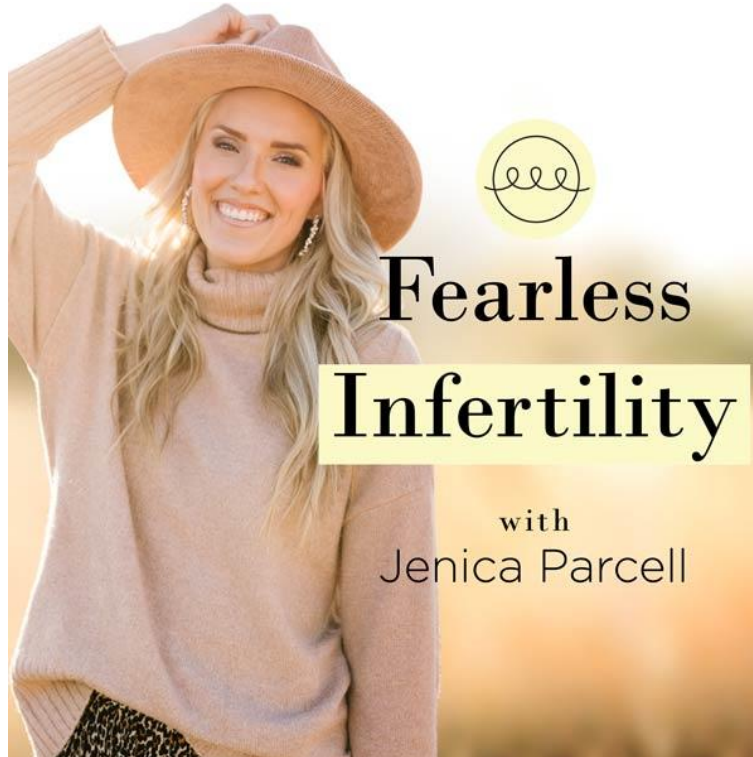


## 11. How to Give Yourself Grace and Self-Love Through Infertility with Courtney Brown



### Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

**Jenica Parcell**

[Fearless Infertility](#) with Jenica Parcell

## 11. How to Give Yourself Grace and Self-Love Through Infertility with Courtney Brown

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.

You made an incredible choice to push play on this episode today. I am talking with my friend Courtney Brown. And at the end of this episode you will have a better understanding of how to truly love yourself. And to really give yourself grace through this experience of infertility. Her and I have both had experiences in where we really have fought against our current situations because we were angry that we were in them, right?

And we talk about in this episode how to look at your circumstance with infertility in a way that's actually beneficial to you. And I am so excited for you to listen. Let's get into it.

Hello my friends, I am so glad that you are here today. It is literally the pleasure of my life to get to share with you these incredible tools that have – like, I honestly like kind of stutter a little bit when I try to describe how significant they've been in living a full human experience that is incredible with its ups and its downs, and really accepting myself and accepting my circumstances. And really getting my control back and not being a victim to my circumstances, including infertility.

And I really love that these tools can be applied to any trial, because as human beings we are here on this earth and we will continue to have experience after experience and trial after trial that will test us. And at the end of those trials and when we've made it, you know, through to the other side we will be better people and we will be able to have characteristics that are really beneficial to us and those around us.

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And that's why I love these tools, because you can apply them to infertility. I apply them currently to infertility for my own life. And I also apply them to all of the other circumstances that I'm in. So it's just really such a pleasure for me to get to share them with you and really see you take them and apply them in your own lives to live a full beautiful life with its ups and its downs.

I love reading the reviews you leave on Apple Podcasts. Please go and subscribe, rate, and review. I will give away a Slice of Sun pajama and stock set every single week to somebody who has left a review. And they're the most buttery, soft, amazing things you'll ever put on your body. I love them, I can't even tell you how comfortable they are.

I sell them on my website, [thesliceofsun.com](http://thesliceofsun.com), and a portion of every single sale goes to women with infertility. And I love to give them away once a week because I really appreciate reviews with the podcast because it helps those who have no idea who I am, have this podcast pull up when they are searching for infertility support.

And there are people in this world, women in this world, who do not have the support system that they need. And these tools that will enable them to be able to move forward in their infertility experience and they need these tools. So you leaving reviews really helps these tools get into their hands.

So the winner of this week is Hawkinsmads15 is the username. The title of review is speaking what I'm thinking. And she says, "In my infertility journey it's been hard for me to articulate my thoughts and feelings because they're everywhere. When I listen to this podcast, the whole time I just keep thinking, "This, this is what I've been feeling." I also like that she gives things to help you. It's very empowering and supporting and I can't wait for more episodes."

