

Taking Control

A Muslim Woman's Guide to Surviving Infertility

by Farah Dualeh

"Taking Control" aims to provide a guidance for Muslim women who are trying to conceive. Author Farah Dualeh, who herself has tried to conceive for many years, shares her personal experience along with psychological tools to cope with this traumatic ordeal for women who struggle to become mothers. Dualeh also gives extensive content from Islamic perspective, including rulings on certain issues, as well as prayers.

"... truly touched my heart to the core"

—Dr Amal Alahmad

Obstetrics, Gynaecology and Infertility Consultant

www.farahdualeh.com/taking-control-the-book

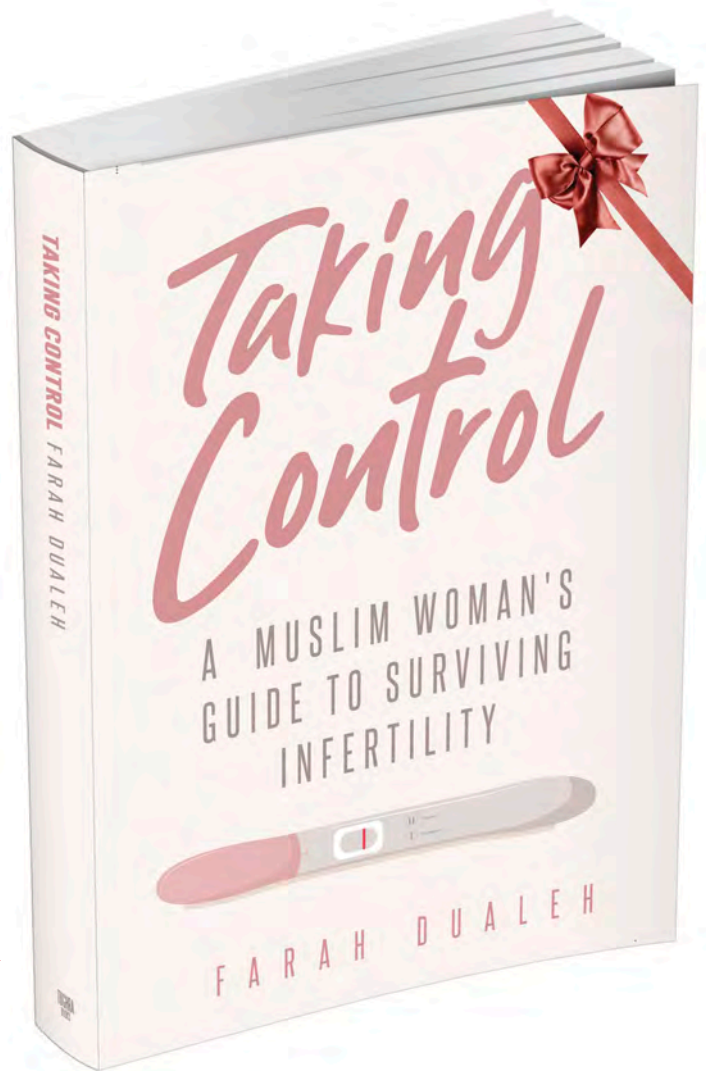
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Farah Dualeh has worked in the charity sector for over 12 years and has a BA in Social Science and a postgraduate qualification in Community Leadership and Law. Having experienced infertility herself and trying to conceive (TTC) for almost 13 years, she's extremely passionate about helping Muslim women navigate infertility and live happy fulfilling lives despite the hardship of TTC.

Many young women around the world find themselves in a place they never imagined as little girl. While 'most' women dream to grow up, marry a nice man and have beautiful children, 'some' women struggle with the third step. This difficult passage of life with infertility can be scary and lonely.

Trying to conceive and struggling with it is difficult and confusing; but in *Taking Control*, author Farah Dualeh shows how this journey can be survived. As a Muslim woman who had to go through this journey herself for a long time, Dualeh is sharing her first-hand experience in this self-help book on how to draw on prescriptions from psychology and Islam to take control of the process within oneself, in marriage, in relation to social pressures, on treatment options, and possible family setups.

