

## PARENT TO PARENT

# Love, marriage and a loooong wait to fill that baby carriage

By Heidi Stevens  
TRIBUNE REPORTER

Love stories, the believable ones anyway, don't unfold in the most likely settings.

Matthew Miller's, in fact, takes place in some pretty unlikely ones: urologists' offices, fertility specialists, hospital waiting rooms.

These are among the places where Miller and his wife, Constance, demonstrate an enviable level of devotion—both to each other and to the family they're desperately trying to grow. Miller chronicles the process, in painstaking detail, in his new book, "Maybe Baby: An Infertile Love Story" (Health Communications, \$14.95).

We chatted with Miller, who lives in Lincoln Square, about "Maybe Baby," and the happy ending that never made it into the book: Constance is pregnant with twins, thanks to a successful round of in vitro fertilization. They're due on March 24.

**Q:** Was it difficult to share such intimate details?

**A:** It was kind of liberating for me. I grew up pretty overweight, and I spent a lot of my life hiding behind big clothes and extra pounds. There came a point when it didn't seem worth it to hide behind myself anymore. I wasn't helping anyone, especially myself. So when it came time to write about this, I thought, "The only way I can truly make this interesting and truly help me and my wife digest these events is to just be as honest as possible." It is kind of odd to think about your co-workers, your friends, your parents knowing the intimate details about your life, but it actually brought me closer to people.

**Q:** Are we too secretive about infertility issues?

**A:** When you feel like your



Chicagoan Matthew M.F. Miller writes about battling infertility in his new book, "Maybe Baby."

body is failing you, it's not something you want to talk about—especially men. It doesn't sound very masculine to say, "I have low sperm count." But by talking to other people, I've come to realize how normal I am. One of my favorite things about writing this is realizing I'm not unique. When I was younger, I wanted to think I was so different, but now I take a lot of comfort in knowing I'm like a lot of other people.

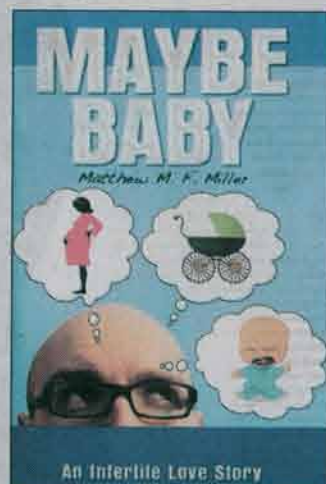
**Q:** Do you think men will read this book?

**A:** I hope so. One of the disheartening things that

started early in our [infertility] treatments was the doctor was surprised to see me. The way reproduction works, most of it falls onto women's bodies. But if one person is doing it all alone, I don't know how you couldn't feel resentful. I wanted to show my wife and prove to her that I'm in this with her. By writing about it, I was able to help us both digest it—"What just went on at that visit?" or "I can't believe it didn't happen again this month."

**Q:** You touch on the guilt surrounding infertility.

**A:** When things start to go



wrong, you can't help but feel it's your fault. As intelligent as our bodies are, we can't always read them and it's no longer simple science for you. To this day, we still don't know what it was [that caused the infertility], and that doesn't satisfy the need to blame something. I love to blame. I'm happy to take the blame, I just need the satisfaction of blaming.

**Q:** Tell me about the 22-mile run you're planning.

**A:** The strange thing about infertility is once you're pregnant, it's very easy to wash your hands of it. It's solved. But I don't want to turn my back on this community of people I've gotten to know. I want to raise the money for one cycle of IVF for one couple who don't have insurance to cover it. Running is one of my favorite passions, so my wife came up with the idea to start at the apartment where we lived, run to our first doctor, run to our IVF clinic and do a complete loop. It represents that whole course of events that brought us here.

Miller will be signing copies of his book at 7:30 p.m. Oct. 15 at Women and Children First, 5233 N. Clark St. Check [maybebabyblog.com](http://maybebabyblog.com).

[hstevens@tribune.com](mailto:hstevens@tribune.com)