
***ABORTION
SURVIVORS***



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Cover Photo

Cindy's Story

Cindy was born by abortion at 27 weeks of development and left to die in the supply room of a large city hospital. No one knows who called the 'blue code' -- but forty minutes after her birth, Cindy was transferred to Children's Hospital. The trauma of premature birth has left her with cerebral palsy. She spent a long time in Children's Hospital before going to the first of a long series of foster homes.

At the age of five, Cindy was adopted. She was a very withdrawn child; silent and unresponsive. "They told us she could never be more than a 'vegetable'," her adopting mother says. Cindy is now seven and is a different child. With loving parents, enthusiastic and affectionate brothers and sisters, and lots of cuddling she is described by her mother and her teacher as "a ray of sunshine." No one in the household is more joyful and loving. She is learning to talk, and is learning more all the time because she is surrounded by family who delight in her.

Cindy has already saved a life. An adolescent friend of the family learned that a girl she knew was determined to abort her baby. She told her about Cindy, the happy child who had been left to die. The idea of abortion was rejected and the baby lived to join the rest of us.

Cindy's parents have gone to court to get redress for the harm done to her. Since the case is still pending details cannot be released; but they are hoping that financial provision can be obtained to support Cindy when she reaches adulthood.

Introduction

Everyone is ambivalent about everything almost all the time. No less about life than other matters. Like every other species, humans depend upon an ecology whose balances, though robust and resistant to many kinds of assault, can become destructively and irrevocably tipped. The fact humans, the self reflective animal, have such difficulty predicting and avoiding disaster has been a puzzle to philosophers and scientists for many generations. There is little doubt humans have both the propensity and the capability of destroying themselves. Their intelligence seems to blind them to the early indications that they are about to enter yet another holocaust of suffering and death. Is it because they have so much knowledge that they think they are wise? They ingest information in massive amounts, yet they have a great fear of finding any truth that implicates themselves as the real culprits rather than some remote, easily discernible villain.

Truth has never been popular. Maybe, the more unpopular a fact or opinion, the more truthful it will be. But, even the most unpopular or politically incorrect truth cannot be suppressed indefinitely. Eventually it will surface as a general outcry, if, for no other reason, than because it foreshadows or expresses suffering. Pain forces a complaint. Too often it is not spoken or heard until it is too late to cure the cancer from which it springs.

There are people who, by choice or chance, live when many others die, but do not necessarily appreciate with joy their good fortune. This idea is not new but has always been disconcerting. Killing millions of voiceless and voteless unborn people ostensibly for good and therapeutic reasons is, if honestly faced, an even more disconcerting thought. Is it any wonder that combining two unpalatable realities is not only unpopular but by most is seen as subversive. When abortion survivors were first described (some 13 years ago) there were occasional outbreaks of rage but more frequently stony silence.

After thirteen years it is time to try again. Hey, everybody! You ignore the existence, plight and underlying problem of abortion survivors at your peril. You may kill unborn babies and discard the aborted fetus to avoid knowing the pain they had and represent, but their surviving siblings are present to remind you of the most awful part of yourself. They won't easily be discarded or explained away. Bit by bit they are

encouraged by their pain and by growing awareness of the cause of that pain to speak their complaint. Though the world won't listen to our explanation of who, why and how they are, abortion survivors will be heard. By then, the underlying cancer of ignorance, selfishness and dehumanization will have caused so much destruction to human ecology it is likely the unbalances cannot be rectified.

Am I An Abortion Survivor?

Patient:

Doctor, I'm desperate. I am depressed much of the time and often I think of killing myself. I can't enjoy life.

I know that I haven't used my abilities and opportunities well. I've always been that way, but now that I've lost my job things are really bad. I keep wondering if people really like me and I am terrified they might reject me. I don't trust many people, particularly not my parents. Sometimes I have queer sensations of some little spirit bothering me. Frankly, I don't feel that I deserve to be alive. What is the matter with me?

Doctor:

Since my examination of you has ruled out most other probable causes for your distress, I suspect you are an abortion survivor. All your confused feelings, your doubts, fears and self-destructive tendencies could be explained by the fact that your mother aborted one of your siblings, or considered aborting you.

Patient:

You could be right, although I've had these problems much of my life and I just found out that my mother had an abortion, I have suspected it for a long time. I can remember as a child my father and mother whispering about her having become pregnant and what should they do? I was surprised when I didn't get a little brother or sister but I was too afraid to ask what happened. The topic of abortion came up in a discussion I overheard the other day. My mother cheerily informed her friend that she had an abortion but it didn't bother her. I don't see why her abortion should bother me; I strongly support the woman's right to choose.

Doctor:

People who have survived major disasters or deaths in the family or those who have survived death camps or starvation will often wonder why they should be alive when other people died. The effect seems to occur even if you are not fully aware of how you are a survivor.

Patient:

Well, I guess I'm just lucky. I realize they could have aborted me. Just because I was conceived after my mother and father married, they wanted me. Because they wanted me, I am here today.

Doctor:

I wonder how you feel knowing that you are alive because you are wanted, while your brother or sister is dead because he or she was not wanted.

Patient:

It is a good feeling, it's wonderful to be wanted. But sometimes, even now, I wonder what would happen if I wasn't wanted. I wonder what would happen if people stopped liking me? I put an awful lot of effort into being popular. I guess it is because I need to be wanted. I am always looking over my shoulder to see how people react to what I do. I can't be sure of the value my own efforts without someone giving me an opinion.

Doctor:

You mentioned how insecure you feel and wonder if you should be alive. That is a common feeling with people who have survived. They often feel they do not deserve to be alive; that the person who died was more deserving but died in their place. Abortion survivors wonder why fate or God selected them for life. They feel they now have to live a special kind of life to deserve their parents' choice to keep them alive.

Patient:

You're right. I feel this enormous burden that I have to be the best of everything that my parents could expect of a child, almost as if I had to compensate for something. Through most of my teen age I tried very hard to please them. Eventually I gave up and became bitterly rebellious. It wasn't that they were so critical. It was this sense of being unworthy of all their love and attention. Now I see that it is probably connected with knowing

that my brother or sister died without them doing anything wrong.

Doctor:

Many abortion survivors resent the fact that they are alive only because they were "wanted". It is such a tenuous thread by which to dangle a life.

Patient:

I have always wondered why I was so angry at my parents. They tried their best to make me feel "wanted", but I now realize what a terrible dilemma that put me in. If a child's first right is to be "wanted" then if they become "unwanted" they have no right to be. When my mother or father got mad, I felt it was because they didn't want me. I remember thinking they might decide to get rid of me in some way. It's no wonder I thought about death so much. I wish that they could have said something like, "Whether we wanted you or not, you are welcome to the world." The other thing that bothered me so much as a child was the feeling that I had to stay close to them. It is almost as if I couldn't believe they would still be there when I came back or if they would still want me. I guess I wasn't sure of their love for me even though they tried to show it.

Doctor:

Abortion survivors have a type of anxious attachment. Part of that insecure attachment results from the child's worry about whether they are still "wanted". Part of it arises from the fact that many parents who have had abortions have difficulty bonding to subsequent children. Mothers who have aborted a child may also have more difficulty touching and breastfeeding subsequent children. The poor bonding exposes children to a greater chance of abuse or neglect. The anxious attachment tends to encourage children to be "clingy". Feeling that they must stick to their parents will inhibit a child's exploration which we now know is absolutely necessary for the proper development of their self-image and intelligence.

Patient:

Now that you mention it, I have always wondered why I couldn't finish my education or really go to the limits of my abilities. I'm pretty passive about things. I always quit just when I'm about to really succeed. I don't really believe I'm good at anything. I feel

guilty about not developing my potential. Attachment was a real problem when I was a teenager. I was part of a gang because I didn't believe I was worthy of all the stuff my parents kept giving me. I suspected they were trying to prove they loved me when really they resented my existence. Being part of a gang made me feel secure. I got into drugs mainly because I didn't like thinking about my life, whether I should be dead or alive. I didn't really trust adults. It sure is hard not having somebody you can trust. I could never talk to my parents -- like, "How could they kill a helpless child?" and "Why didn't they abort me, too?" Is this to do with the fact that I am an abortion survivor?

Doctor:

You are certainly beginning to make the connections. If you feel guilty about surviving you cannot fully participate in life. If you are worried about some event that could extinguish you, you are not going to bother developing long term plans. You are more likely to live life "for the moment". In addition to your existential guilt, you have an ontological guilt. You feel guilty about being alive and guilty about not developing your life.

