

Cracking the Egg

an Insider's Guide to Egg Donation

by

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&

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Introductory Endorsements

"I've been in the field of reproductive medicine for over 19 years and have extensive experience in third-party parenting, including egg donation. I've found that there is an immense advantage in having members of an egg donor agency who are experienced in the field. Wendie and Erika have the advantage of having gone through the process as both egg donors and cycle coordinators. They not only understand the medical and technical aspect of IVF cycles with an egg donor, but can also relate to the recipient's side of the process. As two of the most compassionate, thoughtful and caring individuals I have worked with over the years in this field, I find it a privilege to have a great working relationship with them on both an individual and professional basis. ***Cracking the Egg*** will be a welcome addition to our industry and one my patients will value as a resource."

Vicken Sahakian, M.D.

Founder and Medical Director, [Pacific Fertility](#)

"As a Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist, specializing in reproductive issues for the last thirty years, I have seen the need for a comprehensive, easy to read reference book for my clients. For many infertility patients, there is a huge step involved in accepting the absence of a maternal genetic link. Learning about the ovum donation process and finding the right donor help to build a bridge from the patient to the donor. *Cracking the Egg* sounds like it will be a great resource for my clients and one that I will certainly make available to them. Working with Wendie Wilson over the years, I know that this book will be filled with needed information, but will also have a light touch. I can't wait to read it!"

Shelley M. Tarnoff, MFT, Esq.

Attorney and Licensed Family Therapist to the assisted reproduction field

"As Parents Via Egg Donation (PVED) strives to act as a comprehensive support structure for those considering egg donation, we're excited to see a book concept that addresses the entire spectrum of the process."

Marna Gatlin, Founder & CEO

Parents Via Egg Donation ([PVED.org](#))

Overview

Each year, over 7.3 million Americans (and 3.5 million of their UK counterparts) face the heartbreak of infertility. In their search for answers, absolute and alternative means for building a family, they turn to the nearly 500 reproductive specialty clinics across the United States as well as the government-funded programs across the United Kingdom. But unlike those who need a little help with their own genetic material occupying the seats next to them in the waiting room, many ultimately seek out a different kind of stork to deliver their bundle of joy: **the egg donor**.

While egg donors enter into the picture for a variety of reasons, every reason has the same desired result: **a family to call one's own**. In 2007 (the date of the most recent study on Assisted Reproductive Technology by the Centers for Disease Control), there were **17,405 cycles** performed using donor eggs in the United States along with an additional **3,284 cycles** in the United Kingdom. In the United States alone, 2006 welcomed **10,000 babies** into the world thanks to donor egg procedures - a number that's double figures from the year 2000 according to the Centers for Disease Control. It's estimated that egg donation procedures have blessed families of every shape and size with more than **51,000 children** since 1983 when the first child was born from donor technology. Science builds families and now offers even more solutions for a greater portion of the world's population, including families perceived as non-traditional.

Same-sex and single-by-choice parents are more prevalent than ever in the fertility industry, some because they lack the requisite genetic material and others because they're building a family on their own terms. There's no definitive, up-to-date guide to help families of all types approach egg donation, especially these niche groups. There is still discrimination against families outside of the heterosexual norm, so what resources do they have to achieve their dreams of family when infertility affects their lives? The answer is none. Resources are fragmented, and that's true regardless of your family "type." It's time that there was an up-to-date and comprehensive guide for all faces in the egg donation and third-party reproductive picture.

Cracking the Egg: an Insider's Guide to Egg Donation is the much-needed "What to Expect When You Weren't Expecting This." It's the first how-to handbook that helps navigate the less talked about but widely practiced ovum (egg) donor landscape with a warm and friendly tone, giving those in need of a different kind of stork the answers and information they need as they begin to research family-building options:

- What do I need to know about the medical process of using an egg donor?
- What are the latest reproductive medicine technologies that we should know about?
- What should I consider when choosing a fertility clinic?
- How should I evaluate potential egg donor agencies?
- Choosing an egg donor - how can we understand AND enjoy the process?
- We're gay. Who will talk to us about starting a family?
- Are there places we can go for support from others who have built a family using an egg donor?

- What are the implications of telling our child how they were conceived?

In an easy-to-read travel guide-like format, we provide checklists, anecdotes, best practices and words of advice straight from those whose business it is to build families each and every day. It's a tale told before, but never with the breadth, depth and heart of two voices better suited than any to share the story:

A ten year veteran who's coordinated over 2,000 egg donation cycles and a multi-time egg donor whose efforts have made the dream of family a reality eleven times over.

Author Biographies

Wendie Wilson-Miller



A ten-year veteran of the egg donation and assisted reproductive technology field, thirty-four-year-old Co-Author **Wendie Wilson-Miller** is the Founder and President of Gifted Journeys (www.giftedjourneys.com), an egg donor agency based in Studio City, California. Before founding Gifted Journeys, she served as the Cycle Director of The Egg Donor Program, the largest donor agency in the United States. During her eight-year tenure with The Egg Donor Program, Wendie forged relationships with many of the nation's leading reproductive endocrinologists and the other specialists who work together to join egg donors with recipient parents.

Over the years, she developed a passion for all types of families who sought out egg donors. Single parents, traditional heterosexual couples, gay and interracial couples, transgendered recipients and even those couples who travel from overseas to the U.S. for the accessibility of the assisted reproductive culture - they all deserve to have an advocate. Thus, Wendie founded Gifted Journeys in early 2009 with the goals of not only operating a professional and efficient egg donor agency, but one that served the entire breadth and depth of those seeking to build a family without bias.

A five-time egg donor, Wendie's no stranger to the hormonal, physical and emotional ups and downs of assisted reproduction. With her final donation cycle resulting in a dangerous episode of ovarian torsion, she knows first-hand the risks borne by both sides of the egg donation equation.

She currently serves on the board for [Parents Via Egg Donation](#), the nation's fastest growing support group for recipient parents, and is a contributing author for their resource library. As one of only two Agency owners on their board, her decade of egg donation experience works towards providing the best possible support structure for those pursuing their dreams of family.

Wendie and Gifted Journeys have been featured on NPR, The New York Times, ABC News.

Erika Napoletano



OctoMom's got nothing on thirty-seven-year-old Co-Author and multi-cycle egg donor **Erika Napoletano**. While she jokes that her donor cycles were a covert attempt at world domination, the truth lies closer to her ability to give the gift of family.

Introduced to the concept of egg donation in 2000 through a co-worker who had been a donor for her best friend, she began researching the process and became a rostered donor for a prominent Los Angeles-based egg donor and surrogacy agency. Her donations have given several families the enduring gift of **eleven children among them** and her life is continually blessed with one family's open inclusion of her in their now four-year-old daughter's life.

