



Center for Human Dignity
at Family Research Council



HOW TO CHANGE YOUR PRO-CHOICE FRIEND'S HEART

by Mary Szoch



Center for Human Dignity
at Family Research Council

OUR MISSION:

The Center for Human Dignity exists to defend the inherent dignity of the human person, from the moment of conception until the moment of natural death.

WHAT WE BELIEVE:

We believe that God, the Author of Life, has created every person in His image. Therefore, all people have inherent dignity and worth, and every human being has the right to life. The value of human life is not conditional upon its usefulness to others or the state, or an arbitrary evaluation of “quality of life.” Instead, it is unconditional, and is inextricably tied to us being God’s image-bearers.

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Everyone has a friend or family member who is either ardently pro-choice or “personally pro-life but politically pro-choice.” Conversations with these friends and family members on the topic of abortion can be challenging to undertake. This brochure contains five points to keep in mind when having these discussions, five pro-life arguments that change hearts, and five common pro-choice responses and how to answer them.

5 POINTS TO KEEP IN MIND WHEN TALKING ABOUT ABORTION

- First, pray. If the topic of abortion comes up in conversation, immediately ask God for wisdom. Simply pray, “Lord, please guide this conversation and speak through me.”
- Second, listen closely. Do not formulate your response while your friend is speaking! By the age of 45, approximately one in four women have had an abortion.¹ Of these, one in three attended church at the time of her abortion.² This means there is a high likelihood that your friend has a personal connection to abortion, even if that friend is from a church-going background. Your friend may be hurting; listen carefully, and then respond with truth and compassion.

If the topic of abortion comes up in conversation, immediately ask God for wisdom. Simply pray, “Lord, please guide this conversation and speak through me.”

- Third, express empathy. If your friend has a personal connection to abortion, you want this conversation to be the first of many—not the last. Always acknowledge that women facing unplanned, unintended pregnancies are in a terribly difficult situation and that choosing life is an act of heroic virtue.
- Fourth, stay calm. It can be difficult to remain calm when challenging a person's point of view, especially on something as emotionally charged as abortion. Keep in mind that your friend likely will not remember everything that was said in the conversation but will remember the general tone. Ensure that what you say will not be dismissed merely because of the way in which you said it.
- Fifth and finally, do not waver. Regardless of how well the pro-life position is stated, your friend might not receive those words well. He might even think less of you. Keep in mind what Jesus said, "If the world hates you, remember that it hated me first" (John 15:18 ESV). Do not be afraid if you do not have all the answers—the Holy Spirit will be with you.



5 PRO-LIFE ARGUMENTS THAT CHANGE HEARTS

There are several different lines of argument that can help change a pro-choice friend's heart. Each line of argument is accompanied by several scientific facts and a true, verifiable story. It can be challenging to remember facts. Be certain to share only those facts you remember accurately. Stories, on the other hand, are easier to remember than facts and often have greater capacity to touch someone's heart. Center your conversation primarily around the stories.

Pro-Life Argument #1: **ABORTION KILLS A REAL PERSON**

One of the principal challenges the pro-life movement faces is the lack of universal acceptance that life begins at conception. Cecile Richards, former long-time president of Planned Parenthood, once said that life began for her three children when she gave birth to them.³

Thankfully, most Americans disagree with Richards. According to a Marist poll, 73 percent of Americans believe life begins prior to birth. Unfortunately, only 38 percent acknowledge the scientific fact that life begins at conception.⁴

Establishing that life begins at conception is an important step in changing your pro-choice friend's heart.