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So if you could email me at [hello@thesliceofsun.com](mailto:hello@thesliceofsun.com) with your address and size preference I will get those gorgeous blue floral pajamas sent out to you.

Another review says the username is Learning Em. The title of the review is, Helpful. And she says, "It is so nice to listen and know that my feelings are normal. That I'm not the only one going through this and people have battled it before me, with me, and will after me. She is so kind in helping you to have better thoughts through the process while allowing you to feel all things. I feel like I have no one to talk to about this, so it's nice to listen and feel like someone is on my side."

I absolutely love that. And this just warms my heart because this is exactly why I'm doing this. This is exactly how I have felt using these tools myself, because I think that we're so in control of the thoughts we choose, but I also think it's important for us to accept the full human experience and not feel guilty or bad when you are having negative emotions, right?

The last review I'm going to read today is by MadiSharkey, love the username. And her title of her review is her words are healing. "So thankful to have found this podcast, every word that is said makes me feel so validated in my feelings and not so alone in what I'm experiencing in infertility."

I love that. You guys are amazing. It's really easy to leave a review, just go to your phone on Apple Podcasts, scroll down to the bottom. And then if you have any questions at all you can always go to the show notes page as well. And go to [thesliceofsun.com](http://thesliceofsun.com) and there is a section called podcast and it can walk you through leaving a review.

So you guys are the best. Thank you so much for being here and for really showing up for yourself today because it's you who is changing your life. And with these tools you can, I mean, you're completely unstoppable. So let's get into today's episode.

[Fearless Infertility](#) with Jenica Parcell

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Jenica: Welcome back to *Fearless Infertility*. I am beyond thrilled that you guys get a little taste of the friendship that I share with Courtney Brown. And to help you understand a little bit about the type of person that she is I'm going to share with you how her and I met.

It was January of 2015. Her and I were both at a conference and we opened up to each other about infertility. And this was at the time when I was starting my first round of IVF after three failed IUIs. And I wasn't really talking to a whole lot of people about it yet. But for some reason I felt comfortable sharing it with her. And she opened up about her story with me and she felt like a really safe space.

And we really didn't get a whole lot of time together at that conference. But when I got home and got back to real life, I was driving to work one morning and I looked over to the left on my front porch, and I saw a dozen roses. And they were from Courtney. And there was a note in the envelope that had a line from one of my favorite church hymns. And it said, "In the quiet heart is hidden sorrow that the eye can't see." And that had always been one of my favorite hymns.

And it was just beautiful because it was at a time where, you know, and all of us go through this and go through hard times and trials, but you could look at me and you'd think that everything was fine, right? You can't see the sorrow in someone's heart. And she knew that sorrow because of what she had been through with infertility. And hers was years prior, but she still felt so connected with that trial.

And so that's Courtney, that's who she is. I'm so excited that you get to share a piece of her wisdom today. This interview with her is going to be incredible.

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Courtney: Thanks for having me, Jenica. I'm already like teary. Thank you for those kind words. We definitely were kindred from the start. And I can tell you, you have become one of my most cherished friendships and dearest friends because you bring such a light to my life and to the lives of so many.

Jenica: Oh, thank you. That means a lot to me, I appreciate you. Okay, so we're going to start here with Courtney and talking about what her infertility story is. And she'll just kind of start and I'll ask questions throughout the way. But she's been through a lot and has so much wisdom to share. So let's go.

Courtney: Yeah, so we have to take my infertility story all the way back to 2003. John and I had been married for just about a year and accidentally got pregnant for the first time. It wasn't planned, just, you know, we knew we were going to start a family fairly quickly but it just happened. And about six or seven weeks in I miscarried for the first time.

And after having experienced pregnancy, kind of being excited thinking, "Oh my goodness, here we go. We're going to start a family." And then miscarrying, it was like, "Oh, okay. All right. Well, I guess we're ready. Let's do this thing. Let's start our family." And I proceeded to get pregnant four additional times that then ended, every single one, in miscarriage.

So for me it was not getting pregnant. That has always been the easy piece for me, it was staying pregnant. And so over the course of a few years, I got pregnant five times and every single one ended in a miscarriage. And what a lot of people don't know about recurrent miscarriage is doctors don't even start exploring it until after you've had three miscarriages.

Jenica: I didn't know that.