Patient:

There are times when I feel as if I am living with a suspended death sentence. I feel I was really supposed to die, not my brother, and now some event will suddenly kill me. At times I felt so awful but taking drugs didn't help. I wanted to get high to escape reality. It seemed like any escape was better than what I was going through. I also wonder if my parents discussed whether they would or would not abort me. It is awful to feel that they sat in judgment on an innocent child's life, with the child not even being able to speak up and defend itself. Someday I am going to ask them if they considered aborting me. There are some things I just have to know about.

Doctor:

You talk as though you were partially aware of some secrets about your mother's abortion and whether you would have been aborted. I suspect that these were not real secrets but subjects that you sub-consciously agreed with them that you should not talk about -- probably because you didn't want to upset them. After all, your survival depended on having parents.

Patient:

It's true. There were times when I wanted to find out more about my mother and about me but I got the impression (I don't even know how) that certain issues would cause her great pain. She never was a particularly strong person. My father and she didn't have a good marriage. Actually, she divorced my father a few years ago and now I don't go home much. I just didn't want to make her depressed. Now I am wondering if she should talk about it. She might have been in better shape all those years.

Doctor:

When you can't ask critical questions about life there are many matters about which your normal curiosity is inhibited. I suspect you also had to carefully guard what you said. You didn't want to let slip something that would either make your mother sad, frightened, or angry.

Patient:

When I was a child, there were many things that I wanted to know but I felt I shouldn't ask my parents. It would have been so good to have their permission to ask or talk about anything. I am still careful about what I say. I hate to upset any one. The free expression of my thoughts is so inhibited that sometimes I stammer.

Doctor:

I suspect being an abortion survivor had an effect on how you felt about your father.

Patient:

You're darn right. I never liked my Dad. He was always such a whimp. He was never really there for me. He only thought about his job. He was no kind of model. Besides, I didn't trust him. How could you trust somebody who deserted your mother just when she needed him most and as a consequence she had to abort my little brother? Now that I am talking about it more, I am quite sure that it was a brother -- how I don't exactly know. As a kid I often played with an imaginary brother.

Doctor:

Your difficulty relating to your parents as a child may have carried over into your adult life. It wouldn't surprise me if you have difficulty

trusting men or women, especially about matters they wouldn't openly discuss.

Patient:

I definitely don't trust women. I've had many girlfriends but something always seemed to go wrong. I guess I was looking for something no woman could give me. Even though I am happily married right now I still wonder if my wife might get pregnant and abort our baby without telling me. There are a lot of things we don't talk about. Maybe the same thing happened in her family; I know she didn't have a good childhood. I wish I could really understand her. I don't trust men very well either. Somehow I can't believe that they are able to support women in critical situations. I know that they don't have a legal right to stop an abortion, but I don't see why they don't at least try. I can also see why I don't have a high opinion of myself as a man.

Doctor:

Abortion survivors often try to protect their children from unforeseen dangers and become overprotective.

Patient:

It's true. I am undermining my kids' confidence by always reminding them to be careful. I don't like them visiting their friends overnight or even going to summer camps.

Doctor:

If you would like your children to have a more open and secure childhood than you did, I suggest that the first thing you do is stop telling them that they were wanted. Emphasize the fact that they are welcome to the world, just as they are, wanted or not.

Patient:

That's good advice, Doc. Should I tell them that an uncle was killed by their grandmother? I suspect that they will never talk to her again.

Doctor:

That's a very difficult question. I think that you have learned from your childhood that you shouldn't keep secrets to avoid being upset. There are very few real secrets in families. Most of them are pseudo-secrets. You now realize how damaging it is for a child to try

and keep pseudo-secrets. Children should be informed as much as they need to be, *when* they need to be. You answer their questions when they ask them. Rather than giving them the whole story, you make it part of everyday conversation. I suspect that the first thing that you need to do is to talk to your mother about this. She may be resistant to begin with, then angry, but if you are gently persistent I think that she will welcome the opportunity to talk about her abortion. The secret has been destructive to her as well as it has been to you. She will probably need some professional counselling. Your father should be involved also.

Patient:

Why is it so hard for me to know who I am, Doctor?

Doctor:

If you are guilty about existing and fear you might accidentally discover some terrible secret, you are not going to ask questions about the world or about yourself. If you do not ask questions about yourself, people won't give you corrective feedback. Since you are so determined to be "wanted" friends feel that they should tell you only good things about yourself. Yet you know they are more often telling you what you want to hear rather than what you need to hear.

Patient:

I feel that I missed out on some very important parts of my childhood. Is there any chance that I can catch up on what I lost?

Doctor:

It is impossible to find the ingredients of a childhood in your adult life. People don't want to nurture, guide, and protect you now in the way that you should have been when you were a child. Your wife and your friends do not want to be your parents. What you must do is mourn the loss of the childhood that you should have had and the person that you could have become. That's a lot harder than you think.

Patient:

Will I ever get over this? I am sick and tired of these self-destructive thoughts. I want to learn to love. I want to know who I am. I want to develop all my abilities.

Doctor:

You are already making a good start. There is more work to be done and you will not find it easy to resolve all these inner conflicts. I'm glad that your wife is supportive. I hope that your friends and pastor also understand.

Patient:

I worry that what happened to me is affecting my family.

Doctor:

If it has this effect on you, of course it does. You will need to talk to them as honestly as you can about being an abortion survivor. The more certain you are as a person, the better able your children are to model your good behaviour and consequently you won't have to spend so much time instructing and correcting them. Your wife can stop feeling guilty about not meeting the needs of your childhood. Once you have mourned the person "you could have been" you will find that she is giving you more of what you really need than you saw before.

Patient:

I would like to put aside this burden of impossible expectations. In fact, I would like my parents to take it back. I can't go on being sorry for being alive. If they are disappointed in me as a poor replacement for the child that they aborted it isn't my fault. It is going to be difficult to forgive them until they do apologize. I have tried many times. Maybe I need to write down all the hurts and fears they caused and ask them to apologize for each one of them.

Doctor:

The process of reconciliation is complicated but forgiving and being forgiven is essential to your health and welfare. I'm sure you realize the importance of clear and honest communication with your parents. This is so hard when you can't forgive each other.

Patient:

I wonder about all the millions of children like me who have had a brother or sister aborted, miscarried, stillborn, or die of accident. Is there a difference in how a person is affected by a pregnancy loss?

Doctor:

Children who die of stillbirths, miscarriages, accidents or even illnesses have been killed by events over which parents had no control. Children who are aborted are killed by the very people who ostensibly love their family. For this and many other reasons, abortion survivors have a much more difficult time dealing with the fact that they were chosen to live.

Patient:

There must be other kinds of abortion survivors.

Doctor:

Yes, there are eight types. All of them have similar problems with guilt about being alive, fear of not being "wanted", difficulty with attachments, problems developing their potential, worries about the future, burdens of expectations that they cannot fulfill, trusting their parents, and anger at authority. The other types of abortion survivors are:

1. Children who had a statistically low chance of surviving a pregnancy. Children in some Eastern European countries have approximately a 10% chance of surviving through a pregnancy.
2. Children whose parents carefully considered terminating them *in utero*.
3. Children who have had a brother or sister or both aborted, either before or after they were born.
4. Children who have been threatened by such statements I have not infrequently heard, "You wretched, ungrateful child. I have sweated and saved for you but you do nothing with your life. I should have aborted you!"
5. Children who, because of their handicaps or because they are the "wrong" sex or because they are the result of a mixed marriage, would usually be aborted. Children with developmental defects often wonder whether their parents would have aborted them if they had known.
6. Those children whose parents would have aborted them if they could have.

7. Children whose parents couldn't make up their mind and delayed until it was too late.
8. Children whose twin was aborted. Twins have an intimate relationship in the womb. If one is aborted, the other feels terrible and is often suicidal.
9. Children who survived an actual attempt to terminate their lives by saline, suction curettage or hysterotomy. They have difficult psychological struggles, nightmares, confused identities and a fear of doctors.
10. Those tiny children who survived an abortion for a short period of time, but then were left to expire on a cold slab or were smothered by abortion staff.

Patient:

That's terrible. Being an abortion survivor of one type or another must affect a large portion of young adults alive today. I wonder what it is doing to our world.

