



Deep Release Online
Professional Training for Counsellors



The First 1000 Days

Understanding
Attachment,
Trauma and Early
Development

We used to believe...

Pregnancy is biologically important, but psychological life begins after birth

We now know that...

Development is already occurring in response to the environment before birth



The First 1001 Days

Conception



The beginning
of life



Pregnancy



Growth, connection
and brain development



Birth



A powerful transition
to the world



~2 years



Rapid growth, learning
and early relationships

One continuous journey of development rather than separate stages

MONTH 3.



Erikson's Life Stages: Cycles of Development

0-2 years
INFANCY

2-4 years
EARLY
CHILDHOOD

4-6 years
MIDDLE
CHILDHOOD

7-11 years
LATE
CHILDHOOD

12-18 years
EARLY
ADOLESCENCE

19-24 years
LATE
ADOLESCENCE

25-45 years
ADULTHOOD

45-65 years
MIDDLE AGE

65+ years
SENIOR AGE



TRUST

AUTONOMY

INITIATIVE

COMPETENCE

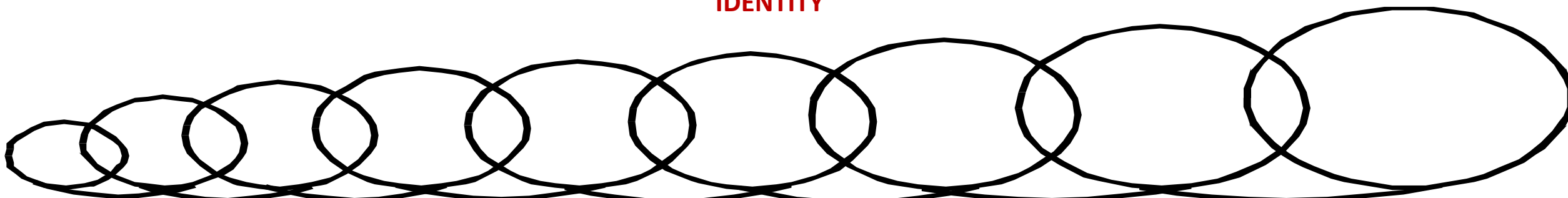
GROUP
IDENTITY

IDENTITY

INTIMACY

PRODUCTIVITY

INTEGRITY



MISTRUST

DOUBT &
SHAME

GUILT

INFERIORITY

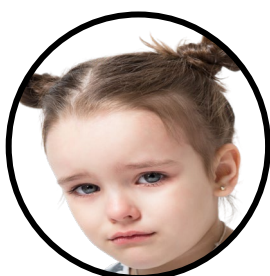
ALIENTATION

ROLE
CONFUSION

ISOLATION

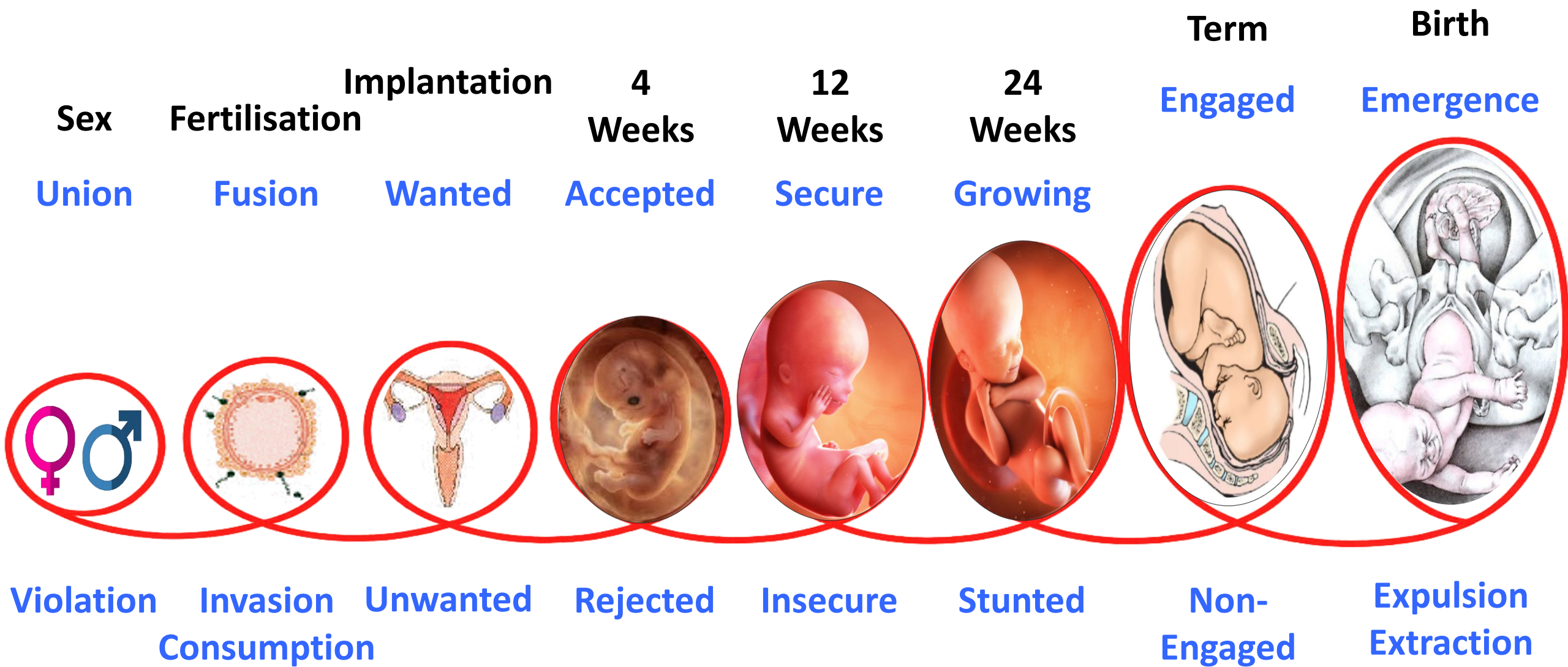
STAGNATION

DESPAIR



"IDENTITY CRISIS"

The Journey from Conception to Birth



The baby in the womb is not isolated from the mother's emotional world

- The baby responds to maternal physiology (what is happening in the mother's body), hormones, sounds, rhythms and changes in the environment *long before birth*.
- Significant maternal stress, anxiety or depression during pregnancy can impact foetal development.



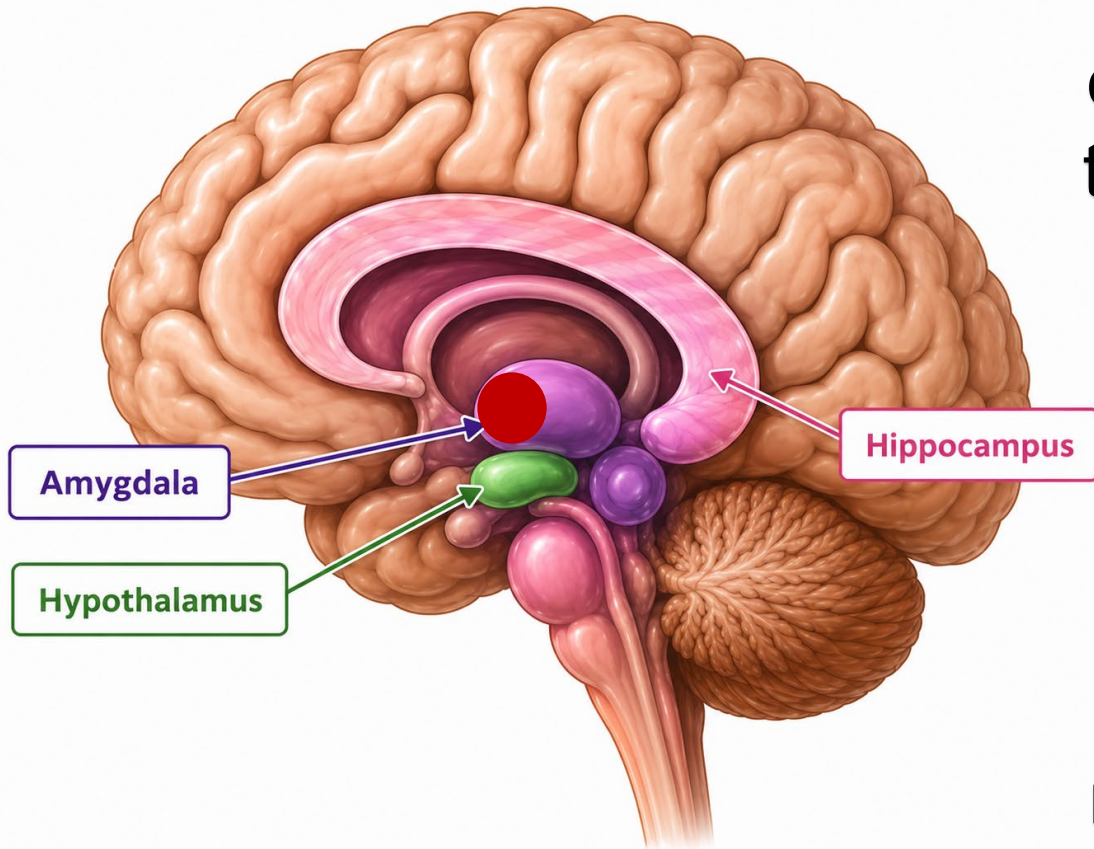
The baby in the womb is not isolated from the mother's emotional world

- This may increase the likelihood of later emotional, behavioural and neurodevelopmental difficulties *in some children*.
- This is increased probability and vulnerability, *not destiny*.



Development in the Womb

THE EMOTIONAL BRAIN



The limbic system forms the core of the emotional brain, including areas such as the amygdala and hippocampus. It helps the baby connect, feel safe, bond and regulate.

It develops before the thinking brain (prefrontal cortex). This early development is why loving attuned relationships in pregnancy and after birth are so important.

Development in the Womb

THE SURVIVAL BRAIN

- The Survival Mind is the most well-organised during the first three months in the womb
- Events at this stage are laid down very deeply in the foetal system – “first line level”
- Experiences of raw pain
- Memory of events and imprinted pain is at its least accessible
- This level can only be reached on its own terms



3 months

Development of the emotional brain in utero

Early pregnancy
5-8 weeks

Early brain
formation



The foundations
for the emotional
brain (limbic
system) are being
laid

1st Trimester
9-12 weeks

Limbic system
begins to develop



The limbic system, the
centre for emotion and
connection, begins to
take shape and grows
rapidly

2nd Trimester
13-24 weeks

Rapid growth of
the limbic system



The emotional brain
becomes highly active.
The baby can feel,
respond to touch,
sound and emotion

Late 2nd Trimester
25-32 weeks

Connections
multiply rapidly



The baby experiences
emotions and is soothed
by the mother's voice,
touch and presence

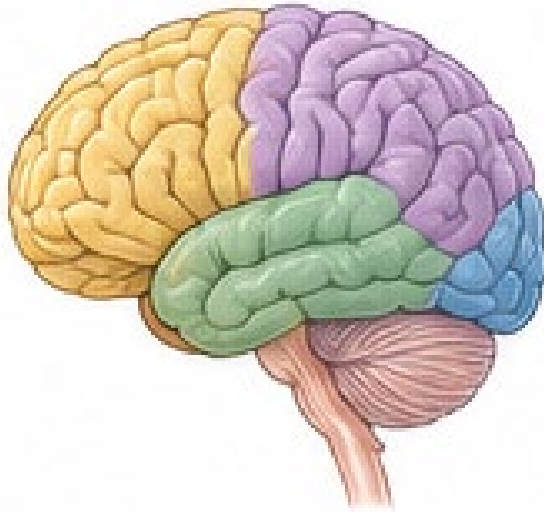
Third Trimester
33 weeks-birth

Emotional brain well
established at birth



The emotional brain
continues to strengthen
through connection,
care and experience
after birth.

