



Dive right in!

What are you waiting for?

In seasons of infertility, it can be easy to get caught up in either a “medical focus zone” (ie: appointments, medication trials, bloodwork, scans, repeat) or the “doldrums of despair” (“Nothing is working out.”, “Why isn’t God answering my prayers?”, “Life seems pointless”, “What purpose do we have if we aren’t parents?”). Sometimes we can even find ourselves in the barren in between - no progress on building your family, and all that’s left is an empty daily routine, devoid of joy or purpose. When we find ourselves in any of these 3 places, it is important to first identify it, give yourself a little grace and understanding... then shake things up! While medical efforts certainly deserve our focus in certain seasons, it’s dangerous for it to remain our sole purpose and focus. And while it’s understandable to feel anxious or depressed, it’s important not to linger and remain in that state for too long. In this resource, we encourage you to embark on a “Dive right in” project: one fun new experience and one bigger exciting project to work on over a few weeks or months. The goal with “Dive right in” is to remind you that there is more to life than what you’re currently experiencing. By sharing this resource, we hope we can help you just a little to lift up your head again and find a spark of life, a little flame of joy, that you can nurture and tend to as you find meaning in your journey forward.

Creating your “Dive right in” adventure plan

★ One fun new experience

Brainstorm activities that you have been wanting to experience or try (eg: a cake decorating workshop, a cultural festival, a new coffee shop, exploring a new small town nearby etc). Select one. We suggest that the activity you choose should take no more than an afternoon or evening, making it an “easy reach” to check off your list.

★ One exciting project

Brainstorm projects you would enjoy tackling that would bring you a sense of joy and accomplishment (eg: planting a garden, redecorating a room in your home, creating a photo album of your wedding, a trip or favorite memories, a crafting project, pursuing a new degree or certification, etc). Select one. We recommend that this project should be something that may take several weeks or months to complete, so as to really allow yourself to become engaged in it and help you shift your time, energy and focus to this fruitful endeavor.

★ **Easy action steps**

Break each adventure, both the experience and the project, into manageable steps and timelines. For example: cake decorating class (1) google search cake decorating classes, (2) call local bulk goods shop or craft store to inquire if they know of classes, (3) book a class, (3) invite a friend.

★ **Choose: 2-player or 1-player adventure**

Decide whether you would like to do each part of your challenge alone or with a friend or family member. If you pick someone to accompany you, make sure they will enjoy the experience and/or project as well and are a life-giving person you will gain energy from spending time with during these activities. Dragging a reluctant and grumpy spouse to a quilt show will not have the same benefits for you as going with a fellow crafting enthusiast.

★ **Choose an accountability partner**

Even if you are doing the adventure challenges alone, think about someone you could ask to be your accountability partner/cheerleader. Who could cheer you on and encourage you to take these healthy steps for you towards joy? Ask this person to follow up with you to see how each part of your challenge is coming along. Make sure to let them know the time you are planning to complete each part/step by.

★ **Document the journey and reflect**

Have fun taking photos of your outings, experiences and before/after photos of your projects. Each step along the way is worth celebrating and enjoying. If you enjoy journaling, take time to jot down your reflections of what you've enjoyed about your adventures, how it's affected your mindset, energy levels and mood, and what God may have been teaching you through it. If comfortable, share these reflections with your accountability partner/adventure partner.

DIVE RIGHT IN ADVENTURE PLAN

Example

Adventure #1 - One fun new experience

Brainstorm several ideas that take no more than an afternoon or an evening:

Walk-in folk dance class, new ice cream place, cake decorating class, see a play, try new exercise class.

Final choice for fun new experience:

Try one session of an walk-in dance class

Steps to take in order to make experience happen:

- 1. Contact organizer to find out if I can start this month as a beginner or if I should wait until their intro session in the fall*
- 2. Choose a date*
- 3. Ask a few friends to see if they would like to join*
- 4. Figure out parking situation before day of class*

Goal date for experience: *September 1*

Alone or with a friend? *With Jamie*

Accountability partner *Samantha*

What I enjoyed about the experience:

I felt proud of myself that I tried something new and learned some new skills. People were very friendly and the class was actually a lot of fun. It felt healthy to get moving too.

How the experience affected my mood, mindset and energy levels:

My mood felt significantly improved afterwards. I also felt more excited and hopeful about the future in general, even just knowing I could attend this class next week again if I wanted to. I'm not used to having something to look forward to, so that's a nice change. I think my mindset felt more positive because I made a plan for something good for the future and I was able to follow through on it and make it happen. I felt much more energetic afterwards and ready to tackle everything else on my to do list.

What I learned/what God taught me through this experience:

How important it is to find and do new things that I enjoy. Focusing on fertility only has never done that for me and makes me feel hopeless. Today I felt healthy, hopeful and not defeated. God reminded me there's good to be experienced today.

Adventure #2: One exciting project

Brainstorm several ideas that may take several days, weeks or months to complete:

Redo front entryway, redo master bedroom, work on quilting project, plant garden out front.

Final choice for exciting project:

Plant garden out front

Project step	Materials	Estimated date
<i>1. Create "sunlight map" to determine how many hrs of sunlight each flower bed gets</i>	<i>Notebook, pen</i>	<i>May 1</i>
<i>2. Pull weeds</i>	<i>Trowel, garden Kneeler, gardening gloves</i>	<i>May 7</i>
<i>3. Measure garden beds</i>	<i>Measuring tape, notebook, pen</i>	<i>May 12</i>
<i>4. Shop for flowers</i>	<i>Gardening notebook, plastic to line trunk of car, container to transport plants</i>	<i>May 15</i>
<i>5. Plant flowers</i>	<i>Watering can, trowel, measuring tape</i>	<i>May 18</i>

Goal date for project completion: *End of May*

Alone or with a friend? Alone

Accountability partner Samantha

What I enjoyed about the experience:

Seeing visual progress everyday was so encouraging. I feel like I've made no progress in my fertility journey but with gardening I could put effort in and it always yielded visual, physical, enjoyable results. It felt good to do the physical work and spend time outside. It has left me with beauty to enjoy looking at everyday when I step foot outside and see my garden.

How the experience affected my mood, mindset and energy levels:

It has definitely lifted my mood, both during the project and afterwards. I feel happy and hopeful just looking at it and while tending it. My mindset feels more positive and hopeful while keeping up with daily tending of the garden and planning ahead of what I want to do in upcoming seasons. Working on it makes me feel less drained, less stressed and calmer.

What I learned/what God taught me through this experience:

There are good things in my "now." I experience God in nature. Just as my garden needs weeding, I need to remove things from my life that are not good for me helping me feel alive.

DIVE RIGHT IN ADVENTURE PLAN

Your Turn

Adventure #1 - One fun new experience

Brainstorm several ideas that take no more than an afternoon or an evening:

Final choice for fun new experience:

Steps to take in order to make experience happen:

Goal date for experience:

Alone or with a friend? _____

Accountability partner _____

What I enjoyed about the experience:

How the experience affected my mood, mindset and energy levels:

What I learned/what God taught me through this experience:

Adventure #2: One exciting project

Brainstorm several ideas that may take several days, weeks or months to complete:

Final choice for exciting project:

Project step	Materials	Estimated date

Goal date for project completion:

Alone or with a friend? _____

Accountability partner _____

What I enjoyed about the experience:

How the experience affected my mood, mindset and energy levels:

What I learned/what God taught me through this experience: