

and THEN THERE WERE NONE

An Open Letter to Clinic Workers:

I started working at Planned Parenthood because I believed I was genuinely helping women make the best choices for their lives. I didn't grow up believing that abortion was a good choice for women, but since it was legal, I thought it must be okay. I thought it would certainly be better for a woman to have a legal abortion rather than an illegal abortion.

I thought that Planned Parenthood really believed in reducing the amount of unintended pregnancies; and therefore reducing the amount of abortions. I thought I was doing the right thing. I defended what I was doing. I believed in what I was doing. I was a true advocate of "choice." I argued with the people on the other side of the fence. I would argue abortion rights with anyone who would listen. I was rising up the Planned Parenthood corporate ladder. **I was the Planned Parenthood 2008 "Employee of the Year."** This was my life. I loved my job. I loved the patients we served. I thought I was helping them. I know you do, too.

Did I help women? Sure. I remember many of the women that I helped...the woman who hadn't had an exam in ten years, the woman who needed testing because her husband had been unfaithful, the woman who had never been checked for diabetes but was then diagnosed because we finally ran the test. I remember all of these women. I remember all of their stories. I helped them. I helped them receive the healthcare they needed, the healthcare they deserved. You know what else I remember? I remember the day I watched a 13-week old fetus fight for its life during an abortion procedure.

I remember looking at the bodies of aborted babies while I accounted for their arms, legs, and head. I remember being able to determine if the baby was a boy or girl. How did I justify my work for so long? How are you doing it? I think I tried to really believe that I was doing the right thing...the right thing for those women. But what about those babies? What about those lives that I was a part of terminating? Didn't they matter? Was it really ALL about the woman and her rights?

I have learned now what I didn't realize then. It is NOT just about the woman. Abortion is something that affects many people. Yes, it affects the woman; but it also affects the man involved, the extended family, and of course, the child growing in her womb. I saw abortion as something that was very one-sided...now I am able to see it as an issue that affects multiple people; multiple lives. It also affects your life as a clinic worker. You are witnessing things that are permanently damaging your mind. You are saying things to yourself and others that you will never be able to get out of your head.

You will dream about the work you are doing and what you have seen. It will not go away...not until you receive real healing. Healing can happen, but it won't until you take that first step and leave. I know it is scary. I know you may feel secure there. You may be a single mother, or you may depend on the insurance benefit...whatever your reason is, there is something better.

You have to trust in yourself and know that you are better than the work you are doing now.

NO ONE GROWS UP WANTING TO WORK AT AN ABORTION CLINIC.

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