The Cortex (Thinking Brain)



- Frontal Lobe (Prefrontal Cortex)
- Parietal Lobe
- Temporal Lobe
- Occipital Lobe

The cortex is the outer layer of the brain responsible for higher thinking skills: attention, language, reasoning, planning, problem-solving and self-regulation. It develops later than the emotional brain (the limbic system) and continues to mature well after birth.

The thinking brain depends on the emotional brain. Early experiences of safety, connection and attunement support healthy cortical development.

Development of the cortex in utero

Early pregnancy
5-8 weeks

Cortical plate
begins to form



The earliest stage
of the thinking
brain.

1st Trimester
9-12 weeks

Early cortex begins
rapid growth



Neurons are
produced and
migrate to their
positions

2nd Trimester
13-24 weeks

Cortex grows and
begins to fold



The cortex
thickens, and
folds (gyri & sulci)
increase surface
area. Early
connections form.

Late 2nd Trimester
25-32 weeks

Rapid growth and
increased connections



Billions of
connections are
made. Baby
responds to light,
sound and touch

Third Trimester
33 weeks-birth

Prefrontal cortex begins
important development



The prefrontal
cortex (the centre
for planning, self-
control & decision-
making) grows
quickly. More
connections are
refined.

Late pregnancy
birth & beyond

Cortex continues
to mature for
many years



The cortex
continues to grow,
especially the
prefrontal cortex,
through experience,
relationships and
learning

“Being able to feel safe with other people is probably the single most important aspect of mental health.”

Whether considering prenatal influences, infancy, or adulthood, the capacity to experience safety, within one's own body and in relationship with others, is central to healthy development and recovery.



Dr Bessel van der Kolk

“The Body Keeps the Score”

- During pregnancy, birth and infancy, the brain is still developing.
- Babies can't store memories in the same way older children and adults do because the parts of the brain responsible for forming memories are still developing.
- Although we won't remember these experiences in the usual sense, they can leave lasting impressions on the nervous system.
- These early experiences may shape how safe, connected and resilient we feel later in life.



Dr Bessel van der Kolk

- The body stores experiences long before we can consciously remember them.
- Traumatic experiences can be encoded as:
 - body sensations
 - emotional states
 - physiological responses
 - patterns of movement and tension

...rather than as explicit memories



Dr Bessel van der Kolk

“Trauma is not what happens to you. Trauma is what happens inside you as a result of what happens to you.”

If the prenatal environment feels chronically unsafe or stressful, the developing nervous system may adapt by becoming more vigilant or sensitive.

These are survival responses.



Dr Gabor Maté

Babies may be born with nervous systems already calibrated to expect a stressful world.

Maté links this to later patterns such as:

- Hypervigilance
- Difficulty self-soothing
- Strong startle responses
- Emotional sensitivity
- Problems with attachment



Dr Gabor Maté

A calm, responsive caregiver can help regulate a baby's nervous system.

Early emotional attunement can buffer the effects of prenatal stress.

Healing remains possible throughout life because the brain and nervous system retain the capacity to change.



Dr Gabor Maté

Possible ideas to share in Breakout Rooms

- How do you respond to the teaching so far?
- Share your own personal and professional perspectives, as much as feel safe.

15 minutes



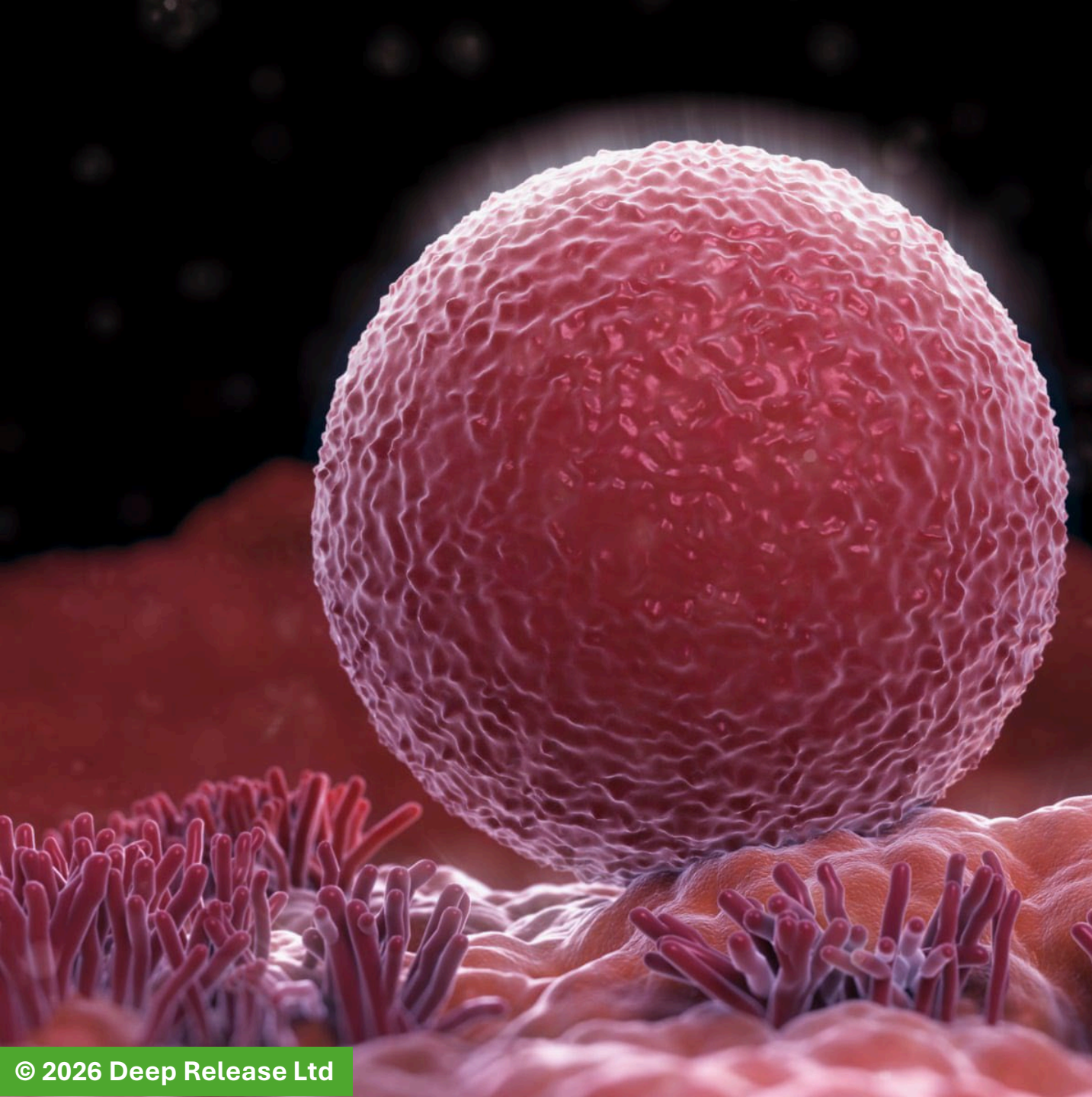
TAKE A BREAK

5:00



The Conception to Birth Journey as an Meditation



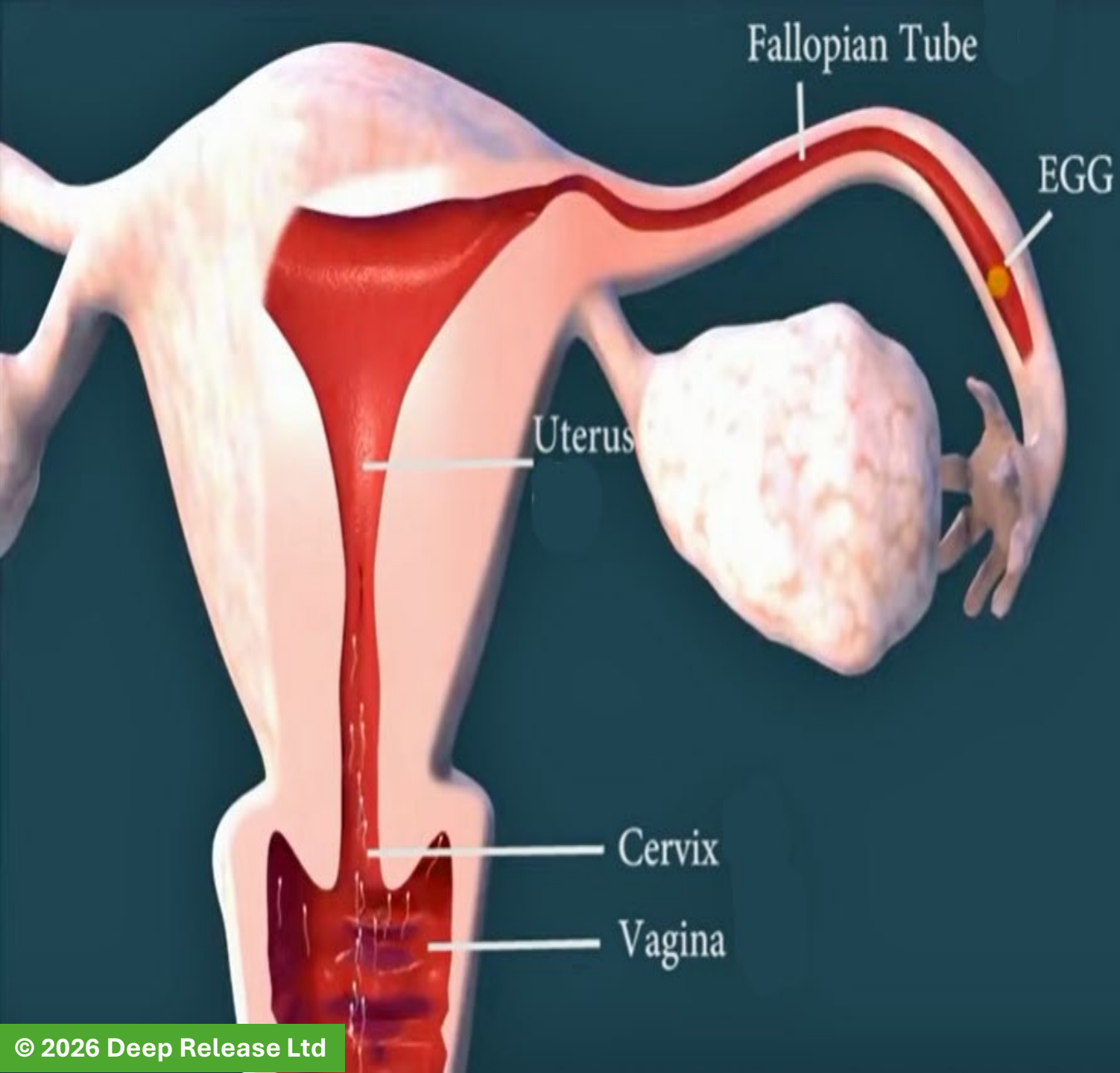


You begin life as an egg.

**You were made while your mother
was growing inside her own
mother's womb.**

**This is your mother's DNA. You
are completely surrounded by her,
totally dependent on her for life
and health.**

**The egg is the largest cell
in the human body.**



At ovulation, the egg is released, drops out of the ovary, and begins its journey, hopefully to meet the sperm.



