



# Rebecca's Reflections



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## *Pro-Choice, Pro-Feminism, Pro-Cats... Wait, What?*

Dear Family and Friends,

As I conversed with two University of Georgia (UGA) students, “Andrea” joined the conversation by voicing some of her own concerns. It was quickly obvious that Andrea thought abortion should be in legal in most cases. I, along with the two men I had been talking to, invited her to join our conversation and stick around for a while. She did. After an hour she had to leave, but before she did she extended her hand to shake mine. What she had to say brought me several surprises. She said something like,

“Thank you. This is the first time I have ever talked to a pro-life person who could have an intellectual conversation and not have it turn into a completely emotional argument. Your arguments are very logical. I’m still pro-choice but I can see what you are trying to present.

“And, hey, did you see my shirt? I promise that I didn’t wear it today just because you guys [JFA] are on campus. I did not even know you would be here today. But what a coincidence that I put it on this morning and now we are having this conversation together!”

She then turned toward me and gave me a moment to read her shirt. With the picture of a large black cat at the center of the shirt, it read,

**“Pro-Choice. Pro-Feminism. Pro-Cat.”**

I was surprised, first, by her willingness to admit that she thought my arguments for the pro-life position were logical. Most people who disagree with me are very hesitant to do so. Secondly, even though she thought my arguments were logical, she quickly admitted she was still pro-choice. This was a clear example of what we teach our volunteers during our seminar—that even if the information we present seems reasonable to pro-choice advocates, they may need time to ponder what they have learned before they choose to change their minds. They react very similarly to how I react when my current beliefs are challenged. When I learn something new, especially something that is contrary to my past beliefs, I need time to process the information. Even if I understand intellectually, sometimes my heart needs time to catch up with my mind. Third, I was oblivious to her shirt throughout the entire conversation until she pointed it out. I consider this a blessing, because if I’d seen it earlier I might have been tempted to make judgments.

From an outside perspective, many people assume that two people who so openly “wear” their passions on their sleeves (me, through pro-life activism with the Justice For All Exhibit and Andrea, on the front of her shirt) would not be able to have a productive conversation about the very subject that seems to divide them. However, a productive conversation is exactly what took place when I talked with Andrea.



After reading her shirt I asked Andrea, “Would you be willing to take a picture with me?”

She obliged and one of the guys in the conversation with us offered to take our picture.



Andrea cared about being pro-choice for a long time, but until that day on UGA’s campus, she had *never* had a conversation about abortion that she thought was productive and based on something other than completely emotional arguments. Because of her past experience, she did not think it was possible.

Many pro-life advocates do not think it is possible either. If you know someone who believes that discussions about controversial subjects, like abortion, have to become contentious conversations, reach out to them. Encourage them that a *different* kind of conversation is possible. Help them see that these *different* kinds of conversations are what actually make a *difference*. Share this newsletter with them or share stories of other productive conversations relating to abortion.

*Rebecca J. Hasche*