



THE WORST GIRL GANG EVER

# CHEAT SHEET CHILDLESS LINGO



**ADAPTED FROM**

LIVING THE LIFE UNEXPECTED (BLUEBIRD/PANMACMILLAN, 2016/2020) BY JODY DAY. CHAPTER 4 [WWW.GATEWAY-WOMEN.COM/BOOK](http://WWW.GATEWAY-WOMEN.COM/BOOK)



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**Childless:** is generally taken to mean being without a biological or adopted child of your own, whether that's because of infertility, or for any of the many other reasons it might not have happened. 'Childless' can feel like a harsh word when you are transitioning into it from TTC, and it certainly feels like it some days. I've been in a good place about my childlessness for a decade now, so the word no longer has a 'sting' for me, it's just a basic biological description. But it takes a bit of work to get there, and that's what my work is all about - helping you get there.

**Childfree:** I really like the word 'childfree' and, when I first heard it, I thought 'I'll have that!' But then I found out that it refers to those women and men who have actively chosen not to have children. Many of them have insisted since childhood that they didn't want children and have never changed their minds, although others have often told them that they would 'one day'. They make up about 10% of those women who find themselves as non-mothers at midlife, although their numbers may well be on the rise for the Millennial and GenZ cohorts. Sometimes the hashtag #CF is used for 'Childfree'

**Childfree After Infertility:** some people choose this term, which just shows that the most important thing is that you choose a term that feels right to you at the time!

**Childless Not By Choice (often shortened to #CNBC):** is probably the most common term in use right now, although I don't use that acronym in my work as it's a trademark of an American news channel and I don't want their lawyers breathing down my neck!

**Childless By Circumstance:** refers to all of those people who are childless for reasons other than infertility, including medical and genetic conditions, life circumstances, partnership issues, as well as many systemic and structural issues like access to housing, healthcare, finances, etc.

**Childless by Relationship:** refers to those people who are in relationships with partners who either already have children and don't wish to have more, or do not want children. Being a childless stepmother has a flavour all of its own too...

**Nomo:** is the term I created in 2012 and which has flown the coop and is in use in all kinds of ways around the world. It's a contraction of 'not-mother' and I just wanted a more neutral-sounding word that didn't include the words child, less, or free. I have seen it used by both childless and childfree women. It's apparently very popular in Spain!

Some of the more academic terms you might come across include: 'Involuntary Childlessness', 'Nullipara', 'Unchosen Childlessness', 'Unplanned Childlessness', and more seem to spring up every year.

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