

Forever Angels



Hello Everyone,

MBC had an amazing Retreat lined up for the delegates last weekend in Collingwood, Ontario. What a beautiful area of the Province. I had not been up there before and had not realized that the Niagara Escarpment began so far North of the Toronto area. Live and learn. There were some wonderful speakers who encouraged us to look after ourselves so that we could be strong enough to deal with issues we might find in the workplace, in our Chapters, with family, friends or neighbours. I am speaking of conflict in particular. Hoo-boy can that be tough and take some practice! How does one be respectfully honest in setting boundaries and limitations when need be? In a nutshell by stating what we need, keeping to the current issue and not bringing up issues from years back or even last week. It is helpful if we make some eye contact, stick to the issue at hand (e.g. I am not sure I understand what you just said; your behaviour determines my decision) and realize that we each have a right to set limits and boundaries for others' inappropriate behaviour. It is also important to try and deal with issues at the time and not let them fester too long as our own active imaginations and perceptions can negatively colour what has happened.

One brilliant piece of advice for taking care of yourself when feeling stressed, is to place a hand on your heart and think of the people you love and who love you. Close your eyes. Stay that way breathing slowly for at least 10 seconds. It really does work.

When we weren't in meetings, free time had some excellent choices: either a visit to the Spa with massage, hot tub and steam room or hike, history and zip lining. Both choices were winners and a good time was had by all participants.

Hope this finds all well with you and yours. If there is anything you would like to share please drop me a line, you know the routine and I can be reached at loss@multiplebirthscanada.org We look forward to hearing from you about anything at all,

Thinking of you,

Lynda

*Give sorrow words; the grief that does not speak
Whispers the o'er-fraught heart and bids it break.
~Shakespeare, Macbeth (IV, iii)*

Loss of Twins.....

I found out I was pregnant on June 15th. I had just completed the DONA birth doula training the day before and was absolutely certain that I wanted another baby. I was so excited to see a plus sign, and it was just one day after I had made the decision that I could have another and really wanted to. One of my good friends took her IUD out the day after I found out I was expecting and “poof” got pregnant right away. We were to be pregnant together, that was a first for me, generally I’m the only one pregnant.

Everything was progressing pretty uneventful, within four weeks my belly had swelled and it was obvious there was a life in there. I was so excited. This was my 5th baby so I felt pretty in-tune with what was going on in my body. That is why I was not concerned when I started spotting. I had spotted with all of my previous babies so I was not worried at all! I carried on doing what I normally would. I started planning my diaper stash, what carrier I would need and was planning to buy a happy hangup for bedtimes (for times when we weren’t sharing a bed). I was also trying to prepare myself for tandem nursing as my 18-month old is nowhere near weaning, I thought for sure I’d be nursing two.

I had a pretty weird dream one night and to this day it still bugs me that I can’t fully remember it. Essentially I had a dream that I lost twins. I couldn’t believe it, twins! Well, at least in my dream. I had a strange feeling though, could there really be twins? I had a big decision to make regarding this birth: whether to go for a midwife assisted birth where we would travel for the midwife, or a UC at home? I was not willing to go back to the hospital. Regardless of what we decided, I needed to have an ultrasound to check for twins. I thought I’d deal with that later.

Weeks went by and I continued to grow and bond with the life in my belly. I started buying maternity clothes and little books to read to the baby in utero. I ordered a special pregnancy hula hoop and planned to register in pre-natal yoga; I had so many plans.

On Saturday, July 26th the family and I drove to Castle Mountain where we would stay for the weekend. I had a baby shower to attend out there. We arrived at Castle and I went to the washroom. I looked down and saw that the toilet had a lot of blood at the bottom of it. Fear overwhelmed me and I decided to go to the hospital.

I arrived at the Pincher Creek hospital and choked out the words, “Um.... I’m 10 weeks pregnant and I’m bleeding”. The reality set in. I know my body and felt something was not right. After seeing the doctor, she reassured me that it was pretty normal and chances are that it was nothing. She said they reserve ultrasounds on the weekend for “emergencies” and refused my request for one. I felt totally let down and disrespected. How could she tell me that nothing is wrong when I was there!! I wouldn’t be there if nothing was wrong. I know spotting is normal, but what I experienced was NOT normal. She said she’d book an ultrasound and call me in a day or two.

Waiting.... Just waiting.. waiting for a good or bad sign, waiting for a phone call, just waiting. The phone rang on Sunday morning and it was a nurse in Lethbridge, “We have an appointment for you on Tuesday afternoon” she said. Tuesday afternoon?!!! 3 days from now?! I said that wouldn’t work for me and she said there was nothing else for 2 weeks. Clearly they didn’t understand what was going on.

