

# WHAT TO SAY WHEN

THE COMPLETE NEW GUIDE  
TO DISCUSSING ABORTION

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How to Change Minds and Convert Hearts  
in a Brave New World

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## INTRODUCTION

# The Landscape Has Changed

*If anything has ever made me want  
to eat an aborted fetus, it's this law.*

— Actress Sarah Silverman responding to a pro-life law

A group of PhD-level scientists on a panel at Texas A&M University awaited questions from students. They were all experts in their respective fields, and all volunteered to be on the panel for an open discussion.

The topic was abortion.

One male geneticist wandered outside of his field and claimed that women should have an abortion if they want. A student raised his hand and asked a question:

*Student:* “Doctor, your work and research are so impressive and known to everyone in this room. Would you say that from your expertise, our DNA and genetic makeup are all there from the moment of conception?”

*Geneticist:* “Yes, that is clear from science.”

*Student:* “So once conception occurs, we have a unique, unrepeatable human being.”

*Geneticist:* “Yes, correct.”

*Student:* “It just seems inconsistent for you as a scientist to prove life begins in the womb at

conception and yet believe we can take that life through abortion.”

*Geneticist:* “Well, I can’t let my professional scientific research influence someone’s belief about human life.”

The landscape on abortion has indeed changed. Gone are the days of abortion being viewed as a matter of religion (pro-life) versus freedom (pro-choice). It is now an issue of science (pro-life) versus emotion (pro-choice).

It is easy to study up or prepare for an academic abortion panel discussion like the one I (Shawn) witnessed as a student at Texas A&M. It is more difficult, and intimidating, to discuss abortion when it comes up in our daily lives. It always seems to be when we are busy with 101 other things we must do when, suddenly, the most crucial issue of our generation (and every generation after us) pops up out of the blue in conversation. We’ve been in the pro-life movement for a combined thirty-five years and have had thousands of conversations on abortion in various and occasionally comical settings. We know abortion comes up when you least expect it, and this book will help you calmly defend the most dehumanized humans in our world today in a simple and effective manner.

Much like the abortion issue, this book is easy and uncomplicated. You don’t need any special insights or wisdom to be pro-life. Being pro-life is the most basic intellectual position on earth, and our ancestors (good and evil alike) couldn’t imagine any other position. Nothing is more unnatural than abortion, and no common surgery is anywhere near as controversial, even fifty years after legalization. No other issue in the world is like abortion, and yet it occurs 73 million times worldwide every year.<sup>1</sup>

The ongoing controversy on the news, in politics, or at the Thanksgiving dinner table stems from the fact that we have not ultimately “gotten over” this fifteen-minute surgery. Abortion still troubles us when it comes up in everyday conversation, political debates, and sermons. This discomfort we have about abortion isn’t because we have some innate desire to oppress women, but because we are inherently humane.

Life is easy to defend because abortion can only be justified by rejecting science, reason, and God (if you think He matters). That’s why it is not bold for us to say that defending life is easy from an intellectual standpoint. In our desire to be respectful, we have given far too much intellectual credibility to abortion supporters’ arguments.

But it is disrespectful to give credence to the defense of a barbaric procedure that kills an innocent person. We never give any credibility or respect to any other form of child abuse. Our pro-life convictions must come with confidence. Respecting someone doesn’t mean giving his dilapidated view of human life credibility.

We must fight the temptation to think that love is possible without truth.

Just as important, we must fight the temptation to speak the truth without love, which only endangers the unborn children we are attempting to defend. Mother Teresa is not the only person in the world who can boldly speak up for the unborn to the most powerful in our world and still be viewed as a loving and caring person. You and I can do it too!

### **The Old Stereotypes Are Gone**

As the abortion debate landscape has changed, many stereotypes have been annihilated by data from decades of legal abortion.

Abortion is not a battle between women and men. (After all, it was an all-male Supreme Court that legalized abortion.) Nor is it a fight between religion and freedom or the church versus the state. Gone is the stereotype of religious people as Pharisees who are blind to science as they force their morality on people. Now, it's pro-life Christians who appeal to science on behalf of unborn children.

The stereotype that abortion empowers women to be free has collapsed as well. Five decades of post-abortive women sharing their regret have proven that women are not victims of the pro-life movement; they are the leaders of it.

