



# The Millennial Life

podcast

with Liz Higgins

## **Episode 28: A Woman's Journey Through Infertility, A Conversation with Stephanie Booe**

Liz Higgins (00:02):

Hey, y'all! Liz Higgins here, and welcome to the Millennial Life Podcast, where my main goal is to share conversations that will inspire you and drive you toward the life and relationship you desire. I'm here to share what I've learned as a licensed therapist and relationship coach specializing in millennial relationships and wellness, as well as transformative conversations with other professionals. Thanks for listening and enjoy today's episode!

Liz Higgins (00:34):

Hey, hey everybody. Thanks for tuning into today's podcast! I'm really excited to bring on a guest, um, that I found on Instagram. Of course, us millennials, certainly like to hang out over there. And Stephanie Booe is with me today to talk about her journey, her experience with infertility, and going through the IVF process with her husband. This is such a relevant story for so many people out there, and I've certainly sat with clients going through this very experience. And so I think it just made so much sense to have Stephanie come on to the episode (or to the podcast) and talk about how this impacted her and just a real life, um, experience and relationship. Stephanie, thanks for being here today!

Stephanie Booe (01:25):

Hello. Thank you so much for having me Liz. I'm happy to be here.

Liz Higgins (01:30):

Absolutely. So why don't we just kick start by you introducing yourself? You know, I think you have quite a following going on your Instagram page, but for those who maybe haven't heard of you, or don't know you... Tell us a little bit about you.

Stephanie Booe (01:44):

Yeah. So my name is Stephanie. I am going to be the big 3-0 this year. I can't believe it! Um, I am married to my husband, Alex, and we have a beautiful son. His name is Aspen. He just turned one back in April. My career has been a bumpy road. I technically have a degree with high school education, but then I became a preschool teacher. And now, I'm an entrepreneur. Published author, writing for myself. And it's just been crazy, but it's been so much fun.

Liz Higgins (02:20):

That is so awesome to hear. It's, it's amazing when your personal journey can kind of shift your life around on lots of different levels... And I think you're doing some incredible things. So I'm excited to share more about all that with listeners. And so you, you experienced infertility and you went

through this journey of, you know, wanting to have a family, wanting to have children and, and hitting those roadblocks. Like tell us about that.

Stephanie Booe (02:51):

Yeah. So I have always wanted a big family. My mom has many brothers and sisters and holidays were just so much fun. Um, everybody was together and I just remember growing up thinking like, 'I want this, like, I want so many, like, just so much family in one space and just all the love to share'. And, um, then when Alex and I got married in, um, 2015, we, I mean, I'll be very honest. Like we were not using anything to prevent pregnancy. And then we officially started trying in 2017. And then after that whole year went by when we were like tracking ovulation and doing that kind of stuff, then we realized, 'Oh, something else might be going on'. So we made our first doctor appointment in 2018. And then that was the year that we found out about infertility. And like, I had never really heard about it. It was not on my radar. I honestly was very oblivious to, to this whole other world that exists of people who struggle to conceive naturally. And so 2018 was our year to do IUI. We did five of them and they failed. And it sucked. Um, 2019, we did one cycle of IVF and we did an embryo transfer in August of that year and it was successful. And then we have our son Aspen from that transfer.

Liz Higgins (04:29):

Wow. That is incredible to hear. And I was wondering, you know, what you would share about just that initial first stepping into that world of infertility? What is this like? Because I think you're bringing up such a huge point that as much as we know, and that as much as the medical field now has so many ways of helping couples in the same space, like... We're not in the mainstream. I feel like we're not really talking about it still, um, maybe like we could. And I even think back to when I, um, went to my doctor and, you know, they were like, are y'all planning to have kids at any point? I'm like, Oh, I mean, I guess we're gonna start. And it was like, okay, well, you know, try for a year. And if it's at a year, we'll see what happens. And like, that was all I kind of heard. And so I just think about that. And then your journey and everything you did end up going through before conceiving your son... Um, what do you think are some of the things that people, or that couples don't realize, or, you know, maybe don't know about this process before hitting it? Before getting there?