We drove back to Lethbridge that afternoon and after dinner I decided I needed to go back to the hospital. I was checked by a doctor who said my cervix was closed and indicated that was a good sign. He then proceeded to do an emergency ultrasound to see if there was anything in my belly. He saw a baby, and I did too. He did not see the heart moving and neither did I. After that ultrasound he said he wanted to send me for a better ultrasound just to make sure, he said that the quality of image on the emergency ultrasound is not really totally accurate. “Come back at 8:00am tomorrow” and I went home. Well, actually, I went to Boston Pizza with a friend who showed up at the hospital. I’m so lucky to have friends who care.

That night I slept at max 3 ½ hours. I was at the hospital by 7:50am and braced myself for the worst. They took me to the medical imaging unit and told me to put a gown on. There was this really lovely older nurse who took me to another waiting room and she just put her hand on my shoulder and said, “You look really sad dear, are you alright”. I said yes, although I was not okay at all. Waiting again, waiting for them to call my name, waiting to see my baby, waiting for answers. While I wait I can hear a heartbeat, they must have been performing an ultrasound and [turned the sound monitor up loud to] let the mama listen to the heartbeat. It broke my heart.

They call my name and in I go to the ultrasound room. I sit on the bed and breakdown, I can’t control myself and my emotions. The ultrasound tech was very understanding and offered me some Kleenex. It’s like I knew what she was going to say to me, and I wasn’t sure I was ready to hear it. I lay down and she goes to work. I got the pleasure (not really) of receiving both belly and internal ultrasound. When she was done she asked me, “Are you

sure you want to see the picture” as I had asked her to show me. She continues with, “your feeling was right, there is no heartbeat, but there’s something else”. My heart was in my throat and I choked out, “What?”. “There were two” she said. I instantly starting crying and could not believe that I had been so close to having twins. I saw the picture and left without taking a copy. (I phoned in a week later and requested the photos which they gave them to me on a CD. It was clear there were 2 sacs with babies in them. I was in shock and awe at the same time.)

After the ultrasound I went back to the waiting room where I continued to sob uncontrollably. The rest of my hospital stay is not worth sharing as we didn’t do much, it’s all a bunch of crying and no real explanations. Whatever the case, I chose to avoid a D&C and birth these babies on my own, and home I went. I spent the rest of the day collecting things that would help labour progress, like Red Raspberry Leaf tea, Peppermint Oil, Black Cohosh, and Vitamin C. I began my regiment.

On Wednesday July 29th, 2009 I felt a pain, a pain so familiar from all of my other births, I knew that would be the day my babies were released. The cramping continued for most of the day and at about 3:30pm I birthed one of my babies. It was shockingly bigger than I had expected and caused me to scream. I then became afraid of what was to come. I had let my first baby go in the toilet and couldn’t bear to flush it, so I knew I could not let the second one go in the toilet. I set up a container on the floor in the bathroom, turned out the lights and lit two candles. I squatted and after a painful contraction, birthed my last baby and the placenta. The placenta was shaped like a heart and was hard for me to look at.

I am so thankful to have a friend like D, as she came over and helped me gather my babies together to bury them in the back yard. Her strength is amazing and I am so grateful for her help. We wrapped my babies and the heart placenta in a beautiful ooga booga organic bamboo velour pre-fold diaper and buried them in the back yard. A rose bush and memorial garden will grow above them.

This experience has already taught me so much, even though I just birthed my babies yesterday. I have realized how much love I have and what it feels like to hurt this bad. I believe it has created a more compassionate person and I will not take what I do have for granted.

This is my story, the story of the twins that I’ll never get to hold, to love or to make memories with. The twins that I loved so much for the brief time I got to care for them, the twins that were just out of my grasp, the twins I’ll never tickle. I still love them so much and I feel like I buried a part of me with them in the garden. I still can’t believe I had twins in my belly, I just wish I could have gotten to welcome them in to the world and let them know how much they were wanted and loved. Mom, Andrea www.tinyangels.ca

On the Internet.....

Support blog for Grandparents whom have lost a grandchild:

"Grieving the Loss of a Grandchild" (for "Pregnancy and Infant Loss Awareness Day")
<http://www.grandparentstlc.com/blog/2009/10/grieving-the-loss-of-a-grandchild/>

This day is remembered,
And quietly kept,
No words are needed,
We shall never forget.
For those we love, don't go away,
They walk beside us every day,
Unseen, unheard but always near,
So loved, so missed, so very dear.

~from an obituary