**Your parents come
together...
to make love?
to make a baby?**

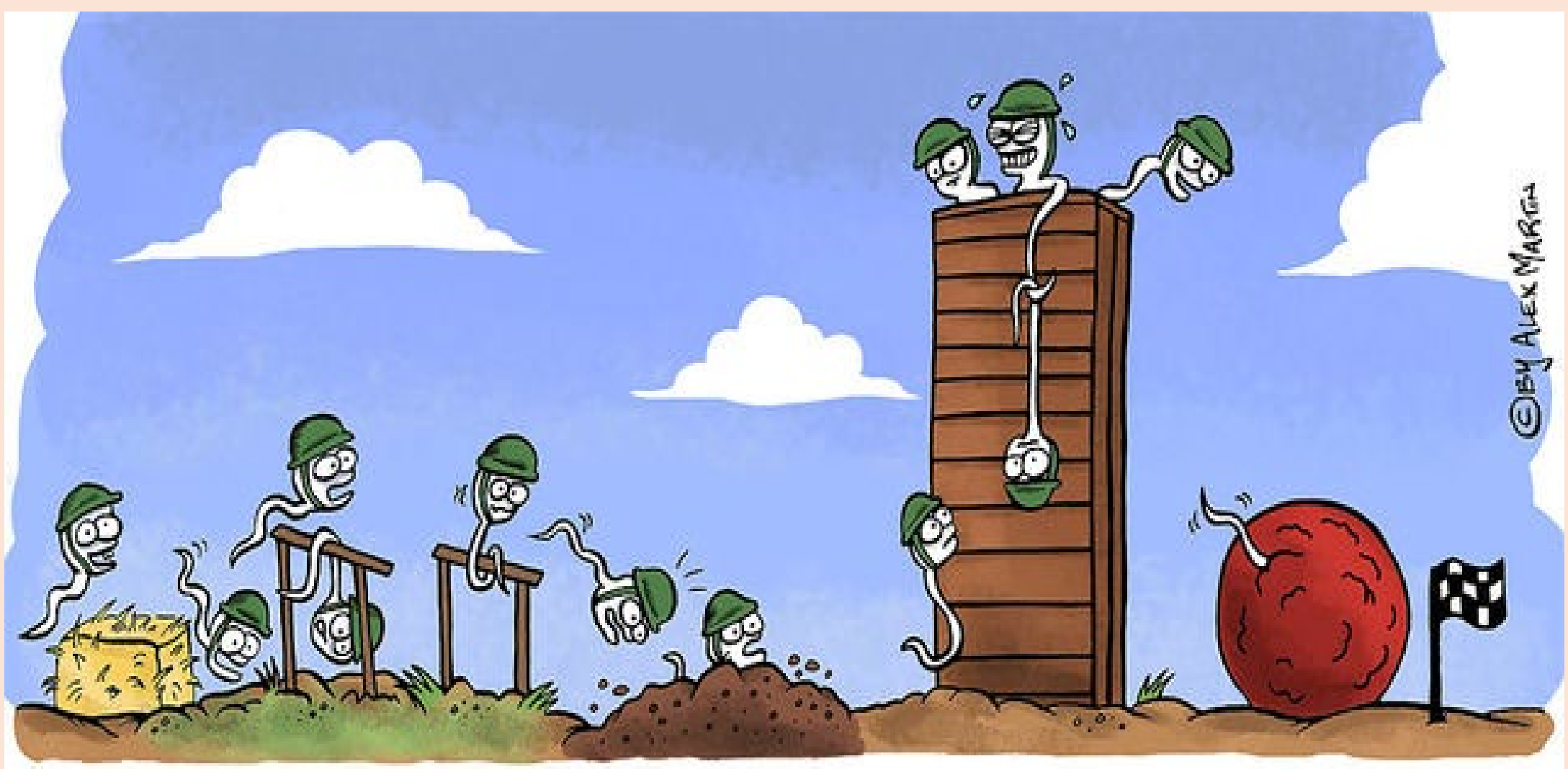


This is your father's sperm.

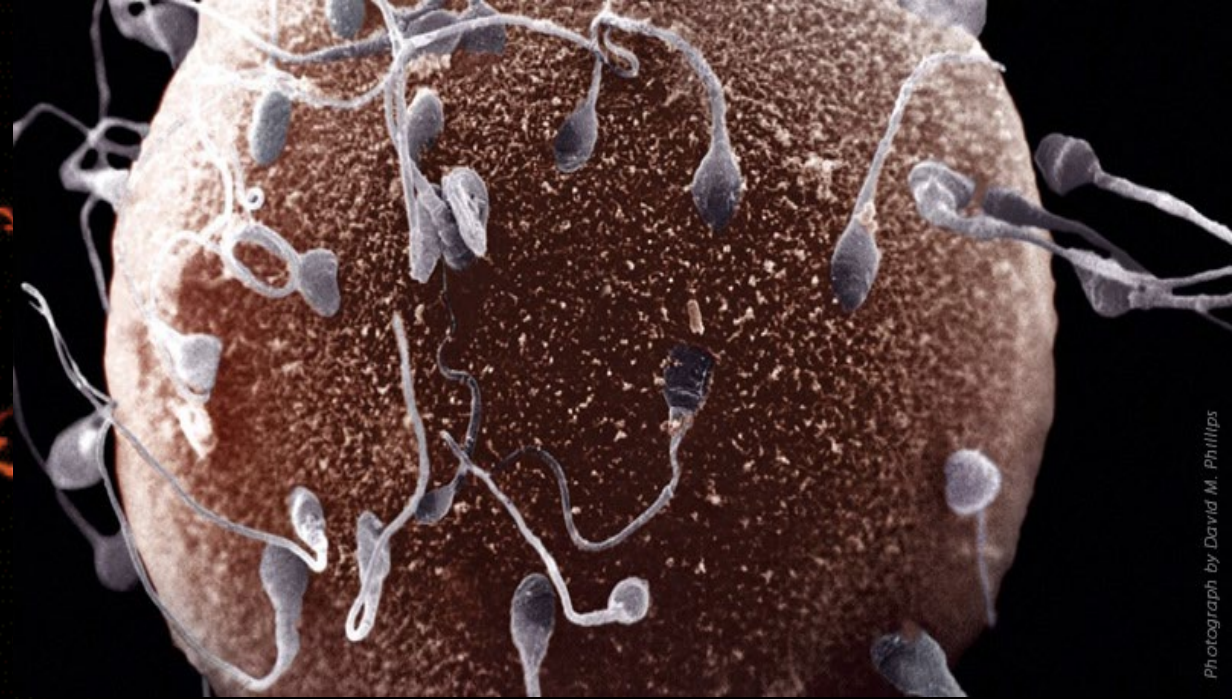
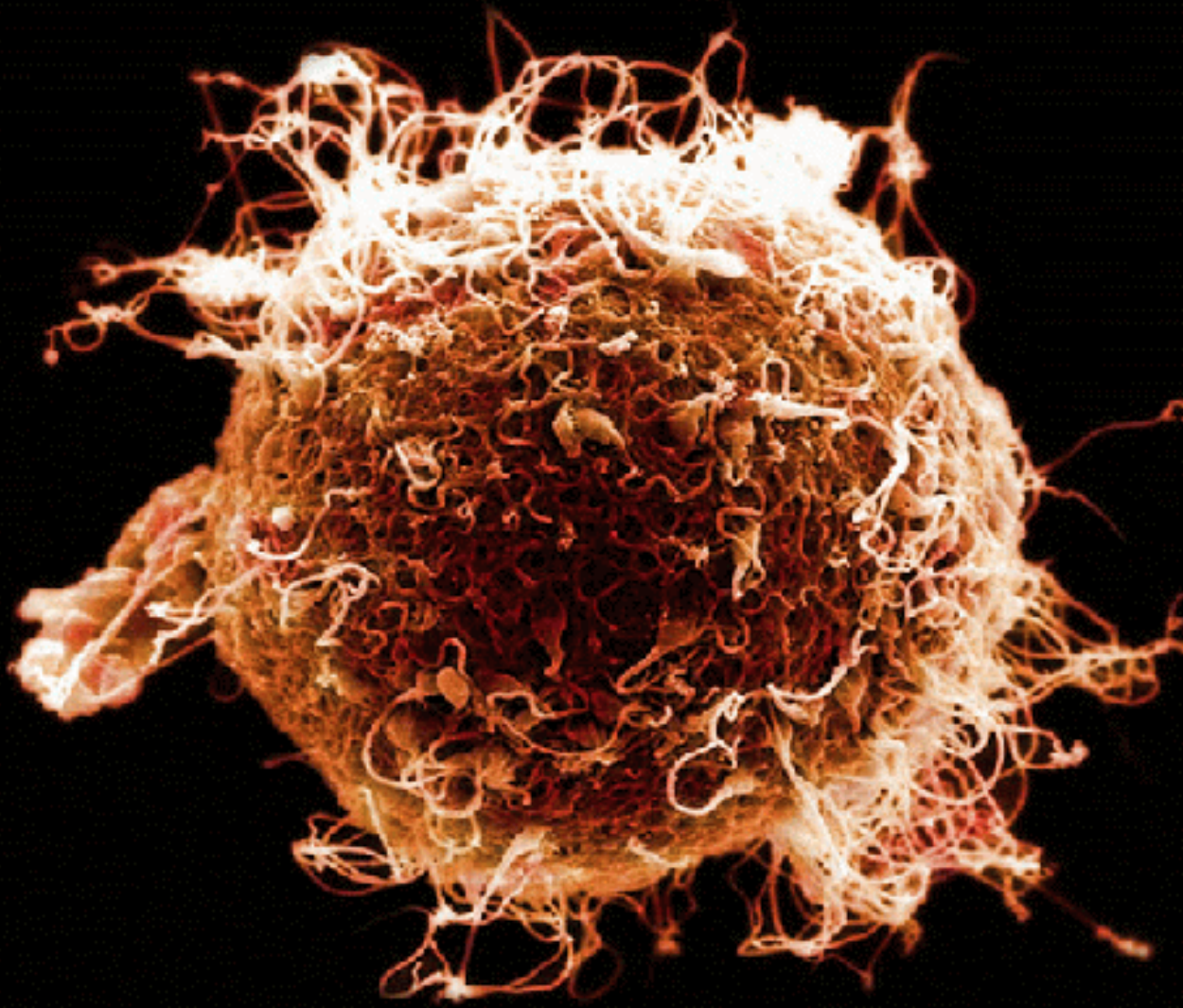
**Each sperm contains an
entirely unique selection of
his genetic material.**

**The sperm is the smallest cell
in the human body**

**One of these sperm will fuse
with the egg and become part
of you.**



Although male ejaculates typically contain vast numbers of sperms, surprisingly few usually get anywhere near the egg. Their journey is arduous and lengthy, like an obstacle course!



Photograph by David M. Phillips

Egg surrounded by sperm

WE'RE
SPERMS.

