

The Post-Abortion Review

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A Hidden Giant

Post-Abortion Expert Leaves Legacy of Written and Living Treasures

David C. Reardon

On November 13, 2003, God called home one of his champions, Tom Strahan. Tom died of a heart attack shortly after he and his wife, Carol, returned home from a fund-raising banquet for a pregnancy help center in Minneapolis. To the very end, Tom was helping others.

As a man, Tom Strahan was a humble, generous, and prayerful father, steward, and Christian. As a laborer, he was an attorney and scholar.

In my judgment, Tom was the world's single leading expert on the literature related to abortion complications. Others might know the details of one area or of a group of studies better, but no one was as well read in regard to the breadth of the literature. The breadth of this knowledge is captured in *Detrimental Effects of Abortion: An Annotated Bibliography with Commentary*.

How did a lawyer come to be an expert in the area of post-abortion complications? It began in prayer.

Tom had matured into his professional life during the late 50's and early 60's. He used his legal skills to serve the poor and disenfranchised and was active in civil rights litigation. I doubt he ever made a lot of money, but he knew he was helping people who needed help. He probably also got a lot of help from his wife, Carol, who encouraged and supported his efforts to serve rather than get.

I first met Tom in 1986. We were both attending the first meeting of the Association for Interdisciplinary Research on Values and Social Change to present papers on the negative effects of abortion on women. It was my first public presentation on the topic. My guess is that it was his first as well.

Tom went on to become the editor and chief author of the Association's publication *Research Reports* (you can find their web site at www.abortionresearch.com). He became the first one I would ever turn to with questions about the literature. Every time, he was gracious and generous with his time, resources, and good advice.

Once, when we were discussing how we had gotten into "this business," Tom explained how he was reluctantly pulled into it.

There had come a time, he said, when he had been at a loss as to where he should be putting his energies. So he knelt down in prayer.

He prayed for an hour or more, repeatedly asking the Lord to show him what he should do. I guess it took him a couple of hours of prayer because this experienced civil rights lawyer kept hoping that if he prayed long enough God would show him some new way to help the poor. Instead, he felt God was insistently calling on him to defend the unborn.

Not the abortion issue, he protested. How about something else? Surely there was something less divisive that he could help out with? No, he sensed

in God's immovable answer, Tom was needed for the battle against abortion.

Without a lot of initial enthusiasm, but with an obedient spirit, Tom began to study the Supreme Court's abortion rulings with greater intensity. Like thousands of other Christian lawyers, he knew that the Supreme Court's reasoning, legal analysis, and historical interpretations were deeply flawed.

But he also saw that the one area in the Court's reasoning that was most susceptible to being reversed by a demonstration in facts was the Court's conclusion that abortion is safe for women. So Tom carefully and meticulously went about the job of gathering the facts necessary to prove that abortion is hurting women.

Becoming an expert in post-abortion literature wasn't ever Tom's plan. It simply happened as he walked in faith to follow God's plan. Nor was it ever my plan. But without Tom, much of what I have done in the field would either not have been possible or would have been much less well-developed.

I remember talking with Tom once about how God pulls us onto paths we would never have chosen to follow on our own initiative. While Tom had once hesitated to pursue the abortion issue, how thankful I am (and all of you should be) that God insisted and Tom submitted.

During this conversation — and probably several afterward, as I tend to repeat myself a lot — I told Tom my favorite joke: How do you make God laugh? Answer: Tell Him your plans. (Teenagers

How did a lawyer come to be an expert in the field of post-abortion problems?

always stare blankly at me when I tell this to them, which gives me a second laugh! I expect this joke has a ten to thirty year gestation period when told to teens.)

I deeply miss Tom already, as a colleague, confidant, and friend. His death reminds me, however, of how there is an economy of grace through which God has arranged that all of our efforts are intertwined, united, and magnified in countless ways.

I'm often blessed to hear how the efforts of others have been aided or inspired by the Elliot Institute's own work. Rarely do they know, however, how our own work has been dependent on the labor and generosity of people like Tom Strahan and countless others who contribute their time, intellect, prayers, and financial support to our efforts.

My guess is that only a few hundred people in the pro-life movement would immediately recognize Tom Strahan's name and associate it with the important contributions he has made to protecting women and their children.

Fewer still would know what he has also done to help the poor and to defend the free speech and civil rights of all. But that also is a beautiful aspect of God's plan, that such important work is done in hidden ways, not for wealth or prestige, but because it needs to be done.

