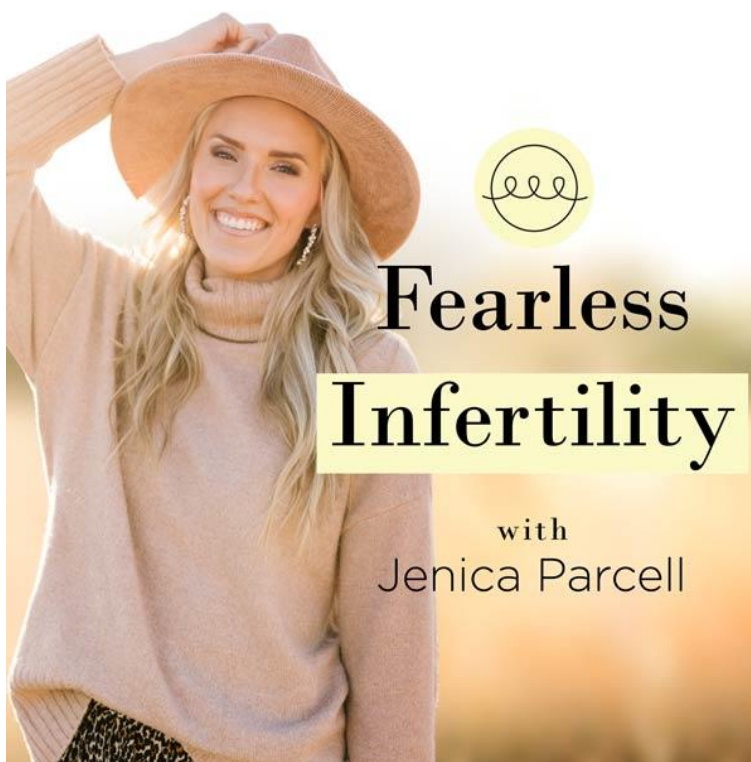


## 25. Infertility While Having a Career with Britt Larson



### Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

**Jenica Parcell**

[Fearless Infertility](#) with Jenica Parcell

## 25. Infertility While Having a Career with Britt Larson

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 grateful that you are here today and excited to introduce to you today my friend Britt Larson. Britt is a career coach and it's been really, really fun to see her as she has supported other women in our community of women with infertility. She is a great support in our Facebook group, Fertility Family by The Slice of Sun.

And in today's interview we talk about how to balance working while also experiencing infertility, which can take its toll on you, both mentally and physically and emotionally. We talk about suggestions on how to approach that in a better way that may help you balance it all a little bit better and continue to move forward.

I'm excited to introduce you to Britt today and get into our amazing interview.

Hello my friends, I am so glad that you are here today and that you've taken some time to fill up your cup so that then you can go out and accomplish whatever it is that you want to accomplish in this life.

Before I get into today's interview with Britt Larson, I wanted to share a podcast review on Apple Podcasts. And for any of you who are new or who have not left a review yet I would absolutely love for you to do so.

And the reason why it's so important to me is because there are many, many women that are currently experiencing infertility that have absolutely no idea how common it is. And they think they need to do it alone. And that's just not the case, they don't need to do it alone. I have these tools

## 25. Infertility While Having a Career with Britt Larson

here, we've created this community here to help them through it and create this incredible experience for them.

And when I say incredible, some days are really, really hard and some days are really, really amazing but there's space here for both.

So in order to help grow the podcast and so people can see it, ratings and reviews help people to see it more often. And so I would love your help with that and in exchange I would love to give one of you a pair of pajamas and socks every Monday.

I created these beautiful pajamas and socks through The Slice of Sun and the pajamas are made of bamboo and they are buttery soft, they're so incredible. And when you put them on and you wear them I want you to really remember that you're a part of this beautiful community of women. You are not alone and we are here supporting you.

So the winner of this week's pajamas and socks is Brooke Thompson. She says, "Truly a fearless experience. I love this podcast. I love the way listening to this podcast makes me feel. I love what Jenica teaches us and for her example of how to truly go through infertility fearlessly.

Listening to this podcast helps me to validate my feelings and know they are valid. It helps me to feel so much stronger to know that I'm not alone in infertility and I'm also not alone in the mental anguish that comes with it. Thank you Jenica for creating such an amazing resource, you are so inspiring."

Thank you so much for being here, this is exactly what I want the podcast to be. I want you to come away from each episode feeling empowered to take the tools that you learn and apply them immediately. And change your lives in any way that you want to and tackle any problem or any experience head on with confidence. Because it is possible, you are capable of feeling all of the big emotions that come along with infertility and I want to be that reminder for you that you are capable of it.

## 25. Infertility While Having a Career with Britt Larson

So let's get into today's podcast episode here in a minute. Before I do, one more thing. I want to let you know I'm launching my coaching program on September 1st. I'm beyond excited about it.

What we will do in the program is take these tools and actually apply them in your lives. It's the difference between me telling you how to create a painting and actually creating a beautiful painting yourself. And I cannot wait to get to know you better and apply these in your life and really help you create these mind blowing results in your own life and just truly amaze yourself.

So in order to sign up for that or become aware when that's going to launch and learn more about it, sign up for my newsletter. The link is in the show notes. It's also on theliceofsun.com where you can sign up there. And in the next few weeks I will be giving away some really amazing freebies if you're on the newsletter list.

One of those freebies will be a checklist for you to print out and look at every morning of things that you can do to actively put yourself in a positive mindset, to then be able to move forward throughout your day with confidence.