Liz Higgins (05:39):

Well, I feel like there's this huge disconnect between the, the idea of exactly what you just said of like, when you went to go talk to your doctor and they're like, 'Oh, well, you're going to have kids at some point, right?' And then it's like, you go for an entire year and then if things are not working out, then we can see what's going on. Versus being proactive and saying, 'Hey, there is a possibility of this'. Or maybe running some tests because I went to my doctor and I said, 'Hey, we're ready to start having kids'. And he was very nonchalant about it. And he was like, 'Oh, just have a good time, throw your legs up in the air and just go at it'. And I was like, 'okay, well, that's not exactly what I expected to hear'. And I definitely did not go back to that doctor, but I mean, there is a huge disconnect.

Stephanie Booe (06:28):

And I think that, like, having some sort of early intervention or just certainly some sort of conversation about it ahead of time might prepare people because I will never forget sitting in our doctor's office, and she's like, handing us these pamphlets and brochures. And we're hearing these words of infertility and IUI and Clomid and IVF. And I'm like, why I have, I knew IVF back in the nineties when it first came out as like, quote, test tube babies. Like that was my understanding of IVF because I don't feel like it's talked about, right? Like society just makes conception to be so natural. And it's just sometimes like, it's just not like, it's not that way. And so I think some serious,

like, education and communication could really prepare people for, for like what, like what could happen or this potential of, 'Hey, this may not work for you, but that's okay. You have options' instead of just being completely blindsided.

Liz Higgins (07:35):

Yeah. And so, as I'm hearing you talk, I'm imagining you sitting in that doctor's office with your husband, I guess he was there too. And you're being given resources, pamphlets, these words coming out, these references, you know, and this is, I just wonder... I want to ask you, can you reflect on the emotional experience you had even at that point in the process?

Stephanie Booe (08:01):

Yeah. I mean, I, so I mean, I remember he was sitting on my right and I just remember looking at him and I just felt like our dreams were crumbling and I immediately felt like, Whoa, we have like, even though she's handing us options, we have no hope. I mean, we, and I'm also kind of like, well, wait a second. And then I'm sitting there doing the math in my head and I'm like, why did we not realize this sooner? You know, like I said, we weren't trying to prevent it. And so I'm just literally thinking through everything of, well, why hasn't this been working? And was it something that I did? Was it something that we could have prevented? Was it, were we maybe not doing something the right way? Were there red flags that I've been missing in my own personal health? Or maybe in his health? And just like every possible thing was just running through my mind.

Stephanie Booe (08:54):

And she, like, our doctor is saying these huge words, like why? And I'm like, what the heck is an IUI? What is IVF? And then I'm like, Oh my gosh, how expensive is this? What are we going to do? Can we afford this? Or is this even something we can do? I mean, it's literally like you're sitting there and like one, one part of my brain is like listening to what the doctor's saying and trying to process it. And the other part of my brain is trying to figure out how did we get here? Like, what happened? How are we here? What, like, what just happened? Our whole world just imploded.

Liz Higgins (09:33):

Yeah. Total, total shock, total shock. And it's like, when we feel powerless or hopeless to circumstances, I think we often try to find some semblance of control in the situation, like an answer or a reason. And all those questions that you were just sharing... It's like you were in that space. Like, let me just know why this is happening. How did we get here? Can you describe like the, the process, the series of conversations with your partner, your husband, about, you know, after you got all that information and decided to proceed with fertility treatments, like how did you all navigate those conversations?

Stephanie Booe (10:18):

I think that we were just very... The first thing is, we just had to be open with one another and we just had to really look and say, what are we going to do? Is this an avenue that we want to take to pursue these treatments? Or, you know, where do we feel most comfortable? And just like have that conversation of, I would ask my husband, 'Hey, what do you feel comfortable with?' And then he would tell me, and then he would ask what I felt comfortable with. And thankfully we both were in agreement. Like, we both felt comfortable starting with IUI. And I think that after that initial visit, we were both just, we took some time to reflect on it individually and then we came together and had a conversation about it. And then we were like, 'okay, well, this is what we have to do.'