A professional writer, Erika is a prominent consultant and outspoken presence in the digital marketing realm. In June of 2011, *Entrepreneur Magazine* will launch her column "All Up in Your Business" in their largest issue of the year. She was recently mentioned in [The New York Times](#) as an authority in the small business space. In November 2010, Westword Denver (a VOICE media-owned publication) voted [RedheadWriting](#) "Best Facebook Fan Page" along with nominations in four additional categories in their inaugural Best of the Web Awards. Named by Social Mouths as one of their [7 Examples of Kickass Personal Branding](#), she's also a regular contributor to [Copyblogger](#) (one of the most widely read online marketing blogs). She was a 2009 finalist for the Denver Business Journal Outstanding Women in Business Award and has been a keynote speaker at Chicks Who Click 2010 social media conference as well as SOBCon Colorado (September 2010), Startup Weekend Denver (October 2010) and the upcoming Angel Capital Summit (December 2010), all of which are well-attended business incubators with attendance of up to 900 registrants.

Known throughout the social media community as [RedheadWriting](#), Erika regularly speaks to crowds of over 800 attendees at sold-out Ignite Boulder, Ignite Fort Collins and Ignite Denver events. She's an influencer and carries a [Klout score of 70+](#), which means when she Tweets, people listen. And more importantly, they talk about what she's talking about. 13,000 followers on Twitter, a fan page audience on Facebook of over 3,000 (and counting) and a blog with over 30,000 unique visitors each month - Erika understands how to build, hold and retain an audience.

You can read her off-color yet on-topic ramblings at **Redhead Writing** (www.redheadwriting.com).

Why We're the Best People to Write This Book

If you've never been hyper-stimulated during an egg donor cycle - you're really not missing out on anything other than a bizarre distended abdomen, lack of appetite and the elusive wish that you could pee for hours to eliminate every ounce of fluid from your body.

We know - you're asking: Where do I sign up?

We've both borne hyper-stimulation's bloated belly yet floated through other cycles without incident.

We're both experts at proper "sharps disposal procedures" and understand what it feels like to not want to ever see another needle (ever) and still muster-up the gumption to give yourself your next shot. At present, there is no single definitive guide on the market that addresses the unique needs of egg donation recipient parents in a concise, first-person viewpoint. That's what we're here to do with ***Cracking the Egg***. After all, statements like "in theory" and "hypothetically" are nice - but we feel that "in our experience" is what people want to hear as they journey towards family.

There's nothing unemotional about the decision to have children. The decision becomes even more emotional for those who have realized they can't achieve their dreams without assistance. From feelings of failure to the uncertainty of whether you could love a child that wasn't entirely your flesh and blood, there isn't much we haven't seen, heard or personally experienced when it comes to egg donation. While there are many books that address personal journeys through assisted reproduction, there's never been one that encompasses both an agency's and donor's perspective. This viewpoint is fundamental to recipient parent audiences. From the questions they ask to our eleven years experience in working with future families, they're hungry for a resource that offers answers to pressing questions like:

- how it works to work with a donor, and
- how to feel at home with an agency that's made a compassionate business out of matching those who need with those who can give.

We're cracking the conventional egg to show what's really inside the journey towards family when egg donation is involved, and in the process, answering more questions than have ever been covered in publications in the industry.

Wendie's seen everything from celebrity recipients interested more in aesthetics than intelligence to donors who refuse a cycle based upon a recipient's sexual orientation. Difficult doctors and donors, lost medication, missed flights. Baby's first photos and letters of undying thanks. Her treasure trove of experience with egg donation, surrogacy and reproductive technology is not only comprehensive, but amusing, enlightening and accessible to a wide audience.

Erika's driven 180 miles in a single day for a 30-minute appointment designed to keep a recipient couple at ease with their donor's progress. She's donated for two families twice and once had a date walk out on her for her "blatant lack of ethical substance" (his response after hearing she was an egg donor for infertile couples). She's managed to squeeze a lifetime of experience from the tip of a syringe.

From managing situations where donors have disappeared mid-cycle to assuaging recipient fears that their donor will show up on their doorstep and demand their child, we - along with our extensive contacts with reproductive professionals across the U.S. - bring a refreshing perspective to reproductive medicine. ***Cracking the Egg*** is not only a "users guide" for assisted reproduction and egg donation for recipient parents of all shapes and sizes, but a publication in much demand by some of the nation's leading reproductive endocrinologists and assisted reproduction support groups.

Audience

Size and Scope

10.8 million people wake up each morning wanting nothing more than a child - and that's in the US and UK alone. While there are those who mix three parts liquor with 2 parts hormones and end up with an awkward conversation and a bun in the oven, these 10.8 million people only wish it were so easy. While there are at least 20,000 egg donor cycles carried out throughout the US and the UK, there are hundreds of fertility clinic staff, doctors and families who would use this book as a resource, research and source of comfort for themselves and those for whom they care.

Infertility is Big Business

In 2006, it is estimated that \$1.8 billion was spent on IVF cycles in the U.S. alone (based on an average cost of \$13,000 per cycle, inclusive of commonplace ICSI procedures and medications). By the time people consider ovum donation to achieve their dreams of family, they've usually endured between three and five failed IVF cycles using their own eggs. And if we break that down even further, there are roughly 20,000 egg donor cycles performed in the US and UK as of 2007, with each cycle costing approximately \$25,000 - \$30,000. That makes egg donation a **\$50 million per year industry** (conservatively) in the US and UK alone.

Rapid Growth

From 1996 to 2006, the number of IVF cycles performed in the U.S. more than doubled (64,681 in 1996 to 138,198 in 2006), as did the number of families blessed with children from these cycles (20,840 infants born in 1996 to 54,656 infants in 2006). In egg donation alone, 2006 welcomed 10,000 or 20% of all children from IVF into the world, numbers which the Centers for Disease Control say have doubled since 2000. We're in the midst of an escalating industry that only gets larger each year and have the opportunity with ***Cracking the Egg*** to convey timely information in an evergreen format. Donation protocol doesn't change much, but technologies and statistics can easily be revised in subsequent editions so that our book remains one of the most current and timely publications available. We will also ensure that links to purchase the most recent editions of our book are readily available on the Gifted Journeys website, RedheadWriting as well as the dedicated website we'll create to market the book in advance of and after publication.

For Women

Cracking the Egg understands what it feels like for a woman to be told "your plumbing doesn't work right." We're here to guide women faced with using another woman's eggs to build a family through the emotional, practical and medical maze of egg donation. How you should expect a donor cycle to flow, the joy in the process of selecting an egg donor and considerations for the future, like sharing with a child or children that the were conceived through donor eggs.