And the second freebie I will be giving away to those of you on my newsletter is a cheat sheet of sorts for you to print out or send to people that want to support you in your infertility experience but that maybe you don't know how to. Maybe they haven't experienced infertility themselves. So it will be a way for them to be able to learn more about what you're experiencing and be able to support you.

So make sure you sign up for the newsletter to get both of those amazing freebies. And I cannot wait to get to know you better through my coaching program. Let's get into today's interview with Britt.

Jenica: Everyone, welcome back to Fearless Infertility. I'm so excited to have Britt Larson with us here today. Britt and I actually met through social

## 25. Infertility While Having a Career with Britt Larson

media, which is actually becoming more common in my life. I feel like a lot of the people that I know now and that I'm friends with now are people that I met online.

So we were talking before the podcast started and we were like, honestly, the internet can be a really bad place. But it can also be absolutely incredible if you're using it for the right things. And so, welcome to the podcast, Britt. I'm so grateful that you're here with us today.

Britt: Thank you so much for having me, Jenica. It's so nice to be talking with you. And I am just so inspired by the community that you're building, it's amazing.

Jenica: Thank you, it really is incredible. I love that we have a space for women to connect. And I love, I mean, I see Britt pop up all the time here and there connecting with women in our Facebook group and on Instagram. And so I just think that that's what it's all about and helping to support one another. And I think you do such a great job of that.

Britt: Thank you. I honestly think your Facebook group, I'm in so many forums for infertility, yours is by far the most positive.

Jenica: Oh good, that makes me happy.

Britt: The women support each other, and that's a testament to you and how you talk about your own journey. It's just a lot more forward thinking. And, yeah, just a lot more positive than a lot of the forums that I'm a part of. So I love it.

Jenica: Oh, good. I'm glad, that makes me happy to hear that.

Okay, Britt, so first of all tell us about your story with infertility, specifically in growing your family and kind of what that has looked like for you.

Britt: So I got married, I was a little bit older, kind of in my late 20s. And so we knew we wanted a little bit of time just the two of us. But we were pretty

## 25. Infertility While Having a Career with Britt Larson

eager to start our family. We're both the youngest of large families, so we've both been an aunt and uncle for a really long time. Surrounded by children, this was always kind of a big part of our life. And so we were pretty excited to have children.

So with that, knowing that we wanted to start our family, we started trying. And we did know that there could be a small chance that there was a genetic issue at play when we started to have children. But obviously, looking back there was no way I could have prepared myself, even though we knew that could be an issue.

So we started trying and month after month I was really, really late. I'm pretty sure I had at least two or three chemical pregnancies. And all of this is going on while we're trying to decide if we should get tested for this genetic issue we knew could be a problem. On the one –

Jenica: And if you don't mind me asking, how did you know that that could be a problem for you?

Britt: Other siblings having a similar problem. So that was what was tough, is that we went in hoping it wasn't an issue for us. And on the one hand I feel very grateful that we knew what we were looking for. Because I know there are going to be women listening to this podcast who have unexplained infertility and that is awful. And it's horrible to not know.

It's horrible in a totally different way to know exactly what is going on. And it was expensive to figure out if that was the problem. So that's why we started trying first.

Jenica: Okay. And also, sorry, going back to this, this is actually something we haven't talked about on the podcast before. It's interesting because I think that, like you said, there's so many ways that you can experience infertility and what the issues stem from. But this brings up something that my husband and I experienced.

## 25. Infertility While Having a Career with Britt Larson

And we had actually gotten pregnant, but we had a genetic disorder in our family where one of his cousins – I guess, if you both carry the gene, and I apologize, I can't remember what it's called. But if you both carry the gene, then your baby can get it. And it makes it so that the baby can't metabolize fats. And so they actually lost one of their babies because of that.

And so when I went into labor at 32 weeks, we hadn't done the testing yet. We were planning to do it before the babies had come but we hadn't done it yet. And so we were waiting to find out while my babies were in the NICU if I carried it as well as him. And I didn't so they were able to eat normally. But had they carried that they wouldn't be able to metabolize fats, which are in breast milk.

And so anyway, as far as the genetic background goes, was it issues with their babies after they were born, or how did you find that out? Like how would other people find that out is basically what I'm trying to get at.

Britt: Yeah, it's extremely rare. It's called a balanced translocation. I'm in a Facebook group with people, either they have it themselves or their spouse. And it's about a thousand people and they're all over the world. So it is really, really rare.

And really, the only way to find out is to do blood work on the carrier, or once you've had a miscarriage they can test if there are genetic abnormalities. It is typically like the eighth, ninth, tenth thing that they look at with infertility because it is so rare.

But I do often say to people who have gone through, say several IVF cycles where things aren't working, or they have a lot of miscarriages with no explanation, I do say please talk to your doctor about genetic issues. Because I don't believe they're brought up enough. And because genetics are becoming more prevalent.

I mean, your example is a great one, that there's no way we would have known that even 15, 20 years ago, that bringing that up as part of the



## 25. Infertility While Having a Career with Britt Larson

conversation is really valuable. Because if you looked at the stats and the things that you typically look at with both me and my husband, you wouldn't see anything wrong. And that's what's really hard. And I feel grateful that we had siblings who were able to figure it out after years of having miscarriage after miscarriage.