Courtney: Yeah, they don't even start looking and having tests. They say that they're common, right, so until you've had three, they won't even really

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start having conversations. And that was really painful, right? Because we couldn't do anything about it but try again.

So after three we started having lots of doctor's appointments, lots of tests, lots of those invasive procedures that those in the infertility world are so familiar with to figure out what's "wrong with you." Which let me not get on my soapbox about that, but it was a very, very painful time. And I'm an achiever, right? Like I set out, I hit goals. And it was kind of like, "Oh, body, don't you dare tell me what I can't do." While simultaneously having the pain of miscarriage again and again.

So when I was pregnant for the fifth time in the summer of '05 I remember looking at John and saying, "If this one doesn't take, I'd like to explore adoption." Because my heart just couldn't keep doing it. And it didn't. And that was May of '05.

And in August of '05, by what I can only deem miraculous circumstances our daughter was born and placed in our home, From the time that it was even a possibility, hearing about the adoption, to when she was in our home was only two and a half weeks.

Jenica: Oh wow, that's so fast.

Courtney: Right, but it had been years of a journey.

Jenica: Right, like you were prepared at that point to receive her.

Courtney: We were from that standpoint. But we didn't even have, we borrowed a car seat. And I could tell you, as everyone talks about, "Well, what do you need for your first baby?" It's like, really nothing. You need a car seat and some onesies.

Jenica: Yeah, you'll make it work.

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Courtney: And so then Bella was born in the summer of '05. We then adopted Chase in the summer of '08. And then in the fall of '10 John came to me and said, "I feel like we should try one more time." And I was literally like, "That's funny. That's adorable that you think I'm going to try to get pregnant again."

Jenica: Yeah, you're like, "No thanks. I've been there multiple times and we're done. We've moved past that."

Courtney: I was like, "That's cute." But he felt very, very strongly that we should try again. And so we made a deal, a compromise, and I said, "Okay, you get one."

And so I got pregnant again in the first part of '11. And by a lot of extra medical help, I'm talking I took two shots a day every day for the entirety of my pregnancy. In my stomach heparin shots and progesterone shots in my behind every Sunday. And then I was put on strict bed rest at 30 weeks because the baby wasn't thriving in utero. He wasn't growing. I wasn't growing.

From the moment I was put on bed rest, again I'm going to touch on this idea of miracles because I was put on bed rest at 30 weeks. I did not gain an additional pound. But Rider grew in my stomach.

Jenica: Wow, so you were withering away and he's growing?

Courtney: Right. So my body was giving him all of the nutrients and supports while I was on bed rest. I was taken off bed rest on a Sunday night, September 18<sup>th</sup>, and I went into labor on September 19. And he was breech and wouldn't turn and so they put me into an emergency C-section and he was born that night. And so I also have given birth via emergency C-section and a lot of extra medical help to our youngest, Rider.



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And so when I say each of my children is a miracle, they are. I believe every child is a miracle, but I got to witness and see the hand of God, and life, and the universe as each of my children were brought into my home via very different circumstances.

Jenica: Yeah, absolutely. You've experienced it all.

Courtney: Yeah, I have. So I am so passionate about adoption, and infertility, and keeping your mind on the vision of what you want while still experiencing, while the fruits of your labors are not evident, but keeping your mind on the vision of what you want and letting life guide you to what is to be. I am so passionate about it because I watched it unfold in my life.

Now, I haven't been pregnant or miscarried in almost a decade and yet I still so deeply feel those experiences and the pain and trauma of it. And also the joy and miracles of it.

Jenica: Yeah, I love that. And I love that your recommendation is to kind of keep your eye on your vision while also being present. Because that's a really hard space to be in, but it is possible. And I think it comes with the acceptance that every day, or week, or whatever is going to have a lot of ups and downs, and that's very normal. And you're not doing anything wrong if you're really sad. And you're not doing anything wrong if you're really happy, you're just experiencing life as a human in this experience of infertility.

Courtney: Right. I get asked often what my advice is in this realm. And when I first sought out learning about adoption, I met with a family that had children biologically and adopted children. And she looked me in the eye and said two words that changed my life, and it was, "Expect miracles." Watch for them, be aware.

And the only way you can watch for them, like you said, is to be present in your life. When we detach and are living for the future or living for the past,

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but we only get to see miracles when we are present in the day to day. When we are watching for them, when we are aware of them.