Doctor:

Since there are about 60 million abortions annually, there are at least that number of people who become abortion survivors each year. I suspect that it is the underlying reason for extensive family and social upheavals. Killing the defenceless has widespread ramifications and unless it is stopped will result in some kind of holocaust. Aborting children destroys the delicate balances of human ecology.

Patient:

I hope that it is not too late for me to do something.

Doctor:

It's never too late to try. Whether you succeed in changing the world's attitude on abortion or not, you *can* change some lives. Most importantly, you will become more "human" yourself. After all, we are all bound together in the bundle of life. We cannot benefit at the expense of our neighbour. When we love him, we are loving ourselves and we discover that life is beautiful.

Scientific Considerations

Ten Types of Post-Abortion Survivor Syndrome

Like all humans, physicians have some reticence to change their view of the world and accept new ideas. Although I (PGN) have been speaking and writing about abortion survivors for over twelve years, the idea does not seem to have been generally accepted by my colleagues. In some circles there is a strong resistance to the idea that people suffer when they know they could have been terminated. Yet, abortion survivors do exist. They won't go away just because it is difficult to think about them. Their distress and clinical illnesses should be recognized and treated. If this requires changing one's view about the world, maybe it is about time. After all, if these observations and deductions are correct, millions of people are badly conflicted, and often as a result, seriously ill.

In an earlier article¹ I described abortion survivors and pointed out their conflicts are similar to those of people whose family members died in accidents, illnesses², or by genocide. Since that time, observations have brought to light the fact that there are at least eight types of survivors. Their situations and conflicts are different, but they have in common deep questions about whether they should be alive, whether they are worth anything to anybody, and whether they should develop their abilities. These people are not easily treated, but insight is valuable. It seems when they sublimate their deepest anxieties into helping other people from becoming what they are, they are functioning best.

The ten types of Post-Abortion Survivor Syndrome (PASS) are:

Statistical Survivors (PASS type 1):

These are people who survived in countries or cities where there is a statistically high probability that they would have been aborted. In North America, there is a 25% chance of being killed *in utero*. In some parts of Eastern Europe there is a 90% chance that they would have been terminated before they were born. If a person has a statistically slim chance of living through an event that kills many like them, they are truly survivors, and should be considered as such. Though many of these people were told they were definitely wanted, they know that the odds were stacked against them. They wonder why they were allowed to live while others died. To be alive because you were wanted is not necessarily a pleasant experience or reassuring knowledge. It becomes

quickly apparent to even children, that if you live because you were wanted, then when you become unwanted you may not be allowed to live.

Wanted Survivors (PASS type 2):

There are millions of children who have survived a serious deliberation by the parents or physicians about whether they were "wanted" and therefore should live or "unwanted" and be aborted. Their parents may have had to calculate whether there was enough money, the grandparents wondered if they could endure the embarrassment, and society may have questioned whether there were too many people in the world. The parents may have consulted a geneticist to determine whether the child was handicapped or the wrong sex, and if so had to make decisions whether the child should or should not be allowed to live. There is growing evidence that unborn children are affected by hormonal changes that result from major conflicts in the mind of the mother. There is also growing evidence that unborn infants not only hear, but remember conversations about them.³ Regardless of this, the implications are subtly conveyed to the child after he is born about whether he should have been allowed to live.⁴

Sibling Survivors (PASS type 3):

Many children are born into families where one or more of their siblings were aborted. Although parents believe it would be impossible for children to know about them, there are many clinical examples where children know that a brother or sister did not survive intrauterine life. One mother asked me to interpret the dream of a very distraught girl, age 7. In the dream, she had gone to play with three young siblings, and together they had tunnelled into a sandbank, which had then collapsed, burying the three siblings. She could not tell me the age, name, or sex of these children. It turned out the mother had had three more pregnancies than she had live children, but insisted the child could never have known about these. In one study of the impact on families of pregnancy terminations for genetic reasons, it appears that "even very young children, and those sheltered from knowledge of the events, showed reaction to their parents distress and maternal absence".⁵

In these instances, some parents try hard to convince their child that they were always wanted, but being wanted may make the child struggle to continue being wanted. They try hard to please their parents, and cling to them for approval. But children must learn by experience, and they must have a sufficiently confident attachment to their parents to not fear

being away from them. Independently exploring the world is where children learn so much. Thus being a wanted child interferes with intellectual development.

Threatened Survivors (PASS type 4):

I have heard parents shout to their frustrating teenager, "You'll never know what I had to put up with having you, and you don't appreciate all my effort. I could have aborted you." Even if that parent never seriously considered aborting the child, that kind of outburst has a major effect on children, making them hateful toward their parents and destructive toward themselves. These children feel an awful obligation to their parents. They cannot seem to enjoy life because they feel like they should not be alive. They don't develop their talents well, and are often seen as lazy, sometimes aggressive, and not infrequently anti-social children.

Disabled Survivors (PASS type 5):

Modern diagnostic techniques make it possible for parents to choose only those unborn infants who appear not to have recognizable defects, or are the preferred sex. The knowledge that they might have been terminated fills the hearts of many developmentally delayed and handicapped children with dread. They know that many like them are being terminated, and that makes them feel vulnerable and ashamed. Even when a great deal of effort goes into making these wounded people have a sense of self worth, the efforts are undermined by the many implied messages in the media, that in the best interest of their parents or society they should not have been allowed to live.

Chance Survivors (PASS type 6):

There are children who would have been aborted if the mother could have obtained an abortion. These survivors are explicitly or implicitly told they were lucky to be alive because "if I had discovered I was pregnant earlier", or "if my parents had given permission", or "if someone had been willing or allowed to do it, I would have aborted you."

Sometimes circumstances arise that prevent a woman from having the abortion that she desires. Evidence shows that the largest number of women who are prevented from having an abortion are grateful once they see the beautiful child. There are others who are resentful and convey this resentment to the child. "You are lucky to be alive."

Unquestionably, children who are caught in this situation feel a great deal of ambivalence toward their parents. If they feel sympathetic to the parents about their dilemma, then they feel angry at themselves for being alive. Sometimes they reject and leave their parents. If they can find some other kind of parent, they may eventually gain a good impression of themselves. If there is no one to parent them, they quickly form an attachment to some type of anti-social leader or gang and thereby become delinquent.

Ambivalent Survivors (PASS type 7)

Children whose parents contemplated aborting them but couldn't make up their minds until it was too late to do an abortion are also a type of survivor. Later in the child's life the mother is likely to indicate that, "it would have been a lot easier and simpler if I had not had you." A child in these circumstances can easily conclude that his parents are still looking for an opportunity to terminate him.

There is no doubt that almost every pregnancy creates a personal crisis. In the early stages most women are at least, for a period, unsure whether they want a child at this time. Often they debate back and forth whether they will or will not have the child, adopt out the child, or abort the infant. There are about 55 factors that a woman needs to consider carefully before she can make a rational decision. It is likely that most women eventually don't make a rational choice at all but are swayed by circumstances or emotions. Some women later convey to the child, "I couldn't make up my mind, but now I wish I had aborted you. Life would have been a lot easier and simple." Some children who grow up under those circumstances are caught up in their parents' continuing ambivalence. Sometimes they are loved and other times they are hated. That ambivalence becomes part of the child's attitude toward himself and others.

Twin Survivors (PASS type 8):

Even when the most modern methods of locating and aborting a child are available, twins are sometimes missed by the abortionist. Those who have survived the abortion of their twin feel a great deal of anger and grief. One man, whose twin was aborted, becomes dangerously suicidal on the anniversary of that event. It is now known that twins communicate, touch, and even caress each other *in utero*. They have a very close intrauterine relationship⁶ and when parted, grieve deeply. When one is killed, the other's grief is long and difficult. But when the grieving is for a twin you knew but never saw, it is almost impossible.

Attempted Murder Survivors (PASS type 9):

Gradually coming to light are a number of people who have survived an attempt to kill them *in utero*. Giana Jensen survived a saline abortion. She has some handicaps, but lives a full life. She overcomes much of her fear and resentment by speaking out for unborn children at Pro Life rallies. At one point, she had nightmares of abortionists trying to kill her. Ana-Rosa Rodriguez survived an attempt to abort her. She lost one arm in that attempt. One man, during his primal therapy, recovered a very early memory in which he felt extremely nauseated, suffocated, and near death. He concluded it could only mean one thing. When he checked it out with his mother, she had indeed attempted to abort him. These survivors struggle with deep and difficult conflicts. "Why would my mother or father want to kill me?" "Am I supposed to be dead?" "Does she still want me to be dead?" "How can I trust myself?" "How can I trust her?"