So I do think the genetic aspect of infertility, it's still being pioneered right now. So I'm grateful and hopeful that my children will not have the same barriers that we've had. Because it's crazy how far IVF has even come in the last 10, 15, 20 years. It's amazing.

I like to say God and genetics are an amazing combo. Because seeing the genetic workup of our embryos that we eventually got was absolutely remarkable. But I'm getting ahead of myself.

Jenica: It's amazing. Okay, yeah, thank you for pausing because we hadn't, like I said, we haven't talked about that on the podcast yet. And I think that that's something that, I mean, I wouldn't even think about it.

It's like most of us find ourselves experiencing infertility and having no idea when we start the experience that we were going to have it. And so I think that's just something to note when you're experiencing it, that that could be one of the reasons why. So thank you for allowing me to go off on that little side tangent there.

Britt: No, I think that's really valuable because that's my whole frame of reference. I feel like I'm an honorary geneticist. I would never say that to an actual geneticist because they probably would slap me. But it's true, I feel like I know so much about all the chromosomes involved that have to make a person.

And I do think everyone who has gone through an IVF consult understands this, that you realize all of the things that have to go right to make a baby. And you just think how does anyone have children naturally?



## 25. Infertility While Having a Career with Britt Larson

Jenica: Yeah, truly, it's amazing.

Britt: It's a miracle. It's a miracle regardless of how it happens.

So long story short, we found out we had this problem. We were told that we would likely never have biological children. But that we had a small shot, pun intended, if we did IVF.

So we went into our first IVF cycle pretty naive. Even though we had been told that I think that I just had to tell myself it was going to work. Because I just thought, how can I pay out of pocket – We had no insurance coverage, we paid for every blood draw, everything. I know a lot of your listeners can probably relate to that feeling.

And our first cycle completely failed. We did get some embryos, but none of them made it past day five, which is crazy rare. What is more typical is that you get a few embryos and maybe you test them and they're abnormal. I've actually never met anyone else who's done IVF who didn't have any embryos. I heard about it and I think it's, again, as they're learning more and more about why it happens.

But we ended up taking a little break. We were obviously devastated. I started to wonder if it was ever going to happen for us. And we're big fans of adoption and so we thought maybe we'll just go that route. But I didn't feel resolved and I didn't want to go into adoption until I felt resolved with IVF.

And so we decided to switch clinics, which I know you've talked about. And that is something that is so huge to me, is just advocating for yourself. I didn't feel like our first clinic came back to us with any new ideas or ideas as to why things happened the way they did in the first place.

So we found a new doctor who was much more experimental, same clinic as you. And they've been so much better at attacking this thing from all

## 25. Infertility While Having a Career with Britt Larson

sides, did a ton more testing. And then we did our second cycle, this is the fall of 2019.

We got two normal embryos, which was just such a miracle. And my baby is eight months old.

Jenica: I love it. Yay!

Britt: So that first transfer worked. It's so crazy to tell it that way, it sounds so straightforward.

Jenica: Yeah, I know.

Britt: And then I got a baby.

Jenica: I know, right? You're like there's a lot of things that happened between then and now.

Britt: Yeah.

Jenica: Oh my gosh. Okay, so did you transfer two embryos? Or do you still have one that's frozen?

Britt: We still have one that's frozen, which is crazy and so weird and such a complicated part of this story.

Jenica: Yeah, I know. It really is so interesting.

So, my clinic, the Utah Fertility Center, is pretty close to my house. And so I'll drive by it pretty frequently and I'll literally be like, "Hello embryos." Like our babies are literally just frozen in there. It's like the weirdest thing. And you think about it too, I'm like, our babies were conceived on the same day, even if they're going to be years apart, you know?

Britt: Yeah, the same age, it's weird.

Jenica: Yeah, it's so amazing. I'm like mind boggled by it all. I'm grateful.

[Fearless Infertility](#) with Jenica Parcell

## 25. Infertility While Having a Career with Britt Larson

Britt: Yeah, say hi to mine too, because they're in the freezer next to yours.

Jenica: I love it, they're a little buddies. They're just keeping to their company in that little frozen environment that they're in. We should knit them a scarf or something.

Britt: That's so funny.

Jenica: Oh my gosh, I love it.

Okay, so thank you for giving us, I guess, a brief summary of your story. Like you said, it's like we could talk about that a lot, because I know that there were a lot of ups and downs throughout that process.

So can you tell us some thoughts that you chose when you were experiencing growing your family that helped you get through it or kept you in a mindset to continue to move forward?

Britt: I love that question. I've been thinking about it a lot in preparation for this interview. And I think, overwhelmingly I just reminded myself of all the hard things that I had done before. And all of the kind of preparation that I had been getting through my life experience.

I have had a really interesting and exciting career path. And with that comes a lot of problems and challenges that I was faced with. And I've had just really high pressure work environments basically, from the start. And so I would think all the time, "I've run huge press conferences. I worked for a congressman, I worked for a governor. I can get a little needle shot in my stomach."

And so whatever kind of version that is for you, hard things that you've gone through. I feel like that's typically what I've reminded my now fellow warriors along the way, is that they have gone through hard things and they can make it through just like they have before. And I also those hard things are preparing them for their journey to motherhood.

## 25. Infertility While Having a Career with Britt Larson

And I also think one thing that I have really tried to focus on is to allow myself to feel the feelings. To be sad when I see a pregnancy announcement that is bothersome and hard to process. But I really try as much as possible to remember that my journey has nothing to do with other people's.