And so when I think about infertility it's like, keep the vision of what you want on the horizon. Keep that in your mind. Think about it when you wake up and go to bed. You desire a family, feel that, keep that vision. But then you've got to give up on the how. You've got to give up on, "Well, I know exactly how it's going to happen." How can God work in our lives if we think we know it all?

Did I ever think I was going to adopt two children and then have a third, have these miscarriages? No, I had no idea that was my life course. And I sit here 15 years removed from the miscarriages and 10 from the pregnancy and think I would not have it any other way.

I got to witness these miracles, my own personal miracles. And it strengthened so much within me. But if I had said, "Nope, I know exactly how it's going to happen. And I'm going to get pregnant at 25, we'll have our first child at 26." And, you know, just duh, duh, duh, duh, this is my life, that is controlling the how and I don't know about you, Jenica, but that's never been my story.

Jenica: No, although I would love to control everything and every aspect of my life, trust me I've tried, it doesn't work. If it worked, I would be telling people how to do it. But unfortunately, it does not. So I love that advice to really trust in a plan that you just aren't aware of.

Courtney: And I like to relate it to this flow of life, right? Like the rivers don't stop, right? The water doesn't stop, it flows. It moves beyond the boulders and life always finds a way.

Jenica: I love that, that's a great visual.

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Courtney: And if we can do the same with our experiences, if we can surrender to what is instead of being super upset about what isn't, while still keeping the vision. I'm not saying not, but keep that vision and allow for life to unfold. I promise you, we will watch this beautiful tapestry of life and we just get to be along for the ride and sit and be like, "Oh my word, look at the goodness, look at the beauty, look at the heartache. Look at all of it. And I get to stand witness to it."

I didn't bring my children into this world in like literally any form. I mean, I just got to stand by and say, "I feel like this is the right path, make it happen." And it did.

Jenica: Yeah, I love that. And I completely agree with that too, where if we could control everything then it would be completely different than how it should be, or is supposed to be, or was going to be all along because we have, you know, such limited vision.

Courtney: We have limited vision and we have limited knowledge of the how.

Jenica: Yeah.

Courtney: There's so much faith that goes into this and it's really hard when your faith is being tried. It's painful and there is heartache in it. And you've taught me so well to in the heartache find the beauty. To find the joy in the heartache. You and I have developed such a dear, close friendship because we were willing to be vulnerable one night with a stranger on the floor of a hotel room.

Jenica: It's so true, yeah.

Courtney: And that's a gift that infertility has brought me.

Jenica: Yeah.

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Courtney: It's a gift.

Jenica: I totally agree. I think that it really is amazing because if we didn't have these trials and this shared heartache, whether it's infertility or whether with other people it's other trials that connect them, it's like we wouldn't have the need for a deep connection, and we would honestly wouldn't need each other. Whereas with this we do, and we're able to have this amazing friendship to support and lift each other throughout life.

Courtney: It's so true. And so I often now, I didn't have these words then, but every single day I ask myself what the gift in the situation is. Now, I wish I could tell you that we adopted our children and I gave birth to Rider and it was a pretty little packaged bow and life was happily ever after from then on. But that's not life, there's still lessons to be learned and motherhood is my greatest teacher.

Jenica: Oh, absolutely. Yeah, it pushes you to every extreme that you never wanted to go to. But then you're so glad that at the end, you're like, "Okay, I'm a better person because of this."

Courtney: Exactly. So when life is challenging and when these kids are really hard and I don't know what to do, I often have to pause and say, "What is the gift? What is the gift in the situation?" And again, I didn't have these words then. But I would challenge your listeners that are in the midst of these infertility battles to say to themselves, "What is the gift?"

Is the gift that my spouse and I get to become closer through all of this? That we get more time to determine what type of parents? We get to be intentional parents instead of it being thrown upon us. Is the gift that I have surrounded myself with a circle of fiercely strong women who lift me up and build me up when I didn't know how? Is the gift that once that baby is placed in my arms I will love and cherish even the worst parts of motherhood because I was denied it for so long?

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Jenica: Yeah, 100%. I love that you're pointing these out because I say that a lot where I don't think everyone needs infertility to become, you know, an incredible mother. But I think that I personally did because I think that it just truly helped me to value it.

And I never grew up with this vision. Like I knew it would happen one day, being a mom, and I knew that that was like probably something that would, you know, be in my future. But I was never the type that when somebody asked me what I wanted to be when I grew up, I would say a mother. That wasn't me, you know, I wanted to have a career and I wanted to, you know, do certain things in my life. But that wasn't it.

