

# One Woman's Story

## "I Was On My Own"

Thirty years ago, I found myself pregnant, divorced and virtually alone.

*The first emotion* was that of sheer panic. I only had a small income and was working two jobs. I had a 4-year-old daughter to support. I had no money, no medical insurance, and didn't realize that there were places to turn to for help.

As I turned to friends and relatives for advice the whole matter became more confusing. Advice poured in from all sides. I felt like I was being put through the third degree: "What is a divorced woman going to do with such a small income? You already have one child to feed. How will you pay the hospital bills?"

A relative that had an illegal abortion 25 years before talked to me about abortion. She had never been able to have children because of her abortion, but strangely enough, advised me to have one anyway. After all, it was now legal and "safe."

I felt like I was in a tailspin. There was no time to think. As I look back, not once did anyone just put their arms around me and ask my feelings or allow me to even have time to have any. Just some positive love and support would have been a relief.

My relatives went about their business of making all the arrangements while I felt like someone on the outside looking in. It was as if it was happening to someone else. I don't blame anyone, they only did what they thought was right; that is why educating people about what's really right is so important.

Anyway, I was soon whisked off to Cleveland and dropped off at some friend's house. The next day I was again dropped off at the abortion clinic. After I got inside (alone) I paid my \$200 and was given a pregnancy test and a locker (just like in a gym). I was given a paper gown and told to put it on. The place was cold and the people formal. No compassion, no understanding. It was like a busy assembly line.

I then waited in a small room until my name was called. I was taken to another room and told to get up on the table, put my feet in the stirrups and scoot down. It was so cold—I shivered and have never been so scared or felt so alone.

I was soon to find out that the "painless" procedure I was promised was anything but painless. As my baby was ripped from my body the pain became unbearable, and tears streamed down my face. I was told to be still—it would soon be over.

After the abortion, I walked to another room and was allowed to lie down for 30 minutes, after which I was told I could leave. I went to my locker, got dressed and was told to see my family doctor in six weeks. I asked if I could use a phone to call my ride and was told they had no phones for public use, but there was a pay phone down the street I could use.

I walked down the street. It was November, and very cold. As I walked back to wait for my ride outside the clinic, I felt cold, nauseous, dizzy, alone and empty.

When my ride picked me up she had a friend with her. They were going to lunch and I had to go along. You would have thought I had just gone to get my eyes checked for all anyone cared.

Later that day, another relative took me home and dropped me off in front of my apartment. It's amazing how everyone was there to give advice before the abortion, but afterwards I was on my own.

What followed was more like a nightmare than reality. I began having nightmares about my baby. I began drinking more and more until I was up to five bottles of alcohol a week. I sometimes went so long without eating that when I would try to eat, I would vomit.

I finally went to the doctor and found out that I had an infection from the abortion. He started treatment but it didn't help. I told him about the nightmares and my nerves and he gave me tranquilizers—no comfort, no counseling—just pills.

I started taking tranquilizers to help me sleep, and drugs to keep me going during the day. Four times I deliberately overdosed, trying to commit suicide. I don't think I really wanted to die, I only wanted someone to care, to help, to listen. I wanted the pain to go away.

The doctor continued to try treatment after treatment on the physical problem, but to no avail. I finally changed doctors and had to have surgery because the infection caused by the abortion had destroyed my cervix and uterus. This helped for a short time.

I finally met the man I am now married to; with his love and support, I started to put my life back together. We started to attend church and I came to find Christ as my Savior. I knew then that I was forgiven but it took time before I was able to forgive myself. I was finally alive after being dead and living in hell.

But the physical problems caused by the abortion started cropping back up. More infections and more damage. I changed doctors again. I had a D&C. I was filled with tumors by this time and had endometriosis. A hysterectomy was inevitable, but we put it off as long as possible.

But in March 1984 it finally came to pass. *Everything* had to be removed, for it was totally destroyed. It took ten years of constant problems, but the abortion finally took its final toll.

As I look back, if I had received love and support, and above all, the true facts, I would have never even considered an abortion. The pain never goes away, it's always there.

I really believe women who have had abortions need to be heard; we have a right to be heard. The thought of anyone going through what I went through (although I know that there are literally millions who have) is heartbreaking to me.

# ***One Teen's Story***

## **"I Wanted to Have the Baby"**

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**When I became pregnant, the father of the baby insisted on an abortion.**

***He was scared,*** because his parents had to get married with him when his mother was sixteen years old. My boyfriend always felt like his dad resented him for "tying him down." His father drank a lot, and would beat him and his mother and sisters. My boyfriend said he wanted to show his father that he could "do it the right way."

But I wanted to have the baby. I didn't know much about abortion, but as a Christian, I knew it was wrong. So I told my boyfriend that he could "get lost" and have no responsibility for the baby. If I felt that I couldn't handle the baby, I could give him up for adoption.

There was one problem: I was so scared! I needed the help of a professional, so like many other girls, I went to Planned Parenthood.

After an examination, I talked with a counselor and explained to her that I wanted the baby, but I was scared and that my boyfriend wanted me to have an abortion. She seemed to think that abortion was the wise choice. All she said was, "Well, remember that it's your body, and you have the final say about what happens. However, here's the phone to call and make an appointment for an abortion. The clinic is very busy so you should call as soon as possible." I told her I wasn't ready to jump that fast, and left feeling lonely and helpless.

I knew I couldn't fight against my boyfriend forever, and I was afraid to tell my parents. So, feeling hopeless, I made an appointment for an abortion.