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Start by sharing a few scientific facts with your friend:

- At the moment when a human sperm penetrates a human egg, a new entity, a “zygote,” which is the earliest developmental stage of the human embryo, comes into existence.⁵
- The zygote is composed of a unique DNA blueprint that will determine the person’s hair, sex, eye color, and even some personality traits.⁶
- All the zygote needs for development and growth is time. The zygote will proceed seamlessly through formation of the definitive body, birth, childhood, adolescence, maturity, and aging, ending with death.⁷

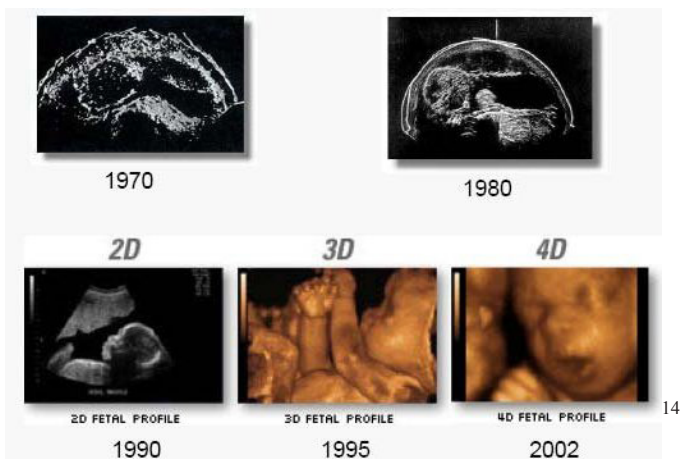
You do not need to be an expert in all the science behind an embryo’s development. The key takeaway is simple. At conception, a fully human and unique being exists. All that person needs to develop and grow is time.

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You may want to add a few fun facts about this tiny, unique person:

- At about 22 days after conception, the child’s heart begins beating.⁸
- At just six weeks after conception, the baby’s fingers have begun to form and the lips, nose, and ears have formed.⁹
- By 10 weeks, the child can make bodily movements.¹⁰
- From as early as 12 weeks—and certainly by 20 weeks—an unborn child can feel pain.¹¹

- By 20 weeks, the baby in the womb can be seen clapping his hands, sucking his thumb, yawning, stretching, getting the hiccups, covering his ears to a loud sound nearby¹²—even smiling.¹³
- Finally, a picture is worth a thousand words. Show your friend these pictures, which show the development of ultrasound from 1970 to 2002. Explain that in 1970, someone looking at an ultrasound might be able to say it did not look human, but by 1990, and certainly by 1995, that was no longer true.



Remind your friend that when an abortion fails, a person is born. You can do this by sharing the story of Melissa Ohden.

MELISSA OHDEN'S STORY

In 1977, four years after the U.S. Supreme Court legalized abortion in *Roe v. Wade*, Melissa's 19-year-old mother was between 18 and 22 weeks pregnant and underwent an abortion using a toxic saline solution. This solution was meant to scald Melissa, who was in her mother's womb, to death. She soaked in the solution for five days. On the fifth day, Melissa was meant to be delivered as a "successful

abortion.” God had other plans. The abortion failed, and Melissa was born alive. She was adopted into a loving home.¹⁵ Today, Melissa shares her story around the country. She started the Abortion Survivors Network (abortionsurvivors.org) in 2012 and has connected with 356 abortion survivors to date.



POINTS AFTER SHARING THE STORY:

- Listen.
- Respond with empathy.
- Acknowledge the challenging situation women in unexpected pregnancies face.
- Ask your friend if ending Melissa’s life is a good solution to a challenging situation.
- If your friend agrees that ending Melissa’s life was not a good solution to a challenging situation, you have an opening to introduce the [Equal Rights Argument for Fetal Personhood](#).
 - ♦ As part of the Equal Rights Argument for Fetal Personhood, ask your friend if everyone that person can visibly see in that moment has an equal right to life.
 - ♦ If your friend says yes, point out that you and all of the other people around, or even just you and your friend, have millions of differences.
 - ♦ Then, ask your friend to identify the trait that all of the people who have the right to life have in common that gives them the right to life.
 - If your friend responds with “consciousness,” ask if a boxer who has just been knocked out has the right to life. If he responds with “reasoning or ability to communicate,” ask if a one-year-old has the right to life. If he responds with “movement,” ask if a paraplegic has the right to life.
 - Eventually, if you friend is willing to be intellectually honest, he will come to the conclusion that shared humanity—shared human DNA—is what gives us the right to life.

