

Infertility Success Stories with The Infertile Mom of 4

Full Transcript

[00:00:00] **Cara Drescher:** Hello and welcome to a brand new episode and season of The Hormonal Mama Podcast. On today's premiere episode, I am interviewing infertility coach and author Erica Hoke. We are having a fascinating conversation about her story. The infertile mom of four and about this incredible book series that she created.

[00:00:30] Infertility Success stories. It is a beautiful series detailing so many women's stories with infertility and the success that they eventually had, all kinds of different stories, all kinds of different success, and the really exciting thing for. Is that I am a contributing author in her upcoming book this year.

[00:00:52] Infertility Success Stories, more Success Stories. It is so exciting. It is such an incredible project. I admire Erica so much for the work that she is doing to share all of these stories. Infertility is so tough and it is so incredible to be able to share successes with people who are going through the struggle.

[00:01:13] So I am thrilled to have Erica with. I am thrilled for you to hear our conversation and learn more about her, and if you stay put for just a minute, we'll be right back. You will not wanna miss this one.

[00:01:31] Hi Erica, welcome to the show. I'm so excited to have you here with me today. Welcome.

[00:01:37] **Erica Hoke:** Thank you so much for having me. I'm excited to be here. I'm excited to share my story and talk about my book.

[00:01:44] **Cara Drescher:** I'm really excited to hear your story because I, I've, you know, read a bit about it. We've talked a little bit about it, and, you know, I am, infertility is such a, a huge part of my life and my journey.

[00:01:57] I love connecting with people who have been through infertility and, you know, we all go through these different journeys with it, and I, I just love connecting with people who've been through this struggle and hearing their stories. I think it's incredible. So I'm really excited to talk to you about it, but I'm also super excited to hear about your books because these books, I think are incredible.

[00:02:20] The, your upcoming books, your published book, I, I'm just, I'm psyched to jump into that too. So I think that we should start a bit, not a bit. I think we should start by talking a bit about your infertility journey, because you had quite a journey to share and I don't know, I'd love to hear about it. So tell me a little bit about it.

[00:02:40] **Erica Hoke:** Yeah, sure. The infertility part wasn't a surprise to me. I had been struggling years with really painful periods by the time that I got an official unexplained infertility diagnosis. I had seven other diagnosis. I had P C O s, I had stage four endometriosis that I had exci, I had uterine fibroids ahead over your cyst.

[00:03:03] I had thyroid disease. I think I I had factor five lidin. So I had a lot of different diagnosis. . But the thing that completely derailed my plan was my plan B, and I think IVF is. Probably everybody's plan B. And I just said to myself, well, I know, well I have all of these things, all these diagnosis, all these problems, these challenges, but I, I'll do I V F if I need to.

[00:03:28] Right. Isn't that what we all say to ourselves?

[00:03:30] **Cara Drescher:** Yep.

[00:03:31] **Erica Hoke:** So at the age of 35 I had been working with reproductive endocrinologists for surgeries and things like, I was told, not only was I not a candidate for IVF at 35, but I had DOR, I had diminished a ovarian reserve and that I would need donor eggs.

[00:03:48] And that completely floored me. I never expected to get that kind of a diagnosis or that kind of an answer at at that stage of my life. And, My oldest son is spoiler alert. Mm-hmm. , I'm the infertile mom of four, is what I call myself.

[00:04:06] **Cara Drescher:** I love it.

[00:04:06] **Erica Hoke:** So I went on to have four boys in a seven year time span.

[00:04:10] **Cara Drescher:** Wow.

[00:04:12] **Erica Hoke:** But 15 years ago Donor eggs weren't as talked about, there wasn't as much information. It, it just wasn't as part as much a part of the infertility journey as it is now. And I just decided that I wouldn't visit that until I

had exhausted what I considered all my other options, which is what was wrong with my body, what could I do to fix it?

[00:04:33] And get some additional answers. So I had. I did that. I went through a healing journey that included acupuncture and herbal medicine diet, lifestyle changes, and conceived the first time about 18 months after that diagnosis with my first son. And then 17 months later, conceived twins spontaneously.

[00:04:55] So I had them at 39 and I'm getting ready to reveal my age to you, . And then I actually lost a set of twins at 41. Because of not being able to get a medication on board fast enough for my factor five, I had a blood thinner for all my kids all my pregnancies. And then my last son was born at 43, just shy on my 43rd birthday.

[00:05:16] **Cara Drescher:** You know, it's funny, I, just as a side note, I had my twins when I was 39 too, so that's really funny to hear.

[00:05:22] **Erica Hoke:** Yeah, that's incredible.

[00:05:23] **Cara Drescher:** It's it. Wait, what's incredible to me, you know, is, is you're, you're talking about this journey, right? And getting all of these diagnoses, which can be extremely overwhelming on its own, but I think the, the lack of better word, the magic of your story is that you, you didn't give up and you said, Okay, I'm gonna change some things about how I'm living my life.

[00:05:45] I'm going to, you know, do these things and we'll see what happens. Really. And here you go with four beautiful children. That's magic right there. I mean, again, that, that's like my favorite word. I use that word a lot lately, but I think in a way it is. You know, I, I think that's pretty incredible that you went through all of that and you said, I think you, you made a really good point too when you talked about how donor eggs, you know, donor sperm donor embryos.