For Men

Cracking the Egg is a man's book for its simplicity and straightforward how-to style. Whether parents are using their own or donated sperm, the book is designed to address both the male and female sides to the equation. From hormonal and mood swings they may experience with a partner going through a cycle to the donor selection process, our book is meant to end up on his side of the bed as well.

Gay, Lesbian, Transgendered and Bisexual

There isn't a current book in the marketplace that specifically addresses gay, lesbian and transgendered unions and their unique journey towards family. How significant a portion of ***Cracking the Egg***'s marketplace is this? Year 2000 U.S. Census numbers indicated 601,209 same-sex families in the U.S., which AVERT (www.avert.org) estimates to have grown to approximately 1.5 million as of 2009. ***Cracking the Egg*** dedicates an entire section of resources and insights to these non-traditional families, tapping into an entirely new buyer segment grossly under-served by the assisted reproduction field. Gay couples, the transgendered and single gay males will generally choose donor eggs when they use a surrogate and both single and lesbian couples face the same feminine challenges as heterosexual women. We're here to address the community specific to their needs and include them openly in the reproductive technology learning process.

International Families

The US is the number one go-to destination for fertility-related travel, with the majority of recipients making the journey from the UK. While UK fertility programs are government funded and egg donors free, the waiting list for a donor can be up to five years. The availability of donors and superior level of medical care in the US makes a plane ticket and exchange rate insignificant (especially with the Euro's current strength against the dollar). Our book can cross international borders and demystify the process of traveling to the US for egg donor-related fertility procedures.

At present, there is also a significant influx of gay males (single and partners) from Spain, Israel and the [Middle East](#) who are coming to the United States for both egg donors and surrogates. Why? Because in those countries, it's illegal for a surrogate to carry and egg donors to donate and/or homosexuality itself is a crime. The LGBT issue extends well beyond our domestic borders and is one that's not likely to see any decline in coming years, especially given cultural and religious dictates in countries abroad.

Of Additional Interest...

Designed as a resource for those ranging from curious to committed, ***Cracking the Egg***'s appeal spans the entire breadth of those facing infertility. It provides a safe, private yet accessible resource for anyone experiencing infertility. Comforting stories, lighthearted anecdotes, words from professionals and an easy-to-follow flow outlining all there is to know about assisted reproduction and ovum donation - it's a bedside table book that reads more like a Frommer's guide to building a family than an overwhelming technical manual.

Cracking the Egg is a simple yet comprehensive handbook that will enable readers to ask better questions throughout their journey towards family. With over 500 reproductive and fertility specialty clinics across the country, a handbook-style guide like ours will have broad appeal, especially given the combination of current scientific data, expert insights and a colloquial tone. Our book will have equal appeal for fertility-challenged couples and singles of any orientation and nationality, doctors needing a conversational companion for their practice, waiting rooms in need of on-topic reading material and complementary professionals (like acupuncturists) who service those in search of the elusive stork.

Key Audience Factors

- 7.3 million Americans + 3.5 million U.K. citizens face infertility challenges each year
- \$1.8 billion (estimated) spent on IVF cycles per year
- Egg donation is a \$50 million per year industry (conservatively)
- 1.5 million under-serviced non-traditional families (GLBT community)
- 20,000 documented IVF cycles completed each year (2007) using donor eggs and embryos
- Over 80 American Society of Reproductive Medicine-registered egg donor programs looking to validate their procedures, assuage recipient parents, communicate with doctors and recruit new donors
- The most comprehensive list of resources and insights for both traditional and non-traditional families alike
- Travel guide-like, conversational tone

Competitive Titles

Those on the journey towards building a family are willing to go to extreme measures both physically and financially to achieve their goals. However, infertility is simply one industry that has no *Build a Better Baby in 30 Days* or *Awesome Ovaries in 7 Minutes*.

Solid Advice in an Evergreen Format

The infertility industry suffers no shortage of comprehensive books - we know. We've read and recommended them time and time again. What we've heard, however, is that people feel completely and utterly alone and overwhelmed as they face egg donation. Aside from Dr. Ellen Glazer's well-respected book, there's nothing on the shelves that discusses the heart of the matter or the most current issues facing those in search of family. The current information available is highly technical and errs on the side of either oversimplification or over-explanation. It is outdated and more clinical than clearly outlined. We've designed ***Cracking the Egg*** to be easy-to-update, eBook-friendly and conversational yet authoritative.

A Roadmap for the Reader

Doctors say you're facing "factors." Perhaps you can't find an agency who will work with same-sex families. You live overseas where the average wait time for an egg donor can exceed two years. You know all the roadblocks - what you need is a *road map*. Over the past ten years, we've found the most powerful roadmap, and the one providing the most hope, comfort and ability to empower, isn't the one where a doctor outlines your medication schedule for the next 6 weeks.

It's the one illustrated through the stories of others.

Cracking the Egg is not only a comprehensive, easy-to-read roadmap for those at any stage of infertility, but one that focuses heavily on the words we could never ourselves conjure: **those from the families we've helped create.**

Listing of Competitive Titles

Having Your Baby Through Egg Donation - Ellen Glazer, Evelina Wiedman Sterling

(2005 - Perspectives Press - \$24.95)

384 pages (hardcover)

Ellen Glazer is a long-standing and well-respected member of the fertility/infertility industry. Her book is currently the industry standard for those seeking information about egg donation. However, in addition to the information in the book being nearly six years old, it offers only nine pages on the subject of alternative (LGBT) families and fourteen pages total to the subject of families with special circumstances, a term enveloping single women, gay and lesbian families and families of color and other cultural considerations.

The inarguable difference is that the authors, due to when the book was published, fail to mention the most recent advances in donor screening and genetic testing as well as technologies like gender selection. The book also fails to offer easy-to-consume criteria, such as a checklist of guidelines for selecting egg donors, egg donor agencies and fertility clinics. As we've often recommended this book, we understand how ***Cracking the Egg*** will stand apart with its travel guide/how-to format, giving its readers actionable information, predictable sequences for the egg donation process and the most up-to-date technology accompanied by heartwarming case studies. While this book does contain plentiful case studies, they follow the overall tone of the book in their clinical format.

