I am so pleased that you are taking the time to read Resolve, for the Journey and Beyond. Reading this publication is one of many ways that you can Take Charge of your family building journey and reach resolution. I am firmly convinced that if you arm yourself with the right information and get the right support, you will reach your family building resolution quicker.

In this issue, RESOLVE provides you some valuable tips and strategies for creating a financial plan and managing your finances during your family building journey in “Creating a Financial Plan.” Because health insurance does not universally cover the diagnosis and treatment of infertility, many of us are caught off guard when we must come up with thousands of dollars to receive medical treatment.

Dr. Larsen’s article “The Magic Number,” discusses the number of embryos to transfer in an IVF cycle. I had the privilege of being at the American Society for Reproductive Medicine’s Annual Meeting in Atlanta in October 2009 when the new embryo transfer guidelines were announced. RESOLVE immediately issued its own statement applauding the updated guidelines. Everyone’s goal is a healthy mom AND a healthy baby; make this your goal too.

The infertility journey can be a rough road, as anyone going through it can tell you. Helen Adrienne brings incredible imagery to the infertility process in “Diving Under the Turbulence of Infertility.” Rochelle Anixt Gold gives you some excellent advice on how to weather this journey with your partner in her article “The Double Bond: Working as a Couple to Create a Family.”

I want to thank Nicolet Zilinsky for sharing her thoughts about Mother’s Day. Zilinsky’s openness provides a heart wrenching timeline of her Mother’s Day celebrations through her infertility treatment.

If you are considering adoption, you must read Hal Kaufman’s article “Developing a Strong Family Profile.” Kaufman gives you practical, easy and sound advice on how to create your family profile for birth parents if you are pursuing a domestic adoption.

Make it your goal to reach out and find the information and support you deserve! Give yourself a pat on the back for taking care of yourself! And for more information on any of these topics, visit RESOLVE’s article library at www.resolve.org.
DEVELOPING A STRONG FAMILY PROFILE

By HAL KAUFMAN

The family profile, also known as the parent profile or Dear Birthmother letter, provides expectant parents considering adoption with their first impression of a prospective adoptive family. It gives them a glimpse into what life would be like for their child. Prospective adoptive families have complete control over the quality of their profile and the profile has tremendous influence over how quickly families adopt. It is the most important element in the domestic adoption process.

What separates the great family profiles from the good ones? The great profiles feel genuine and not cookie-cutter in nature, share interesting stories that create opportunities to develop personal connections and includes pictures that pull the reader deeper into the profile.

Write from the Heart, Not to an Audience

Expectant parents who are considering making an adoption plan for their child can distinguish between prospective adoptive families that write authentically and honestly from their heart from families that seem to be writing what they think expectant parents want to hear. If you stop and think about it, writing what you think an expectant parent wants to read is nearly impossible to do well because the audience is so diverse. For example,

• Expectant women are the primary readers and decision-makers, but sometimes the expectant father and the families of the expectant parents are involved in the process.
• Although 26% of birth mothers are teenagers, the median age is 23 years old and 37% of birth mothers are 25 years old or older.
• Even though many birth mothers are of a lower socioeconomic status, birth mothers of a higher socioeconomic status with educational goals are more common.

Writing from the heart does not mean, however, that one should share everything. Imagine that you are on a blind date that starts something like this: "Wow am I happy to finally get a date! The last person I dated was just awful. It’s been so long since I’ve even had a date and believe me; I’ve tried plenty of times. I just hope this one works out.” That is not a good start! Desperation, sadness and frustration are not a recipe for attracting a match. Unfortunately, many prospective adoptive families communicate similar sentiments in their family profile. The following examples share genuine facts and feelings, but also can create a negative response from the reader and should be avoided:

• “Our hearts ache to think that we are not yet parents.”
• “During the last five years we have suffered through invasive medical treatments and multiple miscarriages, but we now believe that adoption is the best way to build our family.”

One way to address infertility in the family profile is to mention it without any details

continued on page 11
while simultaneously sharing some positive outcomes. For example: “Our experience with infertility not only opened our eyes to the beauty of adoption, but also strengthened our marriage and better prepared us to be parents. We learned that...”