In fact, earlier this summer, for whatever reason, and I think this is interesting and my therapist who specializes in fertility issues told me this is very normal, she validated it.

Jenica: Thank you. Wonderful

Britt: Yeah, thank you therapist, it's what I pay you to do. But she told me that oftentimes people struggle just as much after they have their child. And I definitely have fallen into that category. Before, when I was so focused on IVF a friend got pregnant it seemed like monthly. Both my brother's had kids while we were trying. And I was fine.

But since having my baby, a lot of my friends are now on their second, third, fourth kid and it's been really tough. And it's hard because I've thought to myself, "I have this perfect baby that I prayed for for so long. Why am I upset?"

And so earlier this summer I just had a day where I thought, "I have to snap out of it. I have to stop feeling sorry for myself." So I offered to do something for each of my friends who's expecting right now. And a couple of them I offered to throw like a little sprinkle. Another one I just checked in with and set up a time to hang out with them.

And just serving them really helped take me out of my funk, and again, remind me that them being pregnant has nothing to do with me. It doesn't take away from my future blessings and really has nothing to do with my life in general.

## 25. Infertility While Having a Career with Britt Larson

Because I see it so much in these forums, I've seen it with a friend, they just get so bitter. And it's easy to, because we are in this unique situation that is frustrating. And you have every right to feel sorry for yourself if you're doing IVF. I am so going to validate that, but you have to snap out of it at some point.

Jenica: Yeah. I love that you mentioned that. I think that for me, what I've learned most through coaching is in accepting and validating all of the emotions. And, yes, I think that there are really hard emotions. But I also think it's important to feel them and allow yourself to feel them. And realize there's nothing wrong with you for feeling them.

And I think that we compound a lot of our suffering when we do. Because we feel horrible for whatever it is that we're experiencing, whatever thoughts we're thinking based on the circumstances we're experiencing. So you have that feeling anyway, and then you compound it on top of it when you say like, "Oh, I shouldn't be feeling that way."

So it's like you're feeling that way, you're feeling crappy, and then you compound it and you're feeling extra crappy because you're not allowing yourself to feel your emotions like a human being. And so I think that it's, like you said, it's so important just to allow yourself that.

But I also love that once you've processed that you have found a way for you specifically to maybe feel better after that. And feel like you can move forward after you've processed those negative emotions.

Something I'd love to go back to is you have a baby now, are you going to try again in the future? Or what is your plan as far as growing your family?

Britt: That's a loaded question. And it's so funny, because the second you have a baby, people start asking you. I was shocked by that.

So we are trying to decide. And that's what's really tough, is we have an embryo that's frozen and so we could easily just do a transfer. But I've

## 25. Infertility While Having a Career with Britt Larson

thought a lot about how we want multiple children. And so we all know that a transfer is not a given.

And so the thought of doing a retrieval and starting the process from scratch after a failed transfer is really scary to me. I just feel like motivation wise I would be really stuck. So I am guessing we'll probably do another retrieval, probably in the spring. But I have no idea. I honestly have no idea.

We decided, as a couple, we would basically decide when our baby was one, so November.

Jenica: Yeah, no pressure.

Britt: My husband knows we've got to make a decision. And this is what's so hard about infertility. I'm such a type A planner, I plan everything. And I always knew it's not like you get pregnant right away. I know, there's some people who can literally plan down to the day, and bless their hearts, that must be really nice.

Jenica: She's not angry, you guys. She does love you, I promise.

Britt: But for the rest of us, for those of us who –

Jenica: For the rest of us... You're hilarious.

Britt: But we really do have to, you know, we have this weird ability to plan even more so in some ways. You can literally pick the day of your transfer. But all of those complicated questions, as far as I'm getting older and I will want to do the retrieval sooner rather than later. So how's that for a non-answer?

Jenica: That's a good answer.

Britt: I don't know what's next.

## 25. Infertility While Having a Career with Britt Larson

Jenica: Yeah, I mean that's how it is, right? That's a truthful answer. And that's how a lot of the women listening are feeling right now too, where it's like you don't know but you're just going to continue to move forward. Take it a day at a time and give yourself that grace through the process. So I thought that was a great answer.

Yes, yes. Okay. Another thing that I wanted to ask you, going back to what you said about you think it's maybe as hard, or still hard, after you've had a baby to process the emotions of experiencing infertility. Can you talk a little bit more about why you think that is?

Britt: So I think that for a really long time, years in my case. I think most people who go through IVF have been trying for years., And even friends or people that I know who have done IUIs or other fertility treatments, you're at this for a really long time. I put so much stock in everything in my life being resolved once I had a baby in my arms.

Jenica: Oh, interesting.

Britt: Thankfully, I went to a therapist who told me over and over again that that was not real and validated it but made sure that I understood that that was not going to happen.

Jenica: Yeah.

Britt: And it was odd because I had never felt that way about marriage or other things in my life. But I just had to have that kind of tunnel vision, I think, to move forward that everything will be okay what to have a baby.

Jenica: Yeah.

Britt: And I think what's been interesting is that I just have loved being a mom so much, I just want more babies. And I feel really lucky that I never had a specific number in mind of the amount of children that I wanted. I know there are people who really struggle with that. I've just been very pleasantly surprised how much I love it.



## 25. Infertility While Having a Career with Britt Larson

A lot of the things I thought I would struggle with, I haven't. And so it's just made me even more annoyed that it's going to be a lot of work to add to our family.

Jenica: Okay, yeah.

