

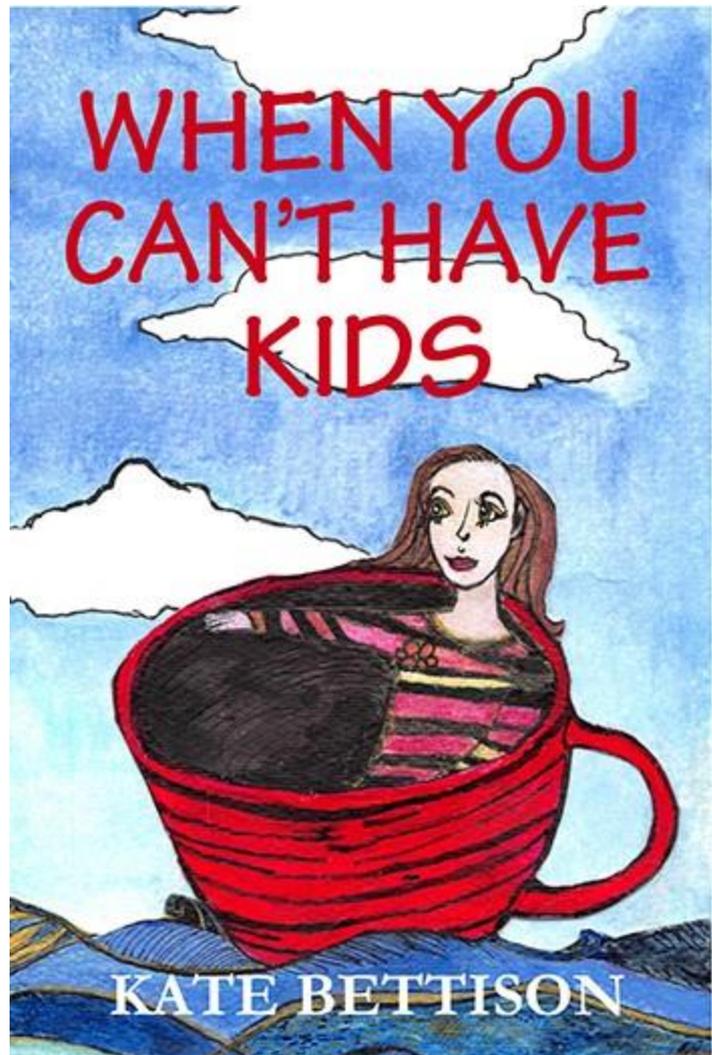
When You Can't Have Kids

by Kate Bettison

The blurb to this new book on childlessness is every apt - Kate Bettison 'never doubted that she would be a mother one day... but 3 rounds of IVF ...brought the reality of infertility and the challenges of adapting to a new life - a life without kids. In 2009 Kate Bettison began looking for a book that would provide her with guidance and comfort, but she could only find books on infertility where in the end a child was born or books written by people who had never wanted a child. *When you can't have kids* is the book Kate wanted to read when she first knew she would never be a mother.'

I must agree - this book is very much that - a book I would have wanted to read when I was coming to terms with infertility. This book is a reminder of what feelings and thoughts are common amongst us, as Kate does not give advice about infertility or childlessness, but tells us openly and honestly how it was for her - her own story.

Kate takes us on her journey from meeting her husband, through the details and feelings about IVF treatments and their decision not to adopt or foster.



She describes dealing with family pregnancies, but also the confusing joys of a new nephew and the anxieties and emotions she encountered as she attempted to come to terms with a life without her own children. Kate is open about the impact treatment had on her emotions - the feelings of anger, inadequacy as a woman, the changes to their marriage as well as jealousy, despair and her depression.

It sounds 'heavy', but Kate writes in a relaxed style in small digestible chapters so you can dip in and out or read more if you are comfortable. In the second half of the book Kate describes her journey of acceptance, never prescribing types of self-help. She shares the ways she marked the events of her infertility that often seemed like deaths and how she put to rest the children that might have been, through passing on collected baby items and redecorating. Through the positivity of her healing retreats, her 'furbabies' and the joy of her nephews she was able to admit, "Life is never guaranteed to work out the way we want it to, it didn't for us. But we have an extraordinary life nonetheless with opportunities now that we might not have had if we had children of our own. They are not better or worse opportunities, they are just different."

Whether at the start of this difficult journey or confirming your own experiences, this book is a valuable edition to the MTL bookshelf. Kate asks, as many of us do, 'So what am I left with that I can leave to the world if I can't pass on my genes as a legacy? - I have a lot.' - I believe her legacy is at the very least this book.

T R Parkes - MTL volunteer