[00:06:16] These things even in the past few years have just blown up as such a such a, a huge part now of. You know, fertility treatments and going through this journey when it didn't used to be. And I think it's pretty incredible you know, for so many, many people who want the opportunity to be parents and for whatever reason are struggling so much.

[00:06:39] But I, I think it's, it's so interesting that, you know, just again, as a side note, that at 35 they told you that you weren't a candidate for ivf. Right. That blows my mind. Mm-hmm. , you know, I went through ivf. My twins were not a result of ivf. IVF was a massive failure for me, but I was 38? 38 when I

went through IVF and, and I don't, you know, I don't know if they've changed the rules or if it was the place that you went, but I, it, it just, it so often blows my mind when our age is brought into the equation and some of it I understand, but there's so much of it that blows my mind and makes me feel like, what?

[00:07:24] Yes. Are you, you're 55? Yeah. Maybe your eggs aren't gonna, Be so good. Right. And, and yeah, they're, you know, DOR like you mentioned, diminished ovarian reserve. That's a very real thing. Absolutely. Right. But it, it just, it frustrates me is, is I think what I'm getting at when yeah, at 35 they turn you down.

[00:07:44] That's tough. That's, that's tough to hear as an outsider. So, going through that, that must have been really, really frustrating. I mean, can't think of a better word. Yeah, I'm pretty sure there are a lot of better words than that, right?

[00:07:57] **Erica Hoke:** So I didn't have enough eggs for retrieval. I was already hyper ovulating, so they couldn't stimulate me.

[00:08:02] So that was, that was kind of the jumping off point. And I, I went through the process, kind of a no holds Barr. I, I thought and I talked to my clients about this too. I didn't have anything. To lose. I didn't have any plan. Mm-hmm. , any plan C. So this, I was gonna make up my plan C. And what I mean by that is I had three laparoscopic surgeries.

[00:08:25] So the first two were unsuccessful. Right. So the, I do these laparoscopic surgeries, the doctor, I come outta surgery. What did you find? Very little, maybe a little bit of this, a little bit of that, you know, a little a, a little fibroid or a small something to remove, you know, in, in my uterine lining.

[00:08:44] And I was still having these terrible, terrible. Debilitating. Mm-hmm. Cycles. And I thought, you know what a lot of people are afraid to continue to do surgeries and kind of. Progress that, but you know, for, for fear of scar tissue. And I was afraid of that too. And I thought, you know what? I don't, this is my only chance.

[00:09:05] I don't have anything to lose. So I did a saline infused sono histogram. No, that's the, that's the tube. Sorry. Like saline.

[00:09:13] **Cara Drescher:** Saline-- it's confusing after a while.

[00:09:14] **Erica Hoke:** Saline infused ultrasound is what it was. Mm-hmm. . Okay. Because of the difference in how they performed that procedure versus a standard laparoscopic, they removed enough fibroids from my uterine wall lining that it looked like aquarium gravel, looked like a handful of aquarium gravel.

[00:09:30] So I encourage people that are at a point of, dare I say, hopelessness. And this is why I share my story because so many people walk out of that doctor's office, they get that diagnosis. And they think that's it. I have no other options. There's nothing else that I can do. The doctor just said that he can't help me, so I can't get, get pregnant.

[00:09:52] And that's simply not true. So I've never met a client yet that has had all the, all the testing. You know, people come to me all the time and say, I've had all the tests. There's no more tests that I can have. I'm like, I doubt it. So there's, it's an overlooked test, right? And some even basic tests.

[00:10:09] The medical professionals are not doing hormone panels and things like that. And so that's why I do what I do as a fertility coach, is I, I want people to know that there's, there's likely always a next. To keep moving forward and providing you answers Yeah. On your, on your infertility journey.

[00:10:29] **Cara Drescher:** I think that's fantastic. And, and I think it's really important because it, it, I remember, I mean, I, I, I remember that first appointment. I remember every other appointment, and I remember that feeling of like, okay, now what, is there a another step? You know, what, what, what do we do? And feeling. You know, it's really as simple as, at least for me, every time I got my period meltdown, you know, just absolute, the world is crumbling around me kind of mentality.

[00:11:01] And it's not fair. And when you don't have that reminder from someone like you who can say, no, this isn't the end, it's okay. It's okay to feel this way

[00:11:11] right now,

[00:11:11] let's work through it. There are new things to try. Opportunities out there to make this a reality for you.

[00:11:20] Which brings me to something I wanted to ask you, which is, you know, you mentioned your clients, so, so there are two big things I wanna talk

with you about today. You're a coach, you're a fertility coach, and you're an author.

[00:11:31] **Erica Hoke:** Yes.

[00:11:32] **Cara Drescher:** We're gonna talk about both of these things. But first I, I wanna talk a little bit about kind of, well, I guess two, two questions about this.

[00:11:40] A. Maybe not. I have too many words in

[00:11:45] my head at once. I can't.

[00:11:46] **Erica Hoke:** So many questions. So many questions.

[00:11:47] **Cara Drescher:** There's so much, there's just so much to ask you because it it cause what you do I think is so incredible. You know, it, it's life changing when you can help someone through this journey, through this struggle, through this madness.

[00:12:00] So tell me a little bit about what, what made you wanna become a coach? What was it your journey? Did, were you a coach before your journey? Did. I guess the big question is what brought you to the point of saying, I wanna be a coach, I wanna be a fertility coach?