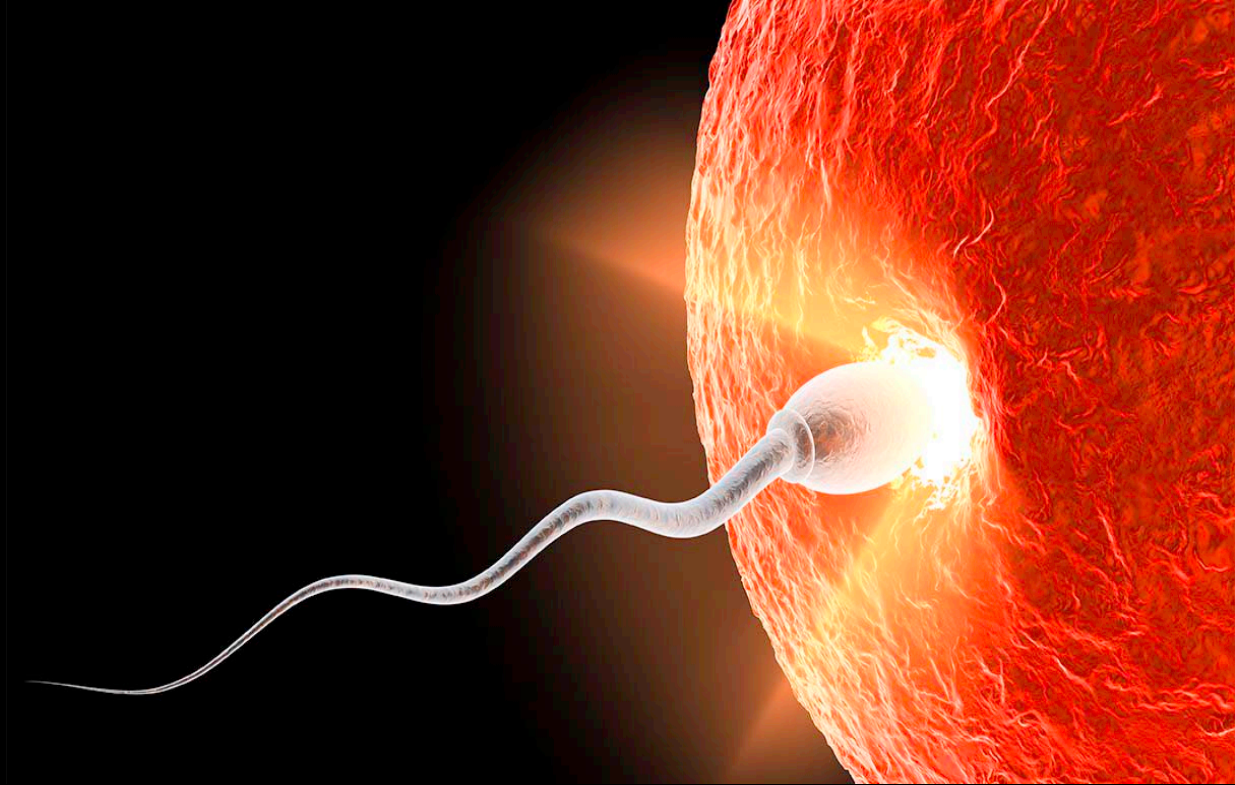
I WON!!

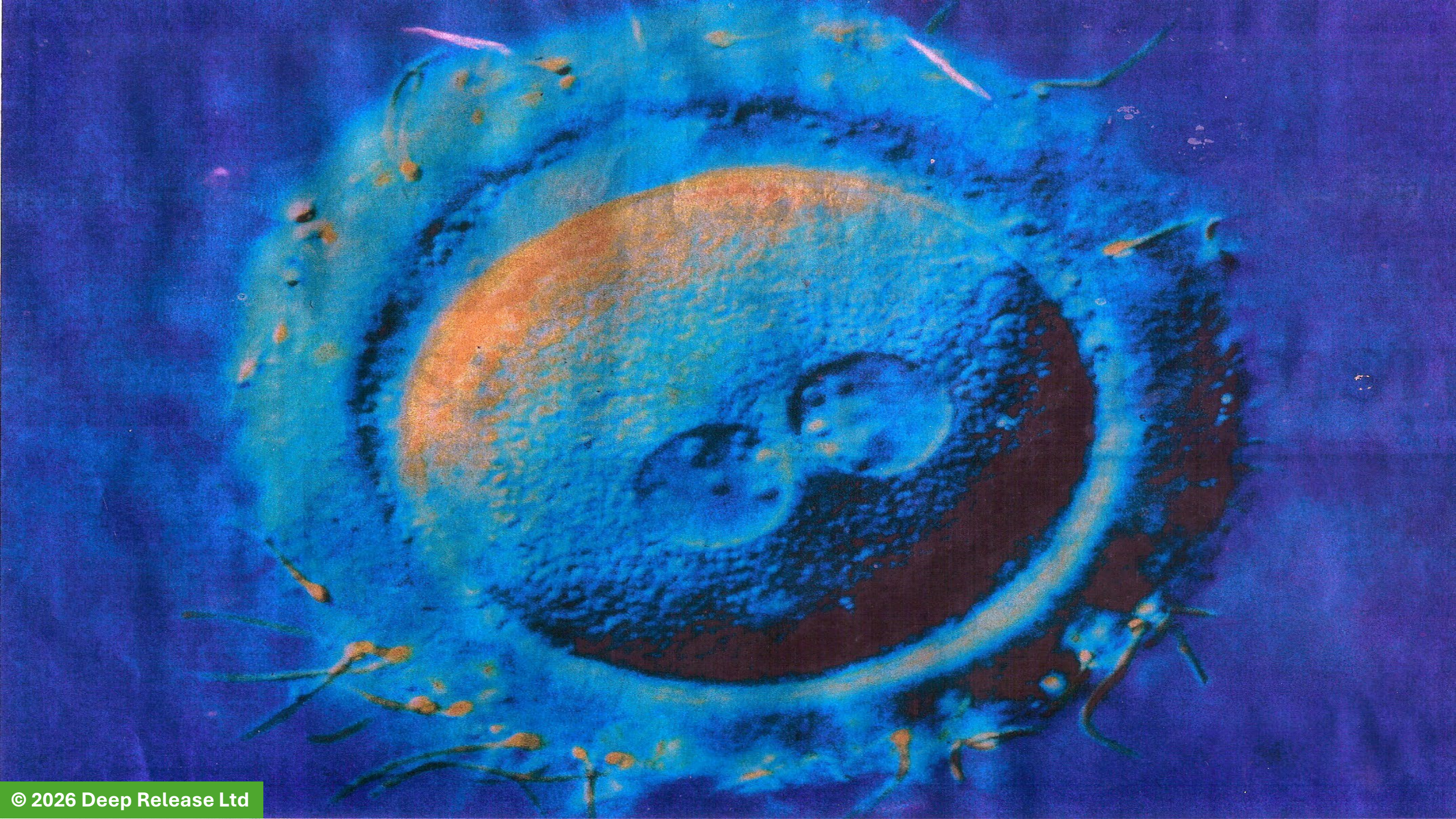
**This is the moment of
fertilisation.**

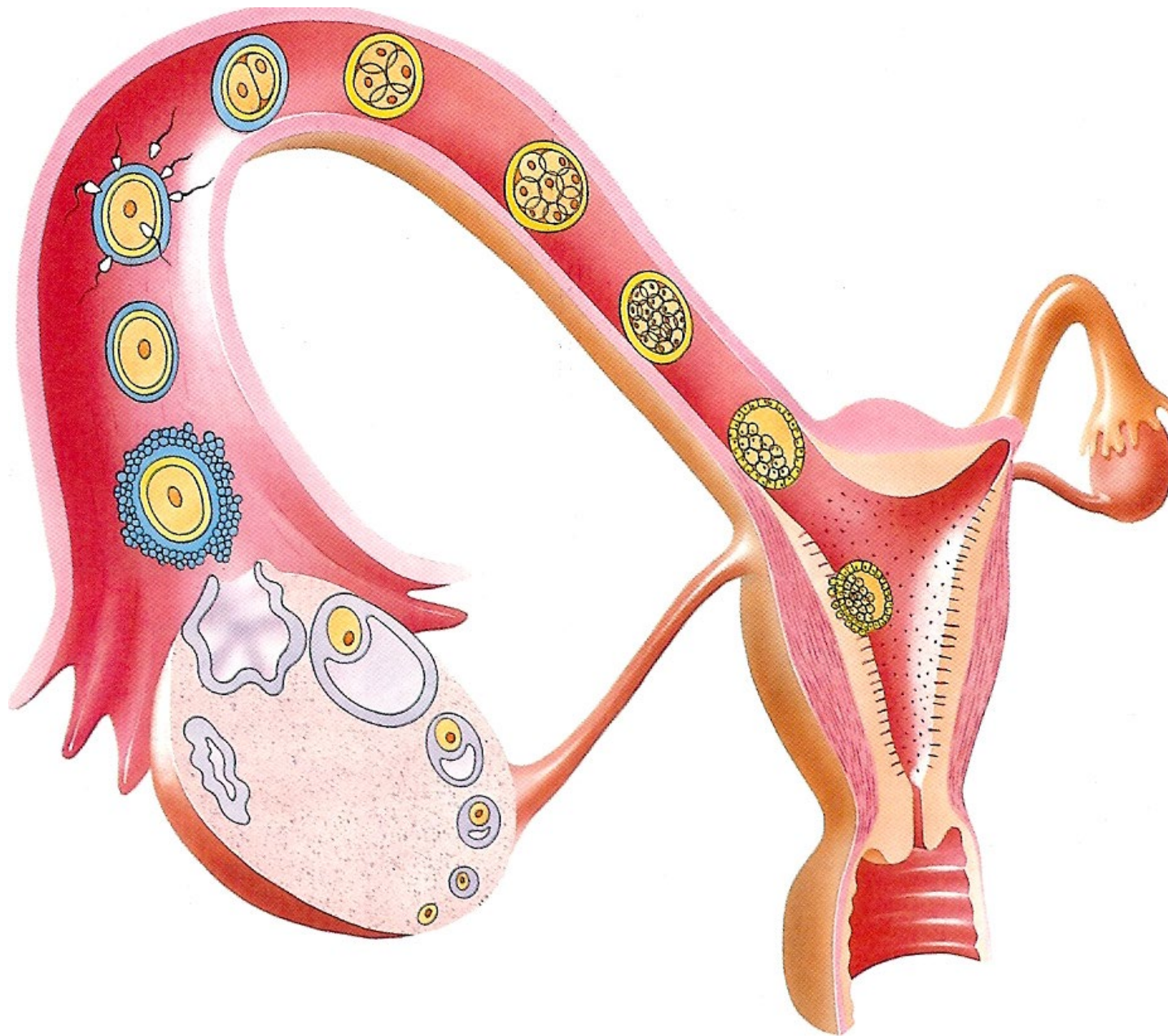
**This is the moment your
mother and father's
genetic material combine
to make you.**

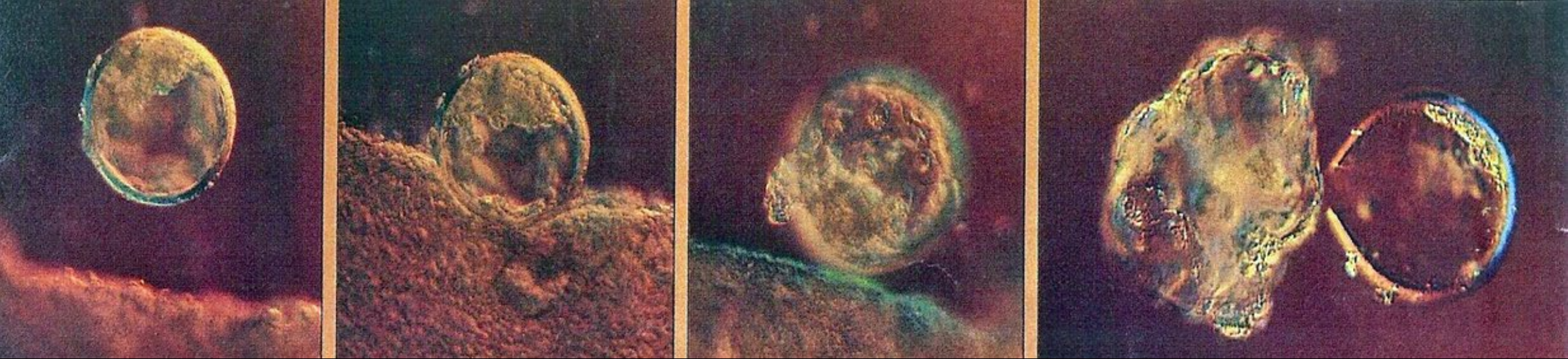
**At the moment they unite, there
is a microscopic flash of light.**

You have arrived.