- Point out that it is undoubtedly this shared humanity that gave Melissa the right to life.
- Ask your friend if there is something that makes Melissa different from every other unborn child, or if perhaps, every unborn child also has the right to life.
- Ask your friend if babies that survive a failed abortion like Melissa did, are deserving of medical care. If he says yes, remind him that each year Congress fails to pass the Born-Alive Abortion Survivors Protection Act that would require medical treatment for babies like Melissa.

Pro-Life Argument #2: **ABORTED BABIES FEEL PAIN**

Share with your friend that one of the lies the abortion industry propagates is that unborn babies cannot feel pain until at least the third trimester.¹⁶ In 1973, the year *Roe v. Wade* was decided, the medical community incorrectly believed this, too, and premature babies—and infants in general—were operated on without anesthesia.

In 1987, Dr. Paul Hickey and Dr. Kanwaljeet Anand performed a study that found babies exhibited stress responses during surgery, and these dangerous responses were reduced when anesthesia was used.¹⁷ Their data proved babies felt pain.¹⁸



Two years earlier, in 1985, a premature baby named Jeffrey was born in Maryland. Jeffrey died a few weeks after heart surgery was performed on him without anesthesia. His parents took action, and in 1987, the American Academy of Pediatrics declared it was no longer ethical to perform surgery on preterm babies without anesthetics.¹⁹

Since 1987, neonatology and perinatal medicine has advanced so far that babies born at 22 weeks have a 23.1 percent survival rate. Babies born at 26 weeks have an 81.4 percent survival rate, and 75.6 percent of survivors have no severe impairment.²⁰ The standard care for neonatal intensive care units requires attention and treatment of neonatal pain. The change in location from inside of the womb to the outside world does not change the neonatal pain experience.²¹



As early as eight weeks after conception, the receptors that transmit pain begin to develop in a child. By 18 weeks, stress hormones in an unborn child rise substantially in response to pain. At 22-23 weeks, an unborn baby will respond to pain the same way older babies respond: scrunching up the eyes, opening the mouth, clenching fists, withdrawing limbs.²²

There is ample evidence to show that while the pain system develops in the first half of pregnancy, the pain modulating pathways do not

develop until the second half, meaning premature infants may have greater pain sensitivity than adults.²³

A meta-analysis of the research on fetal pain entitled “Reconsidering Fetal Pain” was recently released by Stuart W.G. Derbyshire and John C. Brockmann. The authors of this study have divergent views on the morality of abortion, but both consider the experience of pain as morally significant. Both concluded that, overall, the evidence points to the possibility of unborn babies feeling pain as early as 12 weeks.²⁴

It is important to talk to your friend about the scientific findings regarding fetal pain. It shows that the abortion industry’s views are out of touch with modern medicine.

After sharing the facts about fetal pain, share the stories of Micah Pickering and Ana Rosa Rodriguez.

MICAH PICKERING AND ANA ROSA RODRIGUEZ’S STORIES

Micah Pickering was born at 22 weeks and four days at the University of Iowa Hospital. In the days leading up to his birth, Micah’s doctors told his parents that if he survived, he had a 95 percent chance of living life with profound disabilities. After he was born, he was immediately rushed away to the neonatal intensive care unit (NICU) by doctors and nurses who worked to save his life. He was intubated, put on a ventilator, covered with tubes, and placed in an artificial womb that would be his home for the next several months. The doctors and nurses told Micah’s parents that they could not hold their son because his skin was so sensitive. During his stay in the NICU, Micah was on morphine for pain. After about four months, he was released from the NICU. Today, he is a completely healthy, happy little boy.²⁵

The neonatologists saved Micah’s life *and* worked to manage his pain. Sadly, Ana Rosa Rodriguez’s doctors did the opposite.