[00:12:18] What kind of brought you to that?

[00:12:20] **Erica Hoke:** I want those women to know that, that are sitting in doctor's offices right now, that are listening that might be going through infertility.

[00:12:28] I want them to know that just because a doctor tells them that they can't help them, doesn't mean that they can't get pregnant and so many people over and over again, you know, when I told them my story just. You know, I know that it's incredible, but just the impact. I, I would just see the impact just like you of sharing my story and what happened and that's, my children are a gift, but the story of how they, they came about are also a gift.

[00:12:57] I could have easily not addressed any of these things. Probably would've ended up with a hysterectomy because of how my cycles were. On a different route. Like there are a million different endings to that story, but this ending gave me the family of my dreams. Mm-hmm. . And there are other

women out there that need to hear it because while there are other options available other alternatives there, you know, all the things, there's also healing.

[00:13:25] You know, overall health is the goal. Pregnancy is the. Which is completely different than, you know, what Western medicine focuses on. Western medicine focuses on using medicine to get you pregnant. They don't figure out why you can't get pregnant. They just want to use the tools that they have. And what I want women to know is that they have the own tools.

[00:13:45] They have tools at their disposal to fix it themselves. I had no other choice but to fix it myself and figure it out myself, and in the end, It is the thing that probably in some ways saved my health. It has been being able to research, being able to get to the, a place of overall health and pregnancy has allowed me to help my children through their own health issues.

[00:14:13] And, and now I have the tools to help other people. Yeah. It's out there, but not everybody has the same ability to. Grasp on I call myself like a little, I'm a little bit of a, a detective, right? Mm-hmm. . I can hear in people's stories the missing pieces of where there has been overlooked testing.

[00:14:31] There are unresolved traumas. There is an over bioaccumulation of toxins and their, and their health. And just help them to see the places that they can heal not just for pregnancy, but for. Right. For their whole life. Because if you don't address this, you know, like I said, you could go a different route.

[00:14:50] You could go adoption. Mm-hmm. , but your body through not being through the infertility is trying to tell you something. You've got something going on, and that doesn't mean you're broken at all. It just means you have things that. You need to listen to in your body, just like everybody does. This is just one piece

[00:15:08] of that.

[00:15:08] **Cara Drescher:** Yes. I love what you just said about, you know, it, it's the, it's, it's an overall health thing, right? And that is so true. And I think that we tend to, we being, those of us who are going through or have gone through this journey, we tend to forget that we tend to focus so much, which I understand again, I've, I've been there so I understand why we do it, but we focus so much.

[00:15:30] Our goal of getting pregnant that we forget. There's more to it. Our whole being, you know, our, our overall health contributes to that. Yeah. And it,

it can be difficult to, well remember that essentially. So I'm really, really glad you said that. I really I wanna ask you before we talk about your books.

[00:15:52] You have, I, I, I saw it on your website and I love the Accelerate Your Fertility boot. I wanna, I wanna ask you about that for a minute. Just cause, I mean, not just because for a lot of reasons, but I, I love the title. If you could just tell us a little bit about that program and what it's all about.

[00:16:10] Mean, obviously we know what it's about, but you know what I mean. Yeah. Tell me

[00:16:13] a little bit about it.

[00:16:14] **Erica Hoke:** Yeah. It's a 12 week bootcamp and I titled that because I wanted people who were really committed to making changes and. and going in into it with that determination of these are the changes that I need to make, that I'm going to make.

[00:16:33] To go all in on it. So it's a little bit different than I, I feel like, than anything else that I've seen out there. When the clients start the bootcamp, they start on the cycle week that they're in because that's very important to a woman's overall mental health. I don't wanna be providing her tools during the two week.

[00:16:51] As the same that she would get in week one. Right? So it's tailored to the starting point is tailored to what cycle week you're in, and one of the biggest things that we focus on is mental health. Because if you can't cope, you can't continue. Right. Who we both know.

[00:17:07] **Cara Drescher:** That's a great quote. I'm gonna quote you.

[00:17:08] Yeah. Love it. Mm-hmm. .

[00:17:10] **Erica Hoke:** So if we can't cope, we can't continue. So there are progressively provide tools progressively throughout the, the three months, throughout the 12 weeks to give you somatic healing tools. Tools like tapping and E F T A F T where I bring in what I call my super friends and they're experts in their field and they provide you videos that you can go back and watch and utilize.

[00:17:34] If it's not your month. Right. So those are, those are tools that I provide in week one. So every week is, every week is is different because you're in a different place in your cycle, so, exactly. Let me see if I can get myself

focused here. Somatic Healing Tools. So the bootcamp is detox and power and heal.

[00:17:53] So we spend a week detoxing. We have tools. For if you get your cycle, we have two week wait tools because that is the most intense part of your cycle is the two week wait. Absolutely. And so those tools focus on your overall mental health as well, but in a different place. So what we're looking to do is we're looking to shift your focus on your entire life, not just on this pregnancy outcome, but connecting with your partner, looking at your own goals and dreams.

[00:18:26] To also shift your focus away from that while you're healing. So you can there's book recommendations. So you can pick books that are business related, that are emotional, healing related things like that. So I encourage the women to read a book during that time and focus on that. Not as a distraction, but as a growth opportunity because.

