

A Well-Aged Newborn – Well Worth the Wait

As I stare into the eyes of this highly agitated five-month-old, I can't help but smile. We have given him a hundred nicknames and today, once again, he is Wailin' Jennings. I tell him he will be a big fan of Bob Marley and the Wailers. He smiles and I know what a miracle he is.

He is Nate. He received the name unofficially 15 years ago when my wife and I decided to have children. He is now in day care two days a week in a class of 11, and is the third Nate in the bunch. Since he is our first child, his official naming has been a long time coming. Like many other couples, we had no luck with the "kid goal," and while life took a winding road through those 15 years, here he is, loud, proud and set to be spoiled beyond his wildest imagination.

The "kid goal" started innocently enough, with questions from friends and family as to when we were going to "get at it" (which, during his first six weeks of life, I felt was a devious plot hatched by other parents wanting their friends to suffer). We innocently talked about how neat it would be and did internet searches on "conception" facts, read countless articles, and included a good amount of "practice," which wasn't the worst part of the deal.

Six months became a year. We wondered what was happening in the land of sperm and egg. We told those close to us that we were in no hurry, there was plenty of time, but inside we were feeling our first tinges of panic.

We sought help from University OB/GYN Associates on Floyd Street downtown and engaged ourselves in many tests, meetings, ideas, rituals, etc. as the medical community could come up with. No luck. Then the real "hands-on" stuff started. There were focused looks into our physical makeup, corrections through surgery, further "reasons" given, and then on to getting our goods together in the under \$2000 category. Nothing.

Seven years of stops and starts followed. We decided to check into in-vitro fertilization science. This, we found out, would put us in the \$10,000 game, along with more testing, surgery, and months of shots.

But we both had the necessaries, and whether we could afford to feed the kid if he/she were conceived and born became secondary. Toward the end of the procedures and readying of the necessary bits, things began falling apart with the "couple" aspect of our lives. The procedures were halted and six years passed.

We then decided to take all the science previously put in the deep freeze and made the leap. We implanted three embryos. One month later my wife was pregnant. The celebration ended a week later with a miscarriage.

We paid the yearly fees for maintenance of the remaining six embryos, not at all sure we could endure the emotional pain of another unsuccessful try. Eighteen months after the miscarriage we decided to give the process another shot. We made new inquiries and met Dr. Nakajima at University OB/GYN Associates. His conviction and empathy made the final decision an easy one. The process had improved and a few months later we implanted three more embryos.

The news of my wife being pregnant for a second time was met with reserved excitement and we told few people. After the second month of positive tests, we began to have hope. We watched the calendar and read everything we could get our hands on about the things that could go wrong, and right. At six months we were telling complete strangers.

A day or so before Louisville's big Christmas snowstorm, and three weeks early, a wonderfully fussy baby showed up. Previously, when people told us everything would change with childbirth, we smiled, nodded and had no concept. In the first six-week stretch, I must admit, we were sure this whole thing was some type of warped alien conspiracy for world domination to which we would have signed over the deed if it meant sleep. But change is OK. The first time he smiled I told him our ATM pin number so that he could do as he pleased with our depleted bank balance.

We're not sure how we'll tell him about his conception, and don't rightly care. We will tell him how much he was wanted, is loved, and that the rest really doesn't matter. I do wonder, though, if the little sucker will figure out he is due the car keys when he turns eight.

Dan Rose
Father to Nate Rose, Husband to Beth Rose.