Any notion that abortion is legitimate medicine and a source of pride for the medical field has been exposed as a sick joke. Abortion providers are pariahs in their fields. Unlike oncology, cardiovascular care, orthopedics, pediatrics, or obstetrics, abortion is never something a hospital or medical school brags about being known for.

But it's not only abortion supporters' stereotypes that have been dismantled. Some pro-life stereotypes have been shot down too. Through the testimonies of former abortion workers, we know now that all abortion staffers are not on a mission to kill as many babies as possible. Some are, but many believe they are helping women. Tragically, their misguided intentions can take a lifetime to recover from. The exodus of abortion workers out of the abortion industry started with Dr. Bernard Nathanson and grows every year.

The point isn't just that abortion workers sometimes convert to being pro-life; it is that they convert *often*. Doctors, nurses, and other medical personnel do not stop believing in knee surgeries or wisdom-teeth removals and speak out against their industry. But many thousands of abortion workers have lost faith in their line of work, left their jobs, and are now recognized for their courage.

### ***New Stereotypes for Abortion Opponents***

Socrates said, “Know thyself.” It’s good advice. As pro-lifers, we all need to know how we are perceived and how others perceive themselves.

Abortion supporters often paint pro-lifers as:

- Christian bigots
- hateful toward gays
- having no experience with abortion
- hateful toward poor people
- sexist
- racist
- living in the Stone Age
- brainwashed
- supportive of the death penalty
- in favor of “forced birth” (that’s a thing now, and we will cover it)
- wanting to lock up women who have abortions
- wanting to lock up doctors who do abortions
- hypocrites
- uncaring toward children after birth
- intolerant
- judgmental
- Republican

### ***New Stereotypes for Abortion Supporters***

Abortion advocates often understand themselves as:

- open-minded
- LGBT-friendly
- enlightened
- tolerant
- pro-equality

- compassionate toward minorities
- educated
- Democrat

It doesn't matter whether you agree or disagree with these stereotypes. It doesn't matter whether you find them amusing or they offend you. We pro-lifers need to know these stereotypes exist so that we are not caught off guard when they are dropped on us. And we need to be prepared not to walk into a trap and get sidetracked into abandoning our conversation on abortion for a conversation on homosexuality, politics, the death penalty, or any number of other issues.

When we allow ourselves to be sidetracked, we play into abortion supporters' hands. Most abortion advocates love to go off topic because abortion is indefensible. Don't let them steer you off course, surprise you, or jar you when they label you. Labeling is expected, and we respond by staying the course and keeping the discussion focused on abortion.

### **The Heart Is the Key to the Mind**

As we enter this book, know that this epic battle for life is ultimately won on our knees. Our prayers and fasting are our most powerful resources in this struggle.

Yes, it's true that you don't need to believe in God to be against abortion. Any reasonable person should be against abortion. Many atheists and agnostics are pro-life, and they should be. The intellectual case for abortion is easy to refute, and the beauty of life is easy to embrace.

But the abortion crisis goes much deeper. Many things have to go wrong for a woman to feel she has no other choice than to pay a doctor, a healer, to violently end the life of her

baby. Even more must go wrong for that doctor to do it and for the state to approve of it—and to help pay for it.

This is a spiritual battle. Individuals and governments taking it upon themselves to determine whether a person is worthy to live forces us to ask, and answer, the most basic and essential questions of human life: What is it? Where does it come from? And why is it sacred?

Ultimately, abortion survives not because its supporters make a strong case but because pain, confusion, and sometimes anger fuel a relentless push to keep it legal. That's why our hearts and the tone we use when discussing abortion are critical.

We don't know a single former abortion worker who was 100 percent pro-life when she walked out of her facility and asked for help leaving her job. But after leaving their jobs, these former workers' hearts were touched by the Christian charity they witnessed in pro-life prayer warriors. Love softens hearts and leads even the staunchest abortion supporters to the realization that life in the womb is real, inherently precious, and deserving of protection.

The landscape has indeed changed, and the stakes have never been higher. Let us guard our hearts, sharpen our minds, and always proceed with love as we defend the most innocent among us. Let's get started!





## CHAPTER 1

# Go on Offense

*Love follows knowledge.*

— St. Thomas Aquinas

**H**eated arguments never change hearts and minds. But calm, compassionate, true arguments do.

Contentious arguments easily stray off topic, making it difficult to articulate a commonsense case for life to those who have never heard one before or who adamantly reject any restriction on abortion.