[00:18:49] A lot of this is just a grinding down of your dreams. Right? It's just a, it's just a relentless. Every 28 day cycle. And so I want to expand their thinking and the reason that I'm doing all of these things expanding their thinking, connecting with their partner, all of these things raise your vibrational frequency.

[00:19:08] Mm-hmm. . And when you raise your vibrational frequency in your body, in case you've never heard this before, it sounds very woowoo maybe to you. But it's measurable, right? So we all have a measurable frequency of our body. Every, everything does. You can go and Google that . And so I'm, I'm shifting their focus.

[00:19:26] So instead of a downward spiral spiral that we all wanna do, right? Oh my gosh, what am I gonna get? Like, is my period gonna come? When can I test that hyper-focused? I want them to focus on growth mindset and, and moving towards healthier again, overall health. So that's the bootcamp. No exercise required, but we go through, we go through, we go through your cycle and every month there are additional tools.

[00:19:54] I bring. , other specialists like chiropractic care that is focused on fertility. We go through testing that might be overlooked, so.

[00:20:04] **Cara Drescher:** I think that's great. I love, I love that you, well there there's kind of, I love everything you said, really. Two things stand out to me. One, the title, like I said, I, I love it.

[00:20:13] I like that it's Accelerate your fertility. I really, I really like that. Just the, the wording is nice, but I really like that you tailor it, you know, to your cycle because that's, I mean, that's key and, and you know, you talk so much about overall health, which is just so huge. Our cycles are not just, you know, getting our period or, or getting pregnant.

[00:20:39] There's so much more to it. It's, it's part of your life. So to me, I mean, how more perfect, how much more perfect can you get than having it tailored to your cycle, to your needs at each week? And like you said, that two week wait.

[00:20:55] It's tough.

[00:20:55] **Erica Hoke:** Yeah. It's killer. It is. So the detox portion of it is really overwhelming for people.

[00:21:00] So this also, this 12 week period gives them a step-by-step timeframe and progressively goes through different areas of their life. So that overwhelm, you know, instead of just be like, you know, detox everything, throw it all out, you know, , we systematically go through, is what I'm trying to say. We systematically go through and provide step by step clear.

[00:21:22] And small instructions about the things that are gonna provide the most impact. Yeah, and I'll tell you, your listeners right now, if you wanna have the biggest impact on your overall health and especially your fertility, your number one thing to change out is your laundry product. We are in our clothes or on our sheets, 23 and a half hours a.

[00:21:46] And if you don't know, there's an organization, it's a, a nonprofit called ewg.org, and they provide toxicity ratings on, it's a whole rabbit hole. So I will just tell you, there's a skin dip skin deep database for personal care products. . And then there's also ratings in there on laundry products. So most conventional LA laundry products, according to this website, get a deer and F rating.

[00:22:11] So that's 88% are a deer and F rating. And those things are not just endocrine and hormone disruption. They're asthma gens. They're known they're. Toxins to our body. So just doing things like that and walking women through where they can have the biggest and quickest impact with these small changes is really takes the overwhelm out of it.

[00:22:35] Yeah. That's

[00:22:35] **Cara Drescher:** awesome. That's, that's really, that's, I'm gonna check that out. Ewg.org.

[00:22:39] Yeah, I wrote that down for myself to check it out. Cause that's pretty cool.

[00:22:43] Well, I think, I think what you do is, is amazing. But it brings me then to the last thing that I really wanna talk about, which are your books.

[00:22:50] You have a whole series. And I wanna hear a lot about it because I know we talked before we started recording about the first book in the series, which is infertility Success Stories of Help and Hope for your journey. I know you wrote a chapter, it's a collection of 20 women's stories, which I think is, you know, pretty incredible because it's, you know, like we've talked about, it's really important

[00:23:12] to feel and, and realize you're not alone and hear about other people's journeys. So I wanna hear about that. But you also have a follow up book to that one coming out. Mm-hmm. . You have a book about P T S D, which is incredible. And then there was a fourth one that I wrote down and I can't find where I wrote it.

[00:23:30] So we'll get to that also, but, but I'd like to hear about each of these. So let's, let's start with the first one. Tell me a little bit about that book, kind of where the. Where the, the inspiration to put this book together came from, you know, you published this book, you wrote a chapter. Tell me about it, where it came from and, and all that good stuff.

[00:23:51] Yeah,

[00:23:52] **Erica Hoke:** so the women in the book the other authors, we all said that if we only helped one woman by sharing our story, it would've been worth all the effort, all the editing, all the, the putting together of the book. We really want people not to feel alone during their journey. And so this collection of stories is from a variety of different circumstances.

[00:24:14] Some of it is reproductive medicine base. Some of it's natural base like myself. Some of it is donor eggs. Just the whole spectrum. There's some male factor infertility in there too. We didn't want, we didn't want anybody to feel alone. We wanted to share our story, and we wanted the reader to have a very personalized experience.

[00:24:33] So each of the chapters includes I call it a cost. It's a cautionary tale and a and a. A workbook too.

[00:24:39] **Cara Drescher:** Love it.

[00:24:39] **Erica Hoke:** What did I, what did I call it, Cara?

[00:24:41] **Cara Drescher:** Manual. A manual. Manual, right? I like workbook too. .

[00:24:44] Yeah.