What to Do When You Can't Get Pregnant: The Complete Guide to All the

Technologies for Couples Facing Fertility Problems - Daniel A. Potter, MD, F.A.C.O.G.,

Jennifer Hanin, M.A., Pamela Madsen

(2005 - Perseus Publishing - \$15.95)

288 pages (paperback)

We're partial to this book because Dr. Potter is writing our foreword. Partiality aside, it's a clinical overview of current technologies (as of 2005) for those facing infertility. ***Cracking the Egg*** would be a focused addition to the purchaser's bookshelf and would update readers on newer technologies and research of the past five years. This is a comprehensive guide written from a leading physician's perspective, yet only 5 total pages are allocated to the subjects of egg donation, selecting an egg donor and donor screening. With Dr. Potter's contributions to the book, ***Cracking the Egg*** will not only offer the 800+ fertility clinics in the United States an up-to-date companion for their practices, but a complementary title recommendation filled with quotes, case studies and authority from those well-respected in the reproductive medicine field.

In Vitro Fertilization: The A.R.T of Making Babies - Geoffrey Sher, MD, Virginia Marriage Davis, RN, Jean Stoess, MA
(1995 - Facts on File, Inc. - \$22.95)
312 pages (paperback)

While over 15 years from initial publication, this book offers a great resource for those exploring IVF procedures. Dr. Sher is a well-respected, borderline celebrity in the area matter of assisted reproduction and the founder of The Sher Institute with nine locations nationwide. The book only dedicates five pages to the subject of egg donation, making our book an ideal companion or follow-up purchase. It is also the authors' intention to interview Dr. Sher for one of the chapters in the book to involve him in the process due to his authority, expertise and potential distribution channels.

Conquering Infertility: Dr. Alice Domar's Mind/Body Guide to Enhancing Fertility and Coping with Infertility - Alice D. Domar, PhD, Alice Leech Kelly
(2004 - Penguin - \$16.00)
320 pages (paperback)

Dr. Domar's book has been well-received in the infertility realm since publication in 2004. However, the book is tragically out of date. Most glaringly is the mention that there is a wait for egg donors of up to eighteen months in some states, as the majority of couples pursuing egg donation seek donors through private agencies or directly from their fertility clinic. There are only five pages allocated to the subject of egg donation in her book, and for those exploring the issue, ***Cracking the Egg*** would be the ideal companion purchase should they need additional information on the subject (not to mention current information).

Gay Parenting: Complete Guide for Same-Sex Couples - Shawn Priwer & Cynthia Phillips
(2006 - New Horizons Press - \$13.95)
233 pages

As same-sex couples are a more "mainstream" audience than ever before, we have four years of updating to do with this audience. Wendie's worked with numerous same-sex couples, single gay men, single lesbian women and transgendered families on their journeys towards family. While this book introduces the subject of egg donation, it only does so over three pages. Our book will offer an entire chapter, guest authored by Dr. Guy Ringler of the California Fertility Institute, the most recognized fertility clinic in the United States for LGBT and celebrity families. Egg donation spans the entire breadth of the LBGT community: lesbian women face infertility the same as heterosexuals, gay males are opting to select donor eggs (as most surrogates no longer cycle with their own), and transgendered families may need to seek replacement genetic material for both egg and sperm. We'll enhance our offering to the LGBT community with an easy-to-update listing of resources for family building as well as agencies and clinics known to be friendly to the LGBT community.

The Infertility Survival Handbook - Elizabeth Swire-Falker

(2004 - Penguin - \$15.00)

320 pages

A slightly irreverent guide to assisted reproduction, this publication does a great job as a bedside table companion and waiting room reading material. Published in 2004, there are six years of intervening technological advances to explore and the book only offers five pages total to the topics of egg, sperm and embryo donation. It's possible that its irreverent tone might be a turn off to potential and actual purchasers. We'll take the best of the book's matter-of-fact tone and combine it with a more lighthearted approach to a matter very serious for our target demographic.

Planning Parenthood: Strategies for Success in Fertility Assistance, Adoption, and

Surrogacy - Rebecca A. Clark, Michelle Murphy, Gloria Richard-Davis, Jill Hayes, Katherine Pucheu Theall

(2009 - Johns Hopkins University Press - \$18.95)

256 pages (paperback)

Five authors create an all-encompassing guide to infertility, published by a medical press powerhouse. The technology is mostly up-to-date and our book will add fresh perspective and a more conversational tone as well as a significant expansion on the mere eleven technically-phrased pages this book dedicates to donor eggs and embryos. It's more of a general guide for those experiencing fertility challenges than a resource for "what's next" for those seeking solutions, though it does offer in its appendices a fairly respectable list of medical, mental and emotional risks commonly associated with infertility. It could be considered a springboard for those seeking our book next.

Waiting for Daisy: A Tale of Two Continents, Three Religions, Five Infertility Doctors, an Oscar, an Atomic Bomb, a Romantic Night, and One Woman's Quest to Become a Mother - Peggy Orenstein

(2007 - Bloomsbury USA - \$14.95)

256 pages

Perhaps this book's inclusion on our list can be summed-up in a simple quote of the Washington Post's review - we know infertility is a hot topic and this reviewer saw it back in 2007: *"The book business loves a niche, especially a profitable one. So it's easy to understand the burgeoning category of what might be called Repro Lit, fueled perhaps by delayed parenthood or by the increased incidence -- or is it heightened awareness? -- of infertility."* Orenstein's voice reminds us so much of many of our recipient parents (not surprising as she's participated in an egg donor cycle herself). The book is rated 4.5 stars on Amazon with 67 reviews, and the reviews alone merit a book dedicated to telling those tales.

Marketing and Promotional Opportunities

The desire to have a child and build a family is resilient and recession-proof...emotion at its purest. While a new car will wait, people will go to great lengths and expense to build a family.

The authors hold considerable traction and the talent to access key influencers who will not only promote our book but leverage their own networks to drive sales.

Through over ten years in the assisted reproduction industry, Wendie's access to influential voices spans far and wide. Here are just some of the key ways we will leverage her relationships to bring *Cracking the Egg* to the widest possible audience from the inside:

Clinical and Professional Relationships

- Wendie's coordinated donor cycles for and worked with leading reproductive endocrinologists at over 100 IVF and specialty reproductive clinics across the United States and maintains relationships with them on a daily basis. These include facilities in Los Angeles, San Francisco, Chicago, New York, Florida and Texas - the states that have been leading the way in reproductive technology for the longest duration.
- Over the past eleven years, Wendie's built enduring relationships with many psychologists who specialize in counseling specific to infertility such as the recognized Ellen Glazer, Carole Lieber Wilkins (mother of one of the first 11 babies from egg donation born in the US), Abigail Glass, Brenda Hardt and Shelly Tarnoff. Most importantly, these psychologists and counselors maintain relationships with multiple agencies and physicians, opening the door for further sales and book exposure. [Carole Lieber Wilkins](#) and [Abigail Glass](#) have agreed to be contributors to the book.
- As each egg donation cycle requires legal expertise to complete the requisite paperwork for both intended parents and donor alike, Wendie's built relationships throughout the reproductive legal community with such well-known attorneys as Steven Snyder, Robert Walmsley, Steven Lazarus, Mark Wertz, Shelly Tarnoff (a psychologist as well), Theresa Erickson and Kate Lyon-Osher.

