

# Peace WITH ENDO PODCAST

## **PWE26: Having Faith with Endo & Infertility**

**Aubree:** Welcome to the Peace with Endo Podcast. My name's Aubree Deimler. I am an author and wellness coach who helps women with endometriosis to naturally manage pain, increase energy and find peace with endo. This is episode number 26 and on the show today we have Tia Collis. She's a fellow endo sister and entrepreneur.

I first connected with her in my private Facebook group, Finding Peace with Endo and it came from a conversation about leggings. Tia is the owner of a fabulous LulaRoe Boutique and little did I know that my first pair of LulaRoe leggings would turn into a total addiction. LulaRoe clothing is super comfortable and so cute. I'm excited that she's here to share her story of endo, IVF and owning her own successful business. Thanks so much for being here Tia.

**Tia:** Thank you for having me. I'm excited to share.

**Aubree:** So will you share a little bit about your journey with endo and how it's led you to where you are now?

**Tia:** Sure. So, it all began... I didn't get diagnosed until I was 26 and prior to that I had been telling my doctor for probably ten years about my pain and everything that I was going through and I had a doctor that kept telling me that was all normal. So, I lived with the pain not knowing that I had this disease you know like a lot of people that don't get diagnosed for a while and then eventually you know I got married, tried to have a baby, that didn't work out and I got to the point where I didn't realize it but I had these cysts growing from endo and they became the size of grapefruit and I thought that I was dying. I thought that I had some horrible disease because I could feel something wrong with my body. I wasn't... I couldn't eat you know? All of those things.

I was in so much pain it was ridiculous. I would come home from work and just lay on the couch with my heating pad like taking Ibuprofen, a horrific life and so I ended up going to the doctor and they did all of these scans and found out that I had these chocolate cysts and so I got referred to a different doctor and then eventually it

made it to a surgeon who was very well specialized in the DC area. I live in West Virginia so our health care here... there's not always great specialists so I kind of have to travel for good health care, but I am willing to do that so I went and had my first laparoscopic surgery when I was 26 and found out that I had stage four endo and that I would never be able to have children unless I did it through IVF, so I kind of went you know the opposite way through fertility.

A lot of people start out finding out that they can't have kids and they try all of these methods first, you know, the Clomid, all of that stuff, but I kind of fast forwarded and found out that none of that stuff was going to work for me IUI would not work I had to go straight to IVF. So, that's what I ended up doing, and it took a long time for me to get there. So, let me just say there was this period when I was 26 until I guess I was about 30 that I just kind of struggled, you know I couldn't have kids at this point. I didn't think that I wanted to do in vitro fertilization. I didn't know if it was right for me religiously and just in all aspects I did know if that was the route I was going to take and... so it took a long journey for me to be able to accept that.

I was trying to accept the fact that I was never going to have children, that I had this disease, I was in pain, I wasn't living a good life style. I, at the time, was a CPA and an auditor and working like 70 hours a week and traveling and just really making my body not a good place, you know for the endo to calm down at all. It just kept getting worse and worse and worse. I know a lot of us are career driven and kind of run ourselves into a rut. So I wish I would have stepped back and listened to my body, but I had that career focus, and that was what I was supposed to do with my life so I was doing it.

I made myself so sick I was like I said I would come home just in pain and crying and at the time actually that I found out I couldn't have children I got this wonderful Great Dane name Blue and she would lay on the couch with me just nonstop, all day, every weekend, every evening and she was my biggest comforter. I don't know how I would have gotten through without Blue, without Jacob and without my faith really.

So, finally I got to the point where I decided, you know, I'm going to have a hysterectomy. I'm going to give IVF a chance, and if it doesn't work I'm going to accept my fate that I'm not going to have kids. I went out, I bought an expensive car, and I was like this is my baby because I can't have babies. I got another Great Dane, you know, I did all these things to try to fill this void that could not be filled and I was a shopaholic. I was spending money. I was just not in a good place at all, so finally I decided to just try the IVF. I went to Shady Grove fertility, which is out of the DC Washington area and I got super, super lucky, not lucky, I mean I was blessed and I ended up getting pregnant so now I have a three year old toddler through in vitro fertilization.

She is my biggest joy. She is my biggest miracle, and I'm just thankful every day that that worked out since then, you know, the endo came back again, of course, like it

does. It was good through pregnancy and it really came back... I guess a year after I had Savannah after I stopped breast feeding then it came back. So, I felt complete. I felt at peace with my family. I had a beautiful daughter I didn't want to go through fertility again. I'm so glad I did. Let me just say that, but it was super, super hard. I lost a... Savannah was a twin and I lost her twin in the pregnancy.