Tom left a living treasure to this world in the form of his four children and nine grandchildren, and a written treasure of research and case law that will continue to affect the course of national affairs for years to come. Bound to follow God's plans, not his own, he has left these treasures behind to embrace the treasures stored up in heaven for those who do God's will.

The Strahan family asks that any memorial gifts in Tom's honor be directed to New Life Family Services, 1515 East 66th St., Minneapolis, MN 55423, (612) 866-7643, info@nlfs.org.

Memorial Contributions

In Memory of:

Luetta Chapman

Jake Vole



Contributions in memory of loved ones or for a birthday, anniversary or other special occasion can be sent to the Elliot Institute, and will be acknowledged in this newsletter unless otherwise requested.

Supplement to Detrimental Effects of Abortion Now Available

More Studies Document Abortion's Dangers

The 2003 supplement to Tom Strahan's bibliography, *Detrimental Effects of Abortion: An Annotated Bibliography With Commentary*, is now being made available to the public free of charge.

The supplement contains 59 new entries covering studies on topics such as depression, psychiatric hospitalization, substance abuse, repeat abortions, cancer, ectopic pregnancy, reproductive complications, and other problems after abortion. Also included are summaries of the latest Elliot Institute studies that have been published in peer-reviewed medical journals.

The complete 2001 edition of *Detrimental Effects of Abortion* is a 336-page bibliography with more than 1,200 entries to studies related to abortion decision-making and complications, including summaries of key research findings to help readers understand the literature and find the most relevant source for more complete information.

The first supplement was published in the fall of 2002. Both supplements, which add about 10 percent to the number of entries in the main volume, are available as free downloads from www.afterabortion.org/news/dea_supp2.html.

The Post-Abortion Epidemic

- **Suicide Epidemic.** After abortion, a woman is seven times more likely to commit suicide.
- **Homicide Epidemic.** It's the leading cause of death among pregnant women, many of whom enrage their partner if they don't abort. Even if they do, they're still at risk: Women are 14 times more likely to be murdered after abortion.
- **Health Epidemic.** Post-abortion complications are rampant.

If you are suffering after abortion, help is available. Visit www.afterabortion.org/healing for information on post-abortion healing programs.

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Ministering to Abortion's "Extended Wounded"

Sydna Masse

The fingers of abortion reach into many lives and cross all generational lines. It affects everyone whether they know it or not. We often forget the extended wounded in the need to help the grieving post-abortive individual. Wounded family and friends don't even know where to go to get help. Some don't understand why they hurt so bad when the aborted baby's parents don't seem to be in pain.

Who Are the Extended Wounded?

Post-abortive women and men are considered directly injured by abortion. *The extended wounded are impossible to count.* They include, but are not limited to, the following demographic groups:

- Grandparents of the aborted child
- Siblings of the aborted child
- Siblings of the post-abortive individual
- Spouses of the post-abortive individual who are not the parent of the aborted child
- Pro-life individuals who work with the abortion-minded individual
- Friends and co-workers
- Youth ministers and pastors
- Medical personnel — doctors, nurses, staff
- And everyone else!

Virtually anyone who is remotely involved with an individual who aborts can suffer adverse effects from the abortion. Related individuals need an outlet for the stress and grief that abortion can bring to their hearts. When they come to you seeking help for someone else, help them to acknowledge and address their own wounds in this loss. Begin by asking them, "Do you realize you've had a loss too?"

The level of extended pain often relates to their involvement in the abortion decision. Those who participated/encouraged an abortion can feel a deeper level of guilt than those who didn't have an influence on the choice. It is heartbreaking to discover the abortion years after the fact and come to grips with the fact that their loved one did not turn to them in their time of need or trust them with their secret.

Listen to Their Pain

You are valuable to others when you *actively* listen to them. Listening gives value back to the person and allows the pain and grief to come out of the hiding places of their hearts. It will also help you identify their feelings of anger, regret, shame, and guilt. *You may never know what to say so don't feel pressured to say anything.* Just do your best to be a friend to them and comfort them.

Share Your Faith

True healing isn't possible without the Lord. Be sure to share about God's true character of love and forgiveness that was given to us when Jesus died on the cross. Understand that even believers can misunderstand God's love!

When people are hurting they are more open to messages of faith when examining their emotions. They want the relief that Jesus can provide to their hearts. Your faith can help them when they are faithless.