[00:24:45] **Erica Hoke:** It's a cautionary tale and a manual because each of the stories, as we went through, we highlighted, man, I wish I had known about this test here. Let me tell you my story. But if you could, if I could have go, gone back and stopped right here, I wish I would've known this. So there's. And every single one of the chapters is peppered through. And then at the end, each of the authors provided a, a resource, whether it's a checklist whether it's a, like a little journaling workbook there, there's all kinds of tools available via QR code at the end of each chapter.

[00:25:22] And just to be able to reach out to the author and connect with them and say, Hey, like I read your story, thank you so much, or tell me more about it, or whatever your need is, you know, we're available to the reader. And that was very important to each of us. So it was an incredibly humbling process.

[00:25:41] **Cara Drescher:** I bet.

[00:25:41] **Erica Hoke:** And we got to know each other really well and. There was a common thread with some of the women's stories, which led me to the PTSD book. We really wanted to share the, the PTSD, the shame, the, the additional stress that you and I were talking about off camera. So the follow up book I have more stories coming out.

[00:26:02] Let me just mention that. More stories was initiated because there were women who had gotten pregnant during the second or during the first book. There were stories that I just wanted to include and couldn't include, because of space. So it's really. They were so impactful. I, I just knew that I had to do a follow up follow up book and there'll be a workbook, an actual workbook.

[00:26:25] **Cara Drescher:** Nice.

[00:26:26] **Erica Hoke:** Coming out with that too. So I am the world's biggest fan of workbook, so that, I mean, honestly, my, you'll be able to get that too.

[00:26:34] **Cara Drescher:** That's incredible. That's awesome.

[00:26:35] **Erica Hoke:** All the worksheets, right?

[00:26:36] **Cara Drescher:** Yes. I'm a worksheet-- I have a problem. I love worksheets and workbooks. Yeah, I think. So cool. That's, that's so exciting and awesome. I love it.

[00:26:45] **Erica Hoke:** So during the process of making this, this first book, you know, women would say things just about their journey, their relationships with their spouses, but there is a PTSD component to going through infertility and then having a child. People, people overlook it. When you go through infertility and you get pregnant, it's as if a fairy godmother has waved a magic wand over you and all the trauma of the losses, the failed IVFs, the miscarriages, the month, you know, the months that you didn't get pregnant is supposed to just go away.

[00:27:18] **Cara Drescher:** Mm-hmm. .

[00:27:19] **Erica Hoke:** And that doesn't happen.

[00:27:20] **Cara Drescher:** Nope.

[00:27:20] **Erica Hoke:** A lot of women going through infertility are also type A personalities, and so here we get this little baby, the like our joy, everything, and it's so intense. We feel like we can't have a full range of emotion. Motherhood is kind of like that anyway, right? We, we put a lot of pressure on ourselves. There's a lot of expectations, but it's it's a denial of being able to have a full range of emotion because we went through infertility.

[00:27:48] Well, I can't complain that my baby's not sleeping because I have been praying and begging and pleading, you know, with God, the universe, whatever you wanna say for this child. So how dare I have the full range of emotion of exhaustion or overwhelm or being touched out or, or any of those things that mothers go through.

[00:28:08] There's that added layer because of the infertility. and nobody, nobody sees it and it's not recognized. And women are living in shame.

[00:28:17] **Cara Drescher:** Mm-hmm.

[00:28:17] **Erica Hoke:** And it's so much more intense. I, I truly believe it's so much more intense. So...

[00:28:23] **Cara Drescher:** that's, that's amazing. I, I think, I don't know, I, I don't, I don't know what I'm trying to say. I'm a little overwhelmed with thoughts because you make such good points and you're so right about everything you're saying. And to me, just personally, it's so nice to talk to someone. Who gets that? You know, we were talking about that before we started recording and, and that's something, you know, gosh, when I was finally pregnant, so many people would say to me, you're past it now.

[00:28:51] And I'd be like, I can't breathe. And they'd be like, why not? And I'd be like, I'm so nervous, I'm so anxious. Because all you can think about is everything you've gone through up to that point. Right. I, you know, when I was first. With my twins, they had a triplet sibling. And I, you know, those first nine weeks I couldn't breathe every day.

[00:29:11] Cause I was like, are you still there? Are you still there? Are you still there?

[00:29:13] **Erica Hoke:** Mm-hmm.

[00:29:14] **Cara Drescher:** All because I didn't know, you know, there was a lot of, you might lose one or two or all three of the babies. Right. And we did. We lost one of them and from that moment on it was okay. Are you both still in there? Can I feel you?

[00:29:25] Not yet. How about today? Okay. What's going on now? Oh, I don't, oh my gosh. I already went through so much and it's. Gosh, even thinking about it right now. Yeah. I'm like sweating, thinking about what that was like. Right. And you know, pregnancy. Yes. It's, it's always difficult. There's always stress. There's always, I mean, yes, I know plenty of people who had stress-free pregnancies and, you know, I don't wanna talk to them, of course, but you get the point.

[00:29:49] But yeah, this, this whole infertility nonsense, as I like to call it mm-hmm. really affects not just your pregnancy when you give birth, you know, I mean, gosh, I still think about it every day. Think about what a miracle they are, they being my children and how it's completely never really leaves you, unfortunately.

[00:30:12] **Erica Hoke:** Right?