You continue your journey down the fallopian tube, cells dividing as you go, until you become like a ball, with cells on the outside and a hollow interior.

It takes about 5 days to travel to the uterus and find a place to implant. You bounce around, seeking to find the right place.



An embryo
burrowed into the
lining of the uterus

**You burrow into the rich,
fertile lining of your
mother's womb, which will
be your home until you are
born.**

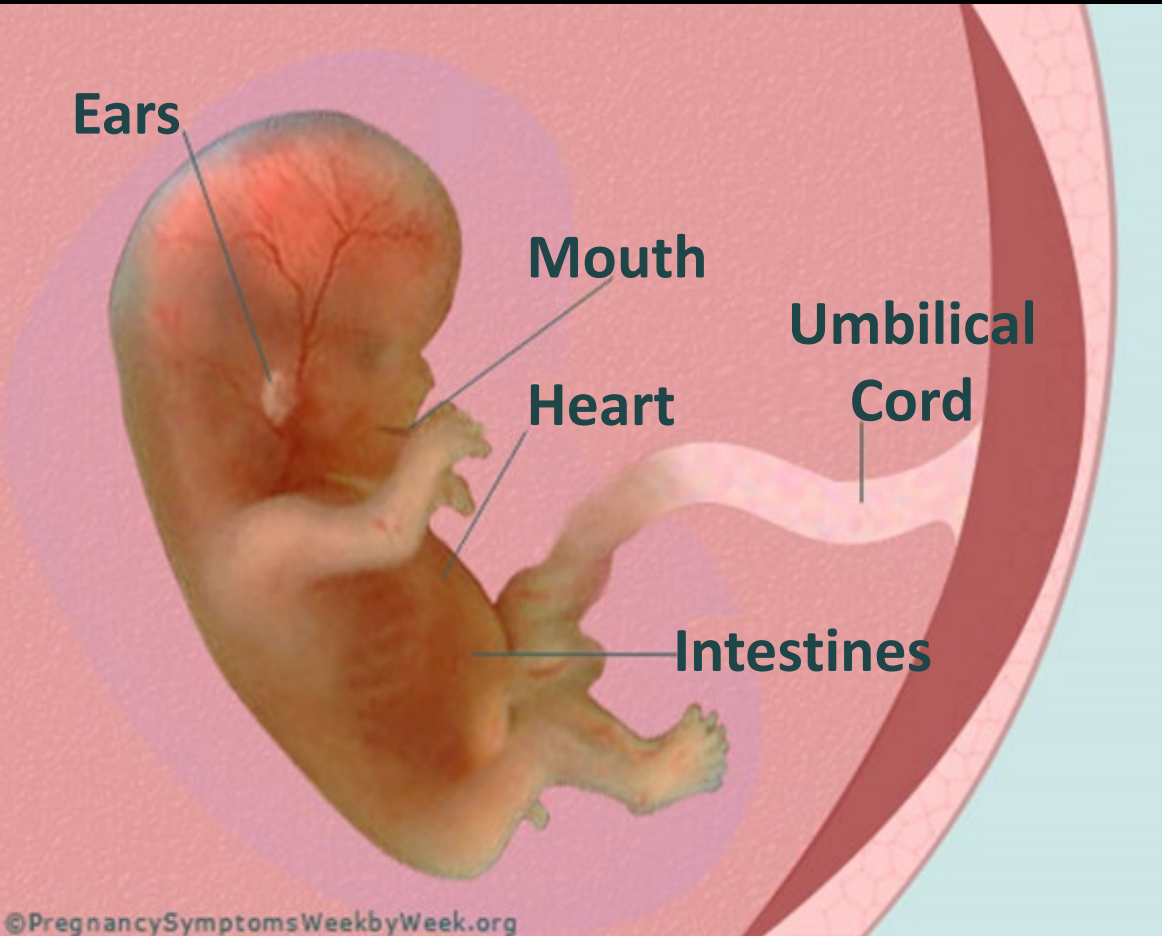
**You are smaller than
a grain of salt.**

**Your eye colour has already
been decided and how tall
you are likely to grow.**



At around 4 weeks, your mother will discover she is pregnant.





Your body takes shape. Your lungs, stomach and digestive system are forming... your kidneys, liver and gall bladder... your pancreas, spine and reproductive tract.

You have your own fingernails and fingerprints.

You can wrinkle your forehead and frown. Your teeth buds have formed.

You are 12 weeks old and about 5½ cm long. You are floating around in the amniotic fluid, connected to your mother by the umbilical cord.

You are aware of sound.

Development in the Womb: 15 weeks





Photo of baby Samuel Armas's hand reaching out from his mother's womb at 21 weeks during foetal surgery. Michael Clancy, snapped the photo after seeing the baby's hand jut out of the hole in the womb made by the surgeons:

"During a spina bifida corrective procedure, Samuel thrusts his tiny hand out of the surgical opening of his mother's uterus. As the doctor lifts his hand, Samuel reacts to the touch and squeezes the doctor's finger. As if testing for strength, the doctor shakes the tiny fist. Samuel held firm."



Pregnancy and Birth Trauma



- Research conducted by the pioneers of pre- and perinatal psychology suggests that an overwhelming amount of physical conditions and behavioural disorders are the direct result of **traumatic experiences during pregnancy and complications during delivery.**

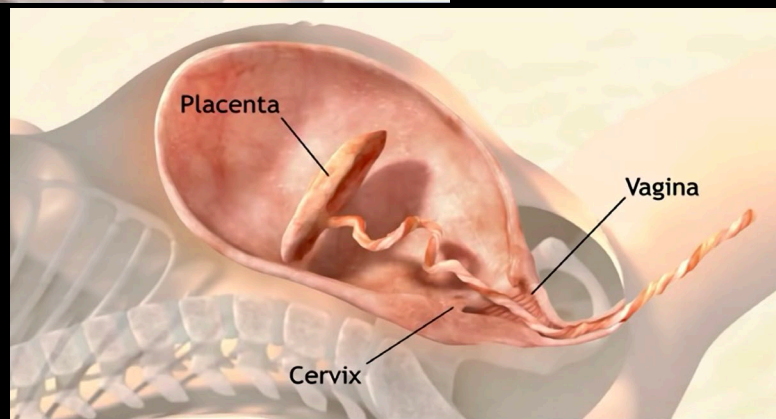
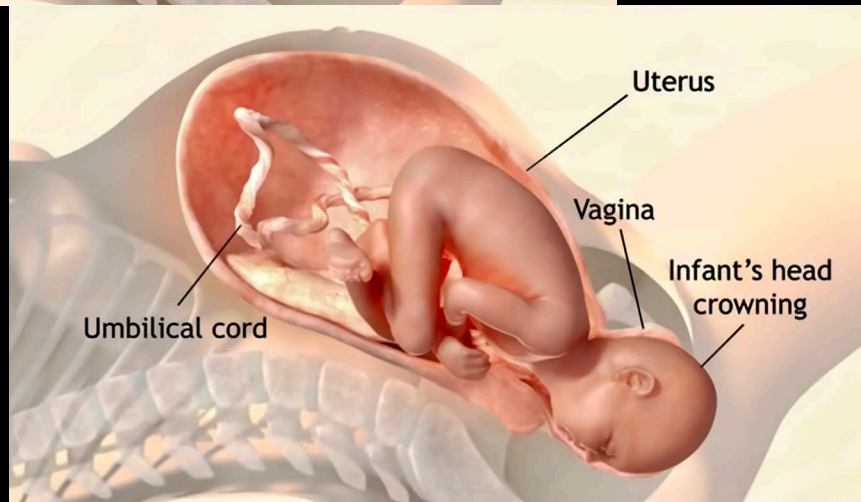
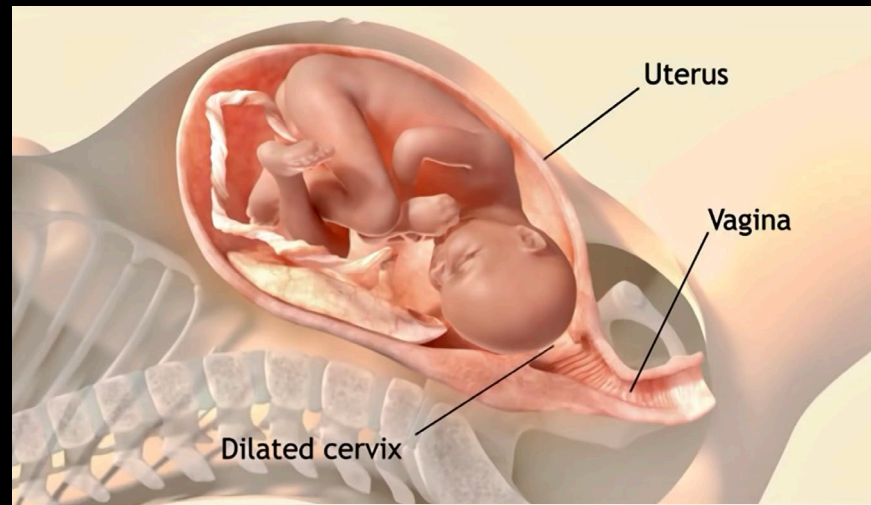
REJECTION IN THE WOMB

If the foetus feels **rejected** in the womb then it might well reject the mother when it is born. There is more likelihood of problems in the pregnancy and birth.

Feeding and bonding is more difficult if the child felt rejected or there was strong ambivalence in the mother.

The baby may literally turn away from the mother and refuse to feed, but may attach well to another love-giving figure.

