

IVF Didn't Work For Me

A gentle guide for right now

THE EMPTY CRIB

PART ONE

Right Now, This Is Real

If you're reading this, a cycle just ended and it didn't go the way you hoped. Maybe you got the call today. Maybe it was a few days ago and you're still moving through the motions, waiting for it to feel real.

There's no correct way to feel right now, and no timeline you're supposed to be on. You don't need to have a plan yet. You don't need to know what happens next. This guide isn't here to rush you toward an answer — it's here for the part before that, when you're just trying to get through the day.

Take what's useful here and leave the rest. There is no wrong way to read this.

PART TWO

What You Might Be Feeling

None of these need explaining or justifying. Feelings can also contradict each other, and that's normal too.

- **Grief** — for the cycle, and for the future you'd already started picturing.
- **Anger** — at your body, at the process, at how unfair the timing feels.
- **Numbness** — a kind of flatness that can feel like you're not grieving "enough." You are.
- **Relief** — that the waiting is over, even alongside the disappointment. This doesn't cancel out the loss.
- **Guilt** — wondering if something you did or didn't do changed the outcome. It almost certainly didn't.
- **Envy** — toward people around you who got what you didn't. This is a normal response to grief, not a character flaw.

If what you're feeling starts to feel unmanageable — if it's affecting your sleep, your safety, or your ability to function for more than a few days — please reach out to a therapist, doctor, or a support line. Wanting extra support here is not a failure to cope; it's a reasonable response to something genuinely hard.

PART THREE

Practical First Steps

A few small, doable things — not a checklist to complete today.

Give yourself a real pause before deciding anything

You do not have to decide what happens next this week. Most clinics recommend at least one full cycle of physical and emotional recovery before any next step — use that time. A decision made from exhaustion rarely feels right in hindsight.

Decide who needs to know, and how much

You're allowed to tell people the outcome without opening a conversation about what's next. "The cycle didn't work. I'll share more when there's more to share" is a complete sentence.

Let your body rest, not just your mind

Hormonally and physically, your body has been through a lot. Basic rest, hydration, and gentle movement (if and when it feels right) matter as much as emotional processing does.

Keep a simple record while it's fresh

If you plan to try again or explore other paths, jot down what felt hard about this cycle — logistically and emotionally — while it's easy to remember. Future-you will be glad you did.

PART FOUR

Questions Worth Asking Your Doctor

When you're ready — not necessarily today — these are worth having on hand for your follow-up appointment.

- What do you think contributed to this outcome, based on what we saw this cycle?
- Is there anything about my protocol you'd change for a future cycle?
- Are there additional tests that might give us more information before trying again?
- What's a realistic timeline if I want to try again — physically and in terms of clinic scheduling?
- What would make you recommend a different approach altogether?

It's completely fair to ask for this conversation to happen at a follow-up appointment rather than in the immediate aftermath — you're allowed to want time before you're ready to talk logistics.

PART FIVE

Getting Through This Week

- Cancel anything you don't have the energy for. You don't owe an explanation.
- Ask one person for exactly what you need — company, silence, a meal dropped off, or space.
- Avoid making any big decisions about next steps until the immediate wave has passed.
- If social media makes this harder right now, muting or stepping back for a while is allowed.
- Notice one small thing that helped today, even if it's tiny. Write it down if that helps.

If you'd like more structure for the weeks ahead — working through the decision in front of you, or the conversations you didn't ask to have — there's a companion toolkit on the site for exactly that, whenever you're ready for it. No rush.

This didn't work the way you hoped. That's real, and it's allowed to hurt.

You are not walking this path alone.

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