Helen survived an abortion many years ago with few effects, but has been plagued by psychiatric problems which require both medication and psychotherapy. She states,

The knowledge I was a failed abortion makes me feel I have disobeyed and should not really be here; that I have no right to be a real person, and have no proper place in the world. I feel I was judged and sentenced, but his punishment was not carried out and is still in abeyance. The hardest thing to accept is that someone who professes to love me did try to kill me. For this same reason of broken trust, I have been unable to discuss this with my general practitioner. I have to overcome feelings of dread and panic when I visit him.

Murdered Survivors (PASS type 10):

Not infrequently, an infant that is aborted in the later months of pregnancy is born alive. Almost always, regardless of their viability, they are left to struggle alone and die on a counter or in a garbage can. Sometimes nurses are ordered to smother them. It is the worst experience for any human to have to deliberately stifle the pitiable cries of a naked and helpless infant. Though these tiny survivors' lives are so short, they leave an indelible imprint on the minds of those who kill them. Neither time nor alcohol can erase the memory of having destroyed an innocent fellow human.

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Parents who have survived Nazi Death Camps have difficulty talking to their children. Often it seems easier to suppress the communication, but then the child's curiosity, fear, and fantasies intensify. Professionals conclude it is better to deal with the subject directly. Parents who have dealt with their abortions find that it is most useful to speak frankly with their children. Initially there is often an outpouring of grief, many fears, nightmares, and psychosomatic complaints. Eventually the child is able to deal with this harsh reality. In fact, they deal with the reality better than innuendo and pseudo-secrets.

We hope that it is not trivializing to make the comparison with death camp survivors⁷, but there are many basic similarities. Helen states that,

Most disaster survivors are threatened by impersonal accidents of nature or, in the case of concentration camp survivors, by a hating adult enemy. Survivors of abortion attempts are threatened by those who profess to love them and it is this dichotomy of love and killing that causes the unresolved problem. I was told by my psychotherapist that terminating a pregnancy is not the same as trying to kill someone, but speaking as and for the fetus, it does feel like it. I have the feeling that I disobeyed in not dying when it was required of me. The medical profession have been very kind although what I really want is for a doctor to put his arms around me and say that he is sorry and that I am worth something after all.

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¹ Ney, P.G. "A Consideration of Abortion Survivors", *Child Psych Hum Development* 1983, 13:168-179.

² Ney, P.G., Barry, J.E. (1983). "Children Who Survive", *New Zealand Medical Journal*, 96:127-129

³ Chamberlain, D.B. (1992) "Is there Intelligence before birth?" *Pre-Perinatal Psychology Journal*, 6(3):217-237.

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Conflicts and Symptoms

For the purposes of this booklet, a survivor is anyone who did not die when the chances of being killed were much higher than usual. There are many situations in which people become survivors but abortion survivors are unique. The very parents who conceived them and who would normally love them have plotted to take their life or the life of their sibling. There can be no deeper enigma or more difficult psychological conflict. "My parents considered killing me," or "My parents killed my innocent little brother," or "My parents hired someone to kill me. How could they? What does it all mean? Why am I alive?"

People also become survivors when:

1. Some evil power tries to destroy their family tribe, race or religious group, e.g. Jews, Caribs, Newfoundland natives, etc.
2. There is a local or area wide disaster that wipes out large numbers of people nearby, e.g. volcanic eruption, famine, disease, plane crash, etc.
3. A person is assaulted with an attempt to kill them.
4. People who survive some other type of possible pregnancy loss or their mother died in childbirth.

All of these groups have aspects of survivor guilt but they experience much less existential anxiety, anxious attachment, self-doubt, ontological guilt and secrecy. In all of these other situations their parents almost invariably attempted to protect them against the force which threatened them all. The post-abortion survivor syndrome (like all syndromes) is a constellation of signs and symptoms, most of which appear in the majority of the people affected by a damaging agent.

It is generally accepted in medicine that the vast majority of distress and illness comes from conflict engendered disharmony of mind and body. Conflicts arise when humans cannot resolve competing or opposing tendencies within themselves or when they cannot accept and deal with difficult realities or when there are major discrepancies between belief and behaviour. The following is a brief summary of the conflicts and symptoms that arise as a consequence of being an abortion survivor.

1. Existential Guilt: "I should be grateful to be alive, but I shouldn't have lived when others died." People who feel existential or survival guilt because they were not aborted believe that it is not fair that they are alive. They feel they are not as worthy as those who died. They may feel they have contributed to the other person's demise. People with this conflict are always apologizing for who they are or trying to justify themselves and their existence. They feel guilty about their needs and their dependency. When they become depressed, they usually become suicidal. If they are anxious, they are almost hypomanic, desperately trying hard to please other people. Some feel haunted by the revengeful ghost of the aborted sibling.

2. Existential Anxiety: "I want to live, but I fear that I am doomed." People whose mothers have considered killing them or whose parents arranged for an abortion that failed, feel that they have escaped a death sentence. However, that sentence is still in effect and may be carried out at any moment. Because only "chance" kept them alive, "chance" will probably kill them. If they are alive because they were "wanted" they feel that they must stay wanted or else they have no right to live. It is easy to make them feel ashamed. They are continually pleasing, fawning, "dancing", and hoping for applause. Eventually this becomes so tiring or time consuming that they become rebellious. The mindless vandalism of many adolescents seems to be an expression of their anger at being dangled by the tenuous thread of "wantedness". They quickly destroy or discard gifts given to them in an effort to remove any evidence of their parents' trying to buy their love. They tend to be fearful people who expect the worst. When they are no longer able to cope with normal defence mechanisms they engage in a variety of types of self injury. The pain or the blood is a reassurance that they are alive and not going crazy. It also seems to be a message, "Look, ye gods, I'm trying to kill myself so you don't have to do it."

3. Anxious Attachment: "I want to be close to my parents, but it doesn't feel right. The closer I get the worse I feel." The anxious,

ambivalent and tenuous attachment between parent and surviving child arises from three sources:

a. Women who have had an abortion have difficulty in bonding to, touching and breastfeeding their young. The mothers and fathers realize these basic difficulties and attempt to compensate with extra effort, doing it "by the book" and buying the child's love with gifts.

b. The abortion surviving child is suspicious. They think, "How could you, my father or mother, be a loving parent and kill one of my siblings or consider killing me or have tried to kill me. I do not trust you and I do not trust the anger that I feel toward you as a consequence. I must hide my anger or it will destroy us both."

c. Abortion surviving infants often emit abnormal, anxious cries when their mother is out of sight. The toddlers cling persistently to the skirts of their mothers. Older children hang around the house. Children need to explore and test their observations in order to develop their intellect; when they do not their development is impeded. The adults with anxious attachment are continually asking each other, "Do you still love me?"

4. Pseudo-secret collusion: "I desperately need to know what you did to my unborn brother or sister, but I'm afraid to ask." This conflict arises from two major sources:

a. The child is afraid that what he will find out is too awful. In knowing the truth about his parents having killed his sibling or wanting to kill him, he would despair. He may refuse to eat wondering whether he could ever know for sure that when they feed him they are not trying to poison him?

b. The child knows that if he brought up the forbidden subject, it might destroy his parents or their relationship and therefore the family upon which he depends.

Children caught up in this conflict tend to be very careful about what they hear. They avoid the normal child's curious "eavesdropping". They are careful about what they see and avoid poking into family correspondence or archives. They are careful about what they say and won't ask things that normally tweak a child's interest. Their own anxiety and anger arising from a sub-conscious awareness of the

pseudo-secret must be hidden. Therefore they tend to repress all of their feelings. Children cut off their normal curiosity and limit their sensory reception. This also interferes with their intellectual development. They must limit the expression of their speech and the expression of their emotions because they could be too dangerous. They become fearful children who don't express spontaneous joy and enthusiasm. As growing adolescents and adults, they only trust the media because they are confident it will lie to them and help support their and their parents' pseudo-secrets, eg. "abortion doesn't kill a real child". They are very curious in spite of their determination not to know what really went on in their family. They have a voracious appetite for newspapers, magazines, novels, television, and almost any media that will provide them a certain amount of excitement but never reveal the real truth. The news creates a modicum of tense anticipation from expecting a disaster. They don't like to worry but they feel worse when the tension stops. This vicious cycle is a major contribution to media addiction.