National Conferences and Organizations - Wendie Wilson-Miller

- Active member and regular attendee of the annual ASRM (American Society of Reproductive Medicine), an organization with over 10,000 members across the field of assisted reproduction.
- Active member of and volunteer for Resolve California, the nation's oldest, most established support group for the fertility-challenged community. Meetings regularly have more than thirty intended parents seeking suggestions, advice, support and resources for their journey through egg donation.
- Board member for Parents Via Egg Donation (PVED.org), the fastest growing support group for recipients in the midst of egg donation. Contributing author to their resource library.

Media Access

- On February 4, 2010, Wendie became the host of a new podcast on Voice America that specifically discusses all things infertility-related in a weekly, hour-long format. Voice America boasts over 7 million listeners across its slate of programs.

Community Building Know-How

Erika's day-to-day encompasses two key activities: consulting with companies on how to build online communities and servicing her targeted and highly interactive online fan base. She's a blogger, writer, social media consultant and the know-how behind several successful (and confidential) brands.

Heading-up the Gifted Journeys Twitter account ([@WendieGJED](https://twitter.com/WendieGJED)) and Facebook Fan Page (www.facebook.com/GiftedJourneys), Erika is the power behind the online brand-building initiatives we'll use to drive awareness and sales for our book. These efforts launched on October 1, 2010.

Twitter and Facebook

At the writing of this proposal, the current Twitter community for keyword "infertility" rates at a mere 158 unique profiles. With the most prominent presence in the community a UK-based acupuncturist, the majority of profiles rate at under 500 followers. Once the Gifted Journeys blog is launched (see below), we'll be able to drive more new traffic to the site and increase Twitter and Facebook fans as well,

Facebook presents similar marketing and community building potential. Most businesses (and those in the assisted reproduction field on Facebook are no different) build a Facebook page, screw around with it for a few months and then get bored with maintenance. Using Twitter and Facebook to drive community back and forth as well as to share content from complementary industry voices - it's the key to social media success!

The present social media landscape offers substantial opportunity for Gifted Journeys to build a high-affinity, highly interactive online community through the simple utilization of social best practices: use Twitter and Facebook to drive traffic to the Gifted Journeys blog.

Gifted Journeys Blog

The key to any successful online marketing strategy is the strategic drive of an audience to a predetermined location. The online community operates in very much a herd mentality - thus, if you give them a resource for finding high-quality information on specific topics and encourage dialogue, you have your audience.

Infertility is a personal journey, yet one shared by many. When you offer the opportunity to discuss something personal in an anonymous context (i.e.: online), you astronomically increase "audience participation." When it comes to sharing misery, humor, frustrations and joy associated with being told that your plumbing doesn't work or you're gay so you can't have a

family - we look forward to opening the floodgates for conversation, commiseration and comfort. The Gifted Journeys website is in the process of being ported to a WordPress-powered platform. Designs have just been approved and Gifted Journeys will be launching with a redesigned brand, website and blog on April 1, 2011.

Erika's Media Access

As one of two coordinators for the Denver Tweetup, Erika has become the unofficial spokesperson (and local media darling) for all that is social media in the Denver and southern Colorado market. She's built excellent relationships with producers at Channel 4, Denver Westword, the Denver Post and the Huffington Post reporter for Denver and has extensive ties in the public relations community across the front range as well as hard-hitting influencers in the social media realm (Twitter and Facebook) as well as in social bookmarking circles (StumbleUpon, Digg, Mixx).

Additionally, Erika and Wendie both retain the same publicist, Merredith Brandscombe of Leap Public Relations. A highly sought-after publicist in the technology and startup realm with a significant background in the medical marketing arena, she has extensive ties at key media outlets like the Washington Post, New York Times, The Ellen Show, Chicago Tribune, Los Angeles Times, CNN, MSNBC and leading online outlets. Time builds trust and Merredith's reputation is well-known and well-received by those journalists who rely upon credible publicist to bring the news to their doorstep.

About Merredith Brandscombe

Merredith Brandscombe brings 20 years of experience in PR, journalism, marketing and advertising to her clients' doorsteps. She focuses on finding the intersection between the story the company wants to tell, and the story the media wants to cover – and she'll help tailor the messaging, materials, and support until she gets there. Her specialty is delivering media relations services designed to elevate her clients' company profile, CEO, products and messages with the mass media, blogosphere and business press. Across her career, she has delivered successful media strategy programs for clients from behemoth to tiny, including HP, Philips and Sony, to Natural Grocers, ThinkFree, Fenwick & West, Collector's Edge sports cards, Plantronics and BumpTop. She has launching down to a science; four out of the five clients she launched in 2009 have been acquired, and all of those attribute their success in part to their media exposure.

Under her direction, clients have secured coverage and built effective relationships with publications such as Entertainment Weekly, The Associated Press, BusinessWeek, The Economist, The Wall Street Journal, TechCrunch, ReadWriteWeb, Mashable, Fast Company, Forbes, PC Magazine and Fortune; and dailies such as The New York Times, Investor's Business Daily, the San Jose Mercury News, The Denver Post, The Washington Post and USA Today. She has also helped clients get valuable broadcast time on CNN, MSNBC, the Today Show, and Ellen – not to mention news stories at local affiliates wherever her clients needed them.

Earlier in her career, Merredith produced and wrote programming on education in America for the Discovery Channel and Learning Channel, as well as engaged in freelance writing, marketing, advertising and production. She previously worked for Fleishman-Hilliard and Darcy Communications, helping to run crisis communications programs for the Anheuser-Busch, Safeway, Children's Hospital Research Foundation and Continental Airlines accounts, as well as several tech firms; and also served as a Creative Director and copywriter for several ad agencies in the Denver area.

Manuscript Specifications

Our book's format (part how-to manual, part travel guide, part memoir) will capitalize on the wealth of information available in the assisted reproduction and egg donation industries with a warm and conversational tone. We know we've said it before, but consider it a "What to Expect When You Weren't Expecting This" - a handbook designed to keep your heart light yet mind full with the information you need, when you need it, delivered by people you can trust.

