



Springs of Hope Virtual Retreat
Together and Hopeful: Relating as a Couple through
Infertility
Allie and James Kleineck

1. Infertility is a *shared* experience and the marriage the most important relationship for each spouse.
2. Each spouse is unique, so give each other space to grieve differently.
 - a. Each spouse has unique reactions and feelings when infertility grief is “triggered”
 - b. Spouses can find ways to communicate their feelings and articulate how they can feel supported by the other spouse. Some ideas:
 - i. Set aside time with minimal distractions.
 - ii. Find a place or activity that will facilitate a more positive outlook on the situation (e.g., a sunny patio instead of a dark room).
 - iii. Be vulnerable with each other.
 - iv. Be patient with each other.
 - c. Good communication fosters growth in intimacy.
3. Find ways to nurture “togetherness.”
 - a. Prayer is critical – develop a prayer life both individually and as a couple. Some ideas:
 - i. Focusing on God can help recover meaning and identity, both of which can be challenged by infertility.
 - ii. Engage God daily.
 - iii. Find ways to pray together as a couple specifically for fruitfulness in your marriage.
 - iv. Consider praying together as a couple for others’ intentions.
 - b. Exercise creativity
 - i. Find ways to undertake a mutual project.

- ii. Wonder together at the beauty of God's creative power in the world around you.
 - c. Reflect with your spouse on what virtues or charisms (e.g. hospitality) are part of your marriage and find ways to live out those out.
- 4. Relating to other couples can be challenging, but spouses can find unexpected blessings in their relationships.
 - a. Resist the temptation to isolate from others and take small steps to have positive interactions with friends and family who are blessed with children.
 - b. Find ways to relate to others through the shared experience of carrying our respective crosses.
 - c. Look for ways that God is trying to bless you through others. Your marriage is beautiful and a gift to the world!
 - d. Remember that as a couple, you are not alone!

Reflection Questions

1. How does my spouse grieve infertility differently than I do? What am I already doing to support my spouse? What could I do to better support him/her?
2. What are some practical ways my spouse and I could grow in "togetherness" through prayer and exercising creativity?
3. What specific charisms or gifts have been part of our marriage since our wedding day? How could we live those out more fully?
4. Are there other people or families my spouse and I feel called to reach out to? How could we do that?