Britt: So I think there are a lot of things that are really tough about going through IVF that first time when you have been told you may not ever have children that I will never experience again. I have a child and I was able to resolve a lot of those really tough things.

I mean you asked me how we're planning on adding to our family, that is coming up all the time. And it's frustrating to me that infertility will always be part of my story. But to your earlier point, I have to let myself feel that, own it, and be okay with the fact that it's part of my story and a huge defining part of my life. And that's okay.

Jenica: Yeah. That is such a good answer, I love that. And you helped kind of explain that a little bit more. Something that I experienced after having my twins was kind of similar.

When we were thinking about trying to have another baby again I had this thought that was recurring to me that I figured out, after I had kind of suffered for a little while, was that I had experienced infertility, I had done that, I checked the boxes, that experience is done. And now I get to have a normal pregnancy. I get to have a normal experience in trying to conceive.

And yeah, I mean, I definitely was angry about that for a while, I was resentful. And when I processed that through and discovered that it wasn't benefiting me to think that and that I don't actually really believe that. Because I do believe that every human being is given trials in life and we can't necessarily pick those trials, but we do all have them. So if it wasn't this for me, it'd be something else. Then I was able to continue to move forward without the anger, without the resentment.

## 25. Infertility While Having a Career with Britt Larson

And so yeah, it is interesting because I think I thought when I first experienced it and after I had my kids that it wouldn't be quite so dramatic going into it again. And again, I mean, that is a choice, right? It's like these thoughts that I'm thinking that are causing the drama, but I think it was just a little unexpected.

So I think that after you have a baby, or two in my case, then you think it's going to be a little bit more smooth sailing from there. But it's still, I think, with any experience or any challenge, we still have the work of managing our thoughts around it.

Britt: Absolutely. That's very validating too, to hear you talk about that with your twins because I haven't heard a lot of people talk about that side of things. I mean, you hear a lot about secondary infertility and kind of the frustrations associated with it being straightforward and easy the first time.

I have a friend right now who is struggling to have her third and it was not difficult at all to get pregnant the first two times. Totally different issue but, obviously, I have a lot of empathy even though I can't completely understand it. And that, to me, is the beauty of all of this, is that I am so much more empathetic and understanding.

I know that I know very little of what is truly going on in most people's lives, because most of my friends and family didn't even know about our first cycle and it was really tough. And I think that it's just valuable to remember that that's not a one time thing, you're going to be processing that. And I still mourn a lot of the things that weren't normal.

Like you said, you were so excited to have a normal pregnancy and not be part of this stupid club. But it's always going to be part of your story that that's how you got your twins. And that's not going away and so processing those emotions, owning them, and then moving forward I think is really valuable.

## 25. Infertility While Having a Career with Britt Larson

Jenica: Yeah, I love that. And I love you said was one of the things that you gained through infertility was empathy. So that segues perfectly into my next question. Are there any other gifts that you experience now because of your trials in growing your family that you can share with us?

Britt: Absolutely. The one that comes to mind in the most obvious way is that I just feel like motherhood is so much sweeter. I think if I had gotten pregnant when I'd wanted to, I think I would have loved being a mom.

Like I mentioned at the very beginning, I've always wanted to be a mom. But I just feel like I relish in every experience, every diaper I change. I just am so excited to do the kind of mundane parts of motherhood that I frankly was very nervous about.

I was a VP at my company when I started IVF and was very used to that external validation and getting a lot of feedback about how good I was at my job. And I was making good money.

And so I had all of those things that kind of come with an impressive title and I was worried about motherhood not being fulfilling. Or that I had built it up in my mind, or just the day to day stuff being really hard for me. And I have just been shocked how much I enjoy it. And I know it's because I put in a lot of effort and work to make it happen.

I'd say that's the first thing is I love being a mom. And I think the way that I became a mom has helped me to savor those moments, you know, just rocking my baby and paying attention to him. And when I'm away from him I'm very thoughtful about the work that I'm doing.

And integrating motherhood into my life has not been as difficult, I think, because I also had so much more time. I don't think it's natural or normal to have as much time as I did to think about the kind of mother that I would be. There are good and bad things that came with that. But the good is that I was really prepared and I had really thought about what our life would look like and how much I wanted to work and all of those things.

## 25. Infertility While Having a Career with Britt Larson

I had always thought I would just be the type of person who went on maternity leave and then figured out if I want to go back to work or not. And through IVF, and especially through our second cycle I was able to kind of build out a schedule that was a lot more flexible that made a lot more sense for our life. And that wouldn't have happened, at least not in this way without IVF.

And then the empathy piece is something else that definitely has helped me be more open and vulnerable to other people. When we started our second cycle we decided, as a couple, to tell more people. I shared my story with the Livlyhood community for the first time. I had not talked about it at all publicly. I had several friends who didn't even know.

And that was so scary. It felt very, you know, "Look at me and my problems." And I really wanted it to come across genuine and authentic. And, thankfully, because I was willing to kind of muck through it and open up people were willing to share with me and learn alongside me.

And probably my favorite thing to date is when I get asked, "How do I help my co-worker going through IVF?" I love that people think of me as kind of a resource for that. Because I think as more and more people are opening up about this, inevitably you're going to work with someone who is going through fertility treatments. And so if I can help you help them, that's my calling.

Jenica: I love that. I feel like you and I have very similar backgrounds when it comes to working and being in that professional environment while also experiencing this hard thing in the background. And I didn't share about it with anyone at work during my first three IUIs and two rounds of IVF.

