



The Family LifeLine

Bulletin of the Family Life Society, Archdiocese of Singapore

www.familylife.sg

Secrets In The Family: A Mother Reflects On Her Daughter's Abortions

I will never forget the day I learnt about my daughter's abortions.

It was late at night; my husband and I were both fast asleep when the phone started ringing, jolting both of us awake. I got to the phone first and all I could hear when I answered the call was the voice of my daughter's friend yelling, asking us to come down right away to the park near our house because K, my daughter and her boyfriend were having a fight, and it was really bad.

We didn't have time to think and we didn't know what was going on so we just bolted from our house and ran to the park as fast as we could. When we found them a few minutes later, I did not recognise the person who looked like my daughter: she had become this wild, raging, and furiously angry *creature*. She was screaming at her boyfriend but the terrible sounds she was making didn't seem to just come from her mouth. The way she shook and trembled, it looked like her whole body was screaming.

Her boyfriend was yelling too but when he saw us coming, he quickly turned to us and said, "I need to talk to you. I need to tell you that your daughter is a liar. She's been lying to you all this time. I just want to tell you the truth." That got K even angrier. She tried dragging us away from him, but as she did so, he stabbed his finger at our daughter and cried, "Do you know that she's had two abortions?"

I remember looking immediately at my daughter's face. I guess I was desperately hoping for her to say something, for her to deny it; I was hoping for a sign, anything at all that would signal that what he said wasn't true, but all I heard was the sound of a horrible, awful silence.

My husband was able to take the boyfriend aside, calm him down and a little while later, everyone left the park. I think I must have been in shock as we walked home because I felt totally numb. Abortion wasn't even in my vocabulary then; it was a taboo topic. I guess I'm what you would call these days a prude about sex and sexuality: do the right thing, respect yourself and others, and virginity till you tie the knot. I have always tried my best to "walk the talk" and to show my daughter how to do the same. As a mother, I had always believed I was modeling all these things to K. So to think about not just one but the two abortions my daughter had gone through – it just blew my mind away.

When we got home, my daughter didn't want to talk but I felt so utterly lost that I desperately needed to know something, *anything*: Who was the father? When did it happen? How did it happen? What had been going on all this while? And over the next few, very long days, small fragments of the story began to surface.

Both abortions had taken place within the span of two years. The father was the same for both of them, someone from a previous relationship. The first time she got pregnant, they

aborted without telling anyone. But during the second pregnancy, they approached some friends of theirs, an older, married couple they both knew and trusted, for advice. This couple told them that they were not ready to have a baby and told K to go for an abortion.

I guess hearing this was one of the things that hurt me the most. I was hurt because the daughter I loved so much, whom I had tried to shield from harm all her life, had suffered so much. I was hurt because I had lost two grandchildren. But most of all, I was hurt because I felt like a complete and utter failure as a mother. Why hadn't she talked with *me*? I had always believed in and prided myself on the openness and trust I thought we had in our relationship. Was it all really a lie? Why hadn't she come to me, her mum, for advice, for help, for counsel? That was what I didn't understand then – I still don't understand it now – and it tore me to pieces.

The days and weeks after that night in the park were the darkest of my life. I couldn't talk to anyone, not my daughter, not even my husband. I felt as if I had sunk to the bottom of the ocean and there, utterly alone in the terrible blackness, I was being smothered by a thick, heavy shroud of burning hot shame.

It was a couple of months later when I got a call from one of my closest friends telling me about Rachel's Vineyard, a new ministry she was involved in that helped people to heal from the wounds of abortion. She

also shared about her own abortion experience for the first time. During that call, all I did was listen. But the next evening, it was my turn to pick up the phone; I was ready to talk. I think so many people have secrets like this in the family and it just needs someone to voice their heart cries, someone to give permission to talk, for other people to start telling their stories too. And that's what I did.

At first, we thought that the upcoming Rachel's Vineyard retreat was for my daughter but after talking it over with K, it was quite clear that she wasn't ready to take that journey yet. But I was. I needed some way to deal with the turmoil I was feeling in my heart, mind, and soul, so I signed up for the retreat instead.

I was uncomfortable at first being the only person there who hadn't actually had an abortion, but that feeling gradually faded away. Over that weekend, God began teaching me how to breathe again, how to see light again. I discovered to my surprise that I had a connection with the two babies that had been aborted. They are my two grandchildren. I was glad that I could acknowledge that. I was able to name them – my

Hope and Grace – mourn them, and release them.

Through the stories of my fellow retreatants, I began to understand my daughter better, what she could have been going through, and why she might have made the choices she did. It gave me hope that I could learn how to love her the way she needed to be loved, and that I could somehow help her rediscover her own preciousness, that very beautiful and fragile thing that had been lost and shattered in all the darkness of her life.

And over that weekend, I was finally able to confront my sense of failure and let it go. I learnt the very simple and very profound truth that my daughter is not me; she is who she is and the choices she makes are her own. That was very releasing for me.

I still have so many questions, and I know there won't be any answers until my daughter is ready to give voice to her own heart cries. But at least I can now breathe again while I wait and, even though the night isn't over yet, I have learnt to see through the darkness and perceive the light beyond.

Rachel's Vineyard Healing Retreats

Dates: Mon, 24 Oct – Wed, 26 Oct 2011 or Fri, 28 Oct – Sun, 30 Oct 2011

Time: Stay-in

Venue: Kingsmead Hall (behind the Church of St Ignatius)
8 Victoria Park Road

To Register: Online at www.rachelsvineyard.sg
Contact: Rose Boon at 9818 5102 or email roseboons@gmail.com

OUR SERVICES

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