The whole thing was very, very tough and it was tough on my body because I was injecting the medicine, you know, I was at the point where I had super bad eggs so my eggs were the quality of like a 40 year old woman. So most people when they do in vitro fertilization they get 20 to 30 eggs in one cycle. I got eight and so the chances for me to get pregnant, even through in vitro, I knew were very slim and out of those eight two made it through to the end to be able to transfer. So I said you know what we're going to transfer both because this is my only chance. If I have twins then my family is completed. If I have one out of the two that's great too. Well they both... they both ended up implanting so I was pregnant with twins, which was also super hard on my body but I did lose her twin at ten weeks and so my whole pregnancy I did not enjoy because I was so afraid of losing Savannah too like I could not... I don't know.

There's a difference between a normal pregnant person and being pregnant after infertility because you just still have this grief. You know the grief that you feel when you can't have a baby. It's the worst grief. You feel it every month, every day. There's something missing, and it's something you can't fill, like it was... it was horrible and so I couldn't be attached to Savannah because I was just too afraid the whole time, and so I remember when she was born. After she came out and the doctor handed her to me. I just like didn't know what to do. I think I was in disbelief that it really was happening. I did not believe it through my whole pregnancy because I was afraid. I was totally afraid to bond with this baby and so he handed her to me and he was like, 'I think you're in shock', and I was like yeah, and so it was really hard for me at first to like I didn't want to share pictures of her online because everybody knew of my struggle with infertility. I had all of these friends in the infertility community and I didn't want to make them you know jealous that I had a baby and so that was really hard for me for a long time to be able to share anything about it, but then I decided that I wanted to give other people hope, and so now I'm really trying to give back to infertility. I started a local infertility support group, and trying to do all the things.

So, since I had Savannah I launched my LulaRoe business actually the same time I had Savannah. So, I was a new mother. I was doing this new business and for a while I had a baby. I had... I was still a CPA. I was CFO of a company and I was doing LulaRoe. So that was for like the first year of Savannah's life and... but at the time I was feeling really good physically because I was nursing. So the endo was staying away, which is a super awesome benefit of that, but like I said once it came back it came back with a vengeance but thank goodness about the same time was when I finally built my business up enough that I could quit my full time job and just focus on my LulaRoe business, my baby and my health.

So, I have seriously transformed since then. Now I eat healthy. I exercise. I take time for myself. If I need to sleep a whole day like if I'm feeling really bad. I can do that. So, it's awesome to be able to be able to be in a place, like I could not still be a CPA and travel like I used to. My body can't do it. If I travel now I have to recover for a whole day afterwards, but I've learned my limitations now so that I don't get sick because I've gotten to these places from endometriosis and I also on top of that have Hashimoto's disease. A lot of times the two can be connected, and so I'd get in these places where I'm so sick where I'm covered in hives for literally months at a time and so now I'm really listening to my body, trying to take care of myself and just being an entrepreneur for a living so things are really good now. It's been a long time to get here but they're good now.

**Aubree:** That's awesome. And I love the story of you know how the two eggs made it through. It sounds like that was really a miracle.

**Tia:** It was. It definitely was.

**Aubree:** So can you share a little bit about how this whole journey has impacted you like more on an emotional and mental type level and what really helped pull you through with that?

**Tia:** Yeah. Sure. So, I mean it definitely made me a stronger person like I said when I first started this journey and was trying to bring up these conversations with my doctor I was so timid and afraid to talk to a doctor about these things I was like well she should know, you know, she's my doctor and I really... I've learned to be an advocate for myself, like nobody else is going to do that for you. You have to do it for yourself. So, if your doctor doesn't listen, go and talk to another doctor until you get an answer where somebody is going to help you. So, I've really learned number one to stand up for myself.

I have learned emotionally... I am not a crier. I really am not. I've always been a super strong person but I would break down and break down and break down and break down through my journey. If you need to cry, you know, cry. If you need to eat ice cream. Eat ice cream. Do all the things to make yourself feel better, to pick yourself up, and I'll have to admit there were days that I couldn't pick myself up, but thank goodness you know I had a support system that would come over and pull me out of bed when they needed to and help me up because sometimes it's hard to do it on your own. So make sure that you have that support system and before I was the type of person that would not... if somebody asked me if I needed help I would say no.

So, I've learned to accept that sometimes I need help and I say yes when somebody offers to help me 100 percent yes, please help me. I need help. I cannot do this by myself. So don't try to go through your endometriosis journey on your own, because it's really hard and you definitely need support. You need physical support, emotional support and the biggest thing for me is seriously my faith. I'm a Christian.

I go to church every Saturday. I read all kinds of devotionals, but at the time I was not on this same journey with that as I am now. So it really has brought me closer to God, closer in my faith, and I have learned to depend on my faith, because I didn't have the strength to do it on my own.