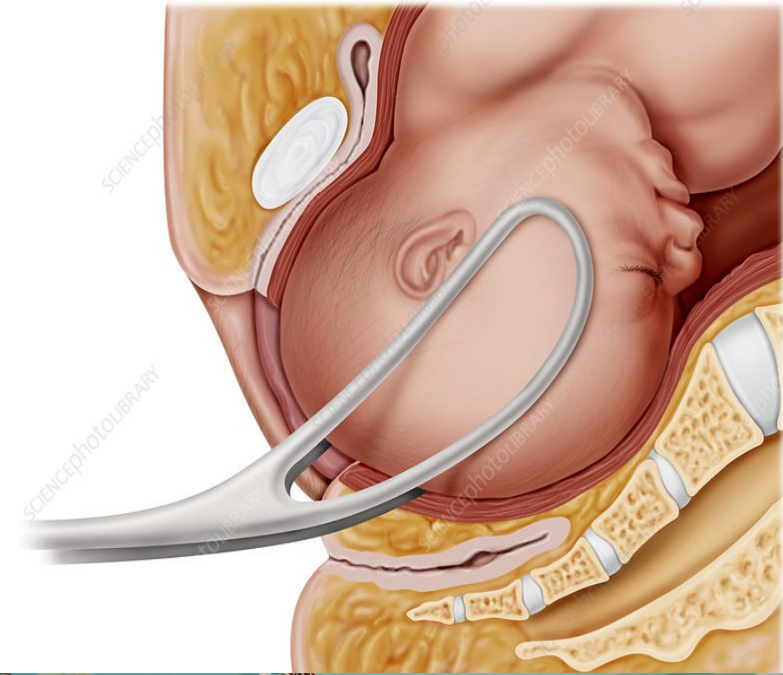




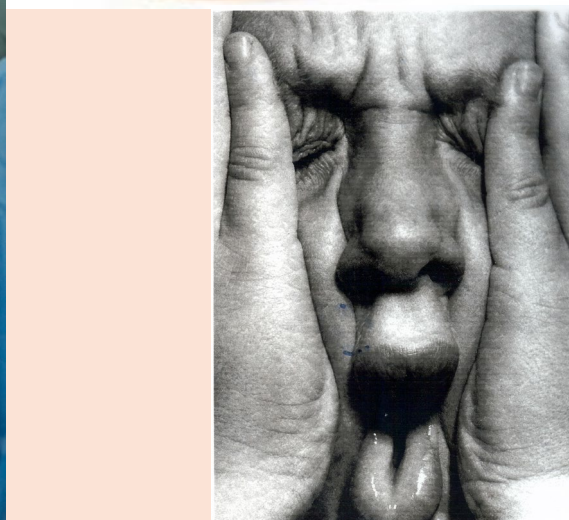
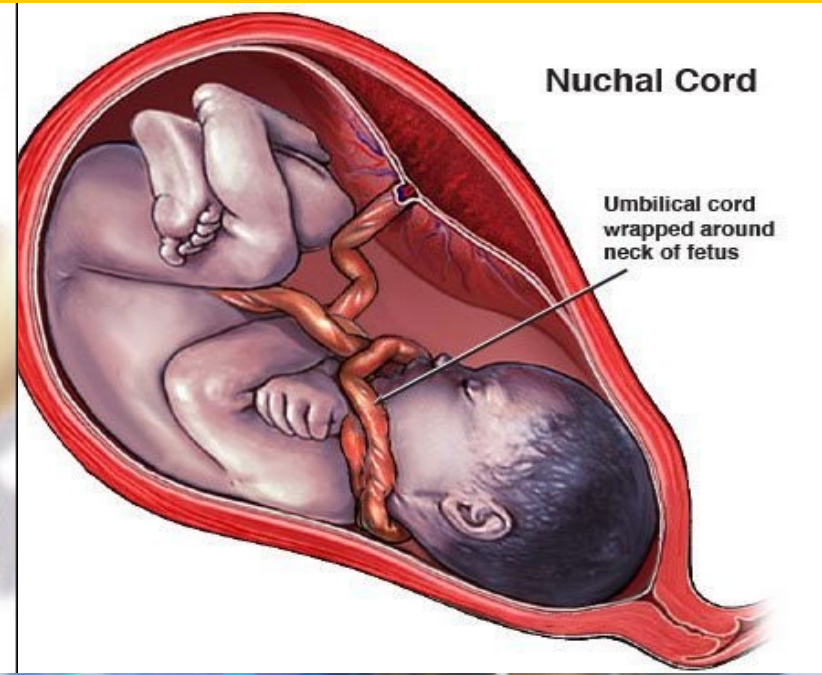
**As you are born, do you
flow out naturally and
easily, working in harmony
with your mother?**

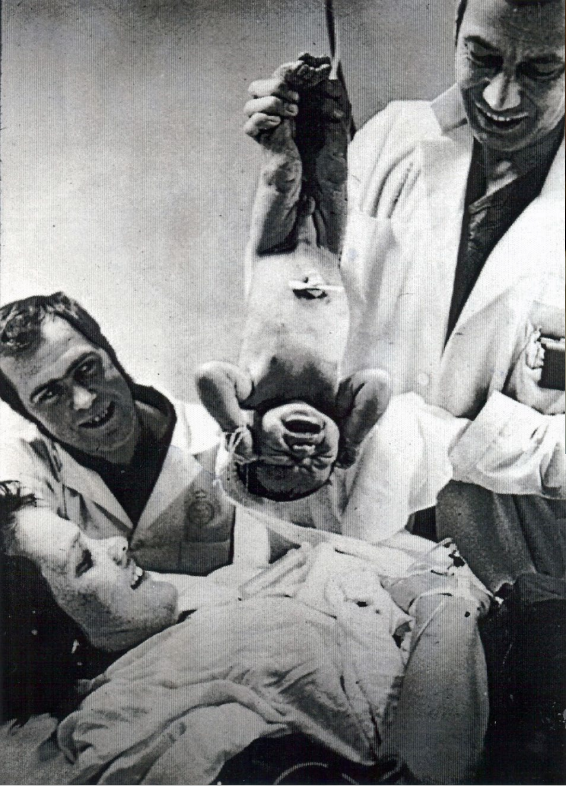
**Or are there difficulties,
body memories that can
stay with you at a profound
organismic level...**

Birth Trauma



Infant's head caught in the birth canal during breech delivery





**How do you come into
this strange new world?**



**Is there a warm welcome
of delight – are you
placed into your
mother's loving arms?**



Or is it different....



**Is there a warm welcome for
you from your wider family?**

**Have they prepared for your
coming? Is there joy in your
arrival?**

YOU MADE IT THROUGH!



Possible ideas to share in Breakout Rooms

- How did you respond to the Conception to Birth Journey?
- Share your own personal and professional perspectives, as much as feel safe.

15 minutes



TAKE A BREAK

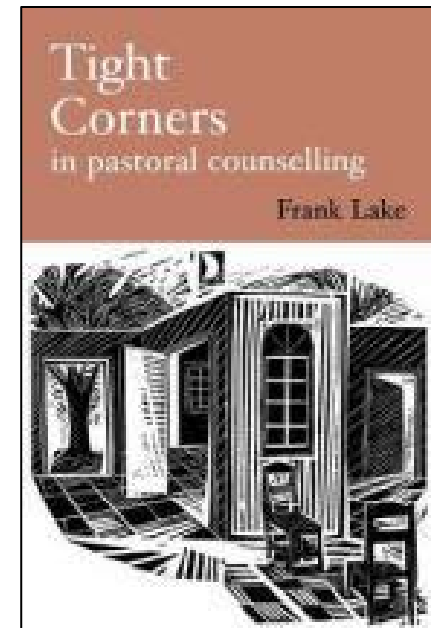
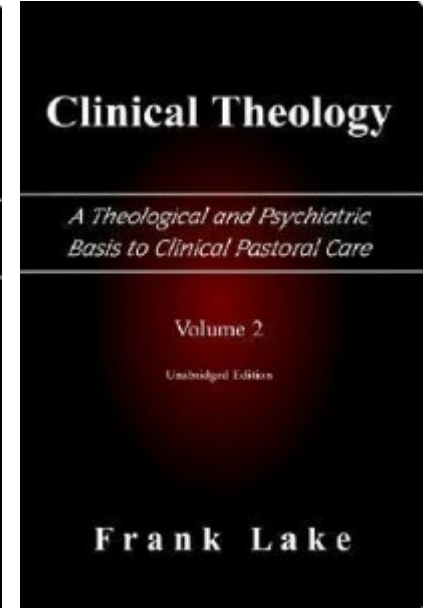
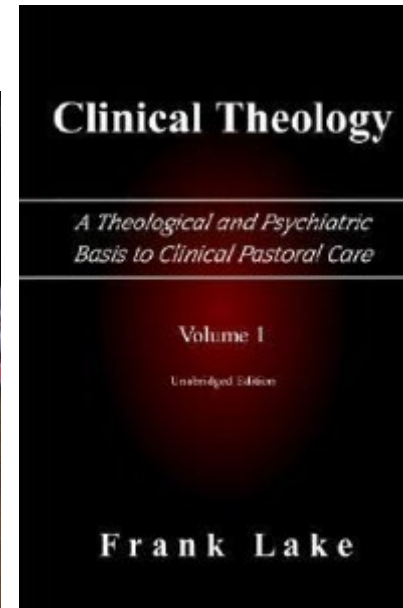
5:00





**Questions
Comments
Discussion**

Dr Frank Lake (1914-1982)



Frank Lake's Classification of Responses

Increasing degrees of pain due to unmet intrauterine and perinatal needs

LEVEL 1: IDEAL

**At best, needs are totally satisfied.
Pain-free interaction between the baby and the environment to which it relates.**



Frank Lake's Classification of Responses

Increasing degrees of pain due to unmet intrauterine and perinatal needs

LEVEL 2: COPING

**Not all needs are met,
but conditions are
bearable.**

**The basically secure
self can cope.**



Frank Lake's Classification of Responses

Increasing degrees of pain due to unmet intrauterine and perinatal needs

LEVEL 3: OPPOSITION

The degree of pain and distress cannot be tolerated without some splitting off.

Unwelcome sensations separate from the accompanying emotions and the memory deals with them by the process of Repression.

The foetus can no longer trust its supporting environment without protest.



Frank Lake's Classification of Responses

Increasing degrees of pain due to unmet intrauterine and perinatal needs

LEVEL 4: TRANSMARGINAL

Lake adopted Pavlov's concept of *Transmarginal Stress*.

Pain is now overwhelming and responses are paradoxical. The self turns against itself, willing its own destruction and death. Nothing gives pleasure and ultimately a protective process of cortical inhibition gives way to apathy





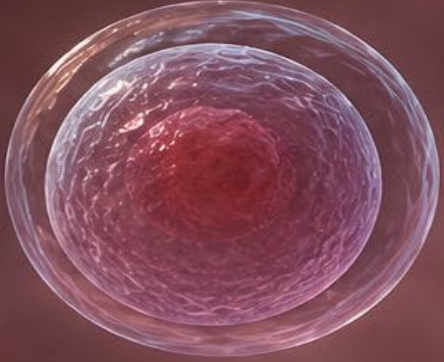
Multiples in the Womb



TWIN CELL DIVISION

(IDENTICAL TWINS)

FERTILIZED EGG
(ZYGOTE)



CELL DIVISION
(2-CELL STAGE)



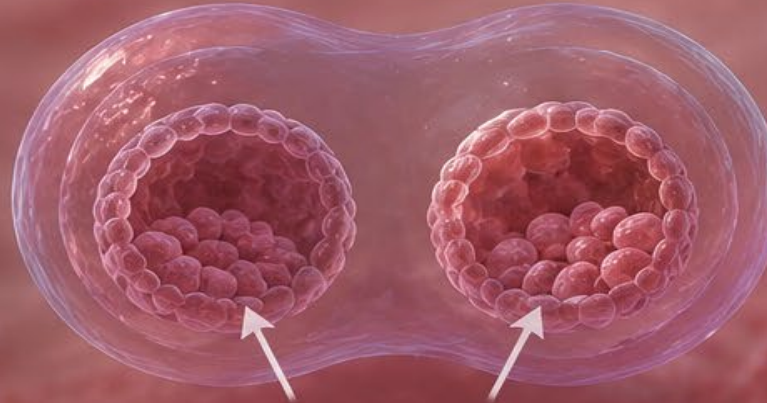
CELL DIVISION
(4-CELL STAGE)



EARLY MORULA
(8-CELL STAGE)



TWIN BLASTOCYSTS
(SEPARATE)



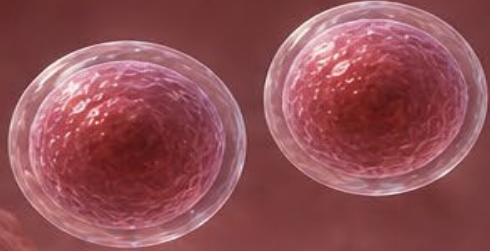
TWO INNER CELL MASSES
BEGIN TO FORM



CELL DIVISION
(TWIN SEPARATION)

FRATERNAL TWIN FORMATION (DIZYGOTIC TWINS)