[00:30:12] And, and I,

[00:30:13] **Cara Drescher:** it's tough for people who have not gone through this to understand that because their best intentions, at least in my experience, is always to. But you had your, you have your kids now, you can forget about all that. And it's like, oh, you really can't, it, it happened. Yeah. It was real.

[00:30:30] **Erica Hoke:** Right, right. So, and that's, that's definitely the PTSD component, right? Yeah. We don't wanna walk around feeling this way, we don't wanna walk around with this anxiety, but it's every stage of the process when you're going through the pregnancy, you're terrified that the babies are gonna die. Go through delivery.

[00:30:48] You're terrified that they're gonna die. They're here now. It's that helicopter parenting, it's that anxiety. Oh my gosh, are they still breathing? Mm-hmm. . And it's, it's really, really intense. And it was clear that the authors also went through a similar story. And again, it's that added layer, like a lot of women have those kind of feelings.

[00:31:08] But the, the added responsibility, the added emotional impact of. Kind of going to battle to, to get, to get these children in our lives, to have them born. Just intensifies, intensifies that. So I've, we found it was very common and really wanted to, again, shed light so people don't feel like they're alone.

[00:31:32] And there's so much shame too, right. You know, like, The normal feelings of motherhood of, oh my gosh, I love this baby, and if somebody doesn't take this baby for a minute, I'm gonna lose my mind. I'm gonna go crazy. Yes. You know, intensified because you're like, you're horrified as a mom, period, but as an infertile mom, you just feel like you have to suck every minute of essence out of all of it.

[00:31:59] Yes. Because you waited for it so long.

[00:32:02] **Cara Drescher:** Gosh, you know, it's so interesting to hear you say, So interesting for so many reasons, and I think I just made a connection in my own head. My children, no one has ever babysat them other than my mom. And my husband and my children and I lived with my parents for the first three years of their lives.

[00:32:20] We only moved out of their house a few months ago, for many reasons. My mom babysat, you know, a few times where it would be, my husband and I go into the supermarket for 45 minutes or an hour. Yeah. Only a few times in their whole lives. And last week was the very first time that anyone babysat them. And it was my sister-in-law and she babysat them for, I don't know, three hours.

[00:32:42] And I'm always, you know, everyone's always talking about, you know, this person's watching the kids. I got the babysitter, I got the nanny, I got the whoever. And I'm always like, I don't want anybody watching my kids. And it never occurred to me until you just said, That, I think that that's related to wanting to soak up every second I possibly can with them.

[00:33:02] **Erica Hoke:** Mm-hmm.

[00:33:03] **Cara Drescher:** Like they're in preschool now and I'm like, someone else is watching my kids. What? No. What, what's going on? Mm-hmm. . And it's just interesting because you really just opened up my mind a little bit that I hadn't really thought about this. What's the word I'm looking for? Oh, I can't--

[00:33:19] **Erica Hoke:** Hyper-- like it's a hyper vigilance.

[00:33:21] **Cara Drescher:** Yes.

[00:33:21] **Erica Hoke:** It's a hyper connection.

[00:33:23] **Cara Drescher:** Yes. And I never, it just never made the connection that it was maybe due to what I went through and it makes so much sense. Erica you're--

[00:33:31] **Erica Hoke:** There you go.

[00:33:32] **Cara Drescher:** Brilliant. Thank you. I feel like I genuinely, it's gonna sound weird or maybe it won't. I genuinely felt my br, my, my mind kind of go.

[00:33:42] *sings* "Whoa! Wait a minute." You know, and that happens. That's just, I dunno. That's pretty incredible. Okay. One last question about your books, and then I'm gonna switch gears for a minute. Sure. How can people get their hands on on these incredible stories?

[00:33:56] **Erica Hoke:** Yeah. So infertility success, stories of help and hope is available on Amazon and on-- where books are sold!

[00:34:03] So, Target or Barnes and Noble, they're available at all the places that Kindle. It's available for your Kindle as well. Awesome. And yeah, so, and then I'm accepting-- I have a few spots still available for more stories. So that application is at the top of my website where you can just click and let me know what story you're interested in.

[00:34:26] It's a short application. It an author sponsored book. So everybody contributes to the publishing of the book. And and then of course It's infertility success, a total mess about the PTSD fallout after infertility. And I'm accepting applications for that. And the fourth book that you were struggling to find the title for was infertility Success: Look what God Did. And that was, again, born out of this book here of people's walks of faith, where I really wanted to give an opportunity. Again, not feeling alone through their struggle of being being faithful and questioning if they were being punished, if they had done something wrong, what that faith block looked like, what it looks like now on the other side.

[00:35:14] And just normalizing the questioning. Right. Normalizing the struggle with faith that people who go through infertility go through.

[00:35:24] **Cara Drescher:** YES!! I'm. I don't mean to be so intense, but yes, I talk about that all the time. Yeah, because there is a huge struggle with faith, whatever that is. Right? Oh, I'm so, because I feel like that's just not addressed enough.

[00:35:39] **Erica Hoke:** Right.

[00:35:40] **Cara Drescher:** That's incredible.

[00:35:41] **Erica Hoke:** And you know, there's a lot of platitudes that are given to women going through infertility, you know, in God's time. And you know, it'll happen when it happens. And relax. And all of those are true and hurtful to be said, and and doesn't negate the feelings of the person that are that's experiencing them.