Ana was born in 1991 in New York. Her mother, a 20-year-old Dominican immigrant, was 32 weeks pregnant and had gone to a doctor in New York for a late-term abortion. The abortion failed. The next day, Ana was born—without an arm.²⁶ Her arm was torn off in the doctor's attempt to end her life through dismemberment abortion—a standard procedure for second trimester and late-term abortion—the day before.²⁷

POINTS AFTER SHARING THE STORIES:

- Listen.
- Respond with empathy.
- Share with your friend that at seven and a half months (about 32 weeks), there is no doubt that, like Micah (who was about eight weeks younger), Ana Rosa Rodriguez felt pain.
- Ask your friend if it makes him uncomfortable that Ana must have suffered terribly as her arm was removed from her body.
- Ask your friend if he has ever thought about the pain unborn babies must undergo during abortions.

Pro-Life Argument #3: **THERE ARE OTHER, BETTER OPTIONS AVAILABLE TO WOMEN**

It is unlikely your pro-choice friend's heart will immediately change. Still, you might be able to convince your friend that of the options available to a woman in an unplanned pregnancy situation, abortion is the worst option. There are other, better options available.

Many people are unaware of the work pregnancy resource centers (PRCs) do. Tell your friend that there are 2,700 pro-life PRCs around the country, ready and willing to help moms (and dads) facing unplanned pregnancies. The beauty of these centers is that they are not just there to talk a woman out of having an abortion; they are there to support and provide resources for the woman as she embarks on the journey of parenthood.



In 2019, PRCs nationwide served almost two million people and provided nearly \$270 million in services despite receiving a fraction of the government funds abortion businesses do. While individual PRCs differ in the services they can provide, many centers do outreach to victims of human trafficking, provide much-needed medical care, and offer maternity homes to women in need. Below is a list of the most commonly provided services at PRCs, offered at virtually no charge in 2019:

- Almost 732,000 pregnancy tests
- More than 486,000 free ultrasounds
- 160,200 STI/STD tests
- More than 291,000 clients attended parenting and prenatal education programs
- More than 21,000 clients received after-abortion support
- More than 881,000 students attended sexual risk avoidance education presentations
- Nearly 1.3 million packs of diapers
- More than two million baby outfits²⁸

Nearly eight in 10 PRC workers are volunteers. These people are ready and willing to assist women in need, to be mentors and friends.

After discussing the good work of pregnancy resource centers, share the story of Alison, a PRC client, with your friend.

ALISON'S STORY

Alison found out she was pregnant toward the end of her senior year of high school. She was afraid and felt alone. Sadly, her family was not supportive and convinced her that she had no option other than abortion. Alison gave in. She aborted her child and spent the next two years depressed, lonely, and—like so many other women who have had abortions—wishing she had met her child.

When she was 20, once again, Alison found out she was pregnant. As before, her family pressured her to have an abortion. Alison did not know where to turn, but she knew she could not survive the heartbreak of another abortion. She found ABBA, a PRC in Portland, Maine.

The pregnancy resource center helped Alison feel as if she had real options—real choices.

After speaking with the women there, Alison felt hopeful for the first time. The volunteers helped her find the support and resources she would need to be a successful parent. At eight weeks, they showed her an ultrasound of her baby and let her keep the pictures. With the support of the women there, Alison and her boyfriend were able to choose life for their son, Jack.²⁹ The PRC helped Alison feel as if she had real options—real choices.

POINTS AFTER SHARING THE STORY:

- Listen.
- Respond with empathy.
- Ask your friend if he would be willing to commit to helping PRCs so that women who might have otherwise felt pressured into abortion can have real choices.
- Ask your friend if he would like to visit the local PRC with you.