Features

- **Foreword** by Daniel A. Potter, M.D., F.A.C.O.G. (see Outline and Appendix for details and credentials)
- **Contributed chapter** by Dr. Guy Ringler of California Fertility Partners. Dr. Ringler will author the chapter for the Gay, Lesbian, Transgendered and Bisexual audience. CFP is the leading practice for both the LGBT and celebrity communities and has proven to be one of the leading pioneers in reproductive work with "alternative" families.
- **Additional professional contributions** by Carol Lieber Wilkins and Abigail Glass (psychological professionals), Kate Lyon-Osher and Steve Lazarus (reproductive law attorneys)
- **Endorsements and recommendations** by leading physicians, family therapists and attorneys in the assisted reproduction field.
- **We Couldn't Have Said It Better:** each chapter will feature stories from recipient parents, doctors, nurses and select donors we've worked with over the years. Their words are an indispensable complement to this book (and we wouldn't be able to write it without them!).
- **Checklists:** Egg Donor Agency interview questions, Egg Donor Selection checklist, Fertility Clinic interview questions (enumerated in Table of Contents in Appendices)

Manuscript Specifications

The included outline offers the forward by Dr. Daniel Potter as well as an Introduction and eleven supporting chapters that follow egg donation all the way through from its history to what's on the horizon for reproductive technology. We anticipate a manuscript in the range of 280 to 296 pages, complete with

Proposed Manuscript Length: 280 to 296 pages (inclusive of Table of Contents, appendices, resources, author biographies and index)

Proposed Word Count: ~72,000

Delivery Terms: 6 to 7 months from signed agreement with publisher

Illustrations: cover art (subject to publisher approval) and introductory illustrations for each chapter

Cracking the Egg - Outline

An Insider's Guide to Egg Donation

Foreword

We're not doctors (and quite frankly don't want to be), but over the past ten years, we've developed amazing relationships with the nation's leading reproductive endocrinologists. Dr. Daniel Potter is one of them.

Author of *What to Do When You Can't Get Pregnant: The Complete Guide to All the Technologies for Couples Facing Fertility Problems* (Perseus Publishing, 2005) as well as an upcoming book discussing gender selection technology (pending FDA approval), he's one of our biggest fans, oldest friends and strongest advocates for getting off our asses and putting *Cracking the Egg* down on paper.

As both a world-renowned reproductive endocrinologist and director of the internationally acclaimed [HRC Fertility](#) in California, we're delighted to share that Dr. Potter has enthusiastically agreed to write the foreword for this book.

HRC Fertility's seven locations across Southern California work with over 2500 families each year from around the globe. As one of the clinics leading the industry with cutting-edge technologies like PGD (preimplantation gender selection), they were also the first West Coast clinic to establish a pregnancy through IVF ICSI technology.

Dr. Potter is a frequent speaker at numerous hospitals, medical centers, and fertility centers and organizations, including The American Society for Reproductive Health, The American Infertility Association, The International Council on Infertility Information Dissemination, Inc., and Resolve Organization. An advocate for women's healthcare, Dr. Potter also serves as an attending physician at Women's Hospital in Los Angeles and as a medical director at the Anaheim Memorial Medical Center.

"Knowing the extent of what's been published in my field, I can say, without a doubt, that Wendie and Erika are the most qualified people in this field to write this book. Wendie's communication style is highly approachable and people will respond to her conversational tone. Add to this Erika's insights from the donor side of the equation make *Cracking the Egg* a resource I'll enthusiastically share with my practice."

Daniel A. Potter, M.D., F.A.C.O.G.

Introduction: A Different Kind of Stork

Included

1-Egg Donation: the Basics

People need and seek out egg donors for a variety of reasons. Maybe it's something so simple as a lack of genetic material. Perhaps it's early menopause. Regardless, the beauty of egg donation is that you have the opportunity to take an active role in creating the family you want. Physicians in the United Kingdom opened up new roads to family with the first successful IVF procedure performed with donor eggs in 1978 and today, those in need of an egg donor have, quite literally, thousands of options from which to choose. We'll explore the most common reasons intended parents seek egg donors (ovarian function, non-viable eggs and lack of genetic material), current technologies that benefit those journeying towards family and the essential statistics that every intended parent should know about success rates. We'll also address the history of egg donors themselves and learn from anecdotes told from both the intended parent and donor perspective.

2-Filling Your Nest: Considering Ovum Donation

Rarely do you ever hear people exclaim, "Yay! We have to use an egg donor!" While for gay parents, it's pretty much a given, families including women will not certainly be facing a kind of loss. You'll feel alienated or different from your friends who have children. You'll want answers and will struggle with the "why" part of the equation. This chapter will cover the inherent gifts of egg donation and how the process offers a new lease on fertility for those who are now considering new options to build their family. Sometimes, it becomes about the goal and less about the process itself.

- Initial Shock – Reconciling with loss
- The Mourning Process
- Education & Exploration – learning about the options
- Genetics: Going beyond X and Y

3-Beyond the Nest – When Hearts and Science Collide

Each year, there are women who have to face the difficult decision to let go of their own eggs and explore using donor eggs to achieve pregnancy. Women in early menopause and ovarian cancer survivors are two key populations that must turn 180 degrees from their own biology if they're ever to experience pregnancy. We'll explore the current guidelines from the ASRM on how many times to cycle with your own eggs as well as how you should expect to be guided by your fertility specialist when your own eggs aren't achieving pregnancy.

- Letting go and letting science
- When to give up on your own eggs and open your heart to others
- Ethical considerations
- Case studies

4-How to Choose a Reproductive Clinic

With over 800 fertility clinics in the United States alone, where do you begin to choose ONE to handle the future of your family? We'll compile a list of considerations for any family to take to heart as the journey to family isn't just about the end result - it's about getting there with your peace of mind intact.

- Geography isn't everything: tips for exploring clinics in your own backyard
- Interviewing physicians: questions to ask
- Statistics: success rates with egg donor cycles, where to find this information and how to ask for it
- Travel considerations
 - Overseas families considering treatment in the United States
 - Comparative practices between UK and US
 - Pros and cons of traveling for an IVF cycle using donor eggs

5-How to Choose an Egg Donor Agency

They advertise in the papers and your fertility specialist likely has a short list of the ones they prefer to work with (and reasons why). Before a recipient parent chooses an agency, however, they should be equipped with a current, easy-to-follow set of criteria to consider. While fees might be the most noticeable differentiating factor, what other things should you be on the lookout for?

- How to research egg donor agencies
 - Physician referral, referral of friends, online research
- Questions to ask and answers you should look for
 - ASRM guidelines
 - SART recommendations
 - Experience in the field
 - Friendliness
 - Organization
 - Operating procedures
- Financial considerations
 - Agency, donor, attorney, medical testing (for donor), medications, IVF cycle, travel and all egg donor cycle-related fees
- Ethical considerations
- Donor fees paid to an agency: what it should cover

6-Choosing Your Donor: Another View on "Natural Selection"

Perhaps the most harrowing part of the egg donor process beyond the decision to pursue the process itself, this chapter explores the beauty and challenges alike in the donor selection process. As humans, we're delightfully imperfect and we'll share with you how to look at everything you love about yourself alongside your hopes for your child's future for a more relaxed donor review process.