[00:36:01] **Cara Drescher:** Agreed. A hundred percent. So let's, let's switch gears for a minute. I have a couple of fun questions that I like to ask all of my guests. I know I sent them to you so I know that you're a little unsure, so let's

start with the, well, for some people it's the easier one. Well, I think for most people, this one's a little easier and it is.

[00:36:21] Who are three people who have had the most influence or inspiration? In your life now. They don't have to be people, you know, I don't know if I ne if I preface that, but who are those three people would you say?

[00:36:33] **Erica Hoke:** Yeah. So I would definitely say this might be, I don't know. I always think that it's a funny one, but Oprah Winfrey, when I was a kid was still on television.

[00:36:43] **Cara Drescher:** Mm-hmm.

[00:36:44] **Erica Hoke:** And I remember I remember watching her show like every day after school, and I was in an environment that was not a great situation. I went through years of abuse and when she started talking about When she started talking about her sexual abuse and that she had lived, you know, what she had lived through and things like that, it really just gave me an anchor point that this person was able to move forward with her life, be successful, be healed.

[00:37:12] It was, it was everything to me at the time because I was experiencing sexual abuse. And so I've always like envisioned that maybe. I would someday meet Oprah and be able to tell her, you know, what an impact that she had on my life as as a a, a young girl sitting on the other side of that tv just knowing that I could be okay.

[00:37:36] **Cara Drescher:** I mean, how powerful is that? And Oprah, I mean, A lot of people--

[00:37:39] **Erica Hoke:** I'm sure there's, I'm not the only one, I'm sure. I'm not the only one. Yeah.

[00:37:43] **Cara Drescher:** And, and I know, and I understand why. I mean, she is just such an incredible human being. Yes. And, but I think how powerful to feel I'm not alone. Right.

[00:37:54] I'm not alone, alone.

[00:37:55] **Erica Hoke:** It's kind of what we were talking about with our books. It's just like dawned on me, you know? It wasn't, you know, in the, in the, it wasn't talked about like it is now. Right. You know, people don't understand. It

wasn't talked about. And she was one of the first people that was shining a light on this.

[00:38:12] Yes. And so not to feel alone. Yes. I don't, I didn't, I, yeah, that's, I just made a connection here. So , I, I just yeah.

[00:38:20] **Cara Drescher:** Love that.

[00:38:20] **Erica Hoke:** I mean, she made me not feel alone. I hear her name, I see her, I hear her voice and I'm like, there she is. Like, she's just such an incredible person in this world, so. Okay.

[00:38:29] **Cara Drescher:** That's awesome. I love it. I love it. Ok, so that's number one.

[00:38:33] **Erica Hoke:** So my, my older sister closest to me probably had the second most impact on my life. I am the youngest. Me, I was, I was born to older parents. Much older parents, like a whole generation older. So they would have appeared to be my grandparents. Like my dad was born in 27. My mom was born in 39.

[00:38:53] **Cara Drescher:** Wow. Wow.

[00:38:53] **Erica Hoke:** And so my sis, we lived in the shadow of a Big 10 university, but I didn't have any idea what that meant. My parents while they ended up running successful businesses in their life, neither one of them had even a high school diploma. And my sister and my brother-in-law, well, it's, it's technically I guess, my brother-in-law.

[00:39:15] But you know, They were able to show me like what college was and just healthy relationships in general. And so that was hugely impactful in moving my life forward in a positive way.

[00:39:28] **Cara Drescher:** So that's, that's incredible. I, I love hearing things like that because yeah, it's gonna sound really sad, but I love hearing things like that because you don't hear about that a lot.

[00:39:40] You know what I mean? Hearing that, that incredible. Influence that someone in your family can have on you and, and can be so important to you and show you, help show you the world, really.

[00:39:52] And I think that's, that's just a beautiful thing. And I could cry about it, but I won't, I won't cry. Okay, so that's number two.

[00:40:00] And then what would be your who, what, or what would be your third?

[00:40:05] **Erica Hoke:** Yeah, so. I don't, I don't know how to identify this well, so I'm going to just say there's been a few people in my life a riding instructor riding horseback riding which I grew up riding. And therapist that basically just believed in me and showed. How had had confidence in me and showed me how much of an overcomer that I was mm-hmm.

[00:40:36] It's hard to see that in yourself. It inspired me to see what I've overcome and what what impact I've been able to make on the world so, or could make on the world. Mm-hmm. By sharing my story. And just believing in me. You know? So

[00:40:51] that's pretty incredible. And those kinds of people can absolutely help change your life and, and make you realize, oh God, what's the right word?

[00:41:00] What am I trying to say? That you're more than you may think you are.

[00:41:03] **Cara Drescher:** Yeah, absolutely. Yeah, I think that's Well, beautiful. Really. Those are, I mean, I, I always say this and it doesn't, and I don't know how to word it better. I mean, I wanna say those are such great answers. They're all great answers because they're all unique, very personal.

[00:41:20] Answers, but Right. The stories behind them I think are pretty fantastic. So, yeah. Let me ask you my last question. And this one's always a tough one because I make it so open-ended. Yeah. So if you could have, and I'm gonna explain it the way I always explain it, if you could have a dinner party. Now, not everybody likes dinner party, so you don't have to worry.