And so it took, for me, infertility to truly be able to appreciate the really low lows of motherhood, like you said, because it's so hard sometimes. And like despite going through infertility, it's still so hard. And that's okay but it helped make those really, really hard days easier for me because I'm like, "This is what I wanted, this is what I worked so hard for." And I didn't think that I would, you know, be able to get that. And so it really did like ease the sharpness of those like really hard days.

Courtney: That's such a good point that I'd like to touch on, is I think sometimes those of us that go through infertility and it's a part of our story, then feel like that we can't be frustrated by motherhood. That we should take it all the time as the best thing ever. And I thank you for saying that because, yes, we are grateful. And we get to have the full human experience.

I think adoptive mothers feel this often too, is like I can't be upset that this is hard.

Jenica: Yeah, which is such a lie.

Courtney: Which is a lie, and I don't know who's telling that story. But like we need to be allowed to feel at each stage of life, each stage of

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motherhood, the full range of emotions. And we need to normalize this idea that I can have contradictory emotions within me, both joy and sorrow, and they don't negate each other. They are both valid in that moment.

Jenica: Yeah, 100%. And I experienced this when my kids were born because I was so grateful for them and I had, you know, gone through so much to get them here that I felt guilty when I would have a bad day. And so what did I do? I turned to very negative ways to cope with that.

And I've talked about this with you before, but I literally started emotionally eating. And I literally thought people were joking when they said I'm eating my feelings. I thought it was a joke and then I started doing it. My kids would go to bed and I'd be like, "You know what? This bag of candy is really going to make me feel great." And I still eat candy. I mean, I'm not like going to like cut it out of my life completely because that's just ridiculous.

Courtney: We also bond over Wonka candy, Jenica and I.

Jenica: We love kids' candy. And if you like kids candy too then we'll send you a bag because that's the kind of friends we are, you know, we like to hook sisters up.

But I did the same thing where it's just like it got to an unhealthy point because I was buffering, which is what we call it in coaching, where I was trying to push down all the negative emotion that came with just being a twin mom. And it's like, yeah, it's hard. It can be hard and you can love it too. And it's like, I love what you said about accepting that there can be two contradicting emotions and that's normal, there's nothing wrong with you when you're thinking that way.

Courtney: Yeah, we do this as mothers a lot, right? And we do this in our lives, we have to qualify it. I love my children, but... Of course you love your children, let's all agree as mothers that that's like a given. You've given so

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much for them, to have them here. You 100% can love them and be infuriated by them at the same time.

Jenica: 100%, I love that. And I think that that's such a, I don't know what you call it, but that's so opposite from what society thinks. Or that maybe what we've applied to ourselves. It's like one or the other, and that's just not how life is. Like there's contradiction in everything, which is normal. Like if we look at nature and there's contradiction in nature, there's sunshine and nighttime. And in the nighttime, you're not saying, "Oh, this is wrong, this is wrong because there's not sun." No, it's because that's how it should be. And that's how it is with our emotions, too.

I think that we are taught to be positive and happy, which I think is a good thing, because I know that we're in control of so much of that. But I also think that for me for so many years when I thought negative thoughts, I got so mad at myself and wouldn't allow myself to feel that way. And then what that causes is me not being able to process as I should. And then it like compounds itself to where it's like this big net negative.

Whereas if I just allowed myself to be a human being, like an actual normal human being then I don't have additional problems layered on to the negative feelings. And it's just like so freeing to be able to like accept myself as a human being. I am so grateful I have finally gotten to this point because for so many years I was like, "No, you're not allowed to feel negative feelings. That's wrong."

Courtney: Yeah, I've dealt with this a lot. I grew up in a household where negative feelings were really frowned upon, right? So you were told to stop feeling them or to stuff them, right? And I think we all, a lot of us, this is a story that a lot of us hold, right? It's only now that we're really starting to understand this idea that we get to feel all of our emotions. And so I resonate with this big time.

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And I also want to touch on the fact that as I was going through my miscarriages, I was not feeling them. I had a goal and I had a purpose, and it was a coping mechanism. But my goal and purpose kept me from feeling the pain, and the sorrow, and the grief of multiple lost pregnancies.

And I will tell you that it has taken till now, I'm almost 40, to start dealing with those emotions. To recognize, to kind of go back and do the work now of saying, "It's okay to mourn. Mourning the loss of those pregnancies does not take away the joy and miracles from the children that I have.

Jenica: I love that you're saying this. I love that you're saying like it's not too late. It's never too late.