5. Distrust: "I want a committed relationship with people but I don't know who I can trust." Abortion survivors don't trust men because men, particularly their fathers, could have made a much greater effort to protect them from their mother's compelling interest in abortion, or they may have pressured the mother into an abortion. Survivors later tend to look upon their fathers as "wimps" who were cowardly and could not provide a model for courage and tenacity in the face of destructive forces. It is obvious to the abortion survivors that males have a seldom mentioned, but selfish interest in having ready access to abortion. Survivors don't trust women because of their murderous or fearful selfishness. They can't believe their expressions of affection are genuine. After all, they have killed a helpless sibling often while declaring, "it is best for everyone." Survivors do not trust authority and cannot recognize leadership. Politicians and judges appear to cave into popular demands for abortion.

Abortion survivors become sceptical children who don't appreciate efforts made on their behalf and won't help around the house. As adults, they have great difficulty with committed relationships but keep searching for someone that they can really trust. They experience a whole string of broken relationships, which only further convinces them they may as well be hedonistic. They tend to be narcissistic and cynical and instead of seeing sex as sacred, they use it for self-gratification.

6. Self doubt: " I want to live a spontaneous, natural, free and easy life, but whenever I try to, my impulses lead me into all sorts of trouble." "I can't trust my parents. They obviously don't trust me, because having killed a helpless child they don't trust themselves. They are continually hassling me about being careful and looking after myself, so how can I trust my emotions, desires, or biological functions to guide me." Abortion survivors tend to overeat, oversleep, or over-drink in binges. In their most extreme form they are anorexic and bulimic. As adults, survivors don't trust themselves as parents and therefore avoid having children. They will engage in any kind of sex that has little chance of propagating, eg. "outercourse". They tend to be "greenies" and/or hippies that turn into "yuppies", who compulsively watch their weight, diet and exercise. They aggressively defend their possessions and pleasures.

7. Ontological guilt: "I know I am talented and have lots of opportunities. I could have a good future, but I can't get my act into gear." Survivors with the conflicts described here find it difficult to finish work projects, their education, or raising their family. They often feel that the future is too uncertain and they shouldn't be alive anyhow. They keep quitting and starting again. Eventually they develop many rationalizations for their failures and become fully occupied with just living and entertaining themselves. They seem to be waiting for a major catastrophe that will propel them into doing something meaningful. They might subtly contribute to the promotion of a catastrophe, even those they ostensibly are trying to prevent. Unfulfilled, ontologically guilt-ridden parents often push their children into filling their own dreams that are usually inappropriate for the child's personality or intelligence. They are often good at rationalizing their lack of effort. When asked to contribute in some way to a worthwhile endeavour, they are full of excuses.

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In addition to these major conflicts, most abortion survivors tend to have an undeveloped or poor self image. They may have perceptual abnormalities and be suspicious of being followed or spied upon. They tend to use chemical substances to deal with their deep conflicts. They try to avoid any real pursuit of truth and are easily swayed by the politically correct opinions. They inadvertently trouble women who are suffering from Post-Abortion Syndrome by contributing to the woman's

painful awareness that they have destroyed something very precious, the survivor's equally lovely sibling.

Most abortion survivors are sceptical. They feel that love does not exist and therefore they have difficulty reaching out to God in a trusting way. Because they have not experienced truly solid and trusting relationships within their family they avoid acknowledging people as parents and have difficulty seeing God as a loving Father. Abortion survivors may experience a deep sense of hopelessness. Because so many parents have destroyed their young, there are fewer children, thus there is less anticipation for the future and a need to preserve for the children's sake. The lack of children produces hopelessness and the hopelessness undermines the desire to have children.

Clinical Cases

Michelle

Michelle is an intelligent four year old girl, abandoned at birth and adopted at two years of age.

One day she gave her adoptive mother a drawing together with the following explanations: "This is a mother. She has a baby in her tummy. He is covered with blood. The mother is bad. She kicks the baby and hits him and spits on him. But the baby is a good baby". As she speaks, she starts hitting the picture of the mother and shouting: "She is bad, she is bad". Her mother asked her: "And the baby - do you hit him, too?" "No, the baby is a good baby". She protects the baby by covering him with her hand. Her mother tells her that she likes her drawings and wants to have some more.

Michelle did not know that she had been conceived during a rape and that her real mother had tried to abort her (using knitting needles). Her parents found this out when they adopted Michelle, but the child was never told. Michelle only knew that she had been adopted.

A few days after drawing the first picture, she showed her mother a similar drawing. This time, however, there was a black object close to the baby's head. It was bent and the child explained that it was a hook.

Eight days later she drew the same type of picture a third time. Her adoptive mother asked her: "Do you think the baby can forgive his mother for hurting him?" Immediately the child answered: "No because she killed ME". It was the only time she had used the first person in talking about the baby.

Kathy's Story

I have a husband and three children. I am employed as a pastoral counsellor with my church. In my early twenties, I became pregnant with my son out of marriage. At the time I was living in South America, where abortion is still illegal. My boyfriend and his parents put a lot of pressure on me to have an abortion. I was appalled by their attitudes. Although I was a lapsed churchgoer, I knew in my heart that abortion is murder.

I was very hurt to think that the father of my baby wanted me to get rid of it in such a cruel way. It could be that my PASS symptoms made me identify more strongly with the baby and helped to intensify the fiercely protective feelings I had towards it.

I believe that God helped me to stick to my decision because I am not naturally morally courageous. I have always been extremely grateful that I did. Today I have a twenty-one year old son who is currently completing a physics degree at university. He is also a young man of God. The world would be a much poorer place without him and so would my life and the lives of many others, including his father.

Though successful at most things I do, I have a sense of inner abandonment and desolation. I am always vainly searching for a home. I am always hungry with an insatiable hunger for love. I always need reassurance of belonging and suffer from chronic performance orientation. I always have to justify my existence by doing it right and being good. At times I have a deep, murderous hatred of children. This baffles me. I do not want to hate children and I really feel for unwanted kids.

Before receiving help, I had no joy and no awareness of nature. I experienced frequent physical sensations of dipping and swaying and balance changes like a baby in the womb. Visual images which haunt my mind are of a ghostly figure suspended between earth and heaven, fleeing over the rooftops of a war devastated city. My mother aborted in the city

of London during the war with bombs and dust and with buildings going up in flames. My strange sensation of being suspended over a bombed city does not come from any stories I have heard or any pictures I have seen. Only my mother would have known about it. She and her aborted baby.

I knew I had to go on the Hope Alive Group Therapy Training Conference although I didn't know why. Even at such short notice, I was inexplicably able to make the time free! As soon as we began the rounds that Sunday evening, I knew I would have to speak about my mother's abortion. I had no idea then of the PASS syndrome. Even now as I write I have deliberately avoided reading anything about it.

At the training session, after I described this phenomenon, the trainer suggested that this was typical of the post abortion survivor's syndrome. It was a great relief to know that at last someone understood what I had been trying to explain for years. Suddenly, something I had only dimly been able to grasp through the ephemeral language of dreams now had a name. There was also an explanation for the strange physical sensations I sometimes experienced, the somatic memories of pregnancy, feelings of dipping and swaying, with an accompanying fogginess of mind. To have someone hear me, believe me and understand me for the first time in my life was like recognizing that little girl in the shadow with her dark secret for the first time ever.

I once had an unusual experience where I relived my mother aborting my sister, I felt an overwhelming feeling of wanting to die. I felt terrible abdominal pain, skin prickling, pain in the umbilical area and a sense of black poison pouring into me. This poison was an intense hatred of children. I went through some time of screaming the terrible screams that have always lurked just below the surface and often threatened to come out. At last, I found myself in a safe enough place to express them. I am very grateful that I was believed and taken seriously.

Since last year, I have searched my mind for the explanation for the knowledge I received non-verbally from my mother. She died when I was twenty-one and never told me about her abortion. My father mentioned it very briefly in passing during a conversation about my mother when I was twenty-five. He offered it as a possible explanation for her irascible temper, but we did not discuss it any further. Immediately I felt that it had to be a key, but have only recently come to realise more fully its impact on both her and me.