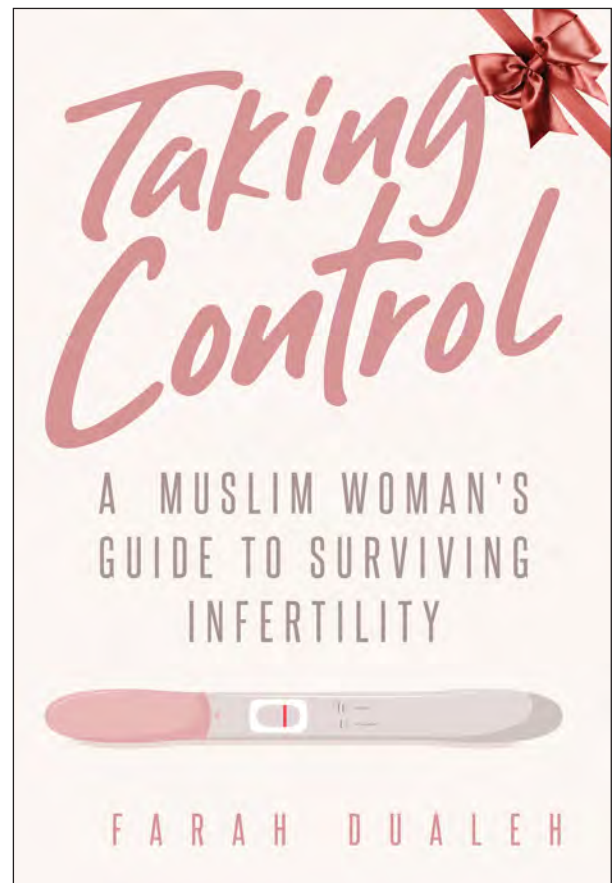
Praise for *Taking Control*

"This book is beautiful and truly touched my heart to the core. What a brilliant book, so honest, raw, and needed. *Taking Control* is excellent, and many Muslims could learn a lot from it on the topic of living with infertility."

—Dr Amal Alahmad
Obstetrics, Gynecology and Infertility Consultant

"Wow! What a read. I cried, I nodded, I smiled. I went through the spectrum of emotions and it touched me to the core. I love the author's raw and frank style. I love her positivity. I love the emotional support offered as well as the practical considerations. She's not shy to discuss all the options, which is fantastic."

—Dr Abia Afsar-Siddiqui



“I loved this book so much. Farah is brave to write this book and share her story. There are no books like this on the market and it is sorely needed. The author encourages the reader to find the joy in life despite the hardship of struggling to have a child, as well as practical information on treatments such as IVF and dealing with social pressures. I hope this book is translated into Arabic soon so I can share it with many patients who I work with and who mostly speak Arabic. This book will enlighten the difficulty of TTC as a Muslim woman for many women.”

—Adwaa Khudhari, MD
Consultant
Obstetrics & Gynecology
Reproductive Endocrinology & Infertility

What Is Inside the Book?

TRYING TO CONCEIVE

1. My Story and My Approach
2. Womanhood and Identity
3. The Body and the Period
4. In the Company of Greats & Delayed Parenthood
5. The Most Difficult Question
6. Emotional Support
7. Dealing With Social Pressures
8. An Awesome Marriage
9. What Friends and Family Need to Know - Your Message
10. Stories of the Brave

TREATMENT OPTIONS

YOUR FAMILY, YOUR OPTIONS



Excerpts from
Taking Control
A Muslim Woman's Guide to Surviving Infertility

Introduction pp. 12-13

The best way to utilise this book is to interact with it at every stage by making the content personal to your unique situation. Much of the information is directed at you as if we were face-to-face, and therefore you will reap the most value from it by being actively engaged with the material as a practical guide; a guide to change or improve the uphill battle of surviving infertility. One way to do this is by completing the questions at the end of certain chapters or sections. You can use a journal or a private notebook to work through these important questions.