And I think specifically with me it was because I was nervous that at that point maybe people would count me out and be like, "Okay, she's doing this, she's just going to quit after." Which I did end up quitting.

## 25. Infertility While Having a Career with Britt Larson

But it's hard because you don't want to ruin your career professional life while you're trying for a family. And there are a lot of people that don't quit after. And you don't want people to assume that you will. And so I would love for you to share with us what you do now in helping with women that are experiencing infertility and working.

Britt: Absolutely. So the first thing I will say is when I found out I was going to do IVF I immediately googled "How do I tell my boss I'm doing IVF?" And I could not find anything. There wasn't even a blog post from someone random talking about this.

And so that's how you and I connected because I said, "Jenica, we have to talk about this. We have to talk about ambitious women going through these treatments." Because you feel so torn.

Because on the one hand, I actually found out that I had gotten promoted to be VP a week before I found out about IVF. So I got promoted, I have this life changing news. And I took on this kind of Superwoman persona and just pushed everyone out of the way. I had several people tell me there's no way you can keep working.

My closest childhood friend had done IVF because her husband had cancer. And she told me, "Britt, there's just no way you can keep up the travel and the management that you're doing. And this job is going to be very difficult to do while doing IVF."

And I'm so glad she told me that. And if there's a couple of takeaways that people have as they're listening to this, I hope that one of them is that it's okay to pause your career success to focus on your family. And I wish I could go back in time and tell myself that.

I was so nervous about maintaining this facade because I'd just gotten promoted that I did exactly what you did. I was super scared, I didn't want to be stereotyped as a woman who was just going to quit. Ironically, I did

## 25. Infertility While Having a Career with Britt Larson

end up quitting because I felt absolutely no support as I went through it. And I had been coaching on the side already.

And just as I was going through IVF and kind of realizing what I truly wanted from my life, I wanted the freedom and the flexibility of working for myself. And so I took my side hustle and made it my main hustle right before my second cycle, which was really tough.

And I have several friends who've worked through IVF. They were able to tell their bosses and the two or three cases that I can think of, they all had female bosses. But I work a lot with men and women in helping them figure out how their job fits into their life, and not the other way around.

And I think a lot of ambitious people make their job the priority and then everything else kind of falls into place as long as their job is in a good place. But they've completely forgotten self-care, they don't ever exercise, or they don't date or do these other things that are actually really important to being a whole holistic person.

So that also helped me see that building a family was really important to me. And I had all these examples from clients, and I still do, who are trying to make that switch where you can get all of those things, you just can't have them all at once.

I kind of take a little bit of a spin on you can't have it all, but you can have it at different times in your life in different seasons. And in that particular season, for me, my job was not the priority, and it didn't need to be. And that was okay.

Jenica: Yeah. Yeah, I love that. I think during my time, I wasn't supposed to quit by any means. I think that I should have done exactly what I did. My insurance was paying for our infertility treatments and I think with many people listening it's not an option to quit necessarily.

## 25. Infertility While Having a Career with Britt Larson

Britt: Oh, for sure, yeah. I didn't have that option either until we decided it would actually be cheaper than having another failed cycle. And I think I had a failed cycle because I was so stressed.

Jenica: Yeah, yeah. That's interesting. With people who choose to continue to work, what suggestions do you have for them to help them balance, I know balance is kind of an illusion. But help their self-care throughout the process so they're not just completely exhausted and burned out?

Britt: I love this question because for the most part all of us are doing something other than just focusing on building our family. And I actually think that's really healthy. I think if I had just outright quit working, I would have gone insane. I needed to build up my side hustle. And having that distraction, I think is really healthy.

So the first thing is to figure out how to tell your supervisor. I think you have to kind of look at how your company and leadership team treats people who have been in similar situations and kind of decide for yourself how you want to handle it.

I set up time with my boss, and you have to tell them because you have appointments and you're going to be gone for surgery and various issues that you may have, being late to work.

One of the best things I think that came out of Covid though is this kind of focus on flexibility and working from home. I hope it will really benefit women that are going through fertility treatments in the future.

So I set up some time with my boss and I just told him I was going through a health issue and that I was going to have a lot of appointments. I think he even maybe still to this day thinks that I had cancer or something because I said serious –

Jenica: Well, you know what? Good for you, honestly, because it's like he doesn't need to know all the details.



## 25. Infertility While Having a Career with Britt Larson

Britt: No, no, and I knew because I reported to the CEO at a small business. I had heard him talk about other people having serious issues when I was giving time off on my team when people had death in the family. And I just knew he was not going to respond well.

He also had already asked me if I was still on birth control and when I was going to be adding to my family. Which is completely illegal.

Jenica: Yeah, 100%.

Britt: So I knew all of this going in and already kind of had one foot out the door. But to your point, I needed to make my money so I could go pay for IVF. So I just thought I'll make it work for as long as I can and tell him all that he needs to know. Which is very little, that I'm going to keep doing my job but I've got some appointments that I've got to go to.

When I've helped other people go through this, like I said, I have friends who've told their bosses and I think that should be the preferred method. But you just need to kind of take stock of what's going on in your company and how these things are handled. Because the last thing you want to deal with is feeling like you can't make it work while you're also going through a really stressful treatment.

Which gets to my second tip, which is to give yourself a ton of grace. I felt so crazy during IVF. I know no one really reacts well, but I feel like I had every horrible reaction that you could have.