Pro-Life Argument #4:

ABORTION IS SYSTEMATICALLY ELIMINATING PEOPLE WITH DOWN SYNDROME

If your friend is lucky enough to know someone with Down syndrome, your friend probably loves that person. People with Down syndrome are, as pro-life self-advocate with Down syndrome Frank Stephens put it, “an unusually powerful source of happiness.” According to a study led by a physician at Children’s Hospital Boston, 79 percent of parents or guardians felt their life outlook was more positive because of their child with Down syndrome, 94 percent of siblings age nine or older expressed feelings of pride about their sibling with Down syndrome, 88 percent said they felt they were better people because of their sibling with Down syndrome, and 99 percent of people with Down syndrome said they were happy with their lives.³⁰

In a world where people are often valued based on what they can accomplish, people with Down syndrome are a bright light. Certainly, their lives are not easy. Heart-defects, leukemia, thyroid problems, and dementia are just a few of the challenges people with Down syndrome face throughout their lifetimes, but their lives are undoubtedly worth living.³¹



Sadly, the lives of babies with Down syndrome are being systematically destroyed through the tragedy of abortion. Here in the United States, 67 percent of babies prenatally diagnosed with Down syndrome are aborted.³² Abroad, the statistics are even more terrifying. In Denmark last year, approximately 95 percent of pregnant women who received a Down syndrome diagnosis chose to abort.³³ In Iceland, almost 100 percent of babies with Down syndrome are aborted.³⁴ These precious unborn babies are killed simply because of an extra chromosome.

After sharing the facts about abortion's role in the elimination of people with Down syndrome, share with your friend the story of Frank Stephens' testimony before Congress. Frank is a very accomplished man who happens to have Down syndrome. He advocates beautifully for himself and other people with Down syndrome. While all other stories in this pamphlet have been summarized for you, a shortened version of Frank's own words are reprinted here. There was no way to summarize Frank's words as beautifully as he wrote them. Read his testimony and share his story.

Testimony of Frank Stephens:

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee,

Just so there is no confusion let me say that I am not a research scientist. However, no one knows more about life with Down Syndrome than I do. Whatever you learn today, please remember this: I am a man with Down Syndrome and my life is worth living.

Sadly, across the world, a notion is being sold that maybe we don't need research concerning Down Syndrome. Some people say prenatal screens will identify Down Syndrome in the womb and those pregnancies will just be terminated.

It's hard for me to sit here and say those words.



I completely understand that the people pushing this particular “final solution” are saying that people like me should not exist. That view is deeply prejudiced by an outdated idea of life with Down Syndrome.

Seriously, I have a great life!

I have lectured at universities, acted in an award-winning film and an Emmy-winning TV show, and spoken to thousands of young people about the value of inclusion in making America great. I have been to the White House twice—and I didn’t have to jump the fence either time.

Seriously, I don’t feel I should have to justify my existence, but to those who question the value of people with Down Syndrome, I would make three points.

First, we are a medical gift to society, a blueprint for medical research into cancer, Alzheimer’s, and immune system disorders. Second, we are an unusually powerful source of happiness: a Harvard-based study has discovered that people with Down Syndrome, as well as their parents and siblings, are happier than society at large. Surely happiness is worth something? Finally, we are the canary in the eugenics coal mine. We are giving the world a chance to think about the ethics of choosing

which humans get a chance at life. So we are helping to defeat cancer and Alzheimer's and we make the world a happier place. Is there really no place for us in the world?...

Let's be America, not Iceland or Denmark. Let's pursue answers, not "final solutions." Let's make our goal to be Alzheimer's free, not Down Syndrome free. Thank you.³⁵

POINTS AFTER FRANK'S STORY:

- Listen.
- Respond with empathy.
- Ask your friend what he thinks about the elimination of people with Down syndrome through abortion.
- Ask your friend if it would be wrong to eliminate people who are unwanted for another reason like race or sex.
- Ask your friend if it is wrong to eliminate people who are unwanted for any reason.

Pro-Life Argument #5: **ABORTION HARMS WOMEN**

If your friend is pro-choice, it is very unlikely that your friend believes abortion harms women, but it will be helpful for you to share the ways that it does.

When you and I think about the ways abortion harms women, physical complications come most readily to mind. These complications are very real, but accurate statistics on the physical ramifications of abortion are incredibly difficult—perhaps even impossible—to obtain due to a lack of reporting laws in the United States.

