

Selling my eggs

An online post from a sperm donor conceived adult who sold her eggs. May, 2010.)

I admit a little shame at having sold my eggs. I feel like I've let down the donor-conceived community. But I'd like to illustrate my motivations with honesty. If there's one thing this industry of buying and selling children is missing, it's honesty.

When I was twenty years old I was in college full-time. I was working two days a week as a waitress in San Francisco and with that money and the wonders of consumer credit cards I was able to go out on the weekends, pay for gas and car insurance, and maintain a wardrobe decent for a precocious young professional. All of my rent and tuition was being taken care of through student loans. In the middle of the semester my mom let me know that she found an extended profile on my biological father. Turns out he was Polish! (Check out my earlier post). This new bit of information (and some other small details too) upset my life in a powerful way. I figured out that I had about three weeks between spring and summer sessions that I could use to travel. So using my credit card, at an interest rate of over 20%, I bought a ticket to Poland - the land of my father! I had to go. I had to see where my ancestors came from. I would have hitch-hiked and swam over if I had to, but it seemed a lot easier just to charge it.

When I returned to the States, I returned to school, and with working two days a week and going to school full-time I just couldn't pay down the credit card bill associated with flying to Poland. All you accountant hard-noses may call me dumb and irresponsible for charging such a steep trip with such a steep interest rate, with only a lousy part-time job - I should have known better you might say. But I was 20, and the economy was great. And I really wanted to go to Poland.

I decided I needed to act fiercely to pay off that trip. I went on Craigslist searching for work. The ads reading "Donate Your Eggs!- Help a Family with the Gift of Life!" were numerous. And for \$8,000 I could pay off my trip and have some money to record my first album in a real studio with a real sound engineer! (I'm a musician). At that time I wasn't a part of the debate on donor conception. I had my issues with donor conception, but I wasn't empowered to believe I could stop it. I knew I had a problem with the anonymity of gamete donation. I convinced myself that selling my own eggs and being willing to be known was a small contribution of activism. If these women are going to buy eggs anyways, I thought, then I'll make sure they have the option of buying from a girl who is willing to release her identifying information. Also this would be the only life experience I knew I could share with my father.

Now that it's all said and done there are some things I'm angry about.

1. I'm mad about the sharp pains in my lower abdomen. (Ovarian Hyperstimulation Syndrome is real!)
2. I'm mad that there was no aftercare to see how my body recovered. They literally took my eggs and never called me again, except to ask me if I wanted to do it again.

3. I'm mad that the medication I took to help a stranger get pregnant might threaten my own chances of having a biological child.
4. I'm mad that I can't afford healthcare to address these pains in my lower abdomen.
5. I was shocked to discover that many of the girls at my egg donation agency were using their money for plastic surgery, primarily breast enhancement. And they were doing it anonymously. (It's probably best that they did it anonymously, because if I were their kid there's no way I'd want to know how shallow my bio- mom was).
6. I'm mad that our culture damages women's self- esteem and standards on beauty in a way that they feel the need to sell one body part to procure or enhance another.
7. I'm mad we don't provide for students in a way that saves them the gloom and despair of debt upon graduation. I have several good friends in Sweden and elsewhere in Europe and none of my friends there are compelled to put their body in harm's way to pay off debt because they don't have debt. They're completing Master's degrees with the expectation to make the world a better place. And when they graduate, that's exactly what they'll do because the devil hasn't hijacked their prospects at a good life.
8. I'm mad because I believe that if women didn't graduate university with huge sums of debt, they'd be more inclined to have children earlier, because they'd be financially secure earlier and we could all be growing our families at an age our body intended! Today I'm responsible for over \$40k in student loans. I finished almost exactly when the economy tanked. I'm working part time at a restaurant now and let me say, it ain't making much of a dent in that 40k. I've worked extremely hard over the last year and a half writing a screenplay on this subject of child procurement, but the whole film is speculative and everyone involved in the project is living on savings and odd jobs until we get financing. Sometimes I think about selling my eggs again. I could really use the money. And they might pay me more because I've proven the impregnability of my ova. But then I'll get a sharp pain in my lower abdomen and have to sit down. And then I'll think about the little boy that was born two years ago (the same month I was born), and I get really sad that I'm not able to see him. I'd make a great godmother. I feel like I sold my first born child. I wonder if my dad ever felt like this.

With all bad decisions the thing we hope for is a chance at redemption. My irresponsibility not only affected my life, but the life of an innocent child. I hope the little boy I helped create finds life to be more full of joy than otherwise. And I hope he calls me one day so we can hang out and get to know each other, because he'll be on my mind often until that day comes