While abortion is an emotional topic, take extra care to make sure your conversations on abortion don't become free-for-alls. Instead, stick to the basics: we live in a society that has legally and scientifically dehumanized an entire segment of our population—unborn children—in order to destroy and discard them for any reason, or for no reason at all.

Life doesn't need defending, but abortion does. Remember these three points to keep your abortion discussion on track *no matter what*:

### **Point 1: Keep Your Cool, but Don't Be a Wimp**

We live in a world of two extremes when abortion comes up in conversation.

On one hand, we are tempted to remain silent out of fear of offending someone. In today's world, if you so much as hint that objective truth exists, you are dismissed as a bigoted, insensitive racist forcing your outdated beliefs on everyone around you. "Cancel culture" leads many to treat moral issues so delicately that we walk on eggshells, afraid to say anything substantive to anyone about any issue of significance.

Cancel culture has taken over media, corporate America, and pop culture to an extent nobody would have imagined only a few years ago.

So what?

Cancel culture is outside our control. We can't cower in fear and make half-hearted comments about abortion (like "it's a tough issue" or "everyone has their own view") out of fear we may be accused of being insensitive. To avoid speaking the truth about abortion is to cancel ourselves, and that's a greater tragedy than being canceled or censored by others.

Failing to stand up for unborn children isn't just cowardly; it has deadly consequences. We have heard countless stories of regret from people who passively opposed abortion—and then passively supported a friend or family member's decision to have an abortion. After the abortion is completed, there is no going back. Those people who had an opportunity to encourage an abortion-bound mom to choose life share the burden and the guilt of *not having said anything*.

On the other hand, some pro-lifers aggressively look for opportunities to boisterously (and sometimes obnoxiously) "declare the truth whether people like it or not because we will neither be silent nor stand by as the innocent are slaughtered."

We don't want to deliberately offend others in a misguided attempt to shock them into accepting the truth. We've certainly met some passionate pro-life people who come off as know-it-alls. They lose their credibility and their audience five

seconds after they open their mouths. As we say in the South, “Bless their hearts.”

Both approaches—passive nice guy and in-your-face truth teller—are disrespectful to those who support abortion and to those who are being aborted. Instead, a good measuring stick for evaluating your conversation with an abortion advocate is to ask yourself whether you made it clear you oppose abortion and whether you challenged the abortion supporter to reevaluate his or her position on the issue.

Reconciling truth with sensitivity is easier said than done and forever will remain a struggle for all of us. But that doesn’t mean speaking the truth in love is impossible. It can be done and needs to be done. All the abortion workers we have talked to and have helped leave the abortion industry knew we were against abortion before, during, and after their conversions. They also knew we came from a place of love and sincerity.

Truth and love are not in two opposing camps. When bound together honestly, truth and love convert more hearts on more issues than any other approach. We can articulate the pro-life position without acting like self-righteous jerks. And we can do so with confidence.

## **Point 2: Don’t Let Abortion Advocates Distract You**

The only intellectually honest defense of abortion is the Machiavellian “might makes right” philosophy in which brute strength is the only measure of morality. This mindset is responsible for every holocaust, every genocide, and every human atrocity in history.

When discussing abortion, we must be disciplined and respectful. But respecting an abortion advocate does *not* require us to give credibility to his or her arguments.

Nor does respecting abortion advocates require us to address the many ridiculous hypothetical arguments used to justify killing an innocent baby. One famous argument compares an unborn baby to a kidnapper experiencing renal failure who takes you hostage to steal your kidney function.<sup>1</sup>

Another bizarre hypothetical situation concerns conjoined twins. After the twins are born, one becomes sick with a deadly virus. The other twin will become infected shortly thereafter, and both will die. Shouldn't we kill the twin with the deadly virus to save the other before he becomes infected? After all, the twin with the virus will die either way.

Abortion advocates in academia love to sit around and argue this garbage.

Don't take the bait. Getting into the weeds of hypothetical situations that rarely, if ever, take place is a waste of time and not the point of this book. This book is for reality. Instead, if someone in your life tries to justify abortion by appealing to hostage-taking kidney patients or conjoined twins, take control of the conversation by calling out his disingenuity.