Stephanie Booe (11:07):

So this is... We're going to do it.' And we just kind of jumped in with both feet and started doing the testing, because then after that, then we went through a series of tests of, of blood tests and, um, sperm analysis and all that stuff. And we just had to be very open and honest with one another and have conversations that I never thought that we would have to have. And I think in the beginning we were very hopeful. And so I think that that also fueled a lot of, of our decision-making because we felt so hopeful in, okay, well, there's, there's options, so it's going to work. And so going into that, you know, we just had to be vulnerable.

Stephanie Booe (11:54):

And I think that that was a huge thing too, is that I realized really fast that all of the medications that I was on messed with my hormones, and I would just have to look at him and say, 'Okay, so I'm going to start crying. And I have no idea why, but here's what I need from you in this moment.' And he was, it was funny because the first few times he's like, Oh my gosh, Oh my God. Oh my God. And then like, after a while, like we both vocalized like, Hey, this is what I need right now. Or, Hey, this is what's happening. And I have no idea why I feel this way, but this is what I need from you in this moment. And we just had a lot of grace to know, like we just have to, to work together.

Stephanie Booe (12:39):

And I think that the biggest hurdle was just learning to have that communication of this is what I'm going through. This is what I need from you. I have no idea why I'm going through this, but we're in this together.

Liz Higgins (12:52):

Wow. I mean, as a, as a relationship coach, as a therapist, I'm like, Oh gosh, you know, this is amazing to hear that y'all kind of had somewhat of a template to be able to turn to each other and face those unknowns. Almost embrace the uncertainty of everything and not knowing why you were feeling something or why you would be crying, but that this is what it was. And here's what I need. It sounds like y'all both responded to each other well, in that way, that's awesome. As I'm thinking about this, I'm like, Oh my God, we should have him come on this podcast.

Liz Higgins (13:33):

Maybe we should do that sometime because, you know, I don't know. I didn't think that, but, um, anyways, that, yeah. Yeah. Well, and I get that impression from your page too. Just how in it you both have been, which is, I think, an interesting point to check in with you on too, because you're right. Like ultimately you made this decision as a couple, but ultimately you are the one that has to take the medicine, to do the procedures, potentially to feel the physical nature of what's happening. And, you know, I guess I just want to ask you a little bit about that and how it impacted you on an emotional level. Just being the one that was, you know, literally experiencing this.

Stephanie Booe (14:20):

Um, it was, it's, it's really hard. Um, honestly, it's actually something we were just talking about the other night and it's still something that affects me and that I am impacted by. Um, cause here we are. I mean, this was... All that happened back in 2018. And so now, here we are three years in and I actually told Alex the other night, I'm like, you know, for the last three and a half years, like my body hasn't been my own. I've been picked, poked, prodded.

Stephanie Booe (14:52):

And I have been on an emotional roller coaster, whether it was the medication from IUI, and then IVF, and then pregnancy, and then postpartum, and now motherhood. And it's just been a roller

coaster of constant physical touch. And it's been very overwhelming. And I have told him like, there are some days, like I just don't want to be touched. I just want to think for myself, I just want to do what I want to do. I don't want to have to worry about, 'Oh, I've had one cookie today. I can't have another cookie because we're prepping for this procedure, we're prepping for this...' Like that impact and that mindset has been so exhausting and it's been a nonstop thing for... Since the day we found out about infertility really. It's just been a nonstop, cognizant thing that I've just had to be aware of like what I'm doing.

Stephanie Booe (15:51):

And that's been very hard. Thankfully, like, I know how to handle myself, um, for the most part. And I have just tried to get outside a lot and too, I'm, I'm a writer. And so it's very cathartic for me to write through what I'm experiencing and that's why I do share a lot on Instagram, um, and through my blog. But I will definitely say that it is still very exhausting on the backside of a lot of things that people don't see. And there are still days even now where, like I said, I just don't want to be touched. Like I just want to sit and be my own person for, for just like 30 minutes.

