



Sometimes Life Doesn't Work Out as We Hope



After seven years of infertility, my husband, Drew, and I had just failed our last attempt at an in-vitro procedure. We drove home in silence. Our home had always been a source of comfort, but I found no comfort that day. I paced back and forth from room to room. At that point, I didn't care if life continued. I went to our bedroom closet in despair, crawled in, and closed the door. Maybe if I just hid long enough, all would go away.

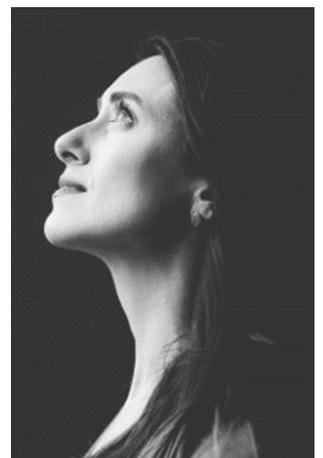
"We're praying for you to have children," well-wishers had promised. "You would make such wonderful parents." Meanwhile, we tried every infertility treatment available and waited on an adoption list. Yet year after year went by, and our arms remained empty. Our dream of having children never materialized.

Many heartwarming stories share about heartbreaking situations that work out miraculously or through a person's iron-willed determination. The stories are useful in that they inspire hope.

But sometimes life just doesn't work out that way. What do we do in a situation that seems unfair? Many going through heartbreaking circumstances ask, "What should I do now?"

Give up the Right to Know Why

When people undergo suffering, their first response is to ask, "Why?" We think if we just knew why, somehow the pain would be easier to handle. But we flatter ourselves. An honest Christian mother who lost her young son told us, "If God said to me that because of my son's death, all of Africa would come to Christ, that would not be enough."



The Bible gives clear reasons why God allows suffering. (Examples: Romans 5:3-4, James 1:2-4, 2 Corinthians 1:3-4, John 9:1-4, John 15:2, and stories of Job, Joseph, and Jonah) But nowhere does Scripture promise to reveal God's specific purpose for suffering in individual situations. One reason may be, like the Christian mother, that to a person experiencing suffering, no reason would seem sufficient.

Instead of asking, "Why?" We should ask, "Who?" That question leads us to God, and that's exactly where we need to be. We must be content to know that God, whose wisdom is perfect, has His reasons.

For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways and My thoughts than your thoughts. (Isaiah 55:9)

Survival Mode

During those years, Drew encouraged me to just survive. If I was doing that much, he would be happy with me, and God would be happy with me. This gave me the freedom I needed to put the pain behind me on my own timetable.



We call the concept "Survival Mode." Sometimes all we should expect from ourselves is to survive, to go on with daily life. We must give ourselves grace and the freedom to heal on our own timetable. Therefore, we need to learn how to put away our expectations of everything returning to normal and work through our pain without adding more pressure to our lives.

Scientific research has recently discredited the well-known stages of grief and has shown that time is the primary healer. A physical hurt to our body can be treated by a medical provider. Yet our body still takes time to heal. Like a physical injury, emotional hurt brought about by suffering or loss requires time.

Be Proud of the Way You Handled This

Several years after our infertility challenge, I felt a lump in my breast. My doctor confirmed my worst fears. "We've already made an appointment with a breast surgeon for you for tomorrow."

A friend calling to express her concern asked if she could pray for me. Her short and simple prayer made a huge impact on me and the many others with whom I have shared. She prayed, "Lord, help Kit to be proud of the way she handles this when it is all long over."

That prayer did two things for me. First, it reminded me that this would one day be long over. Her prayer gave me much-needed perspective. And she challenged me to have victory in my circumstances. The prayer allowed me to be proud, in the joyful sense, of how I handled that crisis. And



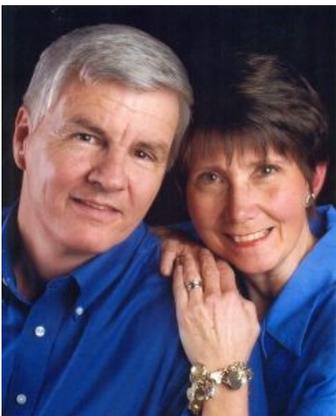
after five years, I was declared cancer free. As Christians, we, more than anyone, can have the victory in our life journeys.

"No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. (Romans 8:37)

How do you respond to heartbreaking circumstances? What lessons have you learned through your struggles?

(Most of this article was taken from two of the life-skills books Kit and Drew have written: [More Than Ordinary Faith: why does God allow suffering](#) and [More Than Ordinary Challenges: dealing with the unexpected](#). They are both available on their [website](#). But for GSW readers, they would be happy to send an e-copy of either or both books to anyone who requests them free of charge. See Kit's email below.)

~~~~~



Kit and Drew Coons have been married for 40 years. They met as Cru staff in Nigeria and later served in the U.S. and New Zealand.

Kit and Drew are authors of [The Challenge Series](#) – five wholesome seeker-friendly novels; [The Ambassadors](#) – A scientific tale seemingly taken from today's headlines; and six life-skills books on difficult topics. Their website is <https://morethanordinarylives.com/>.

Kit can also be contacted at [kitcoons@comcast.net](mailto:kitcoons@comcast.net).