

THE DAY IT HAPPENED started off innocently enough. Until right before I left for work, when bright red spots of blood started showing. “It’s probably nothing,” I told my partner, Nick. “Some spotting is normal. I’ll keep you posted.”

Inside, though, I wasn’t so sure and, by mid-morning at the office, there was no mistaking what was happening. Hiding in a disused room, I called Nick, tears streaming down my face. He came over immediately and took me, sobbing all the way, to our doctor.

The scan showed our worst fears: an empty sac. Our little egg had fertilised but had stopped growing early — they call it a blighted ovum. The cruel part is your body doesn’t recognise the baby isn’t growing at first, so you keep developing a placenta and your pregnancy hormones are still being released, giving you symptoms. Until your levels drop you still feel pregnant.

My obstetrician comforted me as he confirmed the news, saying that nothing I did caused this but I already knew that. I had done everything right, even down to calculating my calcium, iron and folate consumption. In the back of my mind my obsession with health had been my insurance policy; I knew that if something like this had happened I wouldn’t blame myself.

The day after I started miscarrying, I lay on the bathroom floor, bleeding and sobbing and trying to pull myself together enough to get into the office. I felt crushingly alone. We speak to our friends about other tragedies in our lives — death, divorce, heartbreak — but we rarely speak about this. I had no friend to call on who I thought would understand.

Miscarriage is something we’re completely unprepared for. We are taught about sex and pregnancy, we see examples time and again in movies and on television, we talk to our friends about it in hushed, and sometimes cocktail-induced loud, tones. But when was the last time you sat down and discussed a friend’s miscarriage?

The reason for this silence perplexes me. Why, with more high-profile women such as Tara Moss and Georgie Gardner speaking out, are we still so quiet about this private hell? Why do we still wait until that magical 12-week mark before we share our incredible news with the people closest to us? Even after my miscarriage and asking myself these questions, I still did the same thing with my second pregnancy, cutting myself off from a huge support network at a time when I needed it most.

On that horrible day, I still went to work as though nothing had happened. When people don’t know you were pregnant in the first place, how can you tell them why you’re upset? My PA and manager were gentle; without their support I don’t think I would have got through the day. The funniest thing when I look back is that I still kept all my appointments — I even went to the dentist. It was as though I had to keep going, to keep the secret of the pregnancy.

Nick was amazing, as I cried on his shoulder constantly in the days and weeks that followed. The grief was overwhelming at times but I expected the grief. I wasn’t prepared for the anger that followed.

It started when I went for my second blood test to confirm what my body had already told me. I sat in the waiting room across from a young couple. She had scratches on her face and the drawn look of someone who had clearly abused drugs. Both were skinny with no muscle tone, nothing to suggest they’d ever exercised, and it was clear from the McDonald’s burger he was munching on that eating healthy didn’t rate high on their priority list. Yet in a pram in front of them sat a child, and the mother was pregnant again. On top of the pram sat a packet of cigarettes. It was so extreme it was if it had been scripted. I was furious. My brain screamed against the unfairness of it all. I was shaking as I sat down for my blood test, barely holding it together.

In the safety of my car I burst into tears. I was done; after all the needles and tests I was sick of feeling like a pincushion, sick of the ups and downs, and I wanted to get off the rollercoaster.

Thankfully, I didn’t have to have an abortion, a procedure recommended after some miscarriages to ensure everything has gone. My body did exactly what it was meant to do and passed what was going to be my child in three excruciatingly long days. My obstetrician had a long discussion with me about it when I asked him not to perform the procedure. I knew my body was done and he agreed to trust my judgment. I will forever be grateful for that.

The following month was horrible. Everywhere I went there were reminders. Every time I turned on the television there was an ad with a happy baby, or a news story about a baby, or a show with a baby.

Even when you think you’ve dealt with your grief, it hits you when you’re least expecting it. I had injured my knees skiing before I fell pregnant and decided to have them scanned as soon as I could after the miscarriage. In the change room of the radiologists was a huge poster of a baby in a woman’s womb: “Please Mum, tell them I’m here!” I stood frozen, staring at it for ages and then surprised myself by laughing. “You’ve got to be kidding.”

It hit me again after the surgery on my knees to repair tears in the cartilage. Despite us taking precautions in the month leading up to the surgery, I secretly tested again that morning, telling myself I was just making 100 per cent sure I wasn’t pregnant but secretly wishing I was, and being disappointed at the big, fat negative I saw. After surgery I woke up with my usual queasiness, trying not to retch over the side of the bed. The nurses were very sympathetic as they administered more anti-nausea medicine. “You poor thing, do you get bad motion sickness as well?” I nodded, grimacing as the waves of sickness hit me again. “It’s systemic in you, I think,” she said. “Have you ever been pregnant? I bet if you did you’d be really sick!” I burst into tears.

While I was grieving, two friends announced they were pregnant and despite my crushed feelings and »

‘I felt crushingly alone. We speak to our friends about other tragedies in our lives ... but we rarely speak about this.’