

Abortion: Is there another alternative?

By Susan Kirvin
Staff writer

The news hit Angie like a runaway train. A nurse confirmed her suspicions — she was pregnant.

After recovering from the initial shock, she dried her tears and tried to sort out the millions of thoughts running through her head. Her next move was to consider what steps were necessary to put her life back in order.

At 18, Angie was a senior in high school, Catholic, living in Redondo Beach and unprepared for the responsibilities of motherhood.

There were a number of choices she considered. She could either keep her baby, give it up for adoption or have an abortion.

Her first choice was an abortion.

"It (abortion) passed through my mind like I'm sure it passes through everyone's mind. But I knew there was no way I could have an abortion and live with that decision," says Angie.

"I've always been very much against abortion. Life is getting so cheap. It's just too bad people are worried about extinction of animals, but not about our human species.

"I knew if I had an abortion I wouldn't be able to look at another child. I wouldn't be half as strong as I am now and aware of how beautiful and wonderful human life is.

"But I can understand what other girls are going through. When you're young, single and pregnant, the whole world feels like it's coming to an end."

It's been nine months since the birth of Angie's son. She keeps three pictures of the tiny infant in a photo album that serves as the only reminder of her brief stint as a mother.



Ms. Lester, above, listens intently to a caller's questions on the Lifeline. She says abortion is not a simple operation as many people believe and that pregnant women should be told all the facts about abortion.

Soon after the baby's birth, she gave him up for adoption. It is a decision she's learned to live with and one she's glad she made, although she has difficulty explaining her motives to others who don't understand.

"A lot of people ask, 'Don't you love your child? How could you give your baby up for adoption?' That used to really hurt," she muses, staring out her kitchen window.

"That was the hardest decision I've ever made in my life. I think adoption is a very beautiful thing. There are so many people who can bring joy and love to a child. That's how much I love my child — enough to unselfishly offer him to someone else to show my love.

"I knew if I had an abortion I wouldn't be able to look at another child."

"The first week after I gave him away I cried. I just pictured him. It really hurt...he was all mine."

Angie chose birth as an alternative to abortion, a choice groups like the South Bay Right-to-Life League wish more women would consider who find themselves unexpectedly pregnant.

All too often, say Right-to-Life advocates, a woman is pressured into having an abortion without being told of pro-life alternatives like keeping her baby or giving the baby up for adoption once it's born.

"Pregnancy is a natural phenomenon. Lots of girls don't know what an abortion is — it's a cop-out," says Sue Lester, a single, childless, volunteer at the Life Center in Torrance.

"The sales pitch is easy. But I don't believe the salesman who says abortion is a quick and easy solution. There are a lot of complications involved."

Angie recalls how pleasant and convincing social workers at a local hospital were who were counseling her on the simplicity of abortion as a solution to her untimely pregnancy.

"They made it sound so easy," she says. "They told me I'd be more scared if I gave my baby up for adoption than if I had an abortion.

"Fetal development is not a blob of protoplasm. I firmly believe that the fetus is a human being."

"She tried to make me believe it was a blob. She said I could tell my mother I was going away for the weekend."

Angie eventually sought out her parish priest for guidance.

"Women have to know all the facts," says Ms. Lester. "Women's rights are not fair as long as women aren't being told the truth."

"What we offer is a means to help see a woman through her pregnancy," injects Karen Poza, a Torrance mother of three and volunteer at the center. "Lots of women are pressured into having abortions who really don't desire them."



Staff photos by George Saenz
Sue Lester, above, one of 60 pro-life volunteers working through the South Bay Right-to-Life League, answers a caller's questions on the Lifeline, a 24-hour hotline persons may call inquiring about alternatives to abortion.

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Located in a small, modest suite at 1311 Crenshaw Blvd. in Torrance, the Life Center operates entirely on volunteer manpower.

There are some 60 pro-life supporters working through the center, among them volunteer psychiatrists, social workers, doctors and specially trained counselors.

Their mission is to educate more people on the pro-life alternatives to abortion.

Among the services available to pregnant women are pregnancy testing, professional social and psychiatric counseling

and financial, medical and legal assistance.

Films, books, slides for group use, trained speakers for lectures and Lifeline, a 24-hour hotline, also are available.

Volunteers at the center oppose abortion under any circumstances, arguing that it is murder and that the fetus is a living, human life.

They don't support the Supreme Court's decision three years ago legalizing abortion on demand to women.

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Abortion

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"Fetal development is not a blob of protoplasm," argues Mrs. Poza. "I firmly believe that the fetus is a human being. Biology is screaming that this is a human being but we fail to listen because of women's rights.

"From the very moment of conception, it is a human life that has the potential to grow in the womb.

"Having a baby is not the simple answer to abortion, but it's the most natural and loving."

What about abortion in cases involving rape, incest or birth defects?

"We don't approve of abortion under any circumstances," stresses Mrs. Poza. The

baby is not responsible for the rape.

"As for birth defects, we have this thing in our society that people have to be beautiful. Sure it's difficult for the child and family, but it's still the natural order of things.

"Sometimes those are the most loving lives. Life isn't always beautiful. We're becoming a nation that believes if you have a handicap, you're a problem to everyone else because you cost too much money. That's really sad.

In California there were approximately 143,000 abortions performed last year. I really consider them genocides.

"We're actually killing ourselves."