

Coping as a Couple

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Well-being, a state of natural inner balance and self-worth, is deeply challenged by the negative emotions we experience while trying to get pregnant without success. It is virtually impossible to separate the physical issues of infertility from the emotional and spiritual processes that go with it.

While each partner may be struggling with feelings of powerlessness, anger, doubt and frustration, how we experience these and perceive solutions can differ widely by gender. Consider that there are three factors in this equation: both partners and the relationship itself. While each partner may be independently dealing with the stress of infertility, the relationship itself may suffer and communication can begin breaking down. Many couples have developed effective ways to deal with the differences of daily life, and yet do not understand their partner's deep emotion when faced with profound loss, frustration, and invasive medical procedures.

One way to increase understanding is the practice of "pivoting". This is a process of realigning perceptions and transforming bad feelings to feeling good. This is a way of consistently choosing what feels good. This ability will continuously strengthen, and the habit of harboring negative feelings will lose its stronghold.

Primary to the experience of many men, is struggling with how deeply upset their partner is. What they wish for most can be "a return to normal": daily routines, sexual relations, and a partner who can relax and feel good about herself again. The process of "pivoting" involves sitting down and writing a list of 5 items of what "normal" would look like. This way, focus is shifted to what is wanted and how to begin taking action on those items.

While very basic, this shift from the unwanted to the wanted will help to design and bring forth what is longed for in your lives together. If you are unsure of what to put on the list, simply beginning each sentence with "Wouldn't it be nice if..." and fill in the blanks.

Building positive well-being can also be done in segments by women. Research has indicated that most women internalize a sense of failure and self-blame at a higher rate than men. Pivoting from this profound state of despair can also begin with a list. Stop and say to yourself "I want to feel good." When looking at an issue in life what are we giving our attention to? What is wanted - or the absence of what is wanted? It is also very important to bear in mind as you sit with pencil and paper to be clear about your desires... are they yours, or that of your partner?

Underscoring this exercise in pivoting is the dimension of energy. If we are constantly focused on the absence of that we want- that is where our energy is directed. Making conscious choices, whenever and wherever needed keeps our energy on course with what it is we desire. Segment by segment and day by day you will individually create a stronger alignment between your desires and your energies.

As a couple it is important to share your lists with each other, as well as your experience with pivoting. Create an atmosphere of intimacy with candlelight and meditation music and make a list together - funding the energy and direction of your relationship. This way you will capture the delicious feeling that your relationship is greater than the sum of its parts and create a new wisdom in your patterns of relating. For more information on coping as a couple visit our website at www.cnyhealingarts.com.