Liz Higgins (16:36):

Absolutely. And yes! I'm a mother of two and I'm like, yes. And you're, you're describing like the, some of the facets of motherhood that as a culture, we still, I think, I think a lot of millennials, a lot of people like you, too, actually are trying to put the realness of that experience out there for others to feel connected to. That they're not alone in those thoughts where it's like, leave me alone. But again, then I just think about women like you, couples like you, that choose to go that path of fertility treatment. And like, you're saying that access of poking, prodding, you know, no more physical ownership of your space while you choose to do this process - that goes beyond even just the getting to motherhood part. It's everything before. So that's something that even years later you reflect on and you're recognizing just about how that impacted you. Yeah. Tell me more about, and maybe I'm even wondering if, as you think about people listening to this episode that are in a relationship, they're married or whatever, and they're choosing to go this path as a couple. I want to ask you to kind of speak to the way that all this impacted your relationship to your husband, and maybe things that you would share to other couples that just have no idea what's coming in terms of the process.

Stephanie Booe (18:10):

Um, the biggest thing, Alex and I, I, agreed from the very start. We said, okay, well, if we're going to do this, then we have to work first. If we are ever at odds or we are, like, seriously struggling in our marriage, then we're going to stop with the fertility treatments. And we're going to make sure that we are okay first because we, we are driven. Like, we are married first. And in order for any foundation of a future family to work, we have to work first. And that was our mindset the entire time. And so if we ever sensed that we were struggling or that we were, you know, getting to be in a lot of arguments all the time or disagreements, like we were just going to stop. And take a break and focus on our marriage, and then pick up again. With that in mind, we were very aware of the other person.

Stephanie Booe (19:13):

And so we made date night, once a week, a priority where we had the rule of, we're not talking about fertility treatments, we're not talking about any work. We're not talking about anything other than just focusing on having fun and connecting. And that was extremely pivotal for, for the way that we got through that process. Um, I think that that's an important thing to instill in the relationship is that you have to come first. You and your spouse have to work first because it only gets harder. The challenges don't stop when you get a positive pregnancy test. And it definitely doesn't stop when you have a baby. You might think that the infertility challenges might go away

(and they do), but they're still kind of there. And there's like other challenges. So you have to make sure that you and your husband or your spouse are, are connecting and that you come first. That has got to be the basis of everything.

Stephanie Booe (20:19):

And communication is so important. Um, we always took the time to make sure that we were individually digesting appointments or news. And we said, okay, we'll take the afternoon. And we'll think about it. And we'll come together tonight and have a conversation. So then that way we could both digest it on our own and have that freedom to do it individually, but then to come back and make sure that we were having conversations as a couple. And there were some times where, you know, those conversations would be very in-depth and very emotional and we would talk through a lot of things. And then other times where it's like, 'Oh yeah, we're in agreement. Okay.' And the conversation would last 10 minutes. But I think the open communication and just like focusing on making things work is just so important,

Liz Higgins (21:08):

Such great stuff. And, and I'm wondering as you reflect back on the past three, three and a half years since y'all started, had started all this, do you feel... does it resonate for you that there were maybe, like, seasons of that time when you felt more aligned with your husband versus times when you just felt like y'all were just so far from each other? Because the experience was just drastically different for each of you? Like, what would you say?

Stephanie Booe (21:37):

I would say yes. I would absolutely say that there were parts where we were very much in sync, but then it's exactly what we just spoke about. Like, he doesn't understand the physical toll that infertility takes and that's, that's just how it is because he's not experiencing the hormone medication. He's not experiencing the procedures. Um, and whenever we would go through the IUI, I would take the pregnancy test by myself because I always wanted to be able to have that experience to tell him. I didn't want that to be like a joint thing. I wanted to be able to tell him. That was something I wanted to have control over. Um, and I felt like infertility took that from us anyways. So that... Those experiences, he could not understand because he just, he just can't, he wasn't the one that was personally going through that.

