emotion.

And oftentimes, we think it's such a bad harmful thing when we do that we try to hide from it. And I did that for years during infertility. I did that after my twins were born. And I talked about it a lot in episode five, which I will link in the show notes here, called Why It's Okay To Be Sad.

So I reached out to Amanda and she really has an incredible perspective on thoughts as well. And one of the thoughts that I genuinely believed was true, that I had thought for so long I didn't even question it, was that I need to lose weight.

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And it's so interesting too, because I know a lot of people will look at me and be like, "What are you talking about?" Right? And that's the point, is that it doesn't matter what actual reality is, it's what you allow in your thoughts that is your reality. Right? So I genuinely thought that I needed to lose five pounds. I had been a certain weight at one point, I felt my most fit at that point.

And so literally, every single time I would look in the mirror, I would look at my thighs, I would look at different parts of my body and say, "Okay, I'm fine, but I just need to lose weight. I'm going to lose weight. When I go, you know, in my swimsuit in the summer I really want to feel confident. And in order to be able to feel confident I need to lose weight."

And so I genuinely thought that it was true. And it took us about a month and a half, two months to really dive down into this belief that I had. And one day she just questioned me. She said, "Is that true? I want you to think about it. Is it true?"

And for the first time I questioned it. And like I said, I literally wanted her help because I thought, I knew I was draining so much of my energy into this belief that if I could save that energy and spend it towards helping women with infertility it would be a total and complete game changer.

So I literally signed up working with her because I knew that I could help people in this community. And it's been life changing because I really pondered that, I questioned that for the first time. She said, "Is that true? Do you need to lose weight?" And I was like, "Oh my gosh." All of a sudden it really dawned on me that that was just a thought. And it was a thought that I had thought so many times that I truly believed that it was just a fact, that it was just true.

And since that particular day, I am a healthy person, I am eating healthy, I'm exercising, right. I'm still doing those things to physically take care of my body. But my mental state is so much better, because I thought that thought was serving me and it wasn't because the results that it was giving

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me in my life was I was very, very critical of myself. I was constantly just literally draining energy into that thought.

And, you know, I think that oftentimes we can do things physically, but when we come at it from a different feeling your results are completely different. And for me, I challenged that I now look at myself and say, "I don't need to lose weight." It's literally a decision that I made for myself.

And I can't even tell you how much energy I've been able to claim back for myself when I realized that that thought wasn't serving me because I can see what it was doing in my life. It was like this black hole just sucking all of my energy out. I feel like 90% of my energy was going towards that.

And it's so interesting too, because I had gotten used to that being so normal for me that opening up about it with her, and then also telling Tyler, like where my brain goes when I look in a mirror. He was like, surprised by it. And I thought that it was normal. And the fact that he was like, "Oh, like I never think things like that." I was like, "What?" You know, just completely blown away because I just thought it was normal.

And so my takeaway for you in infertility and in any other area of your life is to be very, very curious about what thoughts you are thinking are true. What thoughts have you thought for so long that it's just a belief for you, but in examining it further you can see what results they're creating in your life? Examine them, do they need to be true for you? How are they causing you to feel?

I want you to be very curious in a non-judgmental way. Because that's another thing, once I discovered that this wasn't true for me about the weight loss and about needing to lose weight I looked at myself out of love. And I wasn't like, "Oh, I'm so dumb for thinking that for so many years." It was it was more like a "Oh my gosh, like you're free now. Like you tried so hard and you've worked so hard to get past this, and you're free now."

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And it was almost like looking at myself through this most beautiful, loving lens. And that's what I want for you. I want you to look at yourself that way and examine these thoughts that you think are true. And I really want you to be curious about them. I love you ladies. I'll see you next week.

To celebrate the launch of the show I'm going to be giving away pajama and sock sets from The Slice of Sun that I have personally designed. They are the most buttery, soft, delightful things you'll ever put on your body. And I'm going to be giving away five bundles to five lucky listeners who subscribe, rate, and review the show on Apple Podcasts. It doesn't have to be a five-star review, although I sure hope you love the show. I genuinely want your honest feedback so I can create an awesome show that provides tons of value to you who are experiencing infertility.

Visit thesliceofsun.com/podcastlaunch to learn more about the contest and how to enter and I'll be announcing the winners on the show in an upcoming episode.

Thank you for listening to *Fearless Infertility*. If you want more tools and resources to help you during your infertility experience visit thesliceofsun.com. See you next week.