

TITLE OPTIONS SO FAR: Miscarriage Mindfulness // You can talk to me //

The Universe confirmed my daughter's name in July 2020. Now, this is not another story about signs from the beyond (in case you read [my previous piece](#)), but for you to understand how *deeply* I knew she was coming - and for funsies - let me tell you how I learned it before I move on.

About a month earlier, I had started to feel the pull to call in baby number two. To start feeling ready for it, envisioning it, loving it. And although I say 'it', every ounce of me felt it would be a girl. So on July 4th 2020, while on a deserted hike with husband and son, I found myself daydreaming about her name. Would we name her Micaela, my favorite name since elementary school, or the other one, the shiny new name we had become fans of when I was pregnant with my son. I was in my own little world for a while, ignorant to everything else around me, musing on this as we walked. Later, as we approached the trail end, when my mind had already come to, we came upon a hill and at the top, a bench. Out of nowhere, a voice in my head (my voice, but also, like, not mine) suddenly states very matter-of-factly and swiftly: 'that bench will tell you your daughter's name'.

Wait what? That's SO random. That makes no sense. Where did that thought come from anyway?

I thought I was going crazy to even think that could be true, but still, my heart pounded and my legs trembled as I climbed up, more eager than ever to get to the top of any hill, not stopping to catch my breath, my head spinning. I approached it, huffing & puffing, expectantly. And there it was, carved into the wood with such love: "In memory of Michael", some hearts around it. I was shaking and beaming. What is this world, how can this even be happening? This was the second time I had been in this kind of shock. Here I was, in awe of the magic and so grateful. I had my answer.



So as you could imagine, I was *certain* my baby was coming, and not only that, she must be coming soon. But Mikaela (there was another message about it being spelled with a k) took a bit of time and arrived two years later in July 2022, after three positive pregnancies that then, well, weren't. This is what I want to talk about. The complicated, painful, and generally unspoken experience of miscarriage. And how we could do better.

Now, I say she took 'a bit of time' because I realize that just over a year of trying isn't much in the grand scheme of things, or compared to what other women endure. But to me, each uncertain doctor's visit, each never-ending week, each dreadful trip to the bathroom, each uninvited period, each real or psychologically-induced sense of queasiness, each run to CVS for even more pregnancy tests...it all felt like an eternity nonetheless.

Still, in all of it, after all of it, it struck me how lucky I had been.

First, they were all early and only the first miscarriage needed medical intervention. The other two were early enough for my body to release on its own. (Funny isn't it, how we say something as relaxed as 'release', when it's anything but.) I was also "fortunate" to know a couple close friends who had had miscarriages, and turns out each had undergone one of the two medical options available: D&C or Misoprostol. (If you're new to this, these are basically: a full-on surgical procedure to have the tissue removed from your uterus, or a couple pills, insert others, and wait for the painful contractions to arrive and do their job.) I was astonished by how little I knew about this. How, even after my doctor, who I loved and fully trusted, had explained them to me, I still felt lost, not knowing what to do. *What did people do?* My friends were lovingly open to share their experience and I felt more empowered to make the best choice for me at the time: the pills. The fact that some women need to make these very serious, very medical decisions, each with its own pros/cons/side-effects, without much or any information whatsoever, often racing against the clock, all with a thick veil of emotion layered on top, was bewildering to me. (*Now don't even get me started on what's going on in the country regarding access itself, to these procedures. What a privileged position I was in, and still am in, just because I happen to live in California.*)

Secondly, I wasn't working when I had that first miscarriage. This meant I was free to cry & wallow as my heart desired during this first, truest, heart-break (you rarely think it's *actually* going to happen to you). I could also schedule and experience Pill Day (and its aftermath), when and where I saw fit, no questions asked. Meandering from couch to couch in the comfort of my home, hugging red-hot-water-bag, my trusted BFF, for days if I wanted to (a cynical twist that this RED thing was bringing me comfort). For my last miscarriage - which by then I

was trying to live by the mantra of acceptance of any outcome - I was doing a shift at one of the yoga studios when I got *The Call* from my doctor: blood test results indicated the embryo wasn't growing like we had hoped, my body would likely realize this in the next week or so. I had answered this call about 5 minutes before starting to check-in students for the next class. "Ok, thank you". Hang up. Go with the motions Maria Fe, you can do this, you can be at peace. Get behind the desk, heart pounding. Smile, quiver, smile. Welcome them. Class starts, go to the back office, have a quick cry on my work-wife's shoulder (Love you endlessly L). Took the next day off and took myself to the beach, to look at the ocean. Always my healer. Just the thought that every day women are going through this, juggling it with work, their bosses likely the last person they'd want to share their circumstances with, many not easily able to take time off, was also heart-breaking.