Show More Than Tell
Great family profiles inform the reader through memorable stories. Expectant parents considering adoption get to know families better through stories than by reading a list of facts. Furthermore, the more a family profile engages the senses through anecdotes, the greater the response by the reader.

To reinforce these points, compare the effectiveness of these two pairs of examples. Which ones are more likely to strike a connection with a reader?

1. “Sue likes to cook.”
2. “Nothing beats the sweet smell of Sue’s homemade caramel rolls fresh out of the oven on a brisk Sunday morning.”

1. “We are an active couple and love the outdoors.”
2. “Last summer we fulfilled our dream to hike Glacier Point in Yosemite National Park. After a full day of hiking with 20 pounds of gear we expected to sleep well, but the pounding 1,500-foot waterfall BELOW us had other ideas.”

Include Attention-Grabbing Photographs and Captions
Photographs are another great approach for helping expectant parents get to know prospective adoptive families. In fact, the most important elements of any family profile are the pictures and corresponding captions. Expectant parents use the pictures to make initial judgments about the prospective adoptive family and to decide whether to read the profile. The strongest family profiles communicate so much information through pictures and captions that the reader can truly get a sense of the family without ever reading the profile.

The best pictures show faces and expressions, not scenery and one-inch bodies. Captions should provide useful information that fit into the profile itself and do not repeat what is obvious from the picture. Both pictures and captions provide opportunities to express

continued on page 13
CONNECT

DIVING UNDER THE TURBULENCE OF INFERTILITY

By HELEN ADRIENNE, LCSW, BCD

Anyone who has ever frolicked in the ocean learns to avoid getting knocked over by the waves. When a breaker is rolling toward you with its powerful churning energy, diving under it keeps you safe.

The imagery of the surf, with its potency and relentless momentum, is a fit metaphor for infertility. Infertility has the power to knock over Godzilla. In my 30-plus years of experience as a psychotherapist, I’ve seen infertility rob strength from the most stress-hardy. But, I’ve also been privy to the resilience that carries to parenthood those who, like yourself, have suffered under the strain.

Where does resiliency come from? The frenzy of infertility drains energy. But many apply mental muscle to fight the good fight, which under the circumstances can feel like a car in overdrive with the emergency brake yanked up. While applying mental muscle as a coping mechanism to push through the challenge can be effective, diving under the turbulence renews energy and builds resilience. Diving under the turbulence can be learned and earned. When under the turbulence, you let go of the infertility’s traumas and create a respite into which resiliency can flow.

The October 2009 issue of Fertility and Sterility published a report of a study in which “problem-focused coping” was contrasted with “letting-go coping.” Problem-focused coping is about doing something different to alter the circumstances, whereas letting-go coping is about being in a different mindset by altering your emotional response to a situation that is out of your control. While doing is not to be disparaged and has its place in the infertility struggle, it’s clear that infertility leaves everyone feeling out of control no matter what you seem to do. Giving yourself a respite from the stress is what you can be in control of. Letting go builds resilience for the next leg of the journey. And, by the way, letting-go coping is “significantly associated” with pregnancy in the Fertility and Sterility report.

If infertility is anything it is a total mind/body experience. Mind and body cannot be pried apart. The anguish of infertility goes beyond the mental experience of it. As the mind tries to wrestle with the mental shock and the physical demands of trying to conceive, the mind/body expresses the stress in the form of physical, emotional, behavioral, cognitive, relational and spiritual symptoms.

So with mind and body in a frenzied state, how can one let go and dive under the turbulence? Infertility patients worry that the past is a predictor of the future. Little time is spent in the present moment, the only moment any of us have. The present moment is also the place from which the opportunity to dive under the turbulence resides and where the chance to return the mind/body to a state of neutrality and receptivity to a pregnancy is highest. There are lots of ways to dive under the turbulence: meditation, hypnosis, self-hypnosis and guided imagery are some of the better known among the letting-go techniques. For purposes of this article, the Relaxation Response™ can be easily learned and earned.