Give Them Permission to Grieve

Individuals don't get over grief — they get through it. Lamentations 2:18-19 relays, "The hearts of the people cry out to the Lord. Oh wall of the daughter of

Zion, let your tears flow like a river day and night; give yourself no relief, your eyes no rest. Arise . . . pour out your hearts like water in the presence of the Lord . . . for the lives of your children."

For some reason the extended wounded may not feel like they have a "right" to grieve a child that wasn't their own. It is possible to be so wrapped up in the pain that you cannot grieve. Unexpressed grief can lead to other issues. God created us to cry. He dedicated a whole book of the Bible — Lamentations — to this process. Tears are the body's natural way to rid itself of toxins.

Encourage everyone involved in this pain to cry for the child. It will make a big difference in the beginning of healing to become humble enough to cry. Assure the individual that he or she isn't "going crazy" by being overwhelmed by emotion or tears. As relayed in Isaiah 61:2-3, God has sent you "to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord, and day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all who mourn, to console those who mourn in Zion, to give them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning . . ."

Help Them Identify Their Emotions

Feelings betray us and could determine how our spiritual life is advancing or retreating. Sorrowful emotions put a cloud over our thinking abilities. If these emotions are not identified and surrendered, we can easily become bound to these sentiments.

Encourage the extended wounded to express their "gut level" perceptions to discover which is hurting them the most. Often when anger, guilt, and unforgiveness issues are resolved, the others will follow in short order. Is there pride? Guilt? Sin? Anger? Betrayal? How are these emotions being acted out in everyday life?

We can't bring the baby back, but we can change our attitude and how we view the people involved in the abortion decision. Encourage them to ask God to change bad attitudes and feelings

**The extended wounded
are impossible to count.**

and replace them with grace, mercy, empathy, love, and compassion.

Loving people who hurt us can be very difficult — especially if the offending person isn't repentant. Help them understand that with God's help we can do all things.

Ask Good Questions

Asking good questions will help piece together the broken story of abortion. Questions help the person who is sharing by letting them know you are really listening and that you validate their feelings. They also clarify what you are hearing and clear up misunderstandings. Here are some examples of good questions:

- How did you feel deep inside when you found out about the abortion?
- Do you ever get angry with the post-abortive person now even though you've talked it through with them? How do you express this anger?
- How is your spouse handling this situation? Do these emotions affect you?
- When was the last time you heard God's voice?

By asking questions, you can help them pull out emotions they may not perceive. When a couple is going through the grief of an abortion, one can stifle their emotions while the other weeps openly in pain. Couples can also blame each other.

Always rely on the Holy Spirit's lead in knowing what questions to ask.

Help Them Understand Their Guilt

Psalms 32:3-4 says, "When I kept silent, my bones wasted away through my groaning all day long. For day and night your hand was heavy upon me; my strength was sapped."

Guilt and shame run together in the emotions of an abortion. Parents who forced their child to abort need to realize that they bear a large part of the guilt of the abortion decision.

This dynamic changes for the person who tried to stop the abortion from taking place. A simple question like, "Do you feel guilty?" can help you determine to what extent this is impacting their heart. Confession is a great place to start relieving the burden.

Forgive First

Ephesians 4:22 says, "And be kind to one another, tender hearted, forgiving each, just as God in Christ has also forgiven you."

Everyone needs to understand forgiveness as it relates to God, the post-abortive, and themselves. It could be that the process of forgiving must be accomplished on a daily basis. Some days we struggle more than others to surrender this pain.

Many are furious at the abortion industry for victimizing their loved ones. Someone once said, "Having bitterness, anger, and unforgiveness is like drinking poison and hoping that the other person dies." These emotions don't hurt anyone but ourselves.

Many also have difficulty forgiving themselves. Recognize these emotions as real and help them to understand how important forgiveness is in the plan of God's salvation. Scripture is a great place to start in teaching this principle:

Forgiveness from God

Psalms 86:5
Psalms 103:2-4
Micah 7:18-19
Acts 3:19
Isaiah 1:18
1 John 2:9

Forgiving Others

Romans 14:10
Mark 11:25
Matthew 5:23
Matthew 18:22
Ephesians 4:31-32
Psalms 32:1-17

Give Them a Hope for Their Future

A memorial service provides dignity and importance to the lost person and gives closure to the grieving. *The services allow the focus to shift from the hurting to the missing.* Post-abortion ministries should establish a special service for the extended wounded in your ministry. This time can be powerful for your staff as well as yourself.