So, the verses that really helped me: Joshua 1:9 The Lord is with you wherever you go. So, I would say that when I was going to a scary doctor's appointment or some place that I felt I would break down in tears, you know, I know we've all had those moments where we're going to the doctor and we're just so scared about what they're going to say or what they're going to recommend, and you just cry, like you just can't help but cry. So I would say that to myself over and over in my head so I could get through it and the other one is Philippians 4:13 I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me and that really got me through like I said sometimes I do not have the internal strength, even though this journey has made me so much stronger mentally, I didn't have the strength to get through sometimes so by saying that it really gave me the strength especially like when I was going through my fertility treatments and had to give myself you know six injections a day sometimes and to get the courage to be able to do that inject yourself with a needle was really hard so I really had to pull that out and say you know I can't do this on my own but through Christ I can do it and so using that mantra has really helped me get through and it has made me so much of a stronger person. I'm not at all the same person as when I began this journey and I know everything happens for a reason so I truly feel like if I can help you know one person in their journey by me going through my journey then it was worth it.

**Aubree:** I love that. Thank you for sharing and thank you for being an advocate that's so important and we need more people speaking out. I know you talked a little bit about the grief and I think there's a lot of shame that can also come along with these topics. How are you feeling now with that, you know, now having your daughter do you still have some fears or how has that developed now? All of these emotions that were around for so long.

**Tia:** Yes. Totally. I think again it's a different journey after you've been through infertility when you know you can only have one child and then having that child out there in the world. I have so much fear every day. I don't want her to leave the house. I'm afraid something's going to happen to her and she's my only chance. I mean I know every parent probably has those fears but most parents have multiple kids or they have the opportunity to have multiple kids and when you don't have that opportunity it's like I want to put her in a bubble and never let anything happen to her. I don't want to send her to school. I want to homeschool her, but I've learned I have to send her out into the world because I can't work my business or do anything you know if she's around 24/7.

So, there's a healthy balance, but definitely that fear is still there and I just want to bubble her up, but it also makes me not take for granted a second of her. So, she's fussy, all these things, if she's sick, I sit there and I savor the moments and I am

thankful that I have those moments because I didn't think I'd ever get to have them and I know for me also the shame thing that you talked about it... it did feel shameful.

It felt like when you're infertile it feels like you know something is wrong with you that shouldn't be wrong with you and you're afraid to tell people about it, and so at the time when I was going through my journey I honestly had like three friends I talked to about it. My family knew that I had gotten this diagnosis, that I couldn't have children and I did not tell them I was going through in vitro fertilization because it was too hard like I didn't want them asking me every day how's it going? What's going on? You know because I couldn't do it so I had to keep that private but I did reach out to the RESOLVE infertility network and I went to a meeting, but for me the closest meeting you know was an hour, over an hour away from me so I didn't stick with that because it was just too hard with my schedule and that's one of the biggest reasons I opened the support group here that starts next week in West Virginia because I wanted to be able to support those women who are feeling those feelings and so I share all the time now.

I share in my LulaRoe Facebook group. I share on my personal Facebook page, on my Instagram. I want to tell everybody you know about endometriosis, about infertility about you know if you have these things going on make sure that you get help because I don't want them to feel shameful. I want them to reach out to me even if they don't want to talk about it you know on social media. I just want to be there for people because I didn't have, you know, so much of a support group at the time so it's great to have others who know what you're going through.

**Aubree:** Absolutely. So, that's great that you've started a new group. I'll be sure to include that information in the show notes for ladies that do... are in the area and want to check it out.

**Tia:** Yeah and there's a RESOLVE, you know there's a website for RESOLVE and there's groups all over the United States if they want to get involved with a local chapter.

**Aubree:** Awesome and I think one thing that can come up living with both of these conditions, having endo, having infertility there's really this mindset of like... I'm maybe not worth it, you know, or like not worth taking care of myself where ever that comes from. I think a lot of that might be... comes from some of that shame or internal type stuff that goes on. So, let's talk a little bit about like the self-care kind of things because I know being an entrepreneur now, you know shifting into that lifestyle and having this personality of you know being a driven type personality. How do you manage working... having your own business, you know, having a child now and taking care of yourself?

**Tia:** It goes back to the thing of if somebody asks you if they can help you, you say yes. So I... you know I'm lucky that in my community my family all lives here so they

help me with Savannah a lot. She spends the night with them like one night a week so I can get like a full restful night of sleep at least one night a week and then like I said if I need to sleep during the day I do. So, I make work my... first you know comes my faith, then my family, then my body and then work. So I 100%... and the other thing I've learned... I'm not even going to say that my family comes first. They do, but if I need to take care of myself I have to sometimes put my family on the backburner and I hate to do that but... if that saying where you have to put on your own oxygen mask first... so if I don't take care of myself I can't take care of my daughter. I can't take care of my business. So I 100% make sure I put on my oxygen mask first.

