

Back to the Three Essential Skills

CHERYL KAYE WISNER'S MONTHLY UPDATE



OCTOBER 2015

Dear Family and Friends,

It's been just over three years since my first mission trip with Justice For All. My first outreach event at the University of Kansas back in 2012 is still vivid in my mind. I remember the people I talked with and I remember the moment I broke down in tears after feeling the weight of what abortion is and what it means to love hurting people.

Not a whole lot has changed now. I have more people forever in my mind and my prayers, and I still cry over the horror of abortion and over the hurt that I so often see. There is a significant change, however, in my experience having conversations. Since that first mission trip, I've had hundreds of conversation about abortion on several college campuses. I've heard the same arguments given in defense of abortion over and over again. They are no longer new to me.

Because of all of these experiences, sometimes I find myself not asking enough questions of the people with whom I'm talking. They give reasons for why they think that abortion is justified, and because I've had similar conversations numerous times, I don't ask many clarification questions about their specific views and I quickly assume that I understand their beliefs. I then jump to challenging their false ideas. I aim to do this in a loving way and, often, I have understood enough of what they believe to challenge them in good ways. Even though this has been working for me, I think there is a much better approach to having these kinds of conversations.

We don't need to be experts before we start asking simple questions that lead to someone understanding the truth about abortion. We can do it right now.


Recently, I was at an outreach event at Wichita State University. One of JFA's volunteers who is still learning how to have conversations asked me to listen to her have a conversation so I could give her advice on how to improve. As I listened to her interact with a strongly pro-choice young man, I was struck by the beauty and the simplicity of how she approached the conversation. She used all of the Three Essential Skills by asking a lot of good clarification questions, listening intently, and building genuine common ground.

She also continually directed the conversation back to the question, "What is the unborn?" The college student left the conversation with a clearer view of what he believed, and seeds had been planted for him to start wondering if he was wrong.

It then became clear to me that I've been overthinking my conversations by straining myself to ask the perfect question – one that is loving, shares the truth about abortion, and convicts the person I'm talking with – right away. That does happen sometimes, but I should also be happy with asking a lot of really simple, yet excellent questions. It's not always the most complicated questions that make the biggest difference. Besides, the more I ask, the better I can understand what people actually believe. This is critical if I want to pose helpful challenges to their views. I also need to remember that listening thoroughly and building genuine common ground are very important.

I'm sharing this with you because I'm continually being reminded how each of us can make an impact. We don't need to feel like we have the perfect question and we don't need to be experts before we start asking simple questions that lead to someone understanding the truth about abortion. We can do it right now.

I encourage you to ask someone what she (or he!) thinks about abortion. Then, listen to her response, acknowledge what you can agree on, and ask her another question about why she believes that. Your conversation may not be perfect, but it will be a good start. If you run into any views that you don't know how to respond to, please let me know and I'll do my best to help you out.

Love in Jesus, 



JUSTICE FOR ALL - TRAINING THOUSANDS TO MAKE ABORTION UNTHINKABLE FOR MILLIONS, ONE PERSON AT A TIME.

WEB: WWW.JFAWEB.ORG

EMAIL: CK.WISNER@JFAWEB.ORG

OFFICE PHONE: 316-683-6426