

Next in line: Waiting for baby

I'm at a point in my life where I know a lot of other women who are expecting babies. Many of my friends, family members, and former students who have entered the "adult" phase of their lives, are simultaneously sharing the experience of carrying and growing a life.

I found out I was pregnant on November 1st and learned that my baby would arrive sometime around July 9th. With the exception of one friend who is sharing a due date with me, I could line up all of my fellow moms-to-be on a continuum based on when their babies are expected to arrive. As time has passed, there have been women before me and women behind me. "Like being on an escalator," I told Patrick.



Time moves without stopping, just as an escalator does. Inevitably, some of my friends with due dates before mine, have reached the top and exited into a beautiful new life, their babies nestled in their arms. As I move up on the escalator, I get closer to the top and look over my shoulder to find more friends filing in behind me, their bellies growing in time with the incline.

One of these days, I will reach the top and there will be no one else in front of me. Then, it will be my time to step off of this ride and take my daughter, Teagan, in my arms. I can't wait to explore the next level, but I'm a little nervous. What if something bad happens? Suppose I fall or get stuck? What if the escalator stops and ceases forward progress? (At 38 weeks, it feels like this sometimes.)

Then, I remind myself to trust in God. He is in control of that escalator. He knows when and how I will get off of it. He knows what awaits me on the second floor. He is always good.

The final weeks of this ascending journey are the hardest. (Sometimes I feel like I'm on the never-ending escalator at Camden Yards.) This is my fourth time here, but it doesn't make it easy. I do, however, have some coping strategies that have helped me in the past and are providing me peace now as I wait:

1. Pray for patience, not the expedited arrival of the baby. (I wrote about this in the final weeks before I had Leo. It definitely helped.)
2. Accept that "This too Shall Pass," including the rude comments from strangers, like the man at the gas station who shouted, "You're gonna explode!" I thought he meant I was creating sparks by cleaning out my car while I filled up, but he wasn't talking about spontaneous combustion. He was talking about my gigantic belly. I had

a miserable final few weeks when I was pregnant with Frank (probably because he never stopped moving!), but the only thing that got me through the agony was knowing that he would eventually have to be born.

3. Stay busy. It's summer, so I'm off from teaching, but I'm trying to get into work one day a week to clean and organize for next school year. I've also planned fun activities for myself and the boys, like a visit to an "escape room" with some old friends and a trip to the movies with Collin and his godparents to see *Finding Dory*. I even had an artist friend paint a giant, rosy teapot on my belly. I try to have at least one small activity to look forward to each day.



4. Nesting and prepping. With the help of my mom, Patrick and I FINALLY cleaned out our garage and storage areas. We've also spent some time decorating Teagan's room. It's been fun sorting through her adorable little clothes and finding cute personalized things on Etsy. (Poor Leo didn't get this much attention because he was born in October, our most chaotic time of the year.)



5. Snowballs. Right after I told Patrick about my escalator analogy, we visited the Emmorton snowball stand where I ran into a former student who was rapidly approaching her due date. We talk online regularly and have both agreed that a Styrofoam cup of ice drenched in sugary syrup is exactly what we need to cool us down - body and mind. I couldn't help but think about the irony of her waiting in the long line before me, both of us eagerly awaiting the moment we finally embraced our icy treat. I watched longingly as she received her snowball, indulging in that first taste of sweetness. I was anxious to meet my own frosty bundle. Before I knew it, I was back in the car, savoring every spoonful of my new arrival.

A few days later, my student had her baby, an adorable little boy named Theo.



That meant there were only two women I knew before me, waiting just a few more weeks - or even days — to get off the escalator. One delivered a healthy boy three days ago. The other and I are eager for July 9th-ish to meet our fourth babies.

Hopefully by next week, I'll be writing about meeting my daughter for the first time, but if not, I'll be trusting God to get me there safe, sound, and soon...and consuming my fair share of snowballs!