I told the counselor I wanted to have my baby but my boyfriend wanted me to have the abortion. The counselor seemed quite upset with me and plainly told me that I was being "romantic," while my boyfriend was being "realistic." How could wanting to give birth to my baby be romantic? I knew it wouldn't be peaches and roses, but the counselor had no right to put me down like that, either. It seems to me that these people are so involved in fighting for abortions that they forget to look at the young girls' and their babies' needs.

Anyway, eight weeks pregnant, I had a suction abortion. About six hours after the abortion, I experienced severe cramps and almost passed out. I've never felt pain like that before—it was as if someone was on the inside of my stomach, slowly cutting it away with a knife. I finally rocked myself to sleep on my hands and knees. When I woke up, the pain was gone.

The second day I felt all right. But on the third day after my abortion, the pain came back, and I had a lot of bleeding and clotting. Nobody told me it would be that bad. I was told to expect some bleeding, which they gave pills for, and some cramps.

I was also told that for a couple of weeks I'd feel an emotional loss, but after that, I should be over my experience. If I wasn't, they said, I should seek further counseling, because normally these feelings of guilt, loss, etc. should be gone by then. Well, my symptoms weren't over, but there was no way I was going back to them for counseling.

A year later, I married my boyfriend, who also had horrible guilt feelings [about the abortion]. We have regretted it every day since it happened. We keep wondering what kind of child he or she was: a future President? Someone with the

answer to our energy problems? Quite on purpose, I got pregnant two weeks before we got married. I knew it was wrong, but the need for another child was so great that it was all I lived for.

About three months after we were married, I started changing emotionally, and could not stand having any kind of sexual relationship with my husband. I thought it was a hormone imbalance, due to my pregnancy.

When the problem didn't get better after the baby was born, and went on for another year, I went to talk to a Christian friend who was studying to become a marriage counselor. He said I was probably trying to punish myself for what I did, and that I couldn't accept God's forgiveness. It wasn't until two years later that I found out one of the major problems women face after an abortion is not being able to face sexual relationships. The emotional damage done by abortion goes so deep and into so many different areas that it is hard to understand.

I still have problems that need to be worked out. Nobody ever told me it would be like this. In fact, I thought I was abnormal until I read information from [a post-abortion support group], and realized that I'm not alone. Sad but comforting.

My husband has been great through all of this. Christ is teaching us so much, and because of what I went through, I have a "burden" to help fight this issue. Although I haven't told my parents about my abortion, I'll probably have to soon. I'm sure they wonder why I take everything about abortion so personally. I've already told my mother-in-law, and my husband is supporting me the whole way.

As a Christian, I know God was with me all the way, wanting to give me His strength to help me make it through my pregnancy. I was just too scared to reach out for His hand. I still should have gotten better professional help from those agencies. At the age of eighteen, the law says one is an adult. But emotionally, many eighteen-year-olds are not strong enough on the inside to stand up for what they really want.

I thank God with all my heart that He loved my husband and me and showed His love for us by giving us a second chance. We are blessed with three beautiful boys—I hope we can have three more!

# One Man's Story

## "That Day Ripped Out My Gut"

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For every woman who has had an abortion a man has been involved.  
For me it was two abortions.

*I think* that because we live in such a visual world where we can't see the baby from conception, it just doesn't seem real. I know this may seem like a simple analogy, but ... we cannot see corn that was just planted; yet, that doesn't make it any less a vegetable.

My story begins at 16 when I heard that first "I'm pregnant" from my girlfriend. I can remember being scared and a little confused about how it all happened. I asked all of the questions like, "I thought you were protected," and anything else I could think of to say rather than taking responsibility for my actions.

I can remember when the phone call came to my parents. My feelings of being scared and confused changed to terrified and ashamed. I don't know how much time passed from the phone call until my parents came to talk with me, but it felt like an eternity. I remember putting on my headphones with the music cranked up, not wanting to face the consequences of my actions as my parents were trying to talk to me. I wanted it all to go away.

I'm sure my parents were just as scared and that thoughts of "what's next" were running through their minds. Both sets of parents got involved, and it ended with the untimely death of Jonathan Michael, who would now be 30-plus years old and doing something I never gave him the chance to do.

I don't remember thinking a whole lot about the abortion. In my busy, important life as a teenager, sex, drugs, and rock and roll took over with a steady diet of Pink Floyd and others. It didn't take long for this life-style to catch up with me; I got myself in the same situation with another girlfriend. I remember thinking, "Okay, this time I will be a man and take care of this baby. I know I'm only 17, but I'll be 18 real soon and out of high school. I know I can work hard and make it work out this time."

When we had the sit-down talk with my girlfriend's dad, he proceeded to tell me I wasn't ready for the responsibility of raising a child. After all, I was still in high school and I had no job stability. He continued for some time, but all I heard after that was, "You are not good enough; you're a loser. What kind of idiot would get my daughter pregnant anyway? I can't believe I even let my daughter go out with you the way you look, you long-haired loser."

The result of that conversation was the decision by her parents for the abortion of Zachary Allen, who would be following his older brother's lead in the life I didn't fight for. That day ripped my gut out and closed my heart.

My role in two abortions has been long-lasting. I can tell you that the mental and emotional effects on a man are real and devastating. I really don't let anyone get close to me because I don't want to let them down. I've had a divorce, no current relationship with my two living sons, countless unfinished projects, and several jobs left before true success--mainly because I never felt I deserved it.

Where am I today? After hearing a woman's personal story in our church of how abortion affected her, I felt like a

hammer hit me between the eyes. I knew then it was time to start dealing with my past. Jesus Christ has forgiven my past and continues to strengthen me. I know that there is NO future looking in my rearview mirror and nothing in my past that I can change. My wife had nothing to do with my past, but she wants the best for our future and to fight and save as many untimely deaths as we can together. Her support has been immeasurable in the healing process. ...