Asking good questions will help piece together the broken story of abortion.

The extended wounded should also be allowed to provide a name for the child in the parent's stead. This name can become a "nickname" in the future if another name is given by the baby's parent(s). Planting a tree or bush, releasing a balloon, or writing a poem/song is a great way to memorialize these children.

They Can Help Bring Others to God's Healing

Whenever the extended wounded are in pain, they must know that healing is possible and they have a right to grieve despite the fact that the child wasn't their own. When you share about the pain of abortion, be sure to include them so their pain will be validated as real. God's blessing of healing can start with the extended wounded and migrate to the post-abortive individual and the entire family!

* * *

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Sydna Masse is director of Ramah International post-abortion counseling ministries and co-author of "Her Choice to Heal: Finding Spiritual and Emotional Peace After Abortion."

For Further Reading

- * *Extended Wounded: Ministering to Grandparents*
- * *Her Choice to Heal* program guide
www.ramahinternational.org or 1-866-807-2642
- * *A Time to Heal Bible Study* by Linda Cochrane
703-478-5661



A Memory Should Be . . .

A poem in memory of my grandbaby
by "Karen"

Sometimes . . . in the still of the night
There is a place
Where there should be a memory.
A newborn hand
First steps and things to see.
But always in that memory
Your precious face is hid from me.

Sometimes . . . in the still of the night
In that place where a memory should be
A precious peace comes over me
For I know that Jesus holds my memory.

"As I sought out and received healing from my daughter's abortion, God began to grow my outreach at the pregnancy care center. I have talked to more extended wounded than I had ever imagined. God has used my grandchild to reach out to others who have suffered from abortion. I am much more empathetic with women I counsel with as well.

"God stripped away my preconceived ideas about women who abort. I have worked with women who tell me their mothers would 'freak out' to find out they were pregnant. They justify that abortion is the only answer, and through my grandchild's death, God has used me to challenge that thinking.

"Does God make good come out of bad? Oh, yes, He does — for His name's sake! Now I appreciate Romans 8:28 and understand the unique workings of an almighty God."

New Elliot Institute Resource Kit Now Available Online

Our new resource packet for pro-life groups is now available online! It includes new fact sheets, talking points, and similar resources that can be downloaded and used for public education and similar outreach. The resource kit includes:

- Media Talking Points
- Key Facts About Abortion
- Summaries of Recent Elliot Institute Research
- Physical and Psychological Effects Fact Sheets
- Sample Letters for Legislators and Media
- And more!

Counselors, students, pro-life activists, or anyone interested in learning more about the impact of abortion on women can download these helpful resources free of charge! Plus, by logging on to our web site at www.afterabortion.org, you'll have access to thousands of documents on post-abortion issues and healing. Sign up for our free email newsletter for updates on the latest news and research from the post-abortion field.

In the future, we plan to offer additional resource kits that will be available on the web, and other materials such as a training course on post-abortion complications that will be sent out one lesson a week for those who sign up. Keep an eye on *The Post-Abortion Review* and the e-newsletter for more information about these upcoming materials.

Visit www.afterabortion.org/list/kit to download materials from the resource packet. And visit www.poorchoice.org for free materials from our "Poor Choice" campaign to help raise awareness that abortion is a *poor choice* and women deserve better.

News Briefs

Pennsylvania Man Convicted Under Fetal Homicide Law

A Pennsylvania man has been sentenced to 20 to 60 years for the death of his girlfriend and her unborn child.

Matthew Bullock, 28, was sentenced to serve 20 to 60 years in a secure mental health facility after admitting to police that he strangled Lisa Hargrave during an argument and hid her body in a closet. Pennsylvania is one of more than two dozen states with a fetal homicide law, and a similar bill is pending in Congress.

* * *

South Dakota Man Faces Fetal Homicide Charges

A South Dakota man accused of stabbing his pregnant girlfriend is facing charges for the unborn child's death.

Sundance Medicinehorn Keeble was charged with fetal homicide

under a state law which allows prosecutors to press charges if an unborn child dies as a result of the attack on the mother. Keeble's girlfriend, who survived the assault, was four to five months pregnant.

* * *

Survey: Abortion Clinics Go "Judge Shopping" in Ohio

A survey of juvenile court judges in Ohio found that judges gave permission to teens to have abortions without parental consent in nine out of ten cases.

The survey, which involved the state's largest juvenile court systems, also found that most judicial bypass cases were heard in counties that tend to have more "liberal" judges, suggesting that abortion counselors are steering teens to counties where they are more likely to be approved for abortion.