*What? Why do you need bizarre hypothetical scenarios to justify the most common surgical procedure in the world, which has been legal in the United States for fifty years and happens 73 million times worldwide every year? I can legally take my wife in to have a late-term abortion the day before my daughter's due date. Why do you feel the need to justify that with some ridiculous hypothetical?*

In other words, don't get sucked into an argument that ignores reality. Can some dreamed-up hypothetical kidney disease argument spare a woman walking into Planned Parenthood right now decades of physical, emotional, and spiritual suffering?

Abortion advocates are often detached from the reality of abortion and the real scenarios that lead to abortion. We are

not. Don't allow them to live in a fantasy world. Instead of addressing their self-serving hypotheticals, stay on topic and stick to the matter at hand: abortion kills an innocent child.

The Irish are known for being calm in hostile scenarios and hostile in calm scenarios. It is what led Sigmund Freud to say, "This is one race of people for whom psychoanalysis is of no use whatsoever." Try as you might, you can't rope an Irishman into an argument unless, of course, there is nothing to argue over. There is great value in refusing to engage abortion supporters on every absurd argument they throw at you. Dismissing the silliness allows you to keep first things first when giving a voice to those who have none but ours.

### **Point 3: Make Abortion Supporters Play Defense**

"How do I defend life?"

"What do I say if . . . ?"

"How can I reach a person if they say . . . ?"

We've been asked these questions, and others like them, repeatedly. They're important questions and the reason for this book. But these questions assume that the burden of proof is on pro-lifers. Abortion supporters demand that *we* provide an explanation for our pro-life stance.

The opposite is true. Life needs no defense. Defending life is always the default position. You don't see cardiologists, oncologists, and trauma surgeons asked to justify their efforts to protect human life. Neither should pro-lifers be scrutinized for saving lives.

Instead, those who advocate killing and dismembering unborn children should be the ones on the hot seat, forced to justify their radical agenda.

Surgery and medication are meant to preserve or enhance life. Patients know that medical staff have invested years into

training and education that will help *heal* them. If a doctor ends up killing a patient, he will be sued for malpractice—except for abortion.

Abortion turns health care on its head. Abortion is the only surgery on earth you are not supposed to survive. The abortion pill is the only pharmaceutical on the planet meant to kill a patient who didn't ask for it.

Think about it: if a baby survives an abortion, it means the doctor did something *wrong*.

Many politicians advocate, sometimes successfully, to deny health care to a baby girl who survived an abortion. That baby girl's crime was that she survived the arranged and negotiated taking of her life. Instead of celebrating that she survived the surgery designed to kill her, abortion doctors leave her on the table to die alone.

And still, abortion advocates take it for granted that you owe them an explanation for your pro-life views. It's time to turn the tables by going on offense and demanding an explanation for why it could ever be OK to kill a defenseless baby.

How do we go on offense? Ask questions that make abortion advocates answer for the grisly reality of abortion. Most people prefer talking to listening, so questions demonstrate respect for the person with whom you're debating abortion and creates a space for a fruitful dialogue.

Many well-intentioned abortion advocates have never thought much about what abortion actually is. We, too, often think they have, but more often than not, they haven't. This applies even to some abortion workers. They have merely bought into vague euphemisms and slogans like "choice," "reproductive rights," and "privacy."

Many ill-intentioned abortion supporters, the coldest of the cold, don't care that it's a baby, see us as the enemy, and

want abortion on demand—no restrictions and paid for by the government.

Both groups become vulnerable when you ask questions and then respectfully listen to their answers. Ask four or five questions to get the abortion supporter thinking before you reveal your own position. The more an abortion supporter talks early on in your conversation, the better. No matter what, do not interrupt or correct the person you're talking to.

Your questions shift the burden and put the pressure on the abortion supporter. You no longer have to be an encyclopedia of medical facts and abortion statistics. You might not need to say much at all as abortion advocates sometimes recognize the depravity and insanity of their answers to your questions.

Be confident because your position is the one that's true. Don't forget it.

What questions should you ask?

It depends how abortion came up in conversation. The following questions come in no specific order and have helped disarm abortion supporters ranging from strangers on the street to Planned Parenthood employees. Some are repetitive but worded in different ways; that is intentional:

- What is an abortion?
- Why do you support abortion?
- When are you comfortable with a baby being aborted?  
Is there a point in pregnancy when you would oppose abortion?
- Many people feel uncomfortable with a clearly pregnant woman at twenty-five weeks or thirty-five weeks of pregnancy having an abortion. What is your cutoff line for when a baby should not be aborted?