Courtney: No, it's never too late. And I am a big believer that I probably couldn't have handled it then, right?

Jenica: Interesting, yeah.

Courtney: Like maybe I had to do what I had to do then to cope, to get by.

Jenica: I love that, Courtney. That's such an amazing perspective because it just allows acceptance right now. Like you loved yourself, you were doing the best that you could then. And you love yourself now for realizing that those are some feelings that you can deal with now. And it's like this acceptance of it's exactly how it should be for you.

Courtney: Yes, and I'm working really hard on that. Accepting myself, accepting my experiences, accepting my family and how we look just as it is. Because I believe that that's where peace comes from. It's like, if I am shoulding all over what my life has looked like, or what it will look like, or how it doesn't compare to yours or to someone else's, there's very little peace in that.



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Jenica: Right, because you're fighting against reality. It's like a fight that you're never going to win because reality is reality.

Courtney: And it just is.

Jenica: Right.

Courtney: I can't change the fact, I mean, I can change a lot. I can do things to, I don't know, why to this day I do not know why my body will not hold pregnancies. I don't. There's lots of theory around it, there was never a definitive. I can't change that about myself. Sure, I can take tests, I can seek out experts, I can change my diet, I can work on toxins. Those may all help, but there is no definitive knowing in that.

But me beating myself up and saying that I am less of a mother, less worthy, less of a woman because my experience isn't traditional. Because that literally does me no good and it does the world no good because I am sitting and berating myself instead of accepting myself. Once we accept ourselves, we are able to stop thinking about ourselves and go out and do good in the world.

Jenica: Yes, I love this point. And I think that this is something that I've really learned a lot through life coaching is that there are certain thoughts that seem like they should be helpful. They seem like they should be positive. For example, like you said, shoulding on yourself, that's S-H-O-U-L-D people. Don't should on yourself today, that's a good motto that I've come across the last couple months.

And saying things like, "I shouldn't be here." Or "I should be doing this." They seem like harmless thoughts, but when you realize the feeling that they're giving you, which is guilt, which is just shame, things like that, there's never anything that's good that's going to come from those type of emotions. Those actions that come from those are things like shrinking, things like getting mad at yourself, things like picking yourself apart.

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And so those thoughts seem harmless but they're not. You kind of see like where those go and the results that those are getting you and they're just really not. And so I love this, that you're just pointing out to really be accepting.

And yeah, it's hard, it's going to be hard. And it's work and it doesn't come naturally because I think that as humans, like we talked about in the beginning, we like to control and we have these ideas in our head about what we want our life to look like. And when they don't turn out a certain ways it is work to be able to accept the current present moment.

And then also, from that acceptance, we have positive feelings that we're able to then take actions to get the results that we want.

Courtney: Brilliant. That was really well said.

Jenica: Thanks Court, I appreciate that. Okay, and like I talk about frequently, I think that our thoughts are just really where everything stems from. And so I'd love for you to talk about some thoughts that have helped you during infertility, and any other thoughts that you would like to share that you think are helpful for you in your life and any trials you're experiencing.

Courtney: So I started doing mindset work about four years ago. I know we've shared in this journey together because it's so important. And like you said, it's a practice. And one practice I have taken on is having a mantra in my phone that goes off and reminds me several times a day, and I say it out loud. And one of mine is that I am right where I need to be. And everything is working out for my good.

Jenica: I love that.

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Courtney: Now, to quote the late great Wayne Dyer, and this is his concept, not mine. It's this idea that, do you know 100% that the bad thing is going to happen?

Jenica: No.

Courtney: No. Do you know 100% that the good thing is going to happen?

Jenica: No.

Courtney: Nope. So what would you rather spend your time thinking about?

Jenica: Yeah, exactly. The good things, might as well.

Courtney: The good things, you might as well. And this is this magic of this universe and this world we live in is that when we focus on the good, the good gets better.

Jenica: Yeah.

Courtney: Now, that isn't to say, we've already talked about it, not to honor and allow for the hard and difficult emotions. But if we can practice training our minds to look at the best-case scenario instead of the worst, somehow it works out. And it often does not work out the way we think it will.

Jenica: Right.

Courtney: But it does work out.

Jenica: Yeah.

Courtney: So those mantras, I'm right where I need to be and everything is working out for my good. Now you could argue and say, "Well, no, it's not." But that's not the point.

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Jenica: Right, you can't if you want to. Anyone can do what they want to do for themselves, right?

