

**EXCERPTS ALL CODED UNDER THE BROAD THEME OF 'BIOGRAPHICAL  
DISRUPTION'**

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You can either get on with your life in the sense you're not going to have a baby – 'Let's just get on and take life as it comes'. Or you've (to partner) got to plan for a career break and we start planning to empty out the spare room and that sort of thing. You can't do it either, so we want to know what's going to happen.

✿ FEATURES: 'in limbo'

✿ FEATURES: threat to future plans

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(YCL20; Man)

You know, I think it's just typical of me - to presume, you know, 'Well, I want to do this and that's when I'll have babies' and then you can't. All those years spent taking precautions ...

✿ STRATEGIES: looking back/castigating a past self

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(WBY36; Woman)

Interviewer: Did they ask you if you wanted artificial donor insemination?

Woman: Not – not interested. I think it's too much of a grey area. We both feel that, really. At first I did ... I was sort of thinking in my mind, 'Well, Jack's sort of denying me the right to have a child, though, with a donor, but then I can see it form his point of view that, well, you know, it might go on for years and years and then something can spark it and he might turn round and say, 'That child isn't mine' - because really it wouldn't be, would it? Biologically it wouldn't and then you might as well adopt ...

✿ STRATEGIES: anticipating problems

✿ STRATEGIES: constructing future narrative

✿ TENSIONS: individual or couple?

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(HHH64; Woman)

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016	If we don't have a family what am I going to do for the next 30 to 40 years?		
017	(DF85; Woman)	☼	FEATURES: threat to future plans
018		☼	FEATURES: threat to identity
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020	Man: I can't see the point in worrying.	☼	TENSIONS: individual or couple?
021	Woman: I don't think he understands what I'm going through, because		
022	it's <b>me</b> that's the problem.		
023	(ESC86 - Couple)		
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026	I'm guilty until proven innocent and she's innocent until proven guilty	☼	TENSIONS: individual or couple?
027	(YCL20; Man)		
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030	I feel a failure (in tears). I've let Martin down.	☼	TENSIONS: individual or couple?
031	(LHMR67; Woman)		
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034	We were saying that the only way we could actually have taken control	☼	STRATEGIES: taking control
035	was to decide <b>not</b> to do this (embark on ICSI) ... but then the fear is	☼	TENSIONS: between taking control & anticipating
036	then you would be left with the worry of 'What if ...?'		
037	(PWH34; Man)		
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- 040 We would do IVF – we've talked about this long and hard. If we don't, I think,  
down the line in 10 ... 20 years' time, we'd say, 'Well, what if we'd tried IVF?'  
(VL061; Woman) [ \* STRATEGIES: taking control  
\* TENSIONS: between taking control & anticipating ]
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- 044 Last time I went 7 weeks and we were both convinced. I spend my life waiting ...  
045 (TCL60; Woman) [ \* FEATURES: 'in limbo'  
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- 048 Woman: I have said that I don't want to get married or anything, as  
049 it wouldn't be fair on him. Because I know that Dave really does  
want children and (to partner) you really are quite paternal, aren't  
you? And I think it would devastate him if he knew that he couldn't  
have his own. I'd probably up and leave him (laughs)...
- 050 Man: I'd say that, if the worst came to the worst, and we couldn't  
051 have kids I'd still marry her – know what I mean? I wouldn't,  
like, get rid of her because she couldn't have kids.
- 052 Woman: I might just go anyway (laughs).  
053 (BIH32; Couple)  
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- 057 If we've had a bad day, I say, 'The easiest thing would be for us to split up and  
him - if he wants a child – to go and have one with someone else'. I **do** mean it  
some days.  
(VL061; Woman) [ \* TENSIONS: individual or couple?  
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- 061 A friend has had 3 (IVF) attempts. Somewhere along the line you've got to put  
a full stop to this and say, 'This can't go on forever',
- 062 (DF85; Man) \* STRATEGIES: taking control; calling a halt
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- 065 We'll adopt. We know of other couples who have gone on for further treatment  
and IVF. There's a girl at work who's had 4 IVF attempts. I'd maybe try it once ...
- 066 (HH32; Woman) \* STRATEGIES: taking control; calling a halt
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- 069 Woman: I was quite disappointed really, because all my friends, of course, you  
know, sort of a few years ago – they all started  
having their babies then, you see. So I thought, 'Why isn't  
this happening to me?' I felt very disappointed.
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- 072 Man: .... You feel a bit left out when other people have kids. One  
of my friends, his partner was pregnant when I met him and  
they've gone on to have a second baby. The older you get the further  
you seem to get left out – well, in a way ...
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- 075 (PFD23; Couple) \* FEATURES: getting left behind
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- 078 You just seem to get more and more disheartened, you know. You hear so many  
people are pregnant and you think, 'We've still failed' ... \* FEATURES: comparison with others  
\* FEATURES: getting left behind

079 (LGR32; Woman)

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082 My sister's just had her third - and she's only 26!

