



An Abortion Provider on Infertility: ‘Not Despite, Because’

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I spent six years trying to get pregnant. I am also an abortion provider.

It was a long six years—after three attempts at intrauterine insemination, eight rounds of in vitro fertilization (IVF), multiple early pregnancy losses, countless hormone injections, four painful egg retrievals, and an unsuccessful clinical trial of laparoscopic ovarian surgery in an attempt to increase the viability of my eggs, I was eventually able, with the help of an egg donor, to carry a pregnancy to term. I now have a wild and wonderful, energetic and empathetic 5-year-old, and am grateful every day for the privilege allowing me to finally bring him into my family.

So how, people ask, could I perform abortion care while struggling for so many years to become pregnant? How could I help people end their pregnancies while I was experiencing the anguish of infertility and subjecting myself to seemingly endless medical procedures to get pregnant?

This question has always seemed strange to me. As someone who believes in and advocates for reproductive justice—a framework developed by Black women to address the intersections of race, gender, class, ability, nationality and sexuality—I am also a firm believer in its basic tenets. Among these are the right to have children, to not have children, and to parent children in safe and sustainable communities. So how can I have experienced the hardship of infertility while also continuing to support and provide abortion care? The better question is: How could I not?