Stephanie Booe (22:39):

And so I do think that there was a disconnect. And I would be saying, this is how I feel and he'd say, Oh, okay, like, I'm sorry. You know? And he was very good. Like, he's, he's a very good listener. And he would take such good care of me and he would sit and listen to me talk forever. And he would hold me when I was upset and I cried. But there was a disconnect because I did feel like, while him and I were going through this together, I was still somewhat alone because he can only understand so much. And unless I have someone who has specifically gone through everything, you know, there, there's no one there that could have like empathized with me or said, 'Hey, I understand that feeling.' Um, and that was another reason why I was really hoping to reach out, was hoping to find a community. Because I think I knew one person here, um, locally, a friend that thankfully she guided me and helped me through so much. And I could talk to her about a lot of things, but reaching out and sharing our story, brought me a community in which I felt like I wasn't alone. And it kind of filled that other portion of the void that like, unfortunately my husband just could not understand.

Liz Higgins (23:56):

Right. And I think that that is such an important conversation to have, which is the fact that, of course our culture still values marriage. And that's an incredibly unique relationship that's going to meet very unique needs and all that stuff. But, you know, it's really important, I think, to also not place every single need that we have on all avenues on each other. And so to hear that, you know, you allowed yourself to expand beyond and find that support, um, from other women and stuff. It sounds like that was a really helpful piece of the puzzle. Just, you know, to nurture that part of you, that was going through such a unique, yeah, learning with this. Can you, um, I'm thinking more on the like emotional experience of it all. And I don't know if you can even just think back and like name some of the emotions, the feelings that you experienced throughout this time.

Stephanie Booe (25:01):

I felt a lot of, I felt lonely because I mean, you open social media and I feel like all the time people are sharing their pregnancy announcements. And that's great, but it's also very hard. Also, I feel like in a society where, you know, we live in a society where they portray that pregnancy and conception are just as easy as getting into bed and having unprotected sex. And that's just not the case. And so when you constantly see, you know, these positive pregnancy test commercials, or, you know, it's not even talked about in sex education in school! Um...

Liz Higgins (25:40):

Oh no, certainly not there. Yeah.

Stephanie Booe (25:43):

I mean, and that's just a whole other topic. Like I could go on for days about that. Right? I mean, this society that like doesn't ever really bring up the conversation of infertility, like it's so isolating. And you know, they say one in eight, but half the time you feel like one in 8 million because... Unless we're really open about it, no one talks about it and I get it. But at the same time, like I do think that we, as a society, need to like bring up this conversation more. And so I felt isolated. I felt alone. I felt guilty because I kept feeling like, was there something that I did where we could have like somehow avoided all of this? I felt shame because nobody talks about it. It's kind of like, Oh, well, you know, is this wrong then? Is there something wrong with us? Which leads me to say that I felt broken, um, that I couldn't provide my husband in that way of, of being able to have a child for him. I felt, I just felt like every emotion under the sun, except for joyous and happy. Like all of the, anything I felt angry, I felt so angry. There were so many times where I would just say like, why us, why are we going through this? Why is this something that, that we have to endure? And it was just, I mean, it was hard. It was really, really,

Liz Higgins (27:19):

Absolutely. I hear you. And, you know, it's where you started on that question of like emotional experiences that you had with that sense of loneliness, feeling alone, and then went into some of these other bigger, not bigger, but big emotional experiences as well, guilt, shame, you know, anger, all this stuff. Um, I think that all of those, you know, they just compound that feeling of isolation that, you know, depression or loneliness can just, those voice, those internal voices make you feel so isolated. They can oftentimes pull you away from that desire to connect, to find help, to share the burden, to share the story. And, um, yeah. So, so it feels, you know, even more relevant than to ask you, like, when was it in your process where you like, sought out that support beyond your relationship and, you know, what started that? Who did you go to? How did you kind of find, you mentioned a friend, but what got you reaching out?

