



# Not as Pro-Choice as She Thought

Update from Jacob Burow - December 2012



“I’m pro-choice,” she said quickly and began edging away.

I could tell that she was not excited to talk with me about abortion. We were at the University of Colorado at Boulder, and I had just asked Lindsey what she thought about our sign.

“Okay,” I said, “can you tell me what *pro-choice* means to you?” I pointed to our new sign, which lists different reasons people give for allowing abortion, and asked, “Which of these do you think are good reasons, and which are bad reasons for abortion, if any?”

Lindsey read through the five reasons: *Rape, Fetal Deformity, Poverty, My Career, It’s A Girl.*

“I think that gender selection and fetal deformity are bad reasons,” she said. “But I think it should be legal in the other situations.”

I nodded, and seeing her begin to edge away again I said, “I agree with you that those two are definitely bad reasons for having an abortion. I am curious though; in the situations where you think abortion should remain legal, do you think it should be legal through all nine months?”

“Oh no,” she said quickly. “I think that third trimester abortions are wrong.”

I nodded again. “I agree that those are wrong. It seems especially wrong to kill the child when it can survive outside of the womb. So where exactly would you draw the line and say that abortion should not be allowed anymore?”

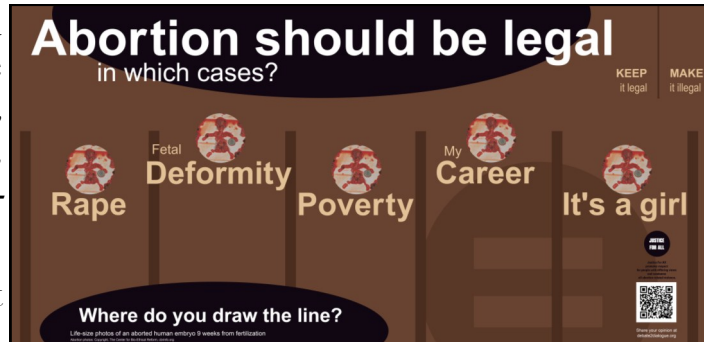
“If the baby has brainwaves.”

At this point in the conversation, I could have challenged Lindsey on the arbitrary point at which she assigned value to living humans. Instead, I chose to ask another question.

“Lindsey, my understanding is that we can measure brainwaves of the baby at about six weeks of development. Do you think that abortion should be illegal after that point?” I asked. She affirmed

that yes, abortion should be illegal after that point.

“Wow, it sounds like we have a lot of common ground then. Almost all surgical abortions happen after that six week mark. So it sounds like you and I would agree that most surgical abortions should be outlawed. Is that a correct understanding of your position?”



Helping to design and create new signs that will start conversation is one of many jobs that I enjoy at JFA.

Lindsey nodded slowly as she realized that it did not sound very pro-choice to agree that most abortions should be outlawed. She thanked me for the conversation, then excused herself saying that she was late for class.

One of my colleagues pointed out that all I did in this conversation was use what we call “The Three Essential Skills” of asking good questions, listening, and finding common ground. I did not challenge anything Lindsey said in the conversation. Now to be clear, there are certainly times to gently challenge people’s views, but with Lindsey, I sensed that it would be most productive to simply point out the practical ramifications of her beliefs by asking questions with an open heart.

I believe that this story demonstrates the power of using The Three Essential Skills in conversation. Without being offensive, or even challenging their claims, we can help people rethink their positions

on abortion in a gentle and loving manner.

I enjoy getting to teach people how to use these skills in the JFA training program. I see our volunteers grow tremendously as they learn The Three Essential Skills by practicing them in our seminar and then by using them in real situations during campus outreach events.

This year has been exciting, and I am looking forward to next year with great

anticipation.

Praise be to God for Jesus Christ, that we can be made right with God through the precious blood of His son! Make the most of every opportunity to share the gospel with someone who does not know Jesus. May God bless you this Christmas season!

Grace and peace to you through Jesus Christ,



Jon Wagner and I recently used this new sign at Wichita State University. The new design works well at starting conversations.

*Thank you all for your generous support of my work! Please prayerfully consider increasing the amount you give, or making that commitment to begin financially supporting my work with JFA.*