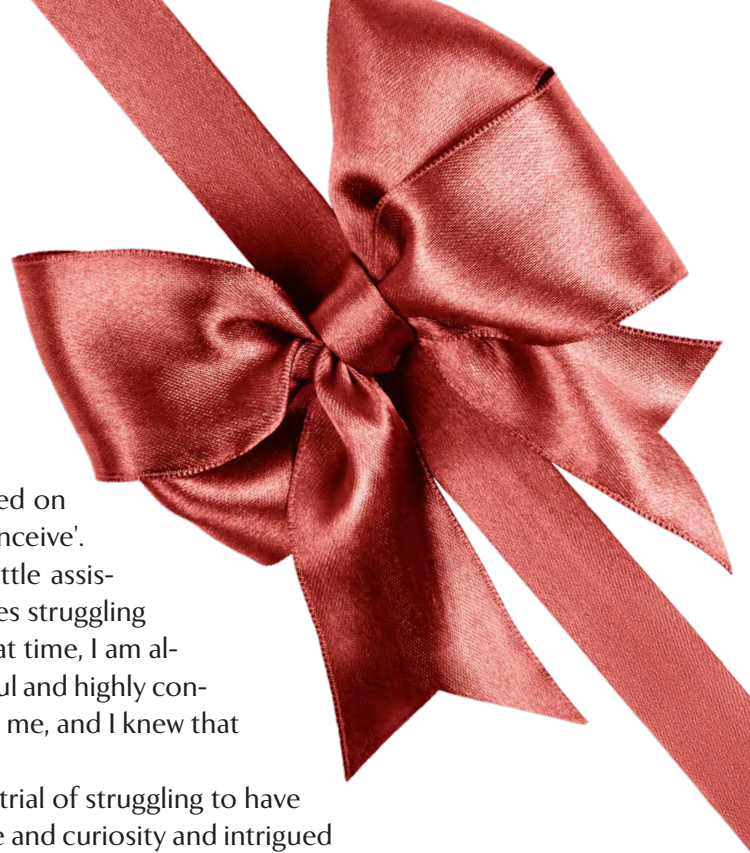
This book is divided into three separate parts, each covering a different stage or need for the Muslim woman or couple facing infertility. Part 1 is about Navigating the TTC Journey, Part 2 discusses Treatment Options, and Part 3 introduces you to some other Family Options. I encourage you to complete Part 1 before you move on to Parts 2 and 3 as this section deals with mindset as well as strengthening your relationship with your spouse, all of which are necessary to strengthen yourself and your marriage before you can consider any options.

Be sure to engage and complete the questions provided at the end of each section, as this will help you achieve an enhanced level of clarity about your feelings and options whilst trying to conceive. This can help you and your spouse, where appropriate, to formulate an action plan to execute immediately in most cases, or to return to at a later stage. Books can be an incredible vehicle for change and growth, but this can only happen in a measurable way when we put what we learn into practise.

Specific parts of the book are designed to be returned to again and again, revisited as often as you need. The pages of dua and reminders are one example of this. Feel free to bookmark and return to any section of the book when the time is right, or you reach that stage of the TTC journey.

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'Why me?' – a common question found in most posts within these forums. Women felt angry and confused as to the 'reason' they were going through this hardship. Some vented and wrote 'how they had been 'good', not smoked, etc. Others talked about 'being ready' and settled in their lives and hence 'motherhood' was their right at this stage in their life. Their pain and frustration were palpable and understandable, but it was incompatible with my beliefs about myself, the world, and my Lord. I found myself unable to relate and thus receive or provide any solace in the support that was available through these platforms. Other common conversations centred around fertility treatment options and personal updates. There was much discussion on IVF/IUI, egg and sperm donors as well as surrogacy. All of it was overwhelming and considerable amounts of it inappropriate for me as a Muslim woman, and for us as a Muslim couple.



During this time and rather unassumingly, it dawned on me that my husband and I were in fact 'struggling to conceive'. It also dawned on me that there was extraordinarily little assistance online or in real life for Muslim women or couples struggling with this health issue. Nevertheless, looking back to that time, I am almost overcome with emotion because whilst I was fearful and highly confused by this unexpected reality, a calmness enveloped me, and I knew that things were going to be ok.

Surprisingly, the more I started to think about the trial of struggling to have a child or potentially being barren, I was filled with hope and curiosity and intrigued by what my Lord may have in store for me.

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I actively avoided my life revolving around treatments and pregnancy tests, but I feel now is the perfect time for me to go all in. I feel more equipped to find a balance in using the tools and information I have at my disposal, including much of what I have shared throughout this book. I hope you too can also use these tools and information to help you navigate it all in a safe way as well.

A structured and tangible way to possibly achieve this balance whilst being engrossed in research (if that is where you currently are), is to allocate a specific time for research for both mainstream and alternative treatments and anything else you need to learn about in TTC.

For example, one day a week could be dedicated to this activity alongside working on fun or important personal projects and goals. For example, spare 3-5 hours one day a week and do not work on it outside of that time frame.

Additionally, keep an eye on all the other parts of the 'Wheel of Life' as shown in Chapter 1, and ask yourself the following questions:

- * Am I spending time seeing friends and family whose company I enjoy?
- * Are my husband and I spending quality time together not related to TTC? Are we creating happy memories?
- * Am I looking after my physical, emotional and mental health?
- * Or am I allowing the task of becoming a mum to consume my every move?