

The Impact of a Single Conversation


Impact Report

JUSTICE
FOR ALL

Jan. 2023

BECAUSE ONE PERSON CAN...

When we set out to help people change their minds about abortion, we focus on being a good representative of Christ, and we leave the results to God to accomplish as He sees fit. We don't evaluate our outreach events or conversations only based on people saying we've changed their minds or behavior. We realize many people simply don't share with us everything they're thinking during our conversations, and few follow up with us later even if we invite them to do so. Sometimes, though, we do get a glimpse of impact. During our August 2022 outreach at Wichita State University, Dillon returned to share how one conversation with Bella O'Neill (Intern, Fall 2021 and Spring 2022) affected him. In this report, Kristina Massa tells the story.

 - Steve Wagner, Executive Director

...CHANGE THE WORLD

Recently I was at Wichita State University (WSU) for outreach when two young men approached my colleague Tammy Cook and me at our poll table. Tammy asked, "Do either of you have any thoughts on abortion?" One student shared that he is pro-life. The other (whom I'll call "Dillon") said something that surprised Tammy and me:

"I used to be pro-choice, but I had a three-hour conversation about abortion with someone last school year. She pulverized all of my arguments. When I realized I couldn't respond to anything she said even in my head, I knew I had to change my mind."

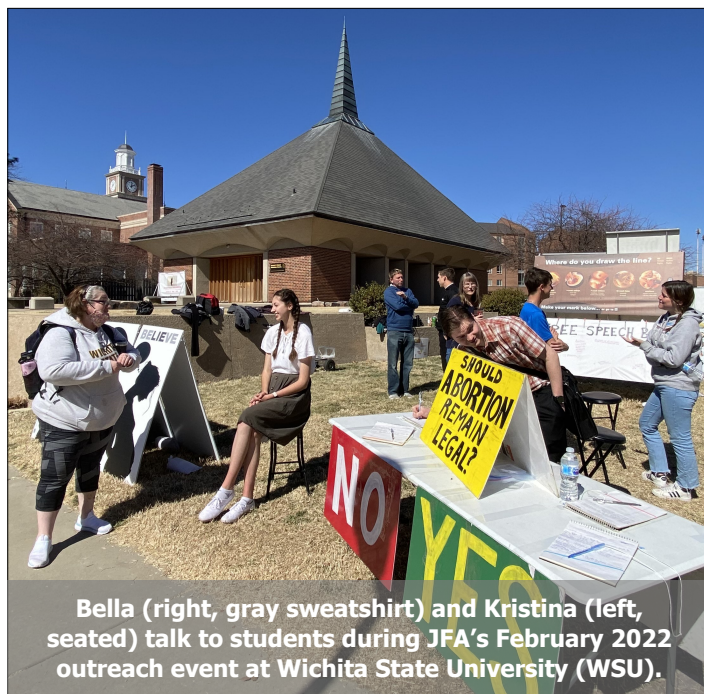
The "someone" he was referring to was my former colleague, Bella O'Neill. Their conversation had taken place six months earlier (February 2022). What began as a simple one-on-one survey with questions related to human rights turned into a comprehensive discourse with five other pro-choice advocates challenging her pro-life position. What's fascinating is that Dillon showed no sign of shifting his view throughout the duration of their discussion. If he had never come back, we wouldn't have known that he had re-evaluated his stance.

"You changed your mind after that one conversation?" Tammy asked.

"Yeah, she had a really good response to everything I said. If this was a debate, she definitely won." Dillon kept reiterating how well Bella had made her case.

"Did you know that...more babies are killed by abortion than there were victims of the Holocaust?" Dillon asked.

The rawness of his question caught me off guard.



Bella (right, gray sweatshirt) and Kristina (left, seated) talk to students during JFA's February 2022 outreach event at Wichita State University (WSU).



Bella O'Neill (seated) discusses abortion with a student during JFA's outreach event at the University of Texas at San Antonio in February 2022.



Not only was he suggesting that abortion is an injustice; he was implying that it's a genocide.

After his newfound pro-life conviction had proven itself authentic, I decided to challenge him with a more sophisticated pro-choice argument—an argument from bodily autonomy. Within a matter of seconds, he started breaking it down to explain why it wouldn't justify abortion.

Dillon's story is an important reminder that the impact of a single conversation is often hidden. It can be discouraging when we don't get to witness the fruits of our labor, but God occasionally rewards us with follow-up conversations like this one to affirm that, by His grace, our efforts are not in vain. With each conversation, we must persistently pray that He will continue the conversation in their minds after we "leave them with a pebble in their shoe" (as apologist Greg Koukl says).

Dillon's story also demonstrates the critical need for all pro-life people to prayerfully work up the courage to talk about abortion. So many of our peers are eagerly searching for truth. They desire an honest conversation that challenges the assumptions behind their current beliefs. Unfortunately, many of them have never had the chance to discuss their beliefs in a healthy way. Their opportunity to get closer to truth may begin with you.

If you would like to learn the conversation skills that Bella used with Dillon, please consider signing up for *Love3*, JFA's online interactive workshop series. We will teach you how to respond to common pro-choice arguments all in the context of being a loving ambassador for Christ. You can get more information and register for free at www.jfaweb.org/love3.

Bella's courage to talk about abortion gave Dillon an opportunity to encounter truth. And because of Dillon's desire to seek truth, he concluded that abortion is not merely a choice—it's the destruction of a person with rights. Please join me in prayerful thanksgiving for Bella saying "Yes!" to God's invitation to talk to Dillon, as well as Dillon's "Yes!" to humbly allowing the conversation to change his mind.

— Kristina Massa, for the JFA Team

Note: Kristina originally sent this story to supporters in September 2022.



Tammy Cook listens to a student at Wichita State University (WSU) in February 2022.



Kristina interacts with a WSU student in February 2022 in front of JFA's "Where Do You Draw the Line?" Kiosk and Free Speech Board.

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