- Setting realistic expectations for your donor
- What you should expect from your donor agency
- Key factors in donor selection
 - Ethnicity, family history, height, weight, academics, physical ability, previous donor status
 - Red flags: age guidelines, health, genetics
- "Leap of faith": donor genetic history, testing offers the most complete picture possible
- Your source of information: where donor information comes from
- Physician approval
- Genetic testing and psychological evaluations - additional cultural risk factors (i.e. African American donors tested for Sickle Cell Anemia)
- Drug testing
- Considerations in choosing an out-of-state donor
- Additional fees
- Canceled cycles

7-Circling the Nest: the Ovum Donation Cycle

You understand the technology, the medications and timeline. You've chosen a donor. What should you expect now that you and your doctor have approved your donor? We'll guide you through the next step in your journey to family: your IVF cycle with your egg donor. Special considerations will be taken to include situations involving surrogate mothers as well as extensive information for recipient parents on what to expect throughout the actual stimulation, retrieval and post-retrieval portions of the cycle.

- Intended Parent testing: hormone levels, general blood work
- Cycle coordination between egg donor and recipient mother
- Suppression phase, stimulation phase - definitions, medications, purpose, durations
- Retrieval details
- Fertilization - Intended Parent expectations
- Post-Cycle Information - cautions, expectations

8-Readying the Nest: Transfer

It's the moment you've waited for: the beginning of the pregnancy process. Whether using a surrogate or a recipient mother, you'll find this chapter useful as you journey through the next step towards family. Discussions will include next steps for all recipients (including those who achieve pregnancy and those who do not), thoughts on how to manage failed cycles (emotionally and financially), frozen embryos, and a host of alternative therapies (such as acupuncture and homeopathic/naturopathic treatments) that are available to you throughout the pre- and post-transfer phases.

9-Leaving the Nest: Recipient Parents, Donors and Honest Questions

When you've built a family through the gift of egg donation, there are choices to be made. Should you tell your child/children? Do you want to involve the donor in your child's life? We'll interview leading psychologists as well as parents and donors to get the full spectrum of thoughts on the matter, including donors who are openly included in a growing child's life,

parents who have shared with their children their genetic origins and those who have opted to not disclose to their children the egg donation procedure.

10-Everybody Builds a Different Nest: Issues facing gay, lesbian, transgendered and single parents, international recipients

Never before has there been a book that addresses both the subject of egg donation and LGBT families in such depth. As we have over eleven years of experience in working with alternative families of every shape and size, we're putting forth an invaluable cache of information for this under-served community. From potential discrimination issues on the grounds of sexual orientation to opening doors that were once closed, we'll explore the issues alike and unique to the LGBT community when broaching the process of egg donation. There are plenty of women who consider family a gift and what to share that gift without bias.

Additionally, international recipients should have a list of resources to call their own. What do you need to know when you're considering coming to the United States for an egg donor? What tools can help you navigate the landscape of securing a surrogate if you need one? Are there clinics that specialize in treatment for overseas patients? How will you handle your legal paperwork? As the waiting list for an egg donor through their government-run fertility programs can span five years, there's a need for information for those who want a timelier path to family. These are all issues left unaddressed in any publication about IVF and egg donation and we'll explain them in a logical and heartfelt manner.

11-The Nest of the Future: emerging technologies in reproductive medicine

While other books in our genre find themselves outdated from the moment of publication, we've separated emerging technologies into a chapter of its own. This makes the chapter easy to update and quick to release in future digital editions, especially. We'll discuss the latest in gender selection technology, new testing criteria and additional advancements that are making the process of building a family more accessible to more of the populations.

Appendices

- Genetic testing checklist
- Intended Parents:
 - Interview questions for fertility clinics
 - Interview questions for egg donor agencies
 - Additional interview questions for donors
 - Common legal considerations for contracts
- LGBT resources
 - Select list of LGBT-friendly clinics, egg donor agencies and other professionals (legal, psychological)
- List of online resources for egg donation and general fertility support
 - CDC studies
 - UK studies
 - PVED
 - ASRM

Introduction: A Different Kind of Stork

Get over yourself. Like I said, it's do or die. Go in, balls to the wall and say 'I'm going to do this, I don't care how long it takes.'

~Lynn McDonnell - mother, hardcase, recipient parent

If you've landed here, it's not by accident. You're looking for answers, assistance, and more importantly, a family. And we're here to tell you: you're not alone.

According to the CDC's 2002 National Survey of Family Growth, 16.6% of those of childbearing age face infertility. That figure translates to one in every seven couples in the UK. The World Health Organization says 8-10% of couples worldwide face it.

What this means (in terms your reproductive endocrinologist will never use):

- **At the Gym:** If your spin class has 21 people in it, two of them are just like you.
- **In Professional Sports:** Out of 53 rostered players on an NFL team, seven are just like you.
- **In the Arts:** Out of the 100+ members currently on the roster at the Gay Men's Chorus of Los Angeles, fourteen to sixteen are just like you.
- **In the City:** Houston, Texas has an estimated population of 2.2 million people as of 2008. That means that in Houston alone, there are 314, 285 (maybe more) people just like you.

If you want to bring the numbers closer to home, insert your own city's population data and divide by seven.

But unlike those who only need a little help with their own genetic material, you're here because you need a different kind of stork to deliver your bundle of joy: an egg donor.

Why egg donation?

Since egg donor technology appeared in the early 1980s, more than 51,000 children have joined families otherwise unable to conceive. If other means of assisted reproduction have failed you and you're considering egg donation, there's one thing of which we're certain:

Those looking for an egg donor often want children more than those who were able to have them the old fashioned way.

When you crave something, you change everything else in your life to have it. You work an extra job, you change your schedule, you sacrifice. You find a way to make it happen, damn the consequences. We understand that craving and we don't take it lightly. We're here to be a resource that you can trust to hand it to you straight, tell you know what's important and let

you know that every family exploring egg donation, while different as eggs themselves, shares a certain path. While you might never have expected to pick this book up, we'll make you glad that you did.

A book for every type of family...

Infertility isn't just about eggs and sperm not playing nice in the sandbox. As you can see by our "arts" example above, there are solid biological barriers that some individuals and couples face on the road to family. If you're a traditional, heterosexual family, your journey is much different from what society considers non-traditional families. From single moms to same-sex couples, society often has had difficulty seeing that the urge to parent extends beyond what's perceived as "normal."