Stephanie Booe (28:28):

Um, honestly, I, I still... So my friend, I, I, it was actually through the preschool that I worked at, and I think it was just kind of known among the teachers that, that like this family, that she had gone through IVF. And because I had been talking with the teacher that I was working with and I was like, Oh, Hey, you know, this is kind of what we're struggling with. You know, just nonchalantly in conversation. She said, Oh, you should, you should talk with her. Like, I think that she went through IVF. And so that's how it kind of sparked in her. And I had already been good friends because her son was in one of my classes and I babysat for her son a few different times. And so through that, then it kind of opened up that conversation where I could say, Hey, I heard that you experienced this.

Stephanie Booe (29:24):

And then we kind of had that conversation and it was able to flow from there. Um, I will absolutely be very honest in saying that when it comes to reaching out with, um, friends, I did the opposite. I, I feel like I kind of grew into myself and pulled away from a lot of the friendships that I had because they did not understand. And because as an infertile woman, it's really hard to be open with my very fertile friends who are having babies and to, to express this. But then also to say like, 'Hey, it's also really hard to sit in a room with you and your children while I'm receiving negative pregnancy tests every week.' Um, and so that was also really challenging. And so I didn't necessarily reach out to my friends in that season. Um, we reached out to our family and we decided to fill our family in on the decisions that we were making about pursuing this. When we were starting the process of IUI, we said, 'Hey, this is what we're going through. And, you know, we would just love your support in this time.'

Liz Higgins (30:38):

Stephanie, do you feel like you got the kind of, um, receptivity from your family that you would have hoped for, or was it one of those experiences where it's like, you put it out there, you share the information, it's kind of a mixed bag of the feedback, the commentary, how was that for y'all?

Stephanie Booe (30:56):

Um, I think it was a little bit of both. And I think that's just because people don't understand. We didn't have infertility in either of our families. And so I think that maybe the disconnect definitely came from people just not knowing what to say, or people not knowing how to respond. Um, overall, I would say that our family was extremely supportive. They remembered our appointments and our big days, and they would always reach out to us throughout those times in our journey. And they would be very helpful. But I do think that, I mean, there is, you know, that that understanding can only go so far when it hasn't been something that they've experienced themselves. Um, and so I do think that it was overall supportive, but then also like a mixed bag kind of like you were saying strictly, because it's not something that they could have experienced or like have known or understood fully themselves.

Liz Higgins (32:00):

Right. Right. And that's what I have heard, you know, from clients that I've sat with who have gone through similar experiences. It's like, and there's different versions of this that we're talking about of not knowing what somebody else is going through. I mean, you went through that with your partner. You went through that, it sounds, with some family, with friends... And, you know, you, you choose to respond accordingly. Um, I think that what I've seen as a therapist and coach it's like, it's, it's, it's on the nose of what you're talking about. There's a huge difference between knowing what somebody is going through and feeling those same things, which is much more rare than I think we wish it would be. And, um, the other piece of, of trying to understand what



somebody's going through, and I mean, I want to ask you about that. Like for people on the outside of the process that might even be listening to this podcast episode, for people who maybe know somebody that's going through fertility treatments, or just got this information that they're dealing with infertility or whatever, like, what do you think are some of the ways that they can support? Like what could they say, what would have been nice for you to have heard maybe from people that you knew didn't get it because they hadn't experienced it?

Stephanie Booe (33:28):

I think, um, the, the biggest question that you could ask to start out with is when they come to you, would be to say, 'What, what do you need from me in this moment? Do you need me to listen? Or would you, are you seeking advice or do you want to have a conversation?' Um, and ask that, and then based off of their response, like, listen and adapt. So if this, if your friend or your family member, who's going through infertility, they're like, I just need somebody to listen. I just need to talk. Then I would just sit and listen and not try to give commentary or not try to give your input and just listen and let them know that you're there for them. And I think that, that's the biggest thing that you can do is just let them know that you're there, but also like follow up with that, like be there and, and give them the support that they, that they ask for, whether it is having a conversation, whether it is advice.

