

Emotions
By James Collins

We were married in 1961. 250 at the reception. - joy, celebration, laughter, happiness.

Christmas 1961, we announced Eileen was pregnant. - joy, hilarity, exuberance, congratulations.

The twin girls were born two months premature each weighed about 5 pounds. – Concern, worry, happiness, joy.

Both lived only one day. They lived together, they died together. Despair, stress, tears, heartbreak, recrimination – a forever sorrow.

It was a disease, known as hyaline membrane, that attacked the lungs of newborn prematures. Two years later that disease killed President Kennedy's son.

Christmas 1962 and we again announced we were pregnant. – Happiness, joy and exhilaration.

Shortly thereafter a miscarriage. - Depression, despair, sorrow, frustration,

Christmas 1963, we again announced a pregnancy. - Happiness, joy, concern, trepidation, uneasiness, uncertainty, concern.

At three months problems developed. It looked like Eileen might lose the baby. Eileen immediately took to her bed. For the remaining months of the pregnancy, Eileen went to her bed to save the child. Concern, uncertainty, prayers, sympathy. Patricia was born. – Joy, exhilaration, happiness, relief.

The next day the doctor called – concern, uncertainty. He announced that the baby's head was growing at an accelerated rate, which is indicative of water on the brain (Hydro Encephalitis). This could lead to all kinds of mental and physical disabilities. Despair, uncertainty, fear, and trepidation. I thought we were suffering the 10 plagues of Egypt. I told the doctor to do nothing and I prayed to God. Why us God? What had we done? We do not deserve this God. Then I turned to my family the bulwark of my life, source of all knowledge and experience. I called my mother.

“Jim! Do not let the doctors touch that baby! There is nothing wrong with her head. The three of you all had heads so big that normal baby caps would not fit in we had to crochet a hat for each of you or buy one of the store and let it out. When you were born, you weighed 10 pounds 7 ½ ounces. You were the biggest baby in the nursery and you had by far the biggest head. This is very common in our family do not let that doctor touch the baby.”

I told the doctor all this information and told him not to touch the baby under any condition. He indicated that he would follow my direction but they would monitor the baby very carefully. They measured Patricia's head every week for three months until the rapid growth rate slowed to a more acceptable number. They continued this check of her head measurements for an entire year. The doctors finally agreed that this appeared to be a genetic condition normal to our family.

Christmas 1964, we again announced a pregnancy. Happiness, joy and enthusiasm wonder.

Jimmy was born at a good weight and everything appeared fine.

The next day the doctor called. Concern uncertainty. He announced again that this baby had a rapidly growing skull. -Relief, incredulity, anger. I told the doctor in no uncertain terms that we had just gone through this with Patricia. He measured her head every week for a year. I told him there was nothing wrong with the child, and to do nothing to him. Again, we went through measurements for a year and there was no problem.

Christmas 1965, we again announced a pregnancy. Happiness, joy, excitement surprise. The first time Eileen went to visit the doctor I went with her. Everything was cordial. I reviewed our experience with the rate of growth of the skull of the babies with the doctor. He said that would not happen again. He would remember. I asked him if I could see the standard form used for each patient -a blank one. He obliged me an eyeglass at the yellowed folding form that consistent of four pages. I said," doctor I see there is a section for comments the very last page of this form. Could I ask you to humor me and put a sentence or two in here indicating that we had this conversation. Also that the previous two babies had this condition and when this baby indicates the same problem it should not be considered a major threat but rather a normal event."

"No problem," said the doctor as he amended the form.

Kevin was born at a good weight and everything seemed fine.

The next day the doctor called. Concern uncertainty. He announced I told the doctor, "Doctor would you mind opening the file on this baby and look at the back on page four."

He did and was extremely apologetic. "I totally forgot Mr. Collins, I am so sorry. We have so many babies being born at a practice that any unique case may be forgotten.

Christmas 1965 whole family showed up at the Murphy's for dinner. My mother-in-law rose out of her chair and said, "Jim if you stand up to make an announcement this year I will shoot you dead. We cannot go through this trauma every year."

With that, my brother-in-law who had just been married the previous year arose and said, "This year it's our turn we are pregnant."

THE END