I wondered if it's because I don't have fertility issues, it's a genetic issue. And so like every extreme reaction you could have to Gonal, I had. Like you read the list, I had every problem.

Jenica: Yeah, fun times.

Britt: Yeah. I didn't have pants that fit me. And I just remember crying going into work and not knowing why I was crying.

## 25. Infertility While Having a Career with Britt Larson

And one particular story, I worked at a kind of bad area of Salt Lake. And I could not find my keys and I'm walking out. It's like 7:30 at night and I'm so desperate to go home but I couldn't find my keys and I look in and my keys were sitting right on my car seat in my unlocked car. Homeless people everywhere, like I don't know how my car didn't get stolen. And I just remember thinking, "I'm so out of it."

I'm on these really intense calls and I'm managing a team of 20 people, and I'm hiring, and I'm trying to do all these things. And I wish I could have just chilled, like just giving myself some grace at work and just accepted, okay, I got this promotion. I may not get another one for two years because I'm just going to kind of skate by this year and that's okay.

Or I'm going to go to work, and I'm going to punch out. And that's okay. This year doesn't have to be a really good year in every way. This year I am focusing on building my family.

And I think for ambitious, goal-oriented people that can be really hard. But just press pause. Press pause on your career success. That would be kind of my third tip. Give yourself lots of grace, but then just press pause. The path you're on will not be sustainable because you're adding in this really tough new experience.

I mean, you know, tracking your meds alone is a full time job. It takes so much out of you. So just try to press pause, do the bare minimum, it may actually pay off.

Jenica: Yeah, I completely agree with you on that. I think to add, I would check in with yourself.

So for me, I'm still glad I didn't tell my boss that I was doing all of this. Because for me personally, I know myself and I know I would – You can't control how other people react. And so for me, I think I'd be constantly worried like, "Is he thinking this about me? Is he counting me out of

## 25. Infertility While Having a Career with Britt Larson

opportunities because he thinks I'm just going to leave anyway?" Or whatever.

So I'm still glad I didn't tell him. But looking back, what I would do differently is slow down. And for me, I didn't realize it at the time, but doing back to back cycles was really, really taking its toll on my energy. And I think honestly it ended up wearing me out so much that that's why I got Epstein-Barr after my twins were born, the virus.

And so I think looking back, and I guess this could just be advice that people can take if they want to. If not, everyone knows what's best for themselves. But for me, I was just trying to do everything at my same pace that I always had.

And I think that looking back on it now, yeah, I think looking back on it now I would slow down and give myself maybe a month or two or three or however long I needed between those IUIs and between IVF and just really slow down a little bit.

Because like you said, for driven people who want to accomplish amazing things in life, it can be hard for us to press pause because that seems like we're slowing down. But in reality, I think if you push yourself so hard that you make yourself sick or you get so stressed out that you're not able to function as well as you could, you're really in reality slowing down.

And so it seems like counterintuitive, but I think in the long run it's better for your physical and mental health. And your career and everything else.

Britt: Absolutely, I wish I could – Amen.

Jenica: Hallelujah. Amen, sister.

Britt: Totally because I just felt so sorry for myself that IVF is throwing a wrench in this career progression. But in the last 18 months to two years I've built this amazing business and I wouldn't trade it for anything. And it

## 25. Infertility While Having a Career with Britt Larson

would not have happened if I hadn't been forced to make some tough decisions.

And so there could be a lot of beauty that comes out of that slowing down. I see it all the time with people that I manage, that sometimes when you just slow down and just focus on doing your job, you actually get promoted and get more opportunities. Because you're just doing your job well and people notice. And again, you shouldn't expect that in the middle of IVF you're going to somehow get promoted. It's too stressful to put that on yourself as well.

I do think, like you said, you know yourself, I know myself too. And I knew if I didn't have something else to work towards as well, that it was going to be even harder. I needed somewhere else to deflect some of my energy because I couldn't control how I was building my family.

So I felt really lucky that I was busy at work. I think that was great. I would never tell someone you can't work, because you need that. But like you said, just expecting yourself to operate at the same level as you did before is really silly. And I totally dealt with that too.

That's something I wish more doctors talked to you about that. Like you're going to be really sick, you are. And you'll react to it differently than anyone else who's done IVF because it's a very unique process. Just know that you're not going to be the same person and that's okay.

Jenica: Yeah, I love that. I think that what we're both saying also is just to not have expectations of yourself. And show up as the truest version of yourself that day. And that might be someone who isn't performing at her highest, most amazing self that day. But it's what you can give and I think that's enough.

And I think that expecting yourself to just show up in that truth of knowing what you're capable of, because we all know. I think that we try to hide and we try to tell ourselves that we're not doing our best because we're our own

## 25. Infertility While Having a Career with Britt Larson

worst critics. But I think in showing up as our best selves, I think that is absolutely enough. And you just need to convince yourself because everyone else is convinced.

Britt: It's true, and no one shows up at 100% all the time. Before IVF I don't know if I would have been able to admit that that's okay. This process taught me that, that there are going to be seasons of life that are just going to be really tough for whatever reason.

And I actually just posted about this with yesterday being world IVF day, that you have no clue what your boss is going through, and your co-workers. And it may not be a fertility issue, it may be a death, it may be a tough marriage, it may just be lack of sleep with young kids.