Stephanie Booe (34:30):

Um, if this is someone that you're really close with and they have talked to you about going through IUI or IVF, I would encourage you to do some, like, research on that, like, okay, what is an IUI? What is an IVF? So that maybe, you know, you don't have to ask those questions. Like maybe you already know, or, you know, it just shows that you're taking an interest in what they're experiencing and going through. And that's just like another form of support. And I think that that's huge, right? If someone said, Hey, I read up a little bit about what you're going through. And I just wanted to say, like, I can imagine that's really hard. Like, what can I do? Like, that would be so out of the norm of, like, anything that I had ever heard, and it would show me like, wow, this person cares enough to know what I'm going through.

Stephanie Booe (35:22):

That they went and like, read up about what I'm experiencing. Like, wow, they must really care. And I think half the time is just like sitting and listening, but then also remembering, like I said, the big days in their journey. If they have an appointment, if they are going, going through the weight of, okay, we just had this IUI and then the pregnancy test is going to come up in two weeks, like be there in that time, whether it's taking them out to coffee or just having coffee delivered to them or something along those lines, just little tidbits of like, 'Hey, you're not alone. Like I may not understand fully what you're going through, but I am here.'

Liz Higgins (36:02):

I think that's so beautiful. And it almost simplifies things for the friend or the family member, whoever that is on the outside of this experience, but wants to be there. It's like just lean in, just lean in with the curiosity and intentional effort to be there for that person. You don't have to know every single thing that you should be doing for this person. There's no way you could. And each person's journey is unique, but, um, feeling empowered that you can ask, what do you need? What could I do that would feel like me showing up and supporting you through this. It's really a practice of holding onto yourself, holding onto your opinions, thoughts, feedback, past experiences, which we often go to first. It's like, you know, I think it's just a human way of connecting to other people's experiences.

Stephanie Booe (36:55):

Well, I went through this one time where they said 'Oh I knew somebody who...' And that's just never what somebody needs in a moment like that. So just letting it be this blank moment of, wow, you just shared something huge. Like what can I do? What do you need from me?

Liz Higgins (37:17):

As I reflect on what you've shared, Stephanie, it's like with your husband and the way y'all went through this journey together, as you've kind of come to identify like what friends and family can do to be helpful... I think of, I think of like two words. One is, is clarity. Like now maybe there's a little more clarity on just being, being aware of how you want to move through such an experience of unknowns, full of unknowns and uncertainties to just focus in on like who you want to be in your relationship and what the priorities are and not losing sight of the important pieces, your marriage, for example, like setting that boundary, honestly at the start of making sure that you two are good and just identifying some of those markers for your unique relationship to kind of help you navigate what would be a winding road ahead. I do want to ask you in just a second about your book. I want to ask you about that. But before that, um, as we kind of wrap up this conversation, is there anything else that you would say to listeners that are in this space that are going through this? Just anything else that you've mentioned?

Stephanie Booe (38:38):

Um, I just want to encourage you that you are not alone. That you, it may feel that way, but, but you are not. And the best thing that I can encourage you to do is to communicate, um, don't bottle all of this in, and don't hold it into yourself. Like that's, that weight is too heavy for you to carry. You are not made to carry that weight, have communication with someone, whether it's seeking a professional help, whether it's having more conversations with your spouse, whether it's reaching out to friends or just seeking community through social media, whether it's through infertility hashtags to find new profiles that you mesh with, or, um, just having those conversations or DM-ing people and asking if you can have a conversation with them. For me, I'm really open and honest, and I welcome those kinds of messages. I don't know about a lot of other people, but I, I think that reaching out and just having someone to talk through everything that you're experiencing is very important. And I want to encourage you to do that because carrying this all alone will, it will bring you down. It's too heavy for you to do on your own. And it may feel like you're alone, but you are not alone. And so I just encourage you to share the weight with those who want to help you carry it.

Liz Higgins (40:01):

Yeah, that's awesome. So really stretching beyond that tendency to kind of curl inward and be isolated, but to let this be a very relational experience, use your relationships to lean on throughout this process, talk about it. And that doesn't mean everybody that's going through. It needs to go set up an Instagram and share their whole journey. But I think you're an amazing example of those that feel called and courageous enough to put it out there and just normalize some of those, um, just impactful things that people will go through on the journey. Thank you.