Courtney: Right. But for me there is comfort in those words. And as someone who has spent most of her life berating herself on the things that she has not done there's comfort and peace in those words for me. And I'm training my brain and new neural pathways to believe it.

Jenica: Yeah, I love that. And I think that our brains are very incredible supercomputers where when you've gone down a certain path for so many years, it's going to take a lot of effort on your part to retrain it. Because our brains are amazing, they automate things for us. So if you've gone down that certain path for so many years and beating yourself up, it thinks that that's what you want. It's what automatically, very easily goes to that place for you. But it's possible to change.

Courtney: It is, and it's a practice. It doesn't just happen. You have to set yourself up with tools and practices to make it so. That's why that little phone tool is such an important one for me, right?

Another one is I have a daily gratitude practice. I believe that gratitude is the single most important practice we could do to shift our thoughts. And so in the morning I write in my gratitude journal, and I consider and I feel the good things in my life. And that really helps.

Jenica: I love that. I have a question for you about that. So, we all know we should be doing these things, right? But it's like the natural man to want to go about the easy way, like I want to push my snooze button every morning, it feels good to me, you know what I mean?

So like I have these goals, and sometimes I'm like, "Nah, I'm just going to sleep a little bit." And then of course, later I'm like, "Why did I do that? I would be so much better off; I would feel so much better." Do you have any

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tips on getting around that and like forcing yourself to really do what's good for you?

Courtney: So I'm not perfect at this. In fact, Covid, I used to have a really great morning routine that included all of these things. But during Covid it slipped, right. And let's give ourselves some grace, you know, I've never been through a worldwide pandemic before. I'm not sure, you know, none of us have. Let's give ourselves some grace. One tip I have is I put my phone across the room.

Jenica: Yes, that's so smart.

Courtney: So one, it takes me from scrolling on my phone at night and going to sleep scrolling and looking at that harsh light. But it also requires me to get out of my bed and across the room. There's a great book by Hal Elrod called the Miracle Morning. And I highly recommend it. But it's this idea that if we start our days off, "right" doing those things that we know are good for us, the rest of the day just kind of falls into place.

And it's not big actions, it's not two hours in the morning. Most of it could be even done in a half an hour or an hour. And I can genuinely say when I take that time, I'm happier. I'm a better person. I get more done and I feel better about myself.

Yeah, I don't know any other tips other than this phone seems to be the hindrance. Because if it's right by my bed in the morning too, what am I doing? I'm picking it up and I'm scrolling Instagram first thing in the morning instead of doing those small things like my gratitude practice, my meditation, my prayer, my reading. You know, those are the things that set us up on the right page. There is discipline to it.

Jenica: Yeah, totally. I love that. I actually started plugging in my phone downstairs, it was probably about three or four years ago. And I started plugging it in my bathroom now, which honestly hasn't been very good for

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me because it's very easy for me to go in there and then actually climb back into bed. I'm like, so good at that, you know? I'm just such a good sleeper.

But I love that because I completely agree where when you look at your email, social media, different things like that, you are literally completely leaving it up to chance on what you see because you can't control that. It could be something amazing that lifts you up. But it could also be something that's disturbing that you don't want to start your day with.

So I love that. Whatever you could do to get back control back with things that you know lift you up, like scripture reading, meditation, reading a good book, praying, whatever it is for you, I think that it's a game changer.

Courtney: The other thing that Hal recommends in his book *Miracle Morning*, if you do plug it in the bathroom, he says to walk in and brush your teeth.

Jenica: Hmm, okay, kind of gets you going.

Courtney: We associate brushing our teeth with the habit of going and being ready. And so if you do that first thing, you're less likely to crawl back in bed with fresh breath.

Jenica: I love that. That's so smart, yeah.

Courtney: One other tool I have used that I was introduced by a coach several years ago was instead of trying to change everything, we just need to become aware of where our thoughts are.

So one practice I've done is set my timer on my phone every hour and I'll do this periodically throughout the day and on repeat. And when the timer goes off, I stop and I think where are my thoughts? And I just see where they are. I'm not trying to change them. I'm not trying to berate myself. I'm

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just noticing, because once we notice and become aware, we can then start to change it.

And if I notice that every time my phone goes off, I'm thinking a negative thought about a particular subject. It's like, "Oh, interesting, right? There's a pattern here." And then you could even take it a step further is that, try it the next day and instead of noticing where, or the next week, where your thoughts are you could say a mantra, right?

Jenica: Yeah, I love that.