- Is your support for abortion (or any restrictions on abortion that you favor) based on science or more of a “gut” feeling?
- Do you think that the human dignity of babies in the womb increases over time?
- Are babies to you more valuable at twenty-five weeks than twelve weeks?
- Since abortion was legalized in 1973, do you ever feel like the science that supported legalizing it has become outdated?
- How do they actually do an abortion?
- As technology and science advance, medical journals report that babies can survive outside the womb at earlier and earlier points in pregnancy. Abortion laws have adjusted accordingly. Are you OK with doing surgery on a twenty-two-week-old viable baby in the womb to improve his life but aborting a baby girl in the womb at the same age?
- Is the source of our human dignity the wishes our parents have for us?
- Do you believe that babies who are born into poverty are less valuable than babies born into wealth?
- Do you think that the actions of our parents—good or bad—make us any more or less valuable than people born with different parents?
- Do you feel that if a woman really wants an abortion but the baby survives and is born alive that the medical team, who attempted to abort the baby, should provide the newborn with medical care?
- Should baby girls and boys who survive abortion attempts get care if they cannot breathe on their own?

- Do you think infanticide is ever justified?
- Does everyone really deserve a chance at life, or can circumstances change that?
- Do you think babies in the womb with disabilities are stronger candidates for abortion?
- Should parents who find out their baby is disabled have priority access to abortion?
- Do you believe we get our human dignity at birth?
- Black Americans only make up around 13 percent of the population, but they make up 38 percent of all abortions. Do you think that is good or bad?
- Should corporate America use its power and wealth to help abort more babies in poverty-stricken countries in Africa?
- Do you think it is elitist or offensive to tell family-oriented cultures outside of the United States that they should not have children?
- Do you think there should be more medical alternatives for women who choose not to have an abortion?
- As you listen patiently, sprinkle in, “Explain what you mean by that.”

Notice these questions are not political or focused on abortion providers. They are aimed at the big-picture concept that drives abortion: might makes right. Most abortion advocates will not admit to supporting this mentality, but millions support it indirectly through their support for killing the most vulnerable members of the human family.

These questions will lead to the topics we equip you to handle in this book, including rape, the humanity of the unborn child, Planned Parenthood, politics, and many more.

### **What to Say to Go on Offense**

1. Make the case for life courageously but politely; gently but firmly. Respect and love abortion supporters without giving credibility to their arguments.
2. Stay on topic and remain grounded in reality. Don't entertain absurd hypothetical situations.
3. Ask at least four questions, listen, respond, and ask at least four more questions to get the abortion supporter to actually think about his position.



## CHAPTER 6

# Rape

*Love can accomplish all things. Things that are most impossible become easy where love is at work.*

— St. Therese of Lisieux

Rape is the most difficult and emotional part of the abortion debate.

In almost any abortion conversation—at work, around a dinner table, or in politics—rape quickly takes center stage. Abortion advocates use rape to justify *all* abortions. And they've been quite successful convincing politicians, women, pastors, and even people who identify as pro-life to support abortion in the case of rape.

We have found that pro-lifers fear no topic more than rape. Although they are against aborting babies conceived in any situation, they feel ill equipped and uncomfortable defending the pro-life position when abortion supporters present them with “hard cases” (which almost always involves a violent criminal who raped a teenage girl, and she needs legal abortion as an option).

Abortion supporters turn to the rape argument because it puts them in a seemingly perfect position. They portray abortion opponents as siding with rapists against innocent women. Nearly every government in the world has a rape exception

because governments never want to be on the side of violent criminals.

Rape cases make up about 1 percent of all abortions each year. However, it would be a mistake to dismiss abortions that follow rape simply because they are relatively rare. If you or a loved one are the victim of sexual assault, that “rare” case means everything to you. A key part of recognizing and defending the dignity of rape victims is protecting them from further violence in the form of abortion.

Remember the following truths when rape comes up in an abortion conversation:

### **Point 1: Rape Is a Terrible Crime, and the Rapist Is a Criminal**

Sometimes pro-life people skip over the crime and harsh reality of rape to start arguing for the humanity of the baby. Remember, though, the woman is a living victim. We need to acknowledge that early in the conversation both in our tone and in our words.