Stephanie Booe (40:40):

And it is hard in the beginning. It feels very weird and vulnerable, but the more that you do it, the more that you have the open conversation with, with people who want to listen, the easier it gets. So I will definitely say that.

Liz Higgins (40:57):

Yeah, yeah, absolutely. I couldn't agree more with you and I encourage you to keep it up. Cause I think you're putting a very healthy narrative out there around what this looks like and how it can impact, um, a relationship, too. Tell us about the book. Um, you and your husband, like, co-authored this little book, right?

Stephanie Booe (41:17):

Yes, yes, yes. Um, I have been a writer my whole life and my, my, one of my biggest dreams has been to write a book. And I remember telling my husband, I said, 'I really want to write, like, a novel of our entire experience.' And he was like, 'Hey, that's great.' And so I'm like starting to work on this in my mind and just like starting to map that out. And he's like, 'Well, wait, what if you wrote a children's book?' And I was like, 'No, I was like, that's not me. That's not my style. I'm never going to do that.' And then one night I was in the shower and it all just like came to me and I remember getting out of the shower and I like ran out into the kitchen in my towel. And I was like, 'I think we have a book.'

Stephanie Booe (42:02):

And he's like, 'What!?' And so I sat down and I wrote it all out and then we worked on it together and made the words flow and you know, he helped me like move this stuff and move that stuff. And then we just went through this entire process and I just remember, he's like, 'Well, like let's do this. Like, let's get it published.' And I was like, this is crazy. And he's like, but we're going to do it. And we did it. I called publishers in our area and this one publishing company reached out to us and I loved them and we just meshed with them really well. And, Oh my gosh, like we have a book and it's gorgeous and it's beautiful. And it's, it's most importantly a tangible piece of hope for people that are going through any sort of hardships. So it's not specific to infertility or IVF. The title is You Were Worth The Wait and that's for any family who has ever experienced a hardship while building the family of their dreams. Um, any, you know, couple that has known what it has been to wait for the child that they have so long wanted. And that's, that's our book. And that's what it's for is to help people and to give them a tangible piece of hope in their waiting.

Liz Higgins (43:20):

Oh, that's beautiful. I was looking at the site for your book, um, the other day. And I'm like, this is so amazing. I mean, the illustrations are just wonderfully done. And, um, I, yeah, I'll probably be getting some copies myself to, to pass out to some loved ones I've got over here.

Stephanie Booe (43:40):

Yeah.

Liz Higgins (43:41):

And to wrap it up, let us know, let me share with listeners, or you share with listeners, where can they find you? Where can they find information about this book? Um, follow you and just see what you're doing? What's your Instagram?

Stephanie Booe (43:53):

Yes, absolutely. So, um, the website for a book is [youwereworththewait.com](http://youwereworththewait.com). And if you order off of that website, you're ordering directly from us. And so we wrap and sign every book that we send out. We have a big stock pile here at our house, and we would be honored to send you a book. Um, you can find me on Instagram. My handle is [stephaneeneee](https://www.instagram.com/stephaneeneee) which is, um, N E E - N E E E... It's a little long. I'm thinking about changing it right now. And those are the two big places. Yeah. It is what it is. So that's where I hang out. You can come hang out with me there.

Liz Higgins (44:32):

Yes. Awesome. And I will be posting links to all of this stuff in the show notes, I'll be putting up, um, some Instagram stuff of my own that connects everybody listening to Stephanie's profiles. So if you want to follow her and see what she's putting out there, I think you, you would really feel inspired by the message. And again, just the normalization of this process and what it looks like through one families' experience.

Liz Higgins (44:55):

So thank you so much, Stephanie. This was really wonderful having you on.

Stephanie Booe (45:00):

Thank you. I'm so honored to be here. I really appreciate you, Liz.

Thanks again for listening to the podcast. If you like the show, leave us five stars or write a review. If you're interested in learning more, sign up for my free ebook "The One Barrier to Commitment All Millennials Face" at [millennialrelationships.com](http://millennialrelationships.com).

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