

A New Beginning

You are hurting. Maybe it's a vague ache deep inside. Or maybe your abortion left you emotionally drained and distraught. You are not alone. Many women are suffering as you are, yet some of us have been able to work through our heartache.

Deeply buried emotions may erupt when you are the most vulnerable. The exact way you experience grief over the loss of your child will be unique to you. The point of crisis occurs most often between 2 and 5 years after the abortion. Yet, for some, the crisis is immediate, *"I made the choice, but as soon as I had the abortion I suddenly just felt like an instant regret."* And for some it occurs 20 or 30 years later.

Don't Trivialize Your Grief

Your grief is a healthy sign - a sign that you are facing realities. The first step toward being healed of emotional wounds is to admit that they exist and admit where they come from (*remove the power of the secret*). You have a right to grieve. If you lost your child in an accident or miscarriage, everyone would expect you to grieve. *"It's hard to verbalize but I also know that by getting it out, a weight is being lifted. And the silence is broken. And secrets have power. And once I was able to tell my secret, all that shame just lifted away."*

Don't Be Too Hard On Yourself

When you become pregnant, your body undergoes changes. Your body and your mind prepare for the birth. You made a very important decision at a time when changes in your body made decision making very difficult. Others around you probably helped influence your decision. Your relatives, your superiors, or your best friend might have all suggested that abortion was truly an acceptable solution to your very difficult situation.

Counselors at a family planning clinic may not have given you enough information for you to make an informed decision. It is likely that you did not make your decision based on adequate information.

Perhaps you thought abortion was "right" because it is legal. It's easy to see why you might not have realized how wrong abortion is. Your decision was tragic. It was regrettable. But, it may have seemed like the only possible solution at the time.

Forgive Others

The second step in healing is forgiveness. It is natural to be angry with people close to you who should have been supportive at a difficult time in your life. But anger only develops into rage or bitterness. You cannot heal emotionally while allowing those destructive feelings to continue.

Look to God

Many women have said that they feel unworthy of God's forgiveness. They feel that they are under God's judgment.

Possible Symptoms of Abortion Trauma

- low self-esteem
- anger, guilt
- anxiety
- depression
- sleep disorders
- drug and alcohol abuse
- promiscuity
- hatred of yourself or of men
- a need to compensate for the loss of your child
- extreme mood swings
- an inability to sustain intimate relationships
- unexpected emotional outbursts
- suicidal feelings

But God says: **“FOR GOD SO LOVED THE WORLD, THAT HE GAVE HIS ONLY BEGOTTEN SON, THAT WHOSOEVER BELIEVETH IN HIM SHOULD NOT PERISH, BUT HAVE EVERLASTING LIFE”.** (John 3:16)

Abortion is not just a misguided act or unfortunate decision. It is sin. Confess it to God as sin, and **“He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness”.** (I John 1:9)

God is not angry. He knows all about your mistake. His Son, Jesus, has already given His life to pay for your sin and guilt. God stands with His arms outstretched, longing to soothe your hurting heart and heal your wounds.

Understand the Grieving Process

The stages outlined below are general observations and will not necessarily be identical to your journey. You will grieve in your own way and at your own pace. Here are the stages of grief that you may experience.

- **RELIEF** – First, you may feel relieved after your abortion.
- **DENIAL AND RATIONALIZATION** – Then, somehow, that relief fades and you become troubled. This feeling is quickly covered over by not admitting what has happened. You make up reasons why you shouldn't feel troubled: “It was something I had to do.” “It was just a blob of tissue.” “It's legal, so it was okay.” These tactics rob you of the opportunity to be healed through grieving.
- **REALIZATION AND SHOCK** – Now you begin to realize what really happened. It can be overwhelming and frightening. With a sense of bewilderment you may have said, “I killed my baby”. With this knowledge you may go back to the denial stage or you could move into the next and most painful part of the grieving process.
- **ANGER AND DEPRESSION** - The full force of the abortion hits you. You feel angry, betrayed, grief stricken, or depressed. Thoughts of suicide may tug at you. Life may seem hopeless at times. Unexplainable rage, guilt, remorse or self-hatred may overwhelm you. You may suffer from insomnia, nightmares and flashbacks. You may drink, do drugs, or indulge in casual sex hoping to fill the emptiness inside. You regret your abortion and would give anything to undo it. You think about your baby often. Now is a good time to seek God, and talk to an understanding minister, counselor or friend.
- **ACCEPTANCE AND SURRENDER** - For your healing to be complete, you must seek and accept forgiveness for yourself. With God's help you need to forgive others who had a part in the abortion. You need to surrender your anger, bitterness and self-hatred to Christ each day.
- **HOPE AND SUBSTITUTION** - As you stand before your Maker, you must realize that it is His grace and His grace alone that has brought you this far. Don't take credit for your healing. Christ does not call you out of your sin and heal your life so that you can enjoy the admiration of others. It is now your responsibility to serve the needs of others with the same compassion and grace that has been shown to you by the Lord. Your self-esteem returns when you go beyond focusing on yourself and into serving others.

The journey from grief to healing, is a long, painful process. It can also be a time of growth, maturing, and self-evaluation. By admitting and surrendering your feelings to God you will find release. Undoubtedly you will always remember the child you never knew here on earth. The memory is not wiped away with the healing - only the tears.

“... if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things become new.” (II Corinthians 5:17). God loves you!

Portions of this pamphlet were taken from the writings of Patty McKinney, Jill Lessard, and Terry Selby. We wish to express our appreciation to them.

Resources

1. <https://www.heartbeatinternational.org/forced-abortion-in-america>
2. <https://concernedwomen.org/10-principles-about-healing-from-abortion/>
3. <https://www.afterabortion.org/stepheal.html>