



## Why I am Grateful to be Quarantined this Mother's Day

By Educator Barnes – May 10, 2020

This Mother's Day will be one for the history books. It was not wrapped up in pretty ribbons and bows. There was not a huge family gathering around a table with delicious dishes followed by some sweet desserts, nor were there any opportunities to take another generational photo of all the mothers and their children. Instead, next to me, I am surrounded by my sons; they are my two blessings. I'm grateful I have them, and I'm grateful we are all together despite being stuck in our homes in quarantine for nearly two months.

“Without intervention, the chances of you becoming a mother are between ½-1%.” I can hear this doctor saying this today as clearly as I did back in 2009. Dream crushing statements have a way of lingering with such clarity even when you have overcome the odds. “With intervention, your chances go up to 40-60%.” I responded, “So a coin flip?” The problem was every infertility treatment I did was a failure except the one that blessed me with not only one child, but instead, two.

Before and after my boys were born, I did rounds of infertility treatments. The coin only flipped in my favor one time. Three years ago, at 33, I put a permanent end to having more children and decided to be content with the miracles I had. People oftentimes forget the conditions that made it hard for a person to conceive can be causing other health issues. That was my story. I couldn't do it anymore, mentally or physically. I put my health first which allowed me to put the children I have first. A sick mom can't be the mom she wants to be.

The journey was not easy. My original plan was to work until I gave birth. Then, I would take off a year from work. My dream became a nightmare fight for all of our lives.

It involved the following:

- being rushed to the hospital from my school in an ambulance
- switching to teaching half days, but rotating AM versus PM so I could see all of my middle school English classes
- Ending up on bed rest at home for two months
- Being rushed to the hospital again the day after Christmas
- Staying in the hospital on bed rest for two months
- Delivering my sons ten weeks early
- Staying in the hospital for six more days after their birth
- Moving in with my parents because I could not walk up the stairs in my home
- Having my dad drive me to physical therapy for two months so I could strengthen my muscles and walk appropriately again
- Visiting my sons in the NICU until they were released two months after their birth

This is only what we endured until we brought our boys home. I moved back home after they were released from the NICU because I could walk up stairs again. The first year brought with it more challenges. What I regretted most is giving up my dream of staying at home with my sons for a year. I had to go back to work because of all of the medical bills which took us three years to pay off.

This pandemic has been a silver lining. I got some of that time back. Just like many mothers, being stuck at home has not been easy. However, I believe we have gotten closer as a family. They got to experience me as a school teacher. Learning about fractions through e-learning was not working, It one thing to be in public and a student stops me while I am with my sons and tells them how great of a teacher I am, but it is a whole other ballpark to have that experience while we are at home. "You're a good teacher!" This statement means so much more when it comes from your sons. We have had so many conversations. I have learned a lot about Splatoon and Minecraft. We have also been able to talk about deeper subjects like politics and community issues.

When I look back and think about all we have been through, I am grateful. It would be great if I could gather around with my extended family, eat until I burst, and fellowship, but I am content with just being at home snuggled up with my sons. They are growing up so fast. They are now nine and halfway to the adult mark.

To other moms, I know it has been hard, but count this blessing of time and make the moments you have together count.

