



Judith Evans

TRYING TO SURVIVE

My childhood was brutal. I was abandoned by my father when I was two-and-a-half. Then when he reappeared in my life again at the age of eight, it became worse. I survived incest, starvation, and beatings.

I clung to life. It was my two abortions that nearly destroyed me.

When I became pregnant for the fifth time in seven years, my doctor asked me if I really thought I should "continue the pregnancy." Abortion had never occurred to me until he suggested it.

My husband said, "It's your decision. Do what you want," and left for work. Naively, I began looking for women who had had abortions. But I couldn't find anyone who would admit to having had one. I asked my doctor and he said, "It only takes a few minutes and it's over."

Having already had four babies, I am now appalled at how ignorant I was about fetal development. My doctor said the baby—at six-and-a-half weeks—was "just a blob," and I believed him. Afterwards, before I even got home, I began to cry. It didn't help.

When finally I stopped crying on the outside, I kept crying on the inside. I felt so dirty and alone. Something deep inside of me froze, I think. I dreamed a lot about snow and ice, as well as about babies. I felt cheated, betrayed, and manipulated.

I went to counseling and the psychologist said, "forgive yourself," and "let yourself go on."

She didn't say how.

Two years later, I had another abortion as an act of self-punishment. I wanted to die, or at least go crazy so I could escape the torment, the nightmares about babies, the self-disgust and the degradation I felt.

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I wasn't told that there could be complications which wouldn't be discovered for years. I wasn't told that the strength of the suction machine is such that it can turn a uterus nearly completely inside out. I had to have an early hysterectomy because of it.

I wasn't told that after having an abortion an unbelievable self-hatred would consume me and lead to distrust, suspicion, and the utter inability to care about myself or others—including my four children. I wasn't told that hearing babies cry would trigger such anger that I wouldn't be able to be around babies at all.

I wasn't told that it would become impossible to look at my own eyes in a mirror. Or that my confidence would be so shaken that I would become unable to make important life decisions. My self-hatred kept me from pursuing my goal of becoming a registered nurse. I didn't think I deserved success.

I wasn't told that I would come to *hate* all those who advised me to have my abortions, because they were my accomplices in the murders of my babies. I wasn't told that having an abortion with my husband's consent would end up causing

me to *hate* the father of my children, or that I would be unable to sustain ANY satisfying, lasting, fulfilling relationships.

I wasn't told that I could become suicidal in the fall of every year, when both of my babies should have been born.

I wasn't told that on the birthdays of my living children, I would remember the two for whom I would never make a birthday cake, or that on Mother's Day I would remember the two who would never send me a card, or that every Christmas I would remember the two for whom there would be no presents.

My abortions were supposed to be a "quick-fix" for my problems, but they didn't tell me there is no "quick-fix" for regrets.

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I went to a psychiatric hospital and they gave me shock treatments. They didn't help. The nightmares continued.

I became a workaholic. Work didn't help.

I became a compulsive eater. Food didn't help.

I became an anorexic as another form of self-punishment. That came close to killing me; I had two strokes.

I tried alcohol. It only helped temporarily. The torment would still be there when I woke up. That effort to escape the pain only lasted two months.

Three things finally helped. First, I participated in a ten-week post-abortion healing program. It was incredible! It did so much for me.

Second, I took the training to help lead others through the post-abortion healing program. Every time I lead a group, I witness the miracle of God's mercy restoring the joy to these women's lives. That has helped me.

Third, in September of 1997 I received a phone call at two in the morning. A girl in Texas had seen a brochure containing my testimony. She was scheduled to have an abortion at three o'clock the next day. We talked until five in the morning. Later, she called back and said she had decided against having the abortion.

Finally, I knew with certainty that God had used my experience to save someone else from making my terrible mistake. That helped a lot.

Healing does not mean forgetting. I will always regret what I did, and I will always miss my babies until the day I am with them in Heaven. But I know now that God can use every part of our lives, even the worst parts, to allow us to help others.

Praise the Lord. He is kind and merciful. He has done wondrous things in my life.

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Judith welcomes correspondence from anyone who has had an abortion or is considering an abortion. She can be reached at talrcrft@kans.com.

AFTER AN ABORTION: STEPS TOWARD HEALING



1. Recognize that *you are not alone*. Others have been through the same experience and the same trials. Their experiences and understanding can help you. They *want* to help you, just as you may want to help others after you have finished going through the healing process. (See "*Don't Go It Alone*," page 12)

2. Recognize that the road to full recovery will take time and effort. God's forgiveness can be had instantly. But sorting out your feelings and overcoming the ever-present temptation to give in to despair and doubt—these take time.

3. Recognize that it is normal and good to mourn the loss of a loved one. Just as mourning the loss of a parent or spouse takes time, so does mourning the loss of an aborted child. In the case of abortion, the mourning process is often cut short and never completed because of denial or feelings of guilt.

Courageously allow the mourning process to get back on track. Accept your grief as normal rather than something which must be covered up or pushed away. Recognize that the pain of your loss will fade as your healing progresses.

4. Admit your personal responsibility but also recognize that others, too, were involved. Pray for the strength to forgive both yourself and everyone else who either encouraged you to have the abortion or failed to help you avoid it.

5. Give your child over to the care of God. Know that he or she is loved, happy, and well cared for in heaven. Do not try to hold onto your child by prolonging your grief. Hold onto him or her by remembering your child's happiness in heaven.

6. Forgive others. Recognize that they, too, acted out of ignorance, fear, or petty human selfishness. If possible, let them know that you forgive them.

7. Forgive yourself. Remember that because your child lives in the love and mercy of God, he or she is beyond earthly malice. Your son or daughter does not resent or condemn you. Instead, your child, like God, *wants* you to be healed and restored to the fullness of joy and happiness.



www.afterabortion.org