083 (BHH32; Woman)

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086 I've been married before, you see, and I didn't want one then. But as soon as I met him I wanted one. (To partner) Sad aren't we?

087 (HHH64; Woman)

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I think a lot of the problem is, as I say, we like to think that we're doing quite well in our lives and working hard - got a nice house and everything else - and people expect your life to be going on quite normally. And we - start seeing other couples having kids - people expect you to be having kids as well. So, obviously, (to partner) we've taken a lot of stick over the last 4 years, haven't we?

090 (WBY36; Man)

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When we first got married we were so careful - don't want to get pregnant now. We wanted to be able to save up plenty of money so that when we did start a family we would have a secure home and everything and then you think, 'Well, we've got the money - where's the baby?' you know. Well, I've said this to Steve before and it may be a negative thing to say, but, you know, we just sort of married and we've been married for eight and a half years now and you think ... I feel annoyed that we waited so long before

✿ FEATURES: comparison with others  
✿ FEATURES: getting left behind

✿ TENSIONS: crisis or shifting priorities?

✿ FEATURES: comparison with others  
✿ FEATURES: forced emotion work?  
✿ FEATURES: getting left behind

✿ STRATEGIES: reconstructing the past/ castigating

we actually started trying. I mean, the only reason we did leave it so long is what I've just said, so we could spend some quality time together before a family came along and that we could have sufficient money to be able to give a child or children a good home and then I keep kicking myself, you know, thinking, 'Why did we leave it so long?' you know, 'We could have managed it even if we hadn't much money'. Maybe if we'd started 2 or 3 years earlier we would have a baby by now ...

094 (DF85; Woman)

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096 You know, I think it's just typical of me - to presume, you know, 'Well, I want to do this and that' when I'll have babies' and then you can't. All those years spent taking precautions ...

097 (WB36; Woman)

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099 I mean, we got invited to the christening (of her brother's baby), didn't we? And we really didn't want to go, but we knew we had no choice. We couldn't turn round and say, 'Well, I'm sorry, but we can't come'. We had to go ... ehm ... and both of us said - when we knew the christening was coming up - 'We don't want them to ask us to be godparents' ...ehm ... and they didn't. They asked her sister instead and another couple who had nothing to do with the family - they're not related or anything - and I sat feeling really jealous that they hadn't asked us. They can't win! But it (the christening) was quite an ordeal really (to partner) wasn't it?

100 (DF85; Woman)

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102 Man: You feel a bit left out. I met a friend during a course, didn't I? (to his partner) And, at that time, his girlfriend was already pregnant. He's since become a very good friend, hasn't he? (to his partner)

✿ STRATEGIES: reconstructing the past/ castigating

✿ FEATURES: comparison with others

✿ FEATURES: getting left behind n

✿ STRATEGIES: emotion, work/ limits

✿ FEATURES: comparison with others

✿ FEATURES: getting left behind

✿ FEATURES: others doing 'emotion work'

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104 Woman: Yes.  
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106 Man: And, em, and also it seems she's had another one.  
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108 Woman: I think the thing is, they aren't married, like, you know ... and what made it  
worse, really was that this baby was born and he was only 5 months old  
when his girlfriend got pregnant with the second one, so that sort of ...  
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110 Man: In fact, he was very reluctant to tell us - he had us guessing for quite a while.  
111 (PFD23; Couple)

**FIG 11.2** EXCERPTS ALL CODED UNDER THE BROAD THEME OF 'BIOGRAPHICAL DISRUPTION'

NB: When I use these data excerpts in workshops I usually photocopy them and literally cut them up. You may find it helpful to do this and to use large pieces of paper (on the large table recommended!) in order to play around with grouping and re-grouping them under different themes, categories and sub-categories as you develop and refine these. Again, you may initially choose to cover up the coding categories I have assigned to these excerpts and may be interested in trying out your own independent coding exercise.