

- How you feel about life.
- How you feel about fatherhood.

It's not a clear-cut thing. If you've been unable to conceive for four years, are you twice as stressed out as someone who's been on the roller-coaster for two years? Maybe. Maybe not. Everyone's different. People are not linear, and neither is the experience of having your family planning thrown like this. Human experience can't be put into a folder and filed away neatly.

As things happen, while trying to get pregnant, you change, your partner changes and your relationship changes. For some people, it will improve. For others, it will get worse. The one thing that is almost guaranteed is its effect on almost every part of your life.

It's more than a whole new ball game. It's a whole new sport.

Men are generally results focused and pretty competitive. We don't want to know that our football team played well, we want to know that they won. We laud gold medallists as winners and label the silver medals as the first of the losers. If you don't get the results, you're out. And it's more than just being unfortunate. You're a failure. That's a male thought pattern.

Recognising a potential fertility problem can be seen as the ultimate failure as a man. If we are told from the time we're born that we'll be a 'stud', recognising and accepting that fertility isn't easy can make you feel like a loser as a man – particularly when other people around you can do it so easily. It can make you feel like a failure as an achiever and in your ability to get the job done with little fuss.

Sometimes men just want to forget about the struggle, because they don't want to recognise failure. It's too painful and too much of a reminder of what they can't do. So while our partners are looking at ways to survive the ordeal, we're looking at ways to stop the ordeal.

And of course, it's just not that simple.

Women also identify that an inability to conceive means personal failure, but they generally work to do something about it. To actually do whatever it takes for however long it takes to achieve that goal of motherhood.

And that's why it's the woman in the relationship who starts to react first.

When should you start worrying that you have fertility problems?

“ We have friends who've been married for 15 years with no kids. They've been trying to have a family for