The Two Doors

Julie Woodley with Matt Woodley

In July 1985, my husband and I paraded through the front doors of Methodist Hospital of St. Louis Park. We came to give birth to a beautiful baby girl, Bonnie Joy.

Six years prior to that, I had quietly slipped into Methodist Hospital through the back door, which is also known as Meadowbrook Women's Clinic. I was single, lonely, and frightened at that time in 1979 when I went to the clinic.

The Story of Two Doors

When I entered through the front door of Methodist Hospital, they insisted that I ride in a wheelchair. The nurse called me "Mrs. Woodley" and wheeled me past a nursery brimming with living, breathing, crying babies. Babies carefully tended and wrapped in pink and blue blankets.

In stark contrast, I entered by the back door at Meadowbrook Women's Clinic. There was no wheelchair. I was given a number for identification and directed to a waiting room after I paid the bill. Anything baby-like was strictly forbidden.

Shortly after I entered by the front door my nurse strapped a monitor on my belly. Her relaxed eyes and gentle touch were her offerings as she assured me, "Don't worry, we don't take any chances with babies." For 20 hours three nurses took turns recording and analyzing a rapid little heartbeat. During prenatal classes I had learned that three weeks after conception, my baby's heart began to pump blood. Brain waves were present at eight weeks and at ten weeks. Bonnie Joy was closing her delicate eyelids, puckering her lips and responding to touch.

In 1979, behind the back door, the baby was treated as an intruder — a formless, featureless blob — and a dangerous one. The attitude was simple and single-minded: let's remove it.

Behind the front door, Jody, my nurse, summoned the doctor to my room to review my charts, papers, and printouts. His eyes didn't quite meet mine when he said that things weren't going according to plan. After 20 hours of labor, the baby was in distress and in a difficult position for delivery. "We need your permission to do an immediate C-section." The doctor sensed our fear and quickly added, "We have the resources to keep both of them safe." The entire staff worked with one thing on their minds: "A mother and baby are in distress; we need to save them."

Behind that back door, a mother and baby were also in distress, but no one came to save us. After the procedure was over I rested in bed at the clinic. A poster taped to the ceiling read in bold, stark letters, "If it weren't for Planned Parenthood where would you be today?" That poster nauseated me more than the abortion. Filled with anger and frustration, I began to weep. "You didn't help me," I thought. "You had the resources but you didn't protect

me or my baby."

Today Bonnie Joy is 15 years old. Despite complications in delivery, my family, society, and Methodist Hospital found resources to save our baby. They spared no expense and employed cutting-edge technology to preserve the tiny life. That's what they do behind the front door.

Less than a thousand feet away, a few doors down and one wing over, tiny lives are quietly and matter-of-factly destroyed. That's what they do behind the back door.

The Third Door

It took a third door to heal my back door wounds. Jesus said, "I am the Door. If anyone enters by Me, he will be saved, and will go in and out and find pasture."

Now I spend my life pointing confused young women to the true door of life and freedom — Jesus Christ. By entering through this third door, we join a radically different community — a fellowship committed to protecting the lives of both mother and baby.

* * *

Julie Woodley has an MA in counseling and is the founder of Restoring the Heart Ministries, which ministers to those struggling with the pain of abortion, sexual abuse, and other forms of damaging or self-destructive behavior. Find out more about Restoring the Heart Ministries by visiting their web site at www.rthm.cc.

Restoring the Heart

Experiencing God's Healing After Brokenness

Julie Woodley shares her story of recovery from childhood abuse, abortion, and sexual addiction in her book *Restoring the Heart: Experiencing Christ's Healing After Brokenness*.

This 68-page booklet is as a resource for those dealing with the pain of a past abortion or other issues related to childhood trauma and sexuality. Julie shares her story honestly and openly, giving hope to others who may be dealing with the wounds of the past and sharing that they too can be brought to healing in Christ.

You can order the book by sending a money order for \$13 to Restoring the Heart Ministries, PO Box 252, Cambridge, MN 55008. Restoring the Heart can be reached at (631) 689-6686 or restoringtheheart@juno.com, or visit www.rthm.cc.

Case Study, *continued from page 8*

thought, “Well, you’re just going to have to live with it.” I did the best I could and took good care of my children. I just wish I could have loved them better.