The mental health impact of abortion is challenging to quantify and certainly varies from woman to woman. However, a meta-analysis of 22 studies found a moderate to highly increased risk (81 percent overall) of mental health problems after an abortion, a 34 percent increased risk of anxiety, a 37 percent increased risk of depression, a 110

percent increased risk of alcohol abuse, a 230 percent increased risk of marijuana abuse, and a 155 percent increased risk of suicidal behavior.³⁶

There are certainly many factors that contribute to poor mental health, but the stories of women who have had abortions and suffered serious mental health repercussions are tragic. As anyone who has suffered a miscarriage knows, the loss of a child—no matter how early in the pregnancy—is devastating. A woman who has an abortion, just like a woman who has had a miscarriage, has suffered a tremendous loss. Yet our society pretends losing a child through an abortion does not actually impact a woman psychologically and emotionally. This pretense makes the challenge of healing after an abortion even more difficult. However, there is hope and healing for these women.

Project Rachel is a nationwide ministry providing women with the assurance that there can be forgiveness, hope, and healing after abortion. The Catholic Church started this ministry, but it is open to all women—including women of no faith. Countless women have found peace after attending this ministry. Project Rachel's website is HopeAfterAbortion.org; or EsperanzaPosAborto.org.

After sharing with your friend that abortion has terrible psychological effects on women, share the story of Catherine Glenn Foster, President of Americans United for Life.



CATHERINE GLENN FOSTER'S STORY

When Catherine was 19 years old, she found out she was pregnant. She felt scared and alone and believed abortion was her only answer. Catherine went online and found the second cheapest abortion center in the area. She made an appointment for as soon as possible because she knew the longer she waited, the more she would bond with her baby. At the clinic, she tried to change her mind, but four doctors and nurses held her down. Catherine asked to see the ultrasound of her baby but was denied because it was against the clinic's policy.³⁷ That day, her child died through an abortion. "In the end," she said, "I was left alone in the recovery room, wishing that I could turn back time and just go an hour, a week, a month back in time and re-do everything." Catherine's road to recovery was not easy—physically, emotionally, or spiritually.³⁸ Catherine spent the next several days just lying in bed, wondering how she would go on. A few weeks later, she told her mom. Catherine's mom helped her find counseling at a local pregnancy center, and that was where the healing began. Catherine eventually went to law school and has since become a voice for the unborn.³⁹ She works daily to save unborn babies and their moms from the evils of abortion.

POINTS AFTER SHARING THE STORY:

- Listen.
- Respond with empathy.
- Tell your friend that they can read the stories of the physical and emotional pain abortion causes women at SilentNoMoreAwareness.org. Silent No More Awareness is a campaign that shares the testimonies of men and women whose lives have been impacted by abortion.
- Concede to your friend that perhaps all women do not feel this way but emphasize that many women do.
- Ask your friend if he would ever recommend an action knowing that action increased the potential for mental health problems by 81 percent.

5 RESPONSES TO BE PREPARED FOR FROM YOUR PRO-CHOICE FRIEND

The last portion of this pamphlet is devoted to several responses that your pro-choice friend will likely have and replies for you to think about. Always remember to stick to the five points (pray, listen closely, express sympathy, stay calm, do not waver) in every pro-life conversation.

- *“I’m personally pro-life, but I don’t want to impose my religious views on others.”*

If your friend responds with this, remind him that there are many “religious views” that are “imposed” on others for the sake of societal flourishing. Laws against murder, human trafficking, and child pornography could all be categorized as “religious views”; after all, these actions are all against the Ten Commandments. Laws prohibiting these actions are accepted by society because these laws promote human flourishing. Laws against abortion do the same. Furthermore, the reasons to be pro-life stated previously have nothing to do with God or religion—they have to do with helping human beings thrive.

- *“Everyone’s circumstances are different. You don’t know what it’s like to be in that woman’s shoes.”*

If your friend responds with this, acknowledge that you do not and cannot know exactly what that woman is going through. If you



faced a similar circumstance at some point in your life, perhaps this is a time to share it, keeping in mind that this conversation is about changing your friend's heart. If you have not faced a similar circumstance, it is important to acknowledge the challenge a woman in an unexpected pregnancy is facing, to recognize the heroism of choosing life, and to point out that we need to work to change her circumstances, not to end the life of the child.