It must be borne in mind that the secret knowledge I received regarding my mother's abortion was accurate and detailed enough to specifically influence my perceptions of myself, my mother and to some extent the safety of the world I was born into. I believe that this information was transmitted to me in the womb with sufficient sophistication of perception to determine some of my deepest beliefs about life. My own identity and personality has been overlaid and haunted by both the presence and the experience of the aborted baby. I feel as if I have lived my whole life under the control of the spirit and experience of the dead child. At certain times, this impression has been made more intense by threatening or painful experiences. My mother's abortion, perpetrated years before I was born and the child of a different father, has had the most profound influence on my life.

It is not possible to give more than a speculative explanation as to how I came by the secret knowledge of my mother's abortion. The knowledge could have been transmitted "transitionally" through some spiritual or psychic connection. Some would explain that it came through the "unquiet spirit" of the dead child. Others, that it was the work of a demonic "familiar" or "guiding" spirit impersonating the aborted child. For the Jungian, it might be understood to be the result of a collective consciousness. I am not sure of the explanations, but I am convinced about my own feelings.

I have the feeling that I don't have the right to live and therefore no right to the good things of life, no right to possess things, no right to an education. I have no sense of belonging to the world or life. Relationships always have to be worked out through the servile role of the little black servant girl, the Cinderella figure. At other times, I play the superior role with those I consider to be inferior to me.

There is the wounded, bewildered, lost person who doesn't know where she belongs. She is rootless, wandering stateless, landless, looking, and searching for home. She's a lonely, haunted, longing little girl, always on the outside, pressing her nose against the window of life, wanting to get in. She senses that there are many lost presences out there longing to be allowed in; the world's orphans, longing to be allowed into the family of man. They are rejected and locked out, longing, alone, lost, lonely, haunted and dark. They are unseen, unknown, *unacknowledged*, unclaimed, unnamed and lost to life. Their haunting presence is always around.

The little servant girl is guilty of living. She doesn't deserve to live. She has no place on stage, no central pace in life, no role to play. No one wants her; no one wants to hear her lines. They are too sad and dark, painful and challenging. Her eyes speak too much truth. She has seen too much. There is a conspiracy to keep her hidden in the dark. She's the silent repository of the world's shame, the world's guilt and pain. And she better suffer silently so they can go on laughing on the bright side of their faces.

No-one wants to face her reality. She judges the world by her innocent pain, her broken exposure, her shameful wounds. She's got too much to say in silent innocence. the eloquence of her wide gaze shames the creatures of the night. So I hid her too for shame and hid with her in the shadows.

It is like an angry parent finding the naughty child hiding behind the couch and dragging him out, unwilling, ashamed, helpless, angry, alone, friendless, no ally to help. The parent is right of course. Might is right, and the child is wrong, helplessly to blame, shamefully existent, shamefully alive. It is not my wounds which pain me the most, nor even my shameful bruises. It's not being heard. It's being sentenced to silence that hurts the most. Worse than not being seen is not being heard.

That's who I have always been really, someone waiting to be really seen and, hope beyond all glorious hope, waiting to be heard. I was someone waiting to happen. I often struggle with weariness and a feeling of heaviness as if it's a struggle to stay alive. I seem to be constantly fighting off death which feels immanent and deeply desired. I long to be able to stop the struggle of life -- the struggle to stay alive, preferring to be allowed to lie down and die. I want to quietly slide into oblivion and give up the fight. I seem to be living under the sentence of death all the time.

When you've seen death with your inner eyes, tasted the blood in your mouth, felt the mushy flesh in your hands, you can never pretend life out there is any more than a pretence. The inner reality is too terrible, too real, too immediate, to ever give yourself to anything else. This surrogate pregnancy grips your inner attention so only the outer smile of you enter life. Your inner self is bearing death -- the wounds and static blood of death.

And you're bound to carry that dead thing forever. No birth can release you. The birth of your own children involves only the outer shell of you as does all your interaction out there. It's easy to give all that away. It really doesn't count anyway. The real person is carrying death within, a dark secret hidden under the covers of silence, known only to the deepest heart of a girl who has drawn life (or death) from the depth of her mother's being, known only to the two of them. This girl has lain close to her mother's heart and drunk deep of her death and learnt from the womb to reject her.

Only the errant temper leaked out around the edges of my self-control. That temper took over me sometimes. I read murder and hatred in my mother's eyes and lived under her judgement of death. I was punished for my weakness, my vulnerability, my need and daring to be all those things. I dared to impose my need on her, to depend on her, challenge her selfishness, asking for her sustenance, support and care.

My mother gave me just enough to stay alive but not enough to live. She carefully maintained a precarious balance between appeasing guilt and keeping her heart under wraps. So I was allowed to stay alive but not to live. In the meantime, she subjected me to the same treatment of her inner heart. I was allowed to be alive but not to live. She denied me as much life as was decently possible without actually killing me.

When I began to tell my story and the others in the training group listened, I couldn't hold my hurt and terror back any longer. Suddenly, I could feel the awful screams which has been locked up inside my coming out. As all the pain started unlocking, I felt myself sliding off my chair onto the floor. I felt very vulnerable and fetal, strangely unable to move or escape my inevitable fate. My skin was burning and I kept plucking at it, trying to escape the pain. I could feel black, poisonous hatred pouring into me through my umbilical cord. All the collective hatred against children through the generations poured into me and I knew it would kill me.

The pain in my stomach was terrible and closely associated with the black poison pouring into me through the umbilical cord. I can only assume that this was the emotional hatred and murder my mother felt towards the unborn child, my older sister. I could feel the fetal attempts to escape and the feeble efforts to move the head out of the way. I don't know how that baby died, but from what I experienced that night, I imaging it was a saline injection or something similar. I don't know how

old it was either, but it was aware enough to know it was in mortal danger and that it had to try its best to escape.

A lot more happened during that week of training, but defusing the abortion memory was the most significant for me. Since then, the somatic memories still occasionally recur. I do not experience abdominal pain or the same measure of panic and fluttering. I have prayed about the fear of death, a death wish, guilt and the feeling of living under the shadow of death because of my mother's judgements on me and her other daughter. I do not feel so panicked about authority either. Best of all, I do not live through Monica any more.

So, I connected me with me for the first time ever. It gave me permission to actually give that little dark girl the opportunity to be heard, to take center stage, to retire Monica and be seen and heard for the first time in a friendly, accepting, wise and knowing environment.

During my Christian life, God has given me many revelations and healed me in many areas, but none more profound than the healing I have received from the influences of my PASS experience. I know that Jesus Christ of Nazareth suffered the sentence of death for me in order that I might be reconciled to the Father. I no longer live under the judgement of death, but in the light of His love, in the kingdom of the Son of His love. For that, I will be forever grateful.

Henri

I am a 52 year old street worker in a large Canadian centre. I am concerned mostly with the poor and immigrants. About 30 years ago I found out that my mother was actually my step-mother and I began to investigate about my dad's prior marriage. It turned out that in the mid 40's he was married to my mother. Eventually I was able to track her down and she told me about the disastrous relationship she had with my dad. It was a marriage mostly of convenience. My father was an officer in the armed forces and had a premonition that he would not "make it back". He desperately wanted a child to survive him so he pressured my mother into having sex without contraception. When she found that she was pregnant she was so angry that she arranged for an abortion in her 4th month.

That abortion was only 50% successful. She terminated my twin brother. At seven months she recognized that she was still pregnant and

went for a second abortion. This time, it was me. I was 3½ pounds, epileptic, jaundiced and dying. A good-hearted woman at the brothel where the abortion took place decided to try and save me. After a time in the hospital and then the brothel, I was placed in a foundling home. Quite by accident (some 6 months later) my father discovered me. I was looked after by my grandparents until I was two years old, then my father remarried and I went to live with him. All evidence of those early events was destroyed. I began finding out about all of this just before my step-mother died. I began finding out about all of this just before my step-mother died. I always wondered why I had such a hostile relationship with my father and why I could never really trust my step-mother.

I was cantankerous and was beaten for it, but could never really understand why. My long-suffering step-mother couldn't understand my father's peculiar behaviour, but eventually decided it was because I reminded him so much of his first wife. When I discovered my real mother, I tried to make contact with her. Sometimes she seems eager to know me but at other times she wishes that I did not exist.

As a teenager I got into alcohol, drugs, and child prostitution. I have now been off alcohol, drugs and out of the prostitution market for 21 years. I am currently in a monogamous relationship, surrounded by a number of caring people, and have a fulfilling job, but still I don't feel right. I just carry these emotional scars and there is no sense for living. Even though people tell me that, "God has a plan", I say, "Yes, that's very nice but you are not the one going through what I am going through." I constantly think about death and dying. I say, "instead of being such a liability of society, if I died then nobody would really care." It is when I get despondent that things really hit hard and I've often thought of killing myself.