What you all have in common is that you want a family, can't have one the old-fashioned way and you're sick and tired of the chirpy optimist in your support group who says, "Ohhhh, you just have to be patient!" This is a guide for what to expect when you weren't expecting this. Egg donation is a beautiful gift of science that makes the dream of family accessible to you. We're here to help you understand and embrace the process. Because that other stuff? We know. It's not working.

While the traditional way of making a family is still working for some, alternative solutions are ever more available and are no longer "in the closet." Today, fertility challenges are fair game for conversation. Ads run in the newspaper to recruit egg donors. Celebrities adopt children and it makes headlines. Same-sex couples and singles seek parenthood with increasing frequency. No matter your beliefs, we understand that the desire to become parents is universal and when looking at the current resources available, we saw there was no definitive guide available that:

- Educated audiences about the egg donation process
- Addressed all types of families
- Offered a road map for those embarking on the journey towards family via egg donation.

So that's where we come in. While we can't tell you that your own journey through egg donation won't have its own unique footprint, we can tell you that we're the best ones to fill you in on best practices, what to expect and how to make the process your own.

About Your Authors

We're not doctors or nurses. We aren't trained psychological professionals.

Only one of us is a parent.

Then why are we writing a book for people trying to start families?

We're women. For all you know, we could be your next-door neighbors or the gals behind you in line at the grocery store. But we're women with a unique perspective that helps us understand what you're dealing with and how many times you felt like banging your head (or someone else's, for that matter) into a wall throughout the frustrating journey down the road of the Fertility Challenged.

We know a thing or two about egg donation, and over the past eleven years, we've picked up a story or two to share. Maybe they'll inspire you as they have us.

Wendie: egg donor agency owner, eleven-year industry veteran and multiple cycle egg donor

The night before the retrieval procedure, I met Anna and her husband. Anna needed an egg donor because she was in remission from cancer, and a donor was her only hope to conceive a child. We'd never met prior to this, though we'd been synched-up. We all went out to dinner and over the next few hours, we laughed, cried and talked. This one dinner changed my life. My decision to become an egg donor brought tears to a couple's eyes, hopes to their hearts and told me that there was more to my decision than I'd ever considered. I had to find a way to make this a part of my life.*

I'd read about egg donation since college, and when I moved to Southern California, I started hearing about it again. It was interesting enough to me to pick up the phone and call an egg donor agency, and that's where my journey began. I filled out an application and went through their screening process. It wasn't long before I was matched with Anna*, the story you read above. Meeting with her was enough for me to know that I wanted to become more involved, even beyond being a donor.

I spoke to the agency owner, which I realized was one of the most prominent egg donor agencies in the country. Over the next year, I worked as a marketing assistant for the agency part-time and within the year, I took a position as a junior cycle coordinator for the donor program. I loved what I did each and every day: help people build families. There was still the occasional donor cycle here and there, but my real passion was in helping recipients learn about the egg donation process, match them with donors, and work with the donors and IVF clinics to make cycles as successful as possible.

Within three years, I became the Director of the entire egg donor program and was ultimately with that agency for eight and a half years before starting my own firm. During that time, I coordinated well over 4,000 donor cycles which all resulted in the most wonderful things: happy parents, delighted donors, notes of thanks. This is a joy-filled business.

And it's also a people business. Maybe that sounds trite, but it's true on so many levels. As a

reproductive industry professional, I build relationships with everyone from psychologists to pharmacists to doctors and hotel concierges. My job is to take care of the people who are involved in making people - and families - a reality. I'm extremely fortunate to have developed long-term friendships with some of the industry's leading voices and practitioners and what many don't consider is that working in this industry is about real world experience. I joined the board of Parents Via Egg Donation (www.pved.com), the leading educational resource for the egg donation industry, in 2009 and am delighted to be a part of shaping the future of egg donation.

Every cycle has its nuances. Each recipient is different. Every donor is beautiful. There's a certain satisfaction that I get from knowing that no matter how different the people we work with are, we help guide them towards that universal goal: family.

Erika: multiple cycle egg donor whose recipients now have eleven children among them

It was a summer day in 2008 when I saw her. Golden pageboy hair blowing from her face with each whoosh of the swing and a cherubic face that reminded me of those square pictures held down by black corners in my parents' vinyl-covered ring-bound photo albums.

Pictures of me.

I looked over at her dad. He was smiling. I looked at Wendie. She was smiling. Then Wendie asked me, "So, how do you feel about seeing a little girl who's half you about ten feet away?"

"It's cool. Very, very cool," I said. Because it was.

I first met Alysson* when she was just over a year old. We all got together at a Studio City cafe, her parents, Wendie and me, so I could meet her. You see, Alysson is my biological daughter. Her parents had their first daughter and while trying for their second child, they learned that Maria* was going through early menopause in her late 30s. Thus, if they were going to have another child, they were going to need an egg donor. And that's how they met me.

Back in 2000, I'd just returned to the United States after living in Japan. I was a personal trainer at the time and a colleague mentioned to me that she was going to see her boys that afternoon.

"I didn't know you had kids! How old are they?" I asked.

“Oh, they’re not really ‘my boys.’ They’re my best friend’s twin sons and they’re about eight months old. I was her egg donor. I visit with them all the time!” she replied.

My eyes got wide. Egg donor? You can do that? Over the next few weeks, I plied her with questions and she told me everything. I thought - this is incredibly cool. What a wonderful gift. So I did my due diligence and connected with a well-respected egg donor agency in Los Angeles (which is how Wendie and I became friends). Five years later, I’d helped multiple families bring eleven children into the world.

Over those five years, I’d virtually passed-out from my first shot of stimulating hormones and hyperstimulated to the point that I appeared six months pregnant. Yet on the other side of the coin, I’ve even met one of the children that’s part me, staring with fascination as she swung on a playground swing while chatting with her dad. It’s a humbling, selfless and awe-inspiring journey, being an egg donor. But why did I do it?

Because all I could think is that I was sitting here with perfectly good eggs that people needed. And from the first note I received from a recipient couple, I knew I’d made the right decision.

Let’s Go Crack the Egg, Shall We?

Now you know who we are and why we’re the ones who decided to write a book on egg donation, let’s get you started. Regardless of why you’ve arrived at egg donation’s doorstep, there’s a wealth of information in the pages following to guide you on your journey towards family. To date, there are over 51,000 children brightening families’ lives because of egg donor technology. We’d love to be a part of helping you become the next family that experiences this unparalleled joy.

Let’s crack the egg and get you the information you need about the incredible gift of egg donation. And the one thing we promise? You’ll hear what it’s all about from the people who know it best: doctors, nurses, donors and recipients. People just like you.