[00:41:39] It doesn't have to be a dinner party. You can have, you know, a, a, you know, Hangout session or you know, drinks or a walk or whatever, whatever. Right. They float your boat with three. I always put it in quotes and say people, but as you saw on the, the note here, they don't have to be people, they can be anything or any idea that you want.

[00:42:04] Who would those three, I'm gonna say beings, Uhhuh . Who would those three be and why?

[00:42:11] **Erica Hoke:** Well, I am a super curious person, and so there's a lot of questions that I want the answer to, like, yeah. I have to say, I, I don't know. I've been trying to figure out how to frame this. Like, do I say God? Do I say Jesus?

[00:42:26] But I wanna ask all the questions and see all the things, like, I wanna know about the Mayans over here, and I wanna know about, like, I wanna know it. I wanna know all the secrets.

[00:42:36] **Cara Drescher:** I get that.

[00:42:37] **Erica Hoke:** Everything.

[00:42:38] **Cara Drescher:** Totally.

[00:42:38] **Erica Hoke:** All of history, right? All of it.

[00:42:41] **Cara Drescher:** Everything that--

[00:42:42] I always, and then some.

[00:42:45] **Erica Hoke:** Yes. Whether that be a time traveler, whether whoever can gimme those answers.

[00:42:49] **Cara Drescher:** Right.

[00:42:49] **Erica Hoke:** No, I wanna--

[00:42:50] **Cara Drescher:** Totally.

[00:42:50] **Erica Hoke:** I wanna know all the secrets to everything, so--

[00:42:52] **Cara Drescher:** Love that!

[00:42:53] **Erica Hoke:** Say, we'll just say God at that point. Right.

[00:42:56] **Cara Drescher:** Okay. I like it.

[00:42:56] **Erica Hoke:** And who else did I write down? If I know all the secrets to everything I. I would love to meet my younger unaffected self. My child self. Like I would love to because I remember like little pieces of that person.

[00:43:14] **Cara Drescher:** Mm-hmm. .

[00:43:14] **Erica Hoke:** They don't have like a good memory and a good sense of, of that. Pre trauma or without the, the veil of the trauma. Yeah. So I would love to see that per that younger version of myself.

[00:43:27] **Cara Drescher:** I love that.

[00:43:27] **Erica Hoke:** Like the little kid version of myself.

[00:43:29] **Cara Drescher:** What an incredible answer that is. I love, I mean my, I dunno if you can see how big my eyes are about to pop outta my head, but I just love that answer because I think, I mean, how incredible would that be?

[00:43:38] Okay. And then who would your last oh gosh, being or person or idea or whatever be?

[00:43:44] **Erica Hoke:** Yeah. I feel like I got asked this question and I, I can't remember who the person was, but it's a better answer than this, but I picked Queen Victoria because, oh, she had such a, she had such a, a difficult reign and she was crowned so young and she.

[00:44:08] Such a tour d'force. Like she, she has a whole era named after her, you know? Yeah. . And she was so impactful and so just to be able to like meet somebody with that strong of will, you know, and just have a conversation with them about how they were able as a woman, especially to navigate the politics and the society and just all of it.

[00:44:31] I think it would be a fascinating conversation to have.

[00:44:34] **Cara Drescher:** I'd like to listen to that conversation. I'll just, yeah, sit in the corner where you can't see me. I'll cover myself with, you know, some bread or something so you don't know I'm there. I think that would be a really, really cool gathering. We'll say gathering.

[00:44:46] **Erica Hoke:** Yeah.

[00:44:46] **Cara Drescher:** I think that would be awesome. Thank you for answering that question. I know it's tough. Sure. Every time I ask people, I'm like, man, do people think I hate them? Because that's a hard question to answer. Yeah. But it's, I personally, I think it's really fun. To get super introspective and,

and kind of in a way it makes you kind of learn more about yourself, even just thinking about that question.

[00:45:06] And I, I love it. I like making people think about themselves. I dunno why. Yes. Okay. Very last question, and this is an easy one. . How can our listeners find you, connect with you, learn about you, what you do, your books and all of those things? What's the best, what are the best places.

[00:45:20] **Erica Hoke:** Yeah, the best place is probably on my website, and that's just my first and last name. It's Erica with a c. And it's Hoke, like, hope. I keep saying that. I would love to change my last name to Hope but it's h o k e and ericahoke.com or on Instagram @infertilemomof4.

[00:45:41] **Cara Drescher:** I like that so much.

[00:45:43] **Erica Hoke:** And I do have a free Facebook group that is in support of you know, resources and support, interviews and things like that.

[00:45:51] And that's infertility. Empowered.

[00:45:53] **Cara Drescher:** Ooh, I like that. Infertility empowered. We need to hear the word empowered more in our circle, I think.

[00:46:00] **Erica Hoke:** Yeah.

[00:46:01] **Cara Drescher:** Erica, I just wanna take a second and thank you so much for this interview. You and everything you do is incredible. I can't wait to check out your book because, you know, I just, I just think you, you shed so much light on well, everything's surrounding infertility, but, but I'm particularly, I'm excited really that, that you are putting out this book, focusing on PTSD as it relates to infertility.

[00:46:31] Cause it's very real. And you know, as you know, we are often made to think it's not. So I think that's incredible. So anyway, thank you so much for taking the time out of your very busy schedule to talk with me and tell me about all this incredible stuff. I appreciate it.

[00:46:46] **Erica Hoke:** Absolutely. Thanks for the opportunity.