



Rebecca's Reflections

June 2010



Last month you learned the importance of asking questions (Skill #1), and particularly asking “what” and “why” when discussing the topic of abortion.

Here's a story that will help you understand the importance of Skill #2: listening.

My colleague, Steve Wagner, engaged an University of Colorado student at our outreach a few years ago. After awhile, the student said, “If you're not going to listen to me, I'm just going to leave.” And he did.

Steve learned from that conversation that if he was more interested in telling the student his opinion than listening to what the student had to say, the conversation was essentially over.

Skill #2: Listen to understand.

Let's assume that you've asked a good question. What should you do next?

Listen for their answer.

If we listen just long enough to say what we want to say, we can't really listen to what the other person is saying. We're too focused on what WE are going to say next. Listen to reflect, not refute.

Listen like we wish our parents had listened to us. Or, if you are a parent, listen like you wish your children would listen to you!

Listen to understand. True listening shows we care about the person. It's one

of the greatest gifts we can give in conversation. It builds trust and rapport. It also helps others enjoy talking to us.

Many times the person who is defensive about abortion is hurting from an abortion. Should we encounter someone who has experienced abortion in some way, listening is the most important thing we can do for that person.

Over the coming weeks, as you talk with other people, try to make an effort to practice using these skills no matter what the subject.

Tools for Effective Dialogue

3 Essential Skills

Skill #1: Ask Questions

1. Don't assume you know what the other person thinks, feels, or intends. Ask!
2. Ask “**What..?**”. **What** do you believe? **What** did you mean by...? This gathers information and makes clarifications of beliefs.
3. Ask “**Why..?**”. **Why** do you believe that? **Why** do you feel the unborn isn't human? “Why questions” ask for evidence and reverse the burden of proof.

Skill #2: Listen

See **Skill #2** in this newsletter

Skill #3: Build Common Ground

Coming in my July newsletter

- Adapted from training materials developed by Stephen Wagner, Justice For All Director of Training

I would love to hear from you in a quick email or note to let me know how your next conversation about abortion went for you. If you would like me to share your experience in my next newsletter (anonymously if you wish), please let me know!

Thanks for your continued support to help JFA make abortion unthinkable. I'm so blessed by your financial gifts and your prayers. Please let me know how I can pray for you. God bless you!

Defending life together,

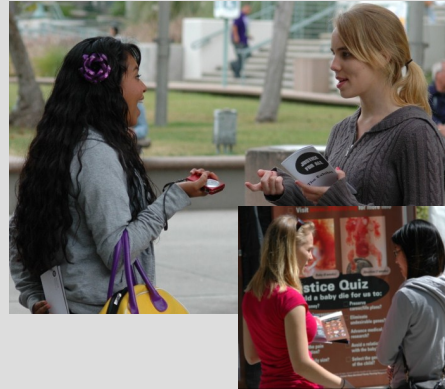


Rebecca L. Haschke

What A Difference Listening Can Make

As the Justice For All (JFA) team travels, not only do we take the JFA Exhibit onto campuses to share the reality of abortion with college students, but through our seminar (Abortion: From Debate to Dialogue) we teach volunteers how to share this message too.

Deborah Haag, a volunteer who has joined the JFA team for multiple campus outreaches, wrote a reflection after her experience in Pasadena City College this past May. She is pictured to the right talking to students in California. Here is a preview from her reflection to show you how listening affected her conversations.



The next day on campus was easier than I thought it would have been. I found it a lot easier to listen. I found that through listening more I had more productive conversations. Not like when I was doing the talking, it was as if they got bored of my examples, analogies and statistics. They just wanted me to listen to how they felt, and what they were going through.

LISTENING- That is how I met Mark. He told me that his now ex-girlfriend had an abortion. He did not even know she was pregnant until after the abortion. He was mad at her for a long time. He said that this would have been his first child and now he will never know if he would have had a son or daughter.*

That is also how I met Adriel. He told me that he has a 3 year old daughter and she is the best thing that has ever happened to him. He said that when his girlfriend told him that she was pregnant he was overseas in the military. He said when he found out he kept trying to talk his girlfriend into having an abortion. She said absolutely not. He said now he is so glad that she was hard headed and gave him this little girl!*

You can read Deborah's full reflection at <http://www.jfaweb.org/becca/Reflection.pdf>

*Name changed for privacy.