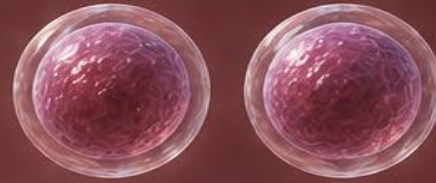
1. TWO EGGS
ARE RELEASED



2. EACH EGG IS
FERTILIZED BY A
DIFFERENT SPERM



3. TWO SEPARATE
ZYGOTES FORM



4. EACH ZYGOTE
DIVIDES NORMALLY



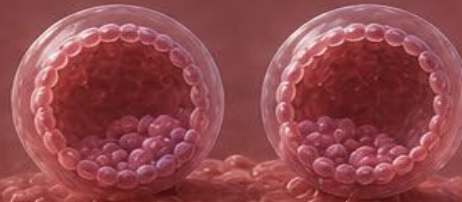
8. FRATERNAL TWINS
DEVELOP INDEPENDENTLY
FROM EACH OTHER



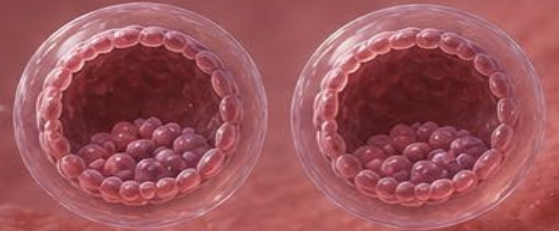
7. EACH DEVELOPS
ITS OWN PLACENTA,
AMNIOTIC SAC,
AND UMBILICAL CORD



6. EACH BLASTOCYST
IMPLANTS SEPARATELY
IN THE UTERUS



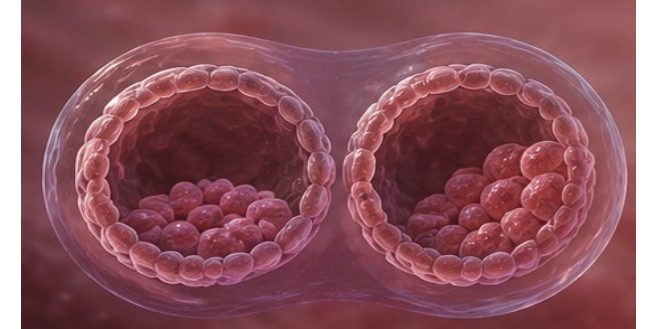
5. TWO SEPARATE
BLASTOCYSTS FORM



FRATERNAL TWINS COME FROM TWO DIFFERENT EGGS
AND ARE GENETICALLY NO MORE SIMILAR THAN ANY OTHER SIBLINGS.

Womb Twin Survivors

- A womb twin survivor is someone who lost their twin or multiple anytime during pregnancy or shortly after birth (miscarriage, stillbirth, abortion or neonatal death).
- It has been estimated that perhaps 25% of all single births were originally a multiple, often with a twin being lost within the first trimester. The 'Vanishing Twin Syndrome'
- Many counsellors and psychotherapists may not recognise or understand the phenomenon and so not address one of the potential root causes for a client's presenting issues.



Womb Twin Survivors

Examples of presenting Issues

- All my life I have felt something was missing
- I've been searching for something all my life but I don't know what it is
- I always feel in some way unsatisfied but don't know why
- I don't feel I'm realising my true potential
- I feel different from other people
- Deep down I feel I am alone, even when I'm with friends
- I have a deep fear of rejection
- I have a problem with anger – too much or too little
- I have a preoccupation with death





Born Bereaved

In the Counselling Room

- Survivors' feelings and grief have often been dismissed, minimised or misunderstood (including by the mother); they have been shamed into silence out of fear of ridicule
- Hold in mind grief, complicated grief, loss and attachment styles
- As counsellors we offer a secure, safe place where the client knows we will meet them in their process, allowing them to express their feelings freely and coregulating them
- Be aware of the potential of high transference between client and counsellor, openly discussing this if it occurs
- It is essential for the counsellor to follow the client's lead in terms of the pace and intensity of the work, making regular use of supervision

In the Counselling Room

- Their goal may simply be to have their grief acknowledged and their twin fully integrated, validating the strength of the twin bond that potentially formed in the womb before the death of the twin
- For some it may be around processing the shock of discovering they are a twin and what this means for their identity and relationships
- Many have been helped by creating memorials for their twin, as well as giving them a name



“Lack of awareness in practitioners of the impact of womb twin loss can result in a tragic lost opportunity.

As Counsellors we have a key role to play in helping clients affected by this issue to explore what it means to them and identify the influence of womb twin loss on their current relationships and life choices.”

Donna McDonald

TAKE A BREAK

5:00





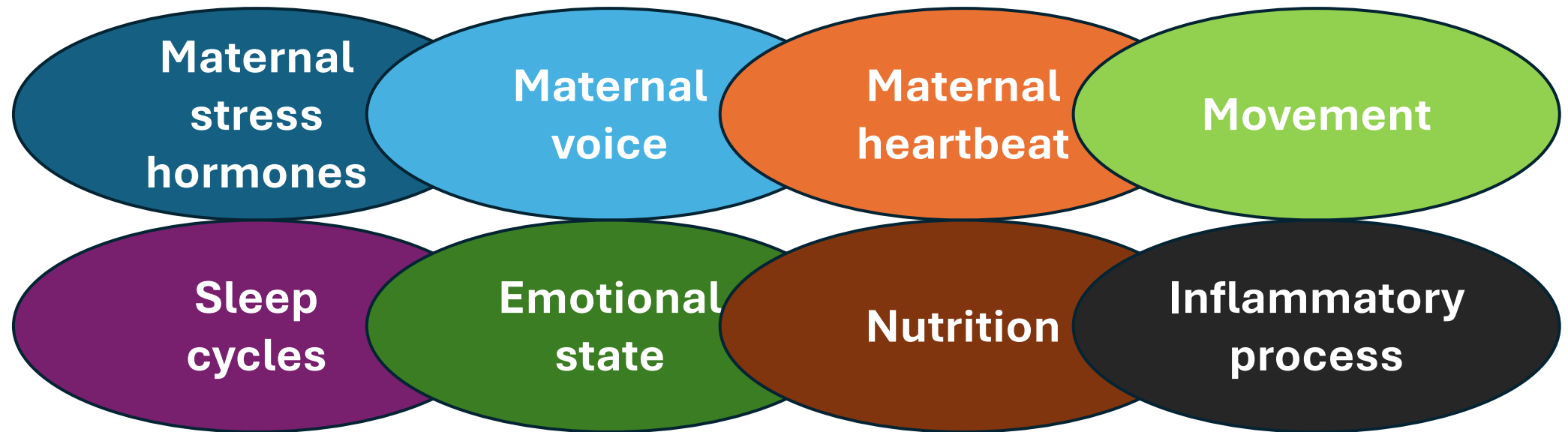
Attachment Issues



Attachment Issues

One of the biggest changes over the past decade is that attachment researchers no longer see attachment as something that suddenly starts after delivery. Increasingly it is being described as beginning during pregnancy.

The baby is developing within an ongoing relational environment.

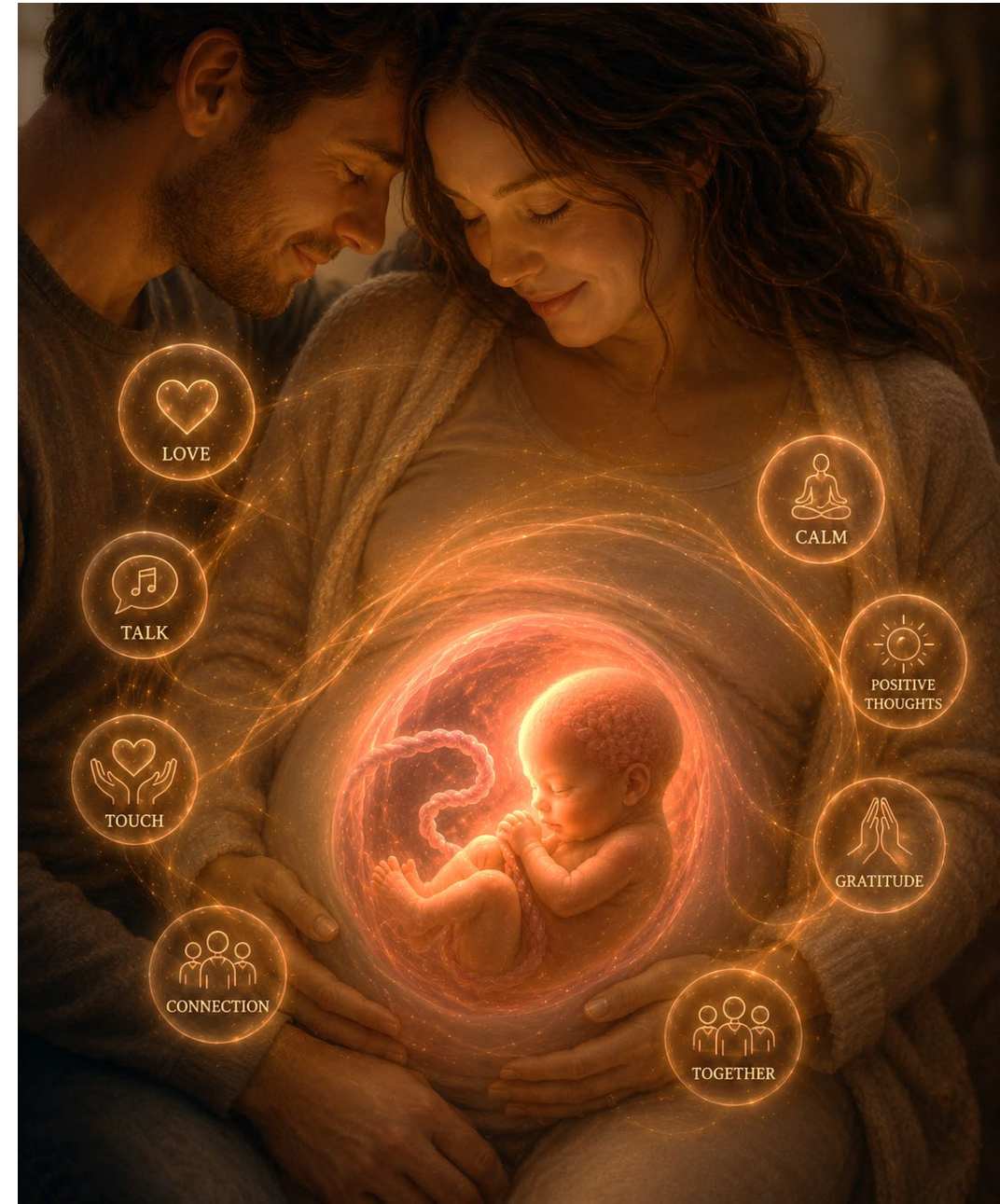


Attachment Issues

Evidence now demonstrates learning before birth, including:

- Recognition of mother's voice
- Preference for mother's language
- Recognition of repeated sounds (eg music)
- Taste learning
- Circadian rhythms
- Movement synchrony (tapping games)

Attachment is becoming viewed as biological before it becomes behavioural



Allan Schore: Right Brain to Right Brain Attachment

1. The **Right Brain** develops first

- During the first 1000 days, the right brain is growing at an extraordinary rate
- It's responsible for emotional regulation, attachment, body awareness, intuition, empathy, reading facial expressions, non-verbal communication, stress regulation and our basic sense of self
- ***Babies are feeling beings long before they are thinking beings.***

2. Babies borrow their parent's nervous system

- They regulate through another human being
- When a baby is held, comforted, fed, rocked, smiled at, spoken to gently, their nervous system becomes calmer
- This is co-regulation - when repeated, it becomes self-regulation

Allan Schore: Right Brain to Right Brain Attachment

3. Attachment literally builds the brain

- Attachment is not simply emotional, it is biological
- Every interaction between parent and baby shapes the developing brain: eye contact, facial expression, tone of voice, touch, timing, responsiveness
- ***These experiences create neural pathways***

4. Emotional communication is mostly non-verbal

- Babies don't understand words
- They understand facial expressions, rhythm, movement, voice tone, touch, breathing, emotional presence
- Right-brain-to-right-brain communications are the foundation of attachment

Allan Schore: Right Brain to Right Brain Attachment

5. The stress system is being programmed

- During the first 2 years, babies are learning, ***“Is the world safe?”***
- Their stress response develops according to experience
- *“When I’m distressed, someone helps me...” or “I’m on my own”*
- ***This affects cortisol regulation, autonomic nervous system development, emotional resilience and future relationships***

6. Chronic stress changes development

- If babies experience ongoing fear, neglect, emotional absence, abuse and inconsistent caregiving, their developing brain adapts for survival.
- This is linked to hypervigilance, dissociation, emotional dysregulation, later mental health difficulties.