Eight years ago I began going back to church and I met some people who volunteered at the local pregnancy care center. I attended a post-abortion Bible study at the center where I was able to give my abortion experience totally to God and be forgiven, healed, and restored.

I now lead the post-abortion ministries at the pregnancy center and watch God heal others. I also get to share my story with women who are in crisis pregnancies and struggling with the decision of whether or not to abort. Almost all the women I have talked with decided to carry to term and all of those who did so are so glad they did.

While we were working on the chapter on forgiveness during the Bible study, I went home and turned on the TV and saw the father of my aborted baby (being arrested, of course). For so long I had been afraid of running into him and I felt so much pain when I thought of him and then . . . it was gone! I felt compassion for him and I knew that I had truly forgiven him — and that I was truly healed.

God continues to heal my heart. After my abortion, I was never able to set foot in a maternity unit in my work. Now I am working in the maternity department and am also a lactation consultant.

What the enemy intended for evil, God has used for good. I wish I could go back, but I can’t . . . The good news is that God can take

**“Making Abortion Rare”
Series to Air on EWTN**

Elliot Institute director Dr. David Reardon has completed filming of a six part series called “Making Abortion Rare” that will air on Eternal Word Television Network (EWTN) in January. EWTN is a Catholic cable/satellite network.

The series also features Rachel’s Vineyard founder Dr. Theresa Burke, with whom Reardon co-authored the book “Forbidden Grief: The Unspoken Pain of Abortion.”

“Making Abortion Rare” addresses a three-pronged educational, legislative, and political strategy for ending abortion. Reardon and Burke discuss how raising awareness of abortion risks will help turn the tide in favor of life, and offer practical and compassionate solutions for making abortion not just illegal, but *unthinkable*.

The series is based on Reardon’s book of the same title. The book can be ordered from Acorn Books at 1-888-412-2676. For more information about the book, including a list of chapter titles, visit www.afterabortion.org and click on the resources link.

Check your local schedule for show times.

something awful and use it for His glory. I am not the same, but I am good because of Jesus Christ in my life.

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I was in nursing school and not doing very well. I had decided to quit school and just work as a nursing assistant when I met the father of my baby. I was very careless and foolish. I just wanted to have a good time and never thought a thing about the consequences. Needless to say, I became pregnant.

I had already been very rebellious (doing drugs and drinking) and had become sexually active at age fifteen. I came from an alcoholic family.

I thought the father of my baby cared about me but I was mistaken. When I told him I was pregnant he insisted that I have an abortion and that really, it was my problem, not his. I never told anyone else and was so afraid of the prospect of being in this situation alone and afraid to tell my parents that I blindly got the number for the clinic and made the appointment.

Very little information was given at the clinic. They had a video but I didn't pay attention to it. I was so numb. Everyone in the room just stared at each other — no one spoke. During the abortion, I felt deep remorse, shame, guilt, and sorrow. I felt a lot of physical pain but the emotional pain was worse. I knew what I was doing. I wanted to scream and jump off the table but I kept feeling like it was too late; like I had no choice.

My mother did find out afterwards because I ended up with a uterine infection as a direct result of the abortion. She came to the hospital and somehow she knew what I had done. The worst part was realizing that she would have helped me and would not have disowned me. I felt really bad about myself after that and the drugs and drinking and promiscuity got even worse.

I got pregnant again only a month later (maybe two). I could not

believe that I did it again and the thought of having another abortion just about sent me over the edge. Two days after I found out I was pregnant I miscarried — I was hemorrhaging and had to have an emergency D&C.

After that I went back to school to try to forget about everything and get my life straightened out. I met my husband and was married a year later. The only thing I cared about was having a baby and I made sure I got pregnant six months after we were married. My husband did not want to have a baby yet and it took a long time for him to forgive me for manipulating him and making sure I got pregnant.

I thought my son would be the healing for me . . . but he wasn't. I remember when they brought him to me, I was shocked by my absence of emotion. I felt nothing for him and it scared me so bad.

I did not dare tell anyone because I thought they would put me on the psych floor. I tried to fake my way through it but it kept getting worse and I sank into a deep depression. I admitted myself to the psych unit when my son was nine months old.

They drugged me and told me I was manic depressive. I was drugged for a long time and was going to a psychiatrist and psychologist and not one person ever put it together with the abortion. But I didn't either; I thought it was stress, inability to cope . . . whatever.

At that point I stopped taking the meds and went on with life. I would have bad moments, but I asked God to forgive me and I

I thought my baby's father cared about me but I was mistaken.

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