Affirm that the man is the guilty party and should be in the penitentiary. He is the criminal, and the victim is innocent. *She did nothing wrong.* It is critical to say this because sometimes the person defending abortion in cases of rape is a victim of rape herself, and victims sometimes blame themselves.

Clearly pointing out that the guilty party is the rapist (who deserves to go to prison) affirms the tragedy of rape and is a crucial part of the pro-life answer.

### **Point 2: Abortion Supporters Believe a Heartfelt Myth—Abortion Removes Rape**

Abortion supporters genuinely believe that abortion will help rape victims move on with their lives. They see abortion as

necessary to give an ounce of consolation to the evil crime that now leaves the victim pregnant against her will. They might view you as disconnected or heartless for not understanding this harsh reality.

### **Point 3: When It Comes to Rape, Abortion Supporters Will Understandably Argue with Passion and Emotion**

When rape and abortion come up, know that abortion supporters will argue passionately and emotionally (most likely as soon as you say that you don't support abortion even in cases of rape). When dramatic statements and accusations about your intentions are made, endure them in loving silence, be kind, and steer the conversation toward the real people involved in the tragedy of rape: the rapist, the victim, and the baby.

#### ***The Rapist***

Rapists deserve to go to a penitentiary. Or maybe to meet Sonny from *The Godfather*, who smashed his brother-in-law's head with a trashcan lid after he found out the brother-in-law was beating his sister. Obviously, we're not encouraging that, but the scene accurately shows how most people feel about men who abuse women. The point is, no one is on the side of the rapist. Casually skipping over the crime he committed is irresponsible when defending the unborn.

*What to say:* "The rapist should go to prison."

#### ***The Victim***

The woman is the victim and our primary focus when discussing rape and abortion. Abortion advocates assume that we couldn't care less about the victims of rape and only care about unborn children. The exact opposite is true. We love

rape victims so much we want to give them real options, so they don't fall into the temptation to try to correct evil with more evil.

*What to say:* “The abortion will not remove the pain of the rape.”

### ***The Baby***

When a woman becomes pregnant after rape, we need to remind abortion supporters that a baby does exist. If the baby didn't exist, abortion would not be an option. Without a baby, there can be no abortion. The question remains, “What do we do with a baby conceived in rape?”

The baby is not responsible and should not be punished for the circumstances of her conception. No child would choose to be conceived in rape.

We do not gradually gain dignity or value during gestation. We're not mutual funds or stocks that get more valuable over time. We come into existence at conception and then grow.

Likewise, our dignity is not based on the circumstances of our conception. If your parents are healthy, Harvard-educated homeowners who conceived you on their honeymoon in Paris, you are not more valuable than someone conceived in an apartment by two people struggling to make ends meet. You're not more valuable than a child conceived in rape.

Scientifically, there is no difference between you and a child conceived in rape. We are all equal in dignity—no matter the circumstances of our conception. Except for rape, we typically have *more* respect for kids who were not conceived in the best of situations but who overcome great odds in life. Except for rape, we seek to protect kids with troubled or abusive backgrounds even more. Except for rape, we never diminish a child's dignity because of her father's crimes. We certainly



would not say that she *never should have been born* because of who her father is.

When else do we punish children for their father's sins? When do we hold babies accountable for their dads' behaviors? If an amusement park attendant stopped a pregnant woman from getting on a roller coaster, and she calmly said, "It's OK. My daughter was conceived in rape," would the attendant let her on the ride? Would the bartender serve her ten whiskeys? Would the skydiving company make an exception and let her jump? No.

We treat human beings with more dignity than we sometimes get credit for, but all of that seems to go out the window when someone is discussing rape and abortion. It is supposed to be the no brainer for why abortion is not just needed but good. In other scenarios we would not look down on someone as a human being if we found out her father was a criminal.

Rape and abortion punish a unique, innocent human being like no other scenario in our culture.

A baby conceived in rape will always live life as a result of that rape. He or she will go to school, play sports, fail, love, struggle, and reach heights and lows no one can or ought to predict upon conception. The road for a baby conceived in rape is a difficult one, but it is hers alone. No criminal, dad included, can be used to justify denying her of her right to life.

*What to say:* "The circumstances of our conception do not determine our human dignity. No child should be devalued because of the sins of the father."



Arguments against abortion in cases of rape make sense, but real human experience is powerful too.