People tell me that there are many good things about me -- that I'm a wonderful artist -- but I cannot accept it. People see in me things that I just don't. I am told that my concern for unwanted animals and people, the pollution in our neighbourhood, the unemployment and particularly unborn babies, is a beautiful thing, but I can't feel it. With some help I built a little chapel out of discarded limestone in our backyard. I have given a decent burial to hundreds of aborted babies near the chapel. Anybody who enters the chapel will tell me that they smell roses, but there are no roses in the area.

I am told that I am a very talented artist, but when I look at those pieces up in my attic, I don't believe that I did them. It is like somebody else did it. I like the work, but it's not 'me'. I have an inner feeling that I can hardly describe where I am just not worth anything. It has been with me ever since I can remember. I have spoken to a number of psychologists about this problem but they don't really want to deal with it.

I know that I am a survivor, but I wonder why I am here in the first place. Is there any meaning to all of us? I know that God is there ... I have no problems with that. But where I fit into the whole scheme of things after having gone through all of this escapes me. Sometimes I feel that the other half (my twin brother) who died is an awfully lot luckier than I am. I have a deep seated feeling inside me that I feel that I'll never get over. Even death and dying don't bother me in the least. "Okay, if I go, I go, it's no big deal." When people get angry with me and say, "You'll be sorely missed," I say, "That's ridiculous. I'm living on borrowed time as it is. I do the best with what I've got for the time I've been given. But after that, I'm gone and no one will give a damn."

My mother was judge and jury for me and my brother. On two occasions I was sentenced to die. For some particular reason I am a survivor. It is a mystery. I have survived two abortion attempts, many illnesses, child pornography, epilepsy, jaundice, drugs, alcohol abuse, child abuse, prostitution, cult activities and all of this ... for what!? I am incredibly insecure in my relationship and wonder how long it will last and how long I am going to last. I feel that everybody would be a lot better off if I died. I feel like I am a sponge on society and have been all my life.

I do that a death sentence was passed on me and still has to be carried out. That's why I always live on the edge. So, if it happens, who cares? I deserve to die. As far as suicide is concerned, well, at this point there is the old adage, "razor blades hurt, jumping off buildings make you look rotten in front of the mortician, gas makes you sick, etc." But it is always an option. If I get boxed into a corner emotionally ... you know a couple of weeks ago was really, really bad.

I didn't realize how much anger there was but I have a lot of anger toward my natural mom and a lot of unresolved anger against my father. I have tried all sorts of ways to resolve it and nothing happens. I know

that people want me around, but it doesn't seem to make any difference. I am always making an excuse for my existence by helping other people.

I went to my dad and step-mom's gravesite. I said, "you know, you are *there* and I am *here*. I have survived all of that bull. I bury it with you. That's it, I'm never coming back here again." Then I walked off. It was supposed to be a magic wand, but it was only a temporary help. I went back into the whole self-guilt trip again.

If I had an opportunity to talk to my mom I would say, "Why are you treating me the way you are? I haven't been angry at you. Why, Mom, why?" I was hoping that she would be proud me with all of my artwork, but she said absolutely nothing. Maybe she can't deal with the fact that she tried to abort me twice. She can't accept herself and she can't accept me as part of her. There's a lot I can't figure out. If I don't kill myself I guess I'll have to keep trying to understand why.

* * *

P.S. Henri is a courageous, sensitive, loving, artistic individual who is still struggling to work through the deep difficulties of his past. He thanks God that there are some lovely people in his city who understand what he is going through and stand by him. He has become increasingly aware of how being an abortion survivor has affected his outlook and he wants to deal with it. He feels the world should know what it is like to be an abortion survivor.

Implications For The World

Statistics

There are approximately 60 million abortions each year worldwide. In some Eastern European countries, 90% of the women have abortions and often have seven or eight per woman. In China, it appears that all pregnancies, but one, are terminated. Thus, in both areas, a child's chance of surviving a pregnancy is 10-20%. Almost all children in these countries have at least one aborted sibling. In the United States, approximately 70% of the women have had an abortion by the age of 45 and another 10-15% have contemplated having an abortion. If all these women had one child, about 85% of the children born in North American would be abortion survivors. Since some women who have

abortions never have any other children, it could be estimated that 75% of children born in western countries are abortion survivors.

Another way of calculating it would be to consider the fact that approximately one in three North American pregnancies end in abortion. In some cities, e.g. Washington D.C., 50% of all pregnancies are terminated. Thus, within a particular family, a child has a 50-70% chance of surviving. In addition, those children who are born after an abortion had been contemplated are also survivors.

In most western countries, abortion has been easily available since 1970. Thus 80% of all 20-25 year olds are abortion survivors or approximately one-quarter of the population. In Eastern European countries, abortion has been easily available since the 1920's, thus 80-90% of all people, 70 years or younger are abortion survivors (which amounts to 75% of the population). In China, the "one child per family" policy was introduced in the 1980's. Therefore 85% of children 10-15 years of age are abortion survivors. This would be approximately 10% of the Chinese population.

It would be reasonable to hypothesize that with a large percentage of the population being abortion survivors who have deep, unattended conflicts, there would be an impact on the overall functioning of the society. Is there any correlation between the percentage of abortion survivors in a country and the turmoil exhibited within that country? We need to determine ways of measuring and evaluating any relationship between the number of abortion survivors and the amount of political chaos, economic struggles and family disintegration. It seems that the Eastern European countries, with the largest numbers of abortion survivors, are most affected. We are also interested in determining whether there is a correlation between the number of abortion survivors and the amount of psychiatric morbidity expressed in terms of rates of hospitalization and the size of medical costs in a country.

The impact on society

1. Psychological conflicts.

There is a large series of interlocking mechanisms that arise from the conflicts generated by being an abortion survivor that are difficult to separate out. However, the following factors affect society and can be clearly detected:

- a. **Mistrust** -- Because abortion survivors cannot trust their parents, they trust only themselves or each other. This makes it hard for anybody to negotiate contracts. Thus people tend to resort to a array of lawyers and accountants to support their side of a bargain. The other side must do the same.
- b. **Dishonesty** -- Abortion survivors have a deeply rooted tendency toward dishonesty. This is because, regarding some of the most critical issues within their family, they do not know what really happened, and they are afraid to ask. They spend their young lives skirting around deeper truths. This tends to have a pervasive effect on their being able to look into many other aspects of themselves. Added to this is a dishonesty handed down by the parents. When the parents cannot admit to their deepest pain and most awful crime, it is difficult for them to be honest. The children collude with their parents and learn the same tendency to be evasive and deceitful.
- c. **Cynicism** -- Because there was a major discrepancy between parents saying that they love their children while at the same time they had killed or contemplated killing one of them, abortion survivors tend to be cynical about many things. They doubt the sincerity of love, compassion, parental care and neighbourly concern. They are particularly cynical about directives from authority and tend to see good government directives as meaningless. The net effect of so many abortion survivors with these conflicts is that it is very difficult to conduct business with any speed. There is so much distrust, dishonesty, cynicism and disregard for authority that many business deals are made only with great scepticism and therefore batteries of lawyers and volumes of legal papers, all which tend to increase the cost of doing business and impede the speed of transactions.
- d. **Immaturity** -- Abortion survivors are afraid to mature. This is partly because they missed out on a secure, well-attached childhood and partly because their future seems so uncertain. They don't want responsibility and complain about those who take it.
- e. **Lack of Gratitude** -- Because abortion survivors are not sure they are happy to be alive they are not easily satisfied and become easy targets for consumer producing media. Many tend to buy with very little purpose. With all their excess materials, they have to store their junk in increasingly large "u-store-it" sites.

- f. **Chronic Unhappiness** -- Survivors are often preoccupied with morbid concerns regarding their own lives, but they are afraid to think about deeper things. To avoid unhappy feelings, they spend a good deal of the time distracting themselves. This is often evidenced in their interest in violence and morbid sex.
- g. **Disregard for Authority** -- Because they do not trust those into whose care they were born, abortion survivors tend to disregard all types of authority. Young people, who are angry about being held by the tenuous thread of "wantedness", tend to be rebellious and wantonly destructive.
- h. **Tenuous Relationships** -- Because they are unsure about their future, abortion survivors have difficulty making commitments. As a result, spousal support for pregnant women is less and this, (as indicated from our research), results in an increase in the chance of abortions and miscarriages.