Early challenges can influence development,
but they don't determine a child's future.

Safe, loving relationships help the developing brain
grow, adapt and heal.

The story doesn't end at birth: what comes next matters just as much.



Therapy isn't just about talking...

It's about something the nervous system may never have fully experienced before:

Safety
Consistency
Attunement
Curiosity
Compassion
Regulation



“The brain is a social organ, and
it is built through interactions with others.”

“The therapeutic relationship is one of the most powerful experiences
available for changing the brain.”

Louis Cozolino

“The Neuroscience of Human Relationships”

“The Making of a Therapist”

“Being able to feel safe with other people is probably
the single most important aspect of mental health.”

Bessel van der Kolk

“Feeling Felt is one of the most healing experiences we can have.”

Daniel Siegel



**Questions
Comments
Discussion**

Possible ideas to share in Breakout Rooms

- Say goodbye to your Buddy Group and exchange details if required.
- What will your take-home message be?

10 minutes

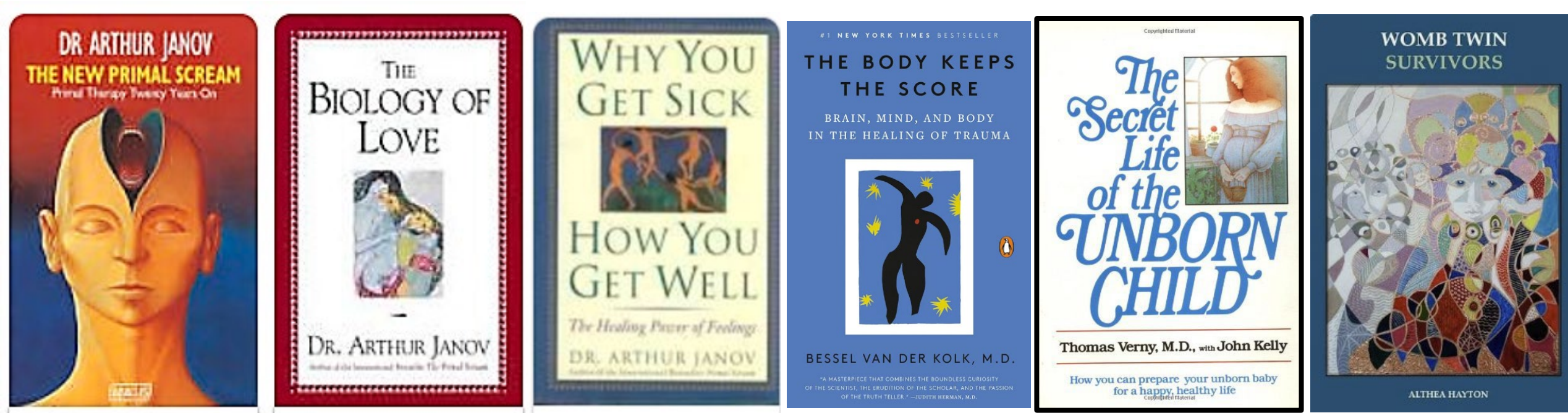




Resources

[PACT-RESOURCES.CO.UK](https://pact-resources.co.uk)

ORIGINAL & CREATIVE
COUNSELLING RESOURCES



parentinfantfoundation.org.uk/1001-days/



<https://birthpsychology.com/>

Donna McDonald writings:

<https://pluralisticpractice.com/main-blog/personal/working-with-a-womb-twin-survivor-through-pluralism/>

<https://www.counselling-directory.org.uk/articles/mental-health-implications-for-womb-twin-survivors>

Counsellors Together



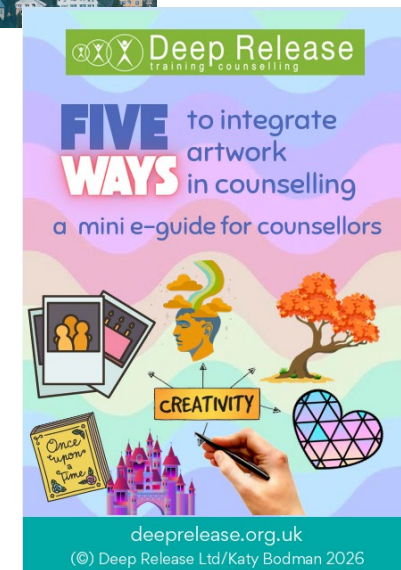
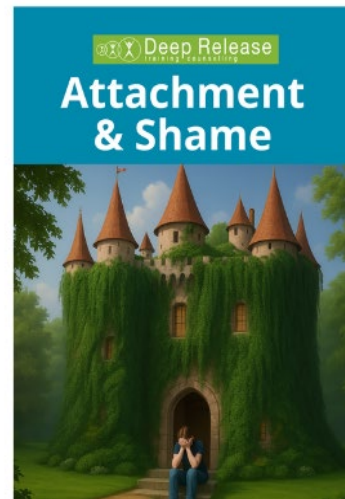
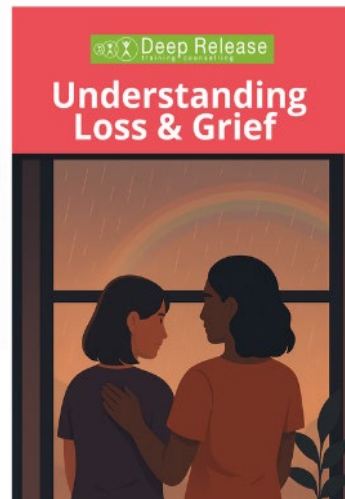
WEEKEND



**The Deep Release Counsellors
Together Weekend**

**Friday 18th-Sunday 20th Sept
Moor Hall, Cookham**

What's new!



pact-resources.co.uk

Cards



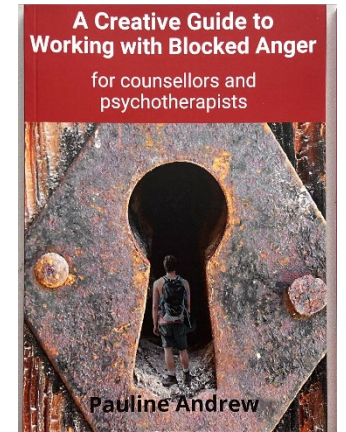
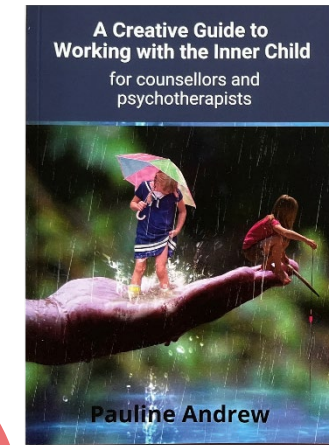
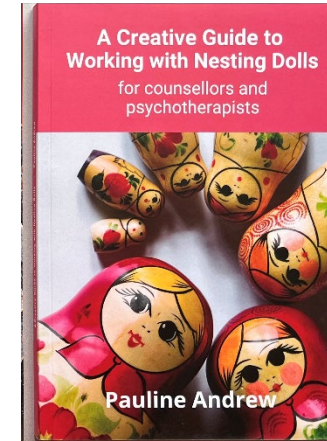
From
£28.50

Extra Set A characters available!



Books

Also available on Kindle



£11.50
each
Or 3 for £32
(save £2.50)

pact-resources.co.uk

Have you explored our Online WebApps?!

- Use Pauline's cards online!
- Working with Sand Trays
- Working with Nesting Dolls
- Free Erikson's Life Stages
- Free Wheel of Life
- Free Working with Stones



pact-resources-online.co.uk

Expressing Difficult Emotions

when feelings are hard to put into words

a visual therapy tool



Who they are for?

- ✓ Adults
- ✓ Teenagers
- ✓ Clinical supervision

What counsellors say:

"Highly recommend, such a powerful resource." – Caroline

"Freed up my supervisee's reaction to their client in moments."
– Jacqueline

HARD
FEELINGS

Explore the cards 
hardfeelingscards.co.uk



Deep Release Ltd - Counselling & Training



Pauline Andrew Creative Counselling

Working with fairy tales
in counselling



Choosing your Nesting Dolls



Working with aspects of self
using nesting dolls



6 ways of working with plain
nesting dolls in counselling



How to introduce creative
interventions in counselling



How to paint and work with
stones in counselling



How to work with animal figures
in counselling

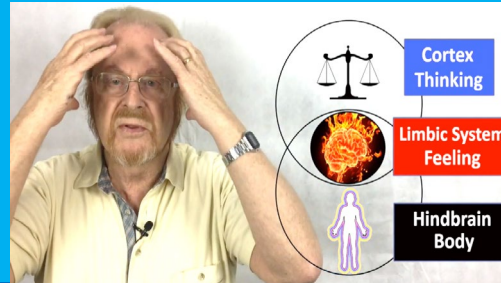


Brain Body & Beyond

Left and Right Brain



The Top Down Brain



Catch Up



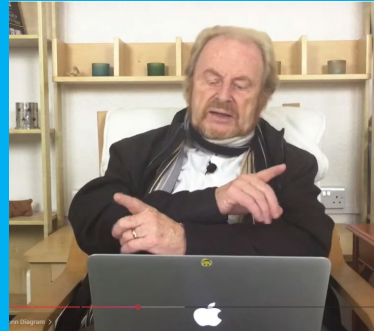
The Left and Right Axes

Sciences
Objective
Prose
Particular
Analyse
By the book
Hardware
Law
Quantitative
Zoom in

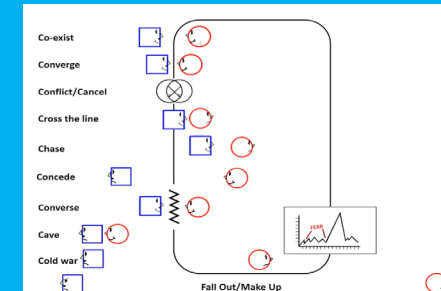


Arts
Subjective
Poetry
General
Synthesise
Extemporise
Software
Liberty
Qualitative
Zoom out

The Warzone



Fixing Broken Relationships Part 1



Fixing Broken Relationships Part 2



**Please send
us your
feedback!**



Thank you so much for joining us and supporting our work!

If you have found the day helpful, please leave some feedback in the Deep Release Facebook group, or send us an email at info@deeprelease.org.uk.

It would mean so much to us! 😊



Thank you

info@deeprelease.org.uk

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