Hundreds of students—half pro-life and half pro-choice—poured into a packed college lecture hall to hear two women speak; both had been raped. One had an abortion, and one placed her baby for adoption. Each shared the horrific experience of rape. Each shared the experience of considering abortion. And each explained the reason for their decision.

Both used logic without much emotion in sharing why they decided to have or not to have an abortion. Most students, even the pro-life students, understood why the rape victim who chose abortion did so. A spirit of compassion, not judgment, was in the room.

The forum seemed to be wrapping up until the woman who chose abortion said, “Now many people encouraged me and supported me in my decision. They understood, and most women told me they would do the same if they were in my position. This is, after all, why we have legal abortion. But no one, including myself, ever considered what would happen after my abortion. No one ever considered that I would be adding an anniversary to my life.”

The students homed in on the term *anniversary*.

We have worked with many victims of rape, and all of them remember the date of their rape. They all have an annual anniversary, a reminder of that horrible event. Similarly, we have met thousands of post-abortive women, and almost all of them know the anniversary of their abortion.

The woman who was raped and chose abortion explained that she did not want her baby to remind her of her tragic rape. She wanted the rape in her past. She then passionately explained how the opposite happened. The rape and the abortion became two parallel traumas that feed off each other. She said that her rape anniversary reminded her of her abortion. And her abortion anniversary reminded her of the rape. She was fighting a double battle because of a decision that was

supposed to help her move on from this horrific event but instead magnified her pain.

Her testimony ended as she described encountering God and receiving the strength and grace to find hope and healing.

Then, the rape victim who chose life and gave her baby up for adoption spoke. She shared the joy of getting updates on her son from his adoptive parents. She shared how close she came to choosing abortion before deciding she couldn't do it. And she described how every event of her son's life is a testament that the rape does not define her. She said her rape anniversary reminds her that there is always hope after our worst experiences in life.

The students sat in silence and listened to these two women share the reality of the consequences of rape and abortion. There is no sugarcoating the tragedy of rape or abortion. But a tragedy does not have the ultimate power to change our nature: that we are hardwired to protect our children. Their courage to share their real-life experiences is too often absent from the discussion on rape and abortion. No one thinks about the two anniversaries feeding—positively or negatively—off each other.

These two women's experiences illuminate the victims in this story and demonstrate why abortion can never comfort, console, or solve a woman's problem.

Now let's look at the experience of the child.



The Planned Parenthood staff gathered outside to hear the speakers at a pro-life event on the sidewalk in front of their workplace the day of the *Roe v. Wade* Supreme Court anniversary.

The last speaker was a young woman in her early twenties. She shared how she was conceived by the act of a criminal

when her mother was raped at fourteen. Her father was incarcerated. After nearly deciding to have an abortion, the teenage mom instead gave her daughter up for adoption. More than two decades later, the young woman who nearly lost her life to abortion conveyed the immense gratitude she had for her mom choosing adoption and expressed her love for her adoptive parents.

“Something in my life never changed since the day my mom was raped,” the young woman said. “From that day on, I am a result of rape. I cannot change that. I was conceived in rape and will be forever a product of rape.”

She then turned to the Planned Parenthood workers standing in the parking lot listening attentively. “Do you see me? Do you look at me differently since I told you how I was conceived? I stand here before you still a result of rape just as I was in the womb. Do you believe my life is worth living because every day I live I do so because of rape? But that rape does not define my dignity or the dignity of any other child who is conceived in rape.”

Just like when the powerful testimonies of the rape victims quieted the university lecture hall, silence poured over both the pro-life audience and the Planned Parenthood workers looking on. That young woman’s powerful testimony spoke truth that our culture has forgotten. She went on to get married and have children of her own, ensuring that the impact of her mother’s courageous decision to choose life is generational.



Once we know how to effectively discuss rape and abortion, all other pro-abortion arguments become easy to counter. We’ve made these points with thousands of people in diversified scenarios, including abortion workers on the sidewalk, college

campuses, and even a pro-abortion NBC News reporter who said that she had never heard a pro-life case against abortion in cases of rape that she agreed with until then.

Trust that when we share the truth with love, minds can be illuminated and hearts changed.

### **What to Say When Rape and Abortion Come Up**

1. The rapist should go to prison.
2. Human dignity is not defined by the circumstances of our conception.
3. In no other scenario do we punish a baby for the crimes of his or her father.
4. Abortion does not remove rape; it adds to the pain.