Abortion survivors are disinterested in having children. Thus there is a decline in the population. A market economy cannot work, partly because there are fewer people to buy the goods produced, and partly because there are too few taxpayers to support the pension plans, old age securities, etc. of those who do much of the consuming.

- i. **Re-enacting Tragic Triangles** -- Abortion survivors tend to be passive participants (or observers) who watch the unhappy events unfold rather than attempt to correct them. This only adds to their feelings of guilt. Their various guilts are denied and seldom examined. This is especially true where current social philosophies teach that guilt is a bad feeling and should be avoided at all cost and that it only occurs because simple-minded religious zealots hold to the outworn concept of sin.
- j. **Increasing Abortions** -- Abortion survivors may feel anger toward their parents that they cannot deal with because they are afraid to lose a relationship that has always been tenuous. They may tend to displace this onto their children. When this happens, they are more likely to abort, abuse or neglect their children.
- k. **"Greenies"** -- Although abortion survivors have a concern for life it is often expressed as a concern for the environment, rather than

children. It is obvious that unless families come first, then preserving the environment has no specific direction or purpose.

- l. Hopelessness** -- With increasing abortion, there are fewer children and consequently a pervasive hopelessness for society. Hope is based on the need to preserve ourselves, our inventions and our environment for future generations. With fewer children there is less need to conserve. The hopelessness makes people less inclined to have children, and with diminishing children there is less hopefulness. Abortion survivors have difficulty concerning themselves with the future of the world, because their own future has been so uncertain.

- m. Disinterest in God** -- Many abortion survivors are very sceptical about the existence of love since those who are supposed to have loved them most, and who often say they do, are the ones who have killed them. If their parents' love is expressed by terminating the life of an unborn sibling, they find it nearly impossible to believe that God the Father can be loving. Since there is such frequency in family breakdowns it is unlikely that people have a good concept of what family relations are supposed to be. When abortion survivors are told God the Father loves them, they are so sceptical that they don't even bother to investigate whether He really does love them.

Treatment

Prevention

To prevent the awful and frequent occurrence of surviving abortion there have to be fewer abortions. There are many routes to do this, but we suspect the best thing to do is increase the value and necessity of children.

Psychotherapy

Abortion survivors have deep rooted conflicts which can only be resolved through a combination of psychotherapy, learning new behaviours, understanding of environmental contingencies and transactions, and a spiritual renewal. Group psychotherapy is both effective and efficient in achieving these ends. It should be followed by family therapy, which helps children deal with the secrets, gives the parents some ideas of better ways to manage their children, and helps

them through the many confusions that have grown up because one or both parents are abortion survivors. Then the family needs to become involved together in a project aimed at preventing the problems that brought them into difficulties. The ideal is intensive psychotherapy, but since there is so little of this available, counselling directed mainly at the existential guilt is very valuable, especially when the individuals are supported by a church.

Spiritual Healing

Abortion survivors must be able to see that parental love is real. When they see it in people then they can understand that God, as our Father, can be loving toward them. They need to understand that they are welcome in God's family, and that when they have God's Spirit within them He gives purpose, joy and meaning to their lives. Salvation through Jesus Christ is both the cause and effect in the healing process.

Conclusion

Abortion survivors are real people with serious conflicts that often result in social, psychiatric and medical problems. These arise from the fact that they have survived in a situation where their siblings or others have frequently died. There are at least ten ways in which they could be survivors, and these result in somewhat different symptoms. The core conflicts stem from their survivor guilt, their existential anxiety and their enormous distrust of themselves and others. They are not easy to treat, but hope and healing are available.

The behavioral manifestations may be of great importance, especially when it is possible that 80% of Eastern Europeans, 20% of North Americans and 10% of Chinese are abortion survivors. There may be a strong relationship between the social and economic difficulties in each of these areas and the number of abortion survivors.

Stern Warning

It appears that we are heading for a human ecological disaster. Without an intervention by God to save us from the natural consequences of our own stupidity, it is quite likely that we will destroy the human race. This will be the natural consequence of disturbing the number of fine balances. It is only because of His grace that we have survived so well so far.

How does one prevent this from happening?

1. **Repent.** We have not been reacting hard and fast enough to pervasive problems. We are guilty of passivity. There are no innocent bystanders in matters of life and death, and there are millions of children dying from abortion and millions more becoming abortion survivors.

2. **Warn.** We must demonstrate to the world at large, this is a matter of grave concern to our human ecology. Speaking from an ecological point of view, it is better understood.

3. **Value Children.** We must increase the value of children. When children are more valuable, people spend more time and effort in looking after them.

4. **Healing the hurts.** When the ones that have been most severely injured are healed, there is an exuberant expression of joy that is very convincing. If nobody else will stop the wholesale slaughter of unborn children, the survivors are those who can best speak of what happened.

5. **Group psychotherapy.** There is an enormous need to heal these people, and it can't be done individually. It can be done in groups, and we are now teaching group psychotherapy in a number of centres.

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Blessed are all those children who grow up in a home where abortion was not even considered. They are free from all the very difficult conflicts surrounding abortion survivors. These children are not alive because they were wanted, but because they have an inherent right to life. Because they do not have to strive to stay wanted, they can be more independent and develop as God intended them to do. God-fearing physicians should have no fear of recognizing the very unpalatable truth of abortion survivors. We hope that they will bring up the subject with their patients, especially when there are many psychosomatic symptoms for which there does not seem to be any other explanation. When they can broach the subject and explain Post-Abortion Survivors Syndrome to their patients, there is often great relief. Later on, the patients may require extensive psychotherapy, but at least now they know why they have such an ambivalent attitude about life, their own life in particular.

For God's sake, for the sake of all humanity, for your own sake, open your eyes and ears. Can't you see what underlies so much hopelessness in the world. It is millions of people who aren't sure that they are glad to be alive when an innocent sibling died. Can't you hear the chorus of reports depicting and predicting misery and chaos? It is likely to be the expression of people so deeply wounded that they don't care if they kill or are killed. Doesn't it occur to you that the chaos and confusion in this world is greatest where abortions and abortion survivors are most common? What is the connection? Read this small booklet and then listen to your heart. Hear your inner perceptions of reality. If you can face your own most painful truths you will see reality. For then you will see that you are contributing to the very dilemmas that you bemoan so loudly. Will the world experience yet another holocaust of pain and grief? It all depends on your determination to know the truth of your own and your neighbour's suffering and/or destructiveness. Yes, you can know the truth and the truth will make you and all your neighbours free. But will you dare?

About the Authors

The authors come from different cultures and different perspectives but have a similar view of the destructive way that the world is treating children.

Marie Peeters is an American, obtaining her medical training in Belgium and her paediatric specialty training in Canada. She now works in France with the world famous geneticist Jerome Lejeun. She has won an important scientific prize for her research in the biochemical causes of mental retardation. She has been long associated with L'Arche, where she worked with handicapped people. She has a deep anxiety regarding eugenics and the vulnerability of disabled people. She sees a desperate need for healing abortion and abuse trauma in Europe where, unless these are dealt with, the consequences will be a totally disrupted society.

Philip Ney was raised in Canada, graduated from The University of British Columbia and trained as a child psychiatrist and child psychologist at McGill University, University of London and the University of Illinois. He is an academic and clinician of thirty years wherein he has taught in five medical schools, been full professor three times, served as department chairman, and established three child

psychiatric units. He has done research into child abuse for fifteen years and has published over sixteen papers on this subject. In his early research he became increasingly aware of the connection between child abuse and abortion. More recently he has studied children who are the survivors of abortion. He has been conducting therapeutic groups for men and women abused as children. From that experience, a book, "*I Shall Be Abused No More*", is to be published shortly.

Both authors have a deep desire to protect children by treating the roots of the problems that make them vulnerable scapegoats. They are now lecturing in a variety of countries and conducting training seminars in the treatment of PAS.

About IPLCARR

The Institute of Pregnancy Loss and Child Abuse Research and Recovery is a group of professional and lay therapists who are devoted to a better understanding of the effects of all types of pregnancy loss -- not only on a woman's health, but on men, grandparents, and children. Our agreed purpose is to do careful research, publish findings in scientific journals, investigate the effective types of treatment, train therapists and encourage each other's endeavour.

The association is supported through a foundation from donations, membership dues, book sales, and lecture fees. The directors are prominent scientists and clinicians from various countries.



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