I sleep in most mornings until about nine o'clock. After I get her up at like seven and send her to the babysitter then I sleep, go back to bed, and I sleep until nine, but with my LulaRoe business, you know, I can work that from ten in the morning until four, have dinner with my family, and then I work it again from like eight to nine PM. So, it really has fit with my schedule and I've made that happen.

So, definitely make the time for yourself and also for self-reflection, not just sleep, like I take time to read and read inspirational books and things that are going to pick me up so like you said I feel worthy. I feel that I need to take care of myself. I feel inspired and so reading those types of things gives me more drive to be able to take care of myself better and so I've really just made it a priority because I know what it's like to hit rock bottom and it's really hard to come back around where as if you stay on top of it and take care of yourself then it helps not to get to that point.

**Aubree:** Absolutely. So Tia what words of wisdom can you share with other endo sisters who may be feeling like there's no hope?

**Tia:** I will share that you know you are proof. I am proof that there is hope, but you have to take control of the situation. You can't let it happen to you. You have to be in charge of it and turn it around for the good. So, if you just sit there and make yourself feel a victim then that's what's going to happen with life, but once you turn it around and say I'm not a victim, you know, I'm going to use this to help others and that definitely helps.

If you have the mindset where you're just focused on yourself - me, me, me then you're going to feel all of those feelings of pain and grief and you're not good enough, but if you turn it around and focus on helping other people then it's going to give you a reason to get through, to pick yourself up and to move forward. So, some days if I'm having a super bad day I go out and I do something for somebody else whether it's just paying for somebody behind you at Starbucks, you know, taking a friend a coffee, something little, it doesn't have to be much at all, but doing that for somebody else is going to make you realize your worth that other people need you. So, you can't focus on being sick and just lay on the couch all the time. You have to get up. Pull yourself together, move on, and go and help somebody else.

**Aubree:** Awesome. So how can our listeners connect with you further?

**Tia:** Well I have a LulaRoe Facebook page if you search LulaRoe Tia Collis you'll find me. Join my VIP group, you know, I have... the other thing to talk about we all go through those times where we feel unpretty and bloated and everything from the endometriosis and LulaRoe is simply comfortable clothing like you mentioned and so having those leggings and the dresses that are stretchy you know nobody wants to buckle up jeans on a day when you just feel like ugh. So, by putting on something that makes you feel beautiful you are going to feel better so connect with me there.

Also, if you joint that page I'm getting ready next week to launch a new company, it's actually named after my miracle daughter. It's called Savannah Grace Designs. I am making recycled, upcycled leather and vegan leather earrings and I'm going to be making a donation from every pair to infertility and just using these to help improve the world and it's something that brings me joy and helps me get through my day by making these and helping other women feel beautiful.

**Aubree:** I love that and I agree that LulaRoe it does make you feel better I think the clothing that you wear does help you to feel better, you know, I work from home but I still wear my dresses every day, you know.

**Tia:** Me too.

**Aubree:** Because it does... it does make an impact on how you feel when you feel beautiful on the outside.

**Tia:** Yes. Don't stay in your jammies all day, that is just going to make you feel horrible.

**Aubree:** Absolutely and LulaRoe feels like pajamas but it's cute.

**Tia:** It does.

**Aubree:** So do you have any final words of wisdom for our listeners?

**Tia:** I don't think so but I am just as Aubree is, I'm you know an open book so like she said if anybody wants to reach out to me I am on Facebook you can find me there, you can find me on Instagram. My user name is Tia\_Collis. So reach out I'm happy to help in any way that I can also especially if you guys are aspiring entrepreneurs and want some advice on that I can definitely help with how you cope.

**Aubree:** Excellent. Well thank you again for being on the show today Tia and sharing your story and inspiration with us today.

**Tia:** Thank you for having me.



**Aubree:** If you enjoyed this episode I invite you to subscribe to continue on the journey. If you want to connect with me further you can find me at [peacewithendo.com](http://peacewithendo.com) or on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram @peacewithendo. I hope that you find some peace in your day today. Sending you so much love. Bye for now.

*All information provided within is for informational and educational purposes only and should not be construed as medical advice or instruction. No action should be taken solely on the contents on this podcast. Please consult your physician or qualified health professional on any matters regarding your health and wellbeing on any opinions expressed.*

*When trying any suggestions posed, please do so at your own risk. You are responsible for consulting your own health professional on matters raised within.*