Courtney: When that alarm goes off, and you can switch that it's fascinating to see how often we are down negative rabbit holes. And we are telling ourselves stories that are not even remotely true.

Jenica: Right, I love that. That's so smart to really just be aware, because any progress I've ever made on myself has always come down to being very curious about what thoughts the actions are stemming from. And I can always, when I get curious about it, and really give myself that space and time to trace it back, like, you know, say, "Okay, this is the result I'm getting, what are my actions? How am I feeling?" And then tracing it back to that thought.

Like you said, you do have to like give it space. It doesn't just happen because in the rush of the day you're not just going to all of a sudden magically stumble across it. So you really do need to give it that time. So I love the idea of setting the timer and then discovering, that's so smart.

Courtney: And I love that word curious. If we can just stay open and curious. When we are so closed off to perspectives, to awareness, to different thoughts, to different experiences, we are closing ourselves off from what can be the miracles of life. But if we stay open and curious, like a kid, right, all of a sudden, we're considering different possibilities and

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different perspectives. And maybe that's just the amount of space we need for the miracles to get in.

Jenica: I love that. That is such a good reminder because like we've talked about over and over again, as humans we want to control and we want to control every minute of every day. And when you want to control every minute of every day you're not allowing yourself that space to be curious. And so it's so interesting too because that thought, when you slow down you speed up. You have to slow down and give it that space because that's where all the discoveries come from. And that's where progress is made.

Courtney: Absolutely. John says this to our kids almost every single day, and that is slow is smooth and smooth is fast. So it's that idea of slowing down to speed up. Like give yourself the space, and the time, and the perspective. That's kind of what we've been talking about this entire podcast.

And honestly, I genuinely believe when we do that, all of a sudden beautiful, miraculous things start entering our lives, right? You find out about the doctor you didn't know existed. You have the impression to call that friend who then gives you a lead on, you know, on an adoption. It's like but when we're so caught up in the day to day and in the control, and in the Oh, I'm right about this, we lose those opportunities that are literally right there just waiting for us to see them.

Jenica: That's so beautiful, thank you. I love that. All right, is there anything else that you want to add? Any additional thoughts? Maybe even one question might be to close it out is what would you tell yourself, your past self beginning your, I love you so much, she's getting emotional because she has the most tender heart. You guys are going to love her. I'm going to link her Instagram handle and everything in the show notes.



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But what would you tell your past self experiencing infertility for the first time that could also be applied to these listeners here experiencing infertility perhaps for the first time?

Courtney: Two things. One, you're not alone. You are surrounded physically and spiritually by legions of people that want to see your success. So reach out, find your people. Pray for help, pray for angels to intervene, because it will happen, I believe that with my whole heart. Because I thought I had to go it alone.

Jenica: Yeah, I did too for so many years. And we're independent people and most of us are, and so we don't like to burden people. You know, which is such a lie, because people want to help.

Courtney: And there's so much shame, right? There's so much shame that my body isn't doing the thing that it's "supposed" to do and it's embarrassing in some ways, at least it was for me. So to be vulnerable and open up and ask for help is hard. But you are not alone, there are so many that are there for you.

And then the other thing I would tell myself is you are so much stronger than you believe you are. And that you're going to be tested through all of this on deeper levels than you ever knew was possible, and you're going to do it. And your story might someday bless someone else. And your strength is going to bless another so keep going.

Jenica: Yeah, I love that. Thank you so much. Okay, Courtney, tell us where people can find you.

Courtney: You can find me primarily on Instagram. My personal account is Courtney Ellen Brown, my two business accounts are Cents of Style, C-E-N-T-S, and be fulfilled which are my companies. But yeah, Courtney Ellen brown on Instagram primarily.

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Jenica: I love that. And Courtney and her husband, John, run two amazing companies, Cents of Style, it has amazing women's clothes and accessories that are very affordable. And then Be Fulfilled is actually who I get my products manufactured through, and they're really incredible. So I will link all of that in the show notes as well so you can access those.

Courtney: Thank you, friend. Thank you for being a light to so many and giving hope and knowledge and belief.

Jenica: Thank you.

Courtney: Thank you for seeing me.

Jenica: Oh, I love you so much. Thank you, Courtney.

All right, you guys have a wonderful day, goodbye.

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To celebrate the launch of the show I'm going to be giving away pajama and sock sets from the spice of sound 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/podcast launch](https://thesliceofsun.com/podcast-launch) 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](https://thesliceofsun.com). See you next week.

[Fearless Infertility](#) with Jenica Parcell

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