Third, I had these experiences smack in the middle of what was my 'most spiritual' year yet. One where I was intentionally seeking personal growth, purpose, peace. I mean, the Universe had recently spoken my daughter's name to me - how could I not feel connected and as part of something bigger. Each loss, a sense of despair and grief, most definitely. But each loss, slightly more emotionally prepared to move through it. It was a year of expansion. Of trying to learn to let go of control. Of surrendering. Of yoyo'ing from one to the next, and then back. Of obsessing, and then obsessing over trying to stop obsessing. Little by little I was getting there, to that place of being at peace even in the darkness, or at least learning to get there faster. I had started to form my squad of spiritual teachers, who supported me through this. With learnings, rituals, healings; with presence. And (getting more 'woo-woo' here little by little but trying not to scare you, lol) I came to learn and truly believe that my Spirit Baby was still there waiting. That it was my same Spirit Baby trying to come Earth-side each time, waiting for the right opportunity. (If you feel called, read [Spirit Babies](#).) Mika was there and was coming; for whatever reason, it just wasn't time yet. And I accepted that I wasn't doing anything wrong. (Of course I kept asking for more signs along the way to 'make sure' she was there.) These beliefs and efforts helped appease my eager aching heart. I'm not sure how I would have dealt with this experience if I'd been clinging to all my original patterns, ideas, and 'what ifs'.

Lastly, and importantly, I was supported by loved ones. I shared what I was going through with select friends around me and I felt cared for and seen, even if they hadn't gone through it themselves. I felt the powerful energy of *women looking after women*. My body was hugged, my phone was lit up with texts from them checking in, my belly was full with perfectly-gooey brownies that were dropped off, and when I was ready, my story was heard. But how many women have to, or feel like they have to, go through it alone?

When the first miscarriage happened and I felt a bit more on the other side, I shared it more broadly. I wanted others to know I was there, if forbid, they were to go through it themselves. I was shocked that quite literally over the next three months, three friends reached out because they were going through it then (apart from the several that sullenly responded a semblance of 'welcome to the club'). Each had different stories, different questions, different needs. Each curious and not wanting to feel alone.

I continue to wonder, can we just talk about this more? 1 in 4 pregnancies end in miscarriage. How can so many women still feel so alone and ashamed in it. Can we build and share more resources? Even if we haven't gone through it, can we - women AND men (and *cough, cough*, employers) - educate ourselves on what a miscarriage involves so that we can better hold space for others? How can we change the stigma so that it's shared more? Or, how can we share more so that we change the stigma? It's win-win.

Bottom-line is: How can we be more *mindful of* miscarriage? And how can we bring more *mindfulness to* miscarriage?

As a start, know that if you want an ear, a shoulder, the science, the pep-talk, the woo-woo, or the gruesome physical bits, I'm here.



Mafe

This is such a valuable and necessary conversation. And you have articulated so much so honestly.

I had a little trouble with the flow - and so I am going to default to what Chris Wong refers to as the 10K/1K/100/1 method - because I want to see this out in the world.

If all you want is for people who have miscarried to read this and find a shoulder, then we structure it one way.

But I think this is an invitation to a wider population (all women, all men, parents-in-waiting and employers) to change our relationship with miscarriage so that we, as society, can talk about it without shame (which is the furthest).

I have never had a miscarriage. But I lost an aunt to a D&C op and held my sister's hand after she lost her baby. I had an additional peek into the world of support needed when I did a keynote for

Pregnancy Cares Canada - who find themselves providing the same support for couples who have miscarried, as counselling those considering abortion.

So:

\$10k: Core Idea - The time is right for society to accept miscarriage as natural, and remove the secrecy around talking about it.

\$1k: Emotional Impact - lots already. It is a heavy subject. Which you relieve well with talking about Mik as a soul waiting to find her perfect earth parents.

\$100: What's Missing? I think we need to rebalance some of the other parts of the essay to have more high notes balance the low notes.

\$10: Line Edits

Do you want to do a 1:1 call? Or bring it to a Feedback Gym. You have more than one idea bunched up in here, and I think that instead you can create a string of pearls.

Mik was a soul waiting for you as her mother. The pain and technicalities of miscarriage, the actual experiences of your three.

Bringing mindfulness practices to the experience of miscarriage. How to fold in work and miscarriage and the delicate conversations.

PS Thank you for putting your name on the google doc! I really helps when I navigate between many great articles.

I'm torn. You have a unique voice, [Mafe Razetto](#) There is a way to restructure this essay. But after reading your previous essay, I don't know if I want to.

I was going to suggest starting off with "Come to me when you need a shoulder. I understand. I empathize." (which is what you end with).

I am typing this comment and hope you read this before you read my suggestions in the google doc.

One of the points I want to make is that there are number of ideas in this post, each an essay in itself. It takes me, the reader, on a sequence of emotional highs and lows which you have lived with for a year. Can we space it into a series that deals with this issue? All thoughts.

For me this comes down to:

Who is for? Where will they find your work?

Who should read it? How will they find your work?