

“I Don’t Think That Abortion is Violent.”

I was speaking to Kate and two other pro-choice women about abortion at the University of Texas at San Antonio (UTSA) this March. Kate stopped the conversation in its tracks when I described surgical abortion as the violent killing of a human being.

Kate: I wouldn’t agree with that, I don’t think abortion is violent at all.

I tend to put aside misunderstandings like this because the killing of the unborn is wrong whether it is violent or not; why get hung up on a distinction that doesn’t change the moral argument? However, as I spoke to these three women, I realized that this particular misunderstanding was critical to their justification of abortion.

So I continued:

Jeremy: Do you know how surgical abortion procedures work?

Kate: I don’t, but my friend here does. How do abortion procedures work?

Kate’s Friend: For surgical abortions, the doctor basically reaches in, cuts the cells loose from the uterus, and then takes them out in one piece. It is not violent at all, about as violent as getting a mole removed.

Many pro-life advocates don’t understand how on earth pro-choice people can think abortion is acceptable. My



I helped Students For Life of America with their outreach event at UTSA in March. You can see me speaking with Kate and her friends in the background of this picture.

conversation with these three women reveals a very common way: they suppress the inconvenient reality of the procedure. They tell themselves, “Why would anyone object to getting a mole removed? After all, abortion is a very similar procedure.”

So I started discussing something I rarely get into: the technical details of an abortion procedure. I took them to abortionprocedures.com on my phone. On that site, Dr. Anthony Levatino, who has performed over 1,200 abortions, describes the procedures. I showed them an animated video of a Dilation and Evacuation abortion, which is fully legal, even here in Texas. The video

clearly showed a depiction of the unborn being dismembered and taken out piece by piece. I asked the women what they thought of the video.

Kate: That does look very violent. That can't be what abortion is like.

Kate's Friend: Is that doctor pro-life or pro-choice?

Jeremy: He was pro-choice most of his life, but he became pro-life after performing over 1,200 abortions.

Kate's Friend: And I'm sure a pro-choice doctor would say something completely different, so stop trying to use biased sources on us.

Jeremy: I agree that any source you find will have some biases. However, biases can't change facts, and how abortion procedures are performed is an uncontroversial fact for both pro-life and pro-choice doctors.

Kate: That site is fake news.

It was an amazing moment. The women saw the uncontroversial, documented truth about abortion, and they could not accept it. They preferred to disbelieve the truth so that they could maintain their pro-choice position. Although I was disappointed, I still feel that this moment may have been a tipping point in the lives of these women. As William Wilberforce said as he showed people the reality of slavery, "You may choose to look the other way, but you can never say again that you did not know." Once this seed of truth is planted in Kate's and her friend's minds, God can do amazing things with it.

Many pro-life advocates, and some of my supporters, ask me why it is necessary to show pictures of the violence of abortion. Doesn't everybody already know that abortion is violent? These three women I spoke with pose a powerful reason for showing the images—many use their lack of understanding of this violence to maintain their stance that abortion is morally acceptable. That's why abortion victim photos are so important. It's not that the grotesque nature of abortion makes it wrong. It's that the harsh reality of abortion utterly destroys many people's attempts to defend it to themselves. It forces them to confront the reality that abortion is not simply the removal of cells, but is always the ending of a human life.

Do you have friends or colleagues that are pro-choice because they believe in a sanitized version of abortion? I would bet that this is the case for many of them. Perhaps you are the only one in their lives who is willing to start a conversation about the reality of abortion. Imagine what a difference you could make by simply explaining the truth about abortion in a loving way. Sometimes, you don't need to make any complex arguments. As I did, you can pull up pictures, descriptions, and videos of abortion procedures on your phone for them. (One helpful resource is JFA's "What Are the Facts?" page at www.jfaweb.org/facts. See, in particular, medical descriptions of different abortion procedures from pro-choice or neutral sources under #6.) And just as with the three women I spoke with at UTSA, your friends may indeed choose to look the other way. But they can never again say that they did not know.

— Jeremy