



Abortion leaves families heartbroken.

Georgette Forney remembers a difficult discussion with her young daughter:

"Trying to explain to an 8-year-old what abortion is and why I had one was extremely difficult. After some discussion, I said it was bedtime, and she said, 'Okay, but let me make sure I understand. You were pregnant when you were 16, and you killed your baby?' I had to look her in the eye and answer, 'Yes.' The look of fear and disappointment in her eyes is something I will never forget."

Experiencing the pain of a past abortion?

Visit RTL.org or call Right to Life of Michigan at (616) 532-2300 for help.

We have all heard the saying: “Abortion is a decision between a woman and her doctor.” This line of thinking is used to keep other people from influencing a mother’s choice regarding the life or death decision she will make for her unborn child. For some women, the uncertainty that an unplanned pregnancy brings is a heavy burden. Abortion, for too many, feels like the only choice that seems feasible.

But an only choice is not a real option; instead it feels like a last resort.

Women are not the only ones who feel the pain and suffering brought about by this last resort. Studies show that abortion leaves families heartbroken. Fathers, grandparents, aunts, uncles and siblings also feel the residual undesirable impact of abortion.

To think that an abortion only impacts a mother and her child preparing to be born removes the genuine pain family members experience when abortion touches their lives. For some family members, the pain comes more acutely because they promoted the abortion or chose not to speak up for the child. For other family members, the pain comes after hearing for the first time that a loved one had an abortion. Feelings of regret for not being there to help can be difficult to overcome.

Studies have shown that following an abortion women have reported having relationship problems,^(1,2) vulnerability to abuse alcohol, and using illegal drugs.⁽³⁾ Women who have abortions have a higher death rate from suicide, homicide and accidents than women who gave birth.⁽⁴⁾ While the statistics point to a documented concern, a better understanding may come from the testimony of those who have been brave enough to express how abortion has left their families heartbroken.

In the book *Changed: Making Sense of Your Own or a Loved One’s Abortion Experience* by Michaelene Fredenburg, the raw emotion of those who contributed is evident; abortion leaves families heartbroken.

Amber, *Changed*, 46:

“I’ve spent a lot of time thinking about what it would have been like to have two siblings. I’m angry with my mother that she would abort them—that she would take them away from me. I feel like my life as an only child is a lie.”

William, *Changed*, 56:

“Ann has never stopped grieving the loss of our grandchild. Every year on the anniversary of the baby’s due date, Ann mourns and struggles with depression. Yet she won’t talk about it with [our daughter] because she doesn’t want to cause our daughter additional pain.”

Mary, *Changed*, 61:

“I could have saved my grandchild. I could have saved my son from this grief and pain. Ryan told me how he’d tried to help Vicki when her parents were pressuring her to have an abortion. He said he was thinking about asking me again if Vicki could live with us, when her parents suddenly—and secretly—took her to the clinic.”

Robert Burke explains how abortion has impacted him and his response to others. *“I lost a child to abortion. I was one of those men who did not see the need to defend the innocent life I helped to create. Needless to say I have made many mistakes in my life. I have hurt others emotionally, psychologically, and spiritually, both intentionally and unintentionally. I supported the physical destruction of a human life. I never found true and lasting peace and acceptance no matter how hard I looked for them. I was restless and deeply unaccepting of myself.”*

Karen Cross shares how abortion impacted her relationship with her mother and extended family. Karen shared, *“Initially I was bitter toward my mother who took me to the first abortion. I wanted—or should I say needed—to blame her. For years I didn’t realize her pain. Sometimes she cried for me and the pain I endured, and sometimes for the grandchildren she’ll never hold. Later I accepted responsibility for what happened and we forgave each other. Even after all these years, it’s still not over. As I held my new grandson, I realized I didn’t abort two children, I aborted generations of children.”*

Works Cited:

- 1 Lauzon, Pierre, et al. “Emotional Distress Among Couples Involved in First Trimester Induced Abortions.” *Canadian Family Physician* 46 (2000): 2033-2040.
- 2 Rue, V.M., et al. “Induced Abortion and Traumatic Stress: A Preliminary Comparison of American and Russian Women.” *Medical Science Monitor* 10 (2004): SR5-16.
- 3 Reardon, David C., et al. “Substance Use Associated With Unintended Pregnancy Outcomes in the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth.” *American Journal of Drug and Alcohol Abuse* 26 (2004): 369-383.
- 4 Gissler, Mika, et al. “Injury Deaths, Suicides and Homicides Associated With Pregnancy, Finland 1987–2000.” *European Journal of Public Health* 15.5 (2005): 459-463.