

“Facing Grief in the Embryo Adoption Journey: You Are Not Alone”

by Jaclyn Davis

Embryo adoption (EA) often begins in a place of deep longing—and profound grief. For many, it follows years of painful experiences with infertility: **failed attempts to conceive naturally, miscarriages, unsuccessful IUI or IVF cycles, and the emotional toll of infertility itself.** Each month can feel like a cycle of hope and heartbreak, building into what some describe as an invisible, ongoing mourning process.

And even once someone chooses to pursue embryo adoption, the **grief doesn't necessarily stop.** There may be additional losses—**embryos that do not survive thawing, transfers that fail, or pregnancies that end in miscarriage.** These experiences can stir up complex emotions: sorrow over what might have been, confusion over how to grieve something so intangible, or a deep ache some describe as a **"miscarriage of hope."** You might find yourself wondering: *Are these feelings valid? Am I supposed to feel this attached?*

Yes. Your feelings are valid. And you're not alone.

Finding Meaning and Strength Through Faith

For individuals whose **faith plays a central role** in their lives, it can serve as a powerful anchor. Reflecting on how your reproductive journey fits within **God's broader plan** can offer comfort. Prayer, Scripture, or reminders of God's faithfulness during times of sorrow—like those seen throughout the Bible—can help restore a sense of peace and trust.

Communicating with Loved Ones

Talking to your partner, family, or close friends can help ease the burden. Let them know that the EA process can be emotionally unpredictable—a roller coaster of hope, fear, disappointment, and joy. You might choose to **set boundaries around what you share**, such as whether you disclose match updates, transfer dates, or results. That's okay. Your emotional safety matters.

It's also common to encounter **misunderstandings** from others who may not fully grasp what EA entails, or who question your choice to pursue it instead of IVF or traditional adoption. In these situations, it's perfectly acceptable to set boundaries by **directing them to a resource** or simply saying, “I appreciate your interest, but I'm not up for discussing that right now.”

Planning for Triggers

Certain situations—**baby showers, holidays, birth announcements, or even social media posts**—can unexpectedly bring up waves of grief. Think ahead about what might feel triggering

and how you'd like to respond. This might mean **leaving an event early, skipping it entirely, or finding ways to care for yourself afterwards**. Protecting your heart during this time is not selfish—it's wise.

Therapy Can Help Hold the Weight of It All

Given how emotionally complex EA can be, it's important to know that **you don't have to carry it all alone**. Individual, couples, or group therapy can be powerful supports. Since EA is still relatively new, many feel isolated, unsure whether their experiences are normal or if their feelings are valid.

If you're feeling this way, consider seeking out a **therapist familiar with embryo adoption** who can walk with you through the highs and lows. **Couples therapy** can also be helpful, especially if partners are processing the journey differently or struggling with shared decision-making. **Support groups**—either general infertility groups or EA-specific spaces—can offer understanding and community.

Wherever you are in this journey, know that your grief is real, your hope is sacred, and your story matters. Help is available—and healing is possible.