All of us have stuff going on, and no one shows up at 100% all the time. And so, like you said, be okay with that and accept it. And know also that it will change. I'm back to working and I love it. I'm showing up in a totally new and different way. Because I've changed since I've become a mother. Like I said, it's a really good thing, it's all been very positive.

Jenica: I love that, thank you. Okay, last question. What are some of the things that you do in your daily routine that you feel like help you show up in a mindset to continue to progress in your life?

Britt: I love this question. I felt a little bit slapped in the face by it and I'll explain why. I've never been good at taking care of myself. And so I had to learn through IVF how to do it better. And after that first failed cycle, I will give my husband a ton of credit, because you talked about this, that he said, "Can we please just pause for the summer, before we just jump into another cycle?"

And that was the best decision because it allowed me to do a ton of research on other clinics. And it forced me to lose all the weight that I had gained in that first cycle. And the weight was less of an issue, just the health side of it, of making myself a priority.

## 25. Infertility While Having a Career with Britt Larson

I have to do all of those things first, which I know is not a novel concept. But at the top of every single day in my planner I have move your body first. Because if I start off by taking care of someone else, or answering my emails, or getting caught up in other non-important things, it won't happen.

So I have to move my body first and I have to take care of myself first. And I've had to figure out how to make my job fit into my life and not the other way around. Because my natural tendency will be to wake up, work dawn to dusk, and then if there's time or energy left I'll take care of my people. And then at the very bottom of that list, I'll take care of myself.

And I think that's something a lot of women deal with. And that's a cycle I am committed to breaking. My mom is an amazing woman, I love her. She owned her own business, she's taught me that I can do anything I want. But she takes care of herself last. And that is something I've always given her a hard time about and I really want to break that cycle for myself.

So as far as daily habits goes, that's the number one thing for me, is I have to start off the day taking care of myself.

Jenica: Yeah, I love that and I agree because for me, my natural tendency isn't to do that either. But I know for a fact that it does help me the most. And it also helps those around me the most as well. Because when you fill yourself up you have more to give, both to your career as well as to your family as well. So I love that you said that.

Britt: And it's hard to remember that. But sometimes just that shift in thinking, actually over this last weekend I feel like we've gotten sick a lot lately. I wonder with Covid and everything in the last year and a half now that I just have no immune system left. And I keep thinking it will be cheaper for me to take care of myself than be hospitalized.

I mean, that's honestly the thinking I have to force myself to get to. And then it's not hard for me to make a good breakfast and go on a walk and exercise in the morning. But whatever you have to do in your mind, to force

## 25. Infertility While Having a Career with Britt Larson

yourself to realize that if you don't take care of yourself you can't take care of your people.

And I've also had to accept that this is going to be an ongoing learning curve.

Jenica: Yes, yes, yes. Love that.

Britt: When I was a brand new mom it was really hard to take care of myself. Those first few months are brutal, I can't imagine with twins.

Jenica: Yeah, it was crazy. I'm not going to lie. But we're alive, man. We're still alive, we're here.

Britt: And you're trying again.

Jenica: I know. Yeah, I question that every other day. But you know what? We're still moving forward.

Britt: You know, you go back and forth between – I actually just saw a meme that said something like, “I could have six more kids, and I think I'm good.” It's like a daily debate in my mind.

Jenica: Yeah. No, for real. Yeah, my kids are like easy now. They just turned five and I'm like, “You know what? We're like smooth sailing at this point.” At least for a few years. I feel like we're in the golden years where I still control their schedule, their problems are really little. So I'm like, here we go again, baby. I don't know about this.

Oh my gosh. Okay. Well, this has been amazing, Britt, thank you so much for talking about this with us today. And how can people find you if they want to connect with you? Which I know they will.

Britt: Thank you so much for having me, this has been awesome. So I would love for the women listening to follow me on Livlyhood. It's spelled L-



## 25. Infertility While Having a Career with Britt Larson

I-V-L-Y-H-O-O-D .com. I also have courses that I just launched, which could be a really good option.

If you're not ready to commit to a one on one coaching with me, I put together courses. Which I am really proud of this so I'm going to pat myself on the back because it was so hard. I was supposed to film them when I was six months pregnant because that was a genius idea that I had. And then I broke my leg while pregnant.

Jenica: No.

Britt: Yeah, I don't know if you knew that.

Jenica: No, that's awful.

Britt: It was horrible. I had to get surgery and had to be awake for it because of the pregnancy.

Jenica: Oh.

Britt: Yeah, it was nuts. So I didn't film my courses I ended up doing it two and a half months postpartum. Another great idea that I had.

Jenica: See guys, she likes to tell us really good advice. Sometimes she needs to remember her amazing advice herself. I love it.

Britt: Yes, exactly. Like those who can't do, teach. I am the epitome of that.

Jenica: It's okay, you're doing great girl.

Britt: So anyway I've put courses together to help people – Thanks. They're a lot cheaper, a lot more accessible than one on one coaching. But I cover everything from setting yourself up for success if you're coming back into the workforce after a break, negotiating for a raise, managing your time. They're awesome. They're all under 60, 70 bucks.

Jenica: That's amazing.

[Fearless Infertility](#) with Jenica Parcell

## 25. Infertility While Having a Career with Britt Larson

Britt: So they're also available on my website.

Jenica: Okay, perfect. We'll link them here in the show notes as well too.

Britt: Awesome.

Jenica: Okay. Well, thank you guys so much for being here and listening on Fearless Infertility. And again, I will link everything in the show notes that we talked about today, and I will 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/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.