- ***“Pro-lifers only care about babies until they are born.”***

If your friend responds with this, concede that yes, there may be some professedly pro-life people who do not care about women or their children after they give birth. Concede that yes, there are pro-life politicians who are only pro-life to win political points. Concede that everyone can learn to love his neighbor better. Remind your friend that the shortcomings of some in the pro-life movement do not justify all of the problems with abortion that you have just discussed. Then, tell your friend about the good work of PRCs and the pro-life movement. Remind your friend that you are pro-life and share the ways that you do not stop caring about people after they are born. If you cannot think of any ways you have shown your care for people in need, contact your pregnancy resource center and ask how you can help. Better yet, ask your friend if he would like to join you!



- *“Wouldn’t a child be better off aborted than living in an abusive environment?”*

If your friend responds with this, acknowledge the evil of abuse and talk about ways the two of you can work together to end child abuse, promote adoption, and foster care, and protect children. Then remind your friend that there is no other problem that we resolve by killing an innocent child. Child abuse should not be solved that way either. Tell your friend that if every child that was born into less than ideal or abusive circumstances was instead aborted, our world would have never known Ludwig vsn Beethoven, Frederick Douglass, Eleanor Roosevelt, Rudyard Kipling, George Orwell, Johannes Brahms, Billie Holliday, Steve Jobs, and countless others who have overcome hardships early in life and flourished.

- *“If a child’s whole life is going to be suffering, wouldn’t it be more compassionate to end the baby’s life before all that suffering begins?”*

If your friend responds with this, acknowledge that yes, some people suffer more than others and why that happens is a mystery. However, remind your friend that no life is without suffering. Tell your friend that it is impossible to predict how much suffering a person will endure at any point in life. Share that the word “compassion” comes from the words meaning “to suffer with.” Hold fast to the truth

One of life’s certainties is that there will be suffering, but killing an unborn child is certainly not the solution.

that fear of someone’s future suffering does not justify ending that person’s life—not in the womb, not after a terrible embarrassment in middle school, not after heartbreak in college, not after the loss of a parent, not ever. One of life’s certainties is that there will be suffering, but killing an unborn child is certainly not the solution.

CONCLUSION

It is unlikely that your friend's heart will change after one conversation. Your conversation will likely have an impact on your friend and cause them to think more seriously about abortion. The Lord will continue to work on your friend's heart. In the meantime, continue to witness to the dignity of each person by the way you live your life, and pray that our nation will soon recognize abortion for the scourge that it is.



Mary Szoch serves as the Director of the Center for Human Dignity at Family Research Council. In this position, Mary researches, writes, and coordinates collaborative efforts with other pro-life advocates on policies surrounding life and human dignity.

Prior to joining Family Research Council, Mary was the Director of the D.C. Catholic Conference and the Manager of Catholic Policy and Advocacy for the Archdiocese of Washington, where she collaborated with churches and pro-life organizations to educate and raise awareness on issues including abortion, assisted suicide, and discrimination against people with disabilities. Mary has also founded a non-profit, *Teaching Together*, that provides meaningful jobs in schools to adults with special needs.

Mary is a graduate of the University of Notre Dame where she received a master's in education and majored in political science and philosophy as an undergraduate. She also played basketball for the Fighting Irish and lettered on the 2010-2011 National Championship Runner-Up team. A native of Altoona, Pennsylvania, Mary currently lives in D.C. with her husband, Ben.

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Most of us have at least one friend or family member who is pro-choice or have engaged with someone who doesn't share our pro-life views. As Christians, we are called to "defend the weak" and to "speak truth in love." When we advocate for the unborn, we must do so in a way that is both truthful and loving so that people will listen—both for their benefit and the unborn. This can be challenging when it comes to the controversial and visceral issue of abortion.

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