



## “I’d Rather Be Aborted.”

Dear Friend of Justice For All,

It’s such a simple mistake, and it’s so easy to prevent. *Many pro-life advocates process statements defending abortion only intellectually.* This causes them either to immediately launch into an intellectual response or to stay silent because they haven’t studied the particulars of the topics raised. If they will simply pause, though, and take time to sympathize with what the person is saying, they can not only find something to say, but they can also say precisely the thing that will open the other person’s heart to the unborn child.

Rebekah Dyer gives excellent teaching on how to employ this insight with one common abortion-choice argument in her recent post for the Human Defense Initiative (HDI): “I’d Rather Be Aborted.” You can read a version of the article enclosed, or see [www.jfaweb.org/april-2024](http://www.jfaweb.org/april-2024).

In virtually every training event we lead, whether it’s an interactive workshop or an outreach event where volunteers are learning to converse with people who disagree, we emphasize this need to “be relational first, and then be intellectual.” I suggest sharing Rebekah’s letter with others to help them learn this easy strategy that can transform conversations. Thank you for helping us bring this essential equipping to Christians all over the country.

*Sm* Steve Wagner, Executive Director



### Recent & Upcoming Outreach Events

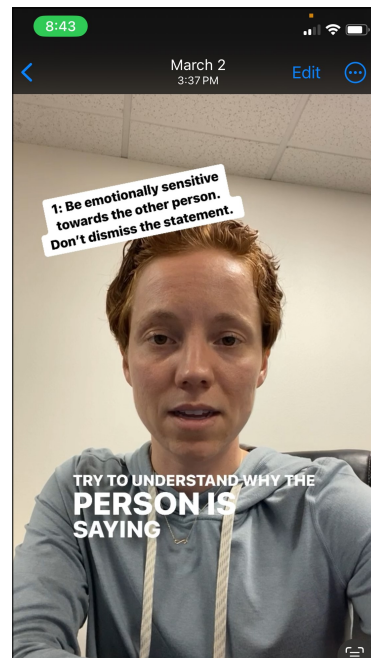
- 2/12-14 Univ. of Arizona (AZ) & UTSA/TSU (TX)
- 3/4-6 Univ. of Cincinnati (OH)
- 3/13 Palomar College (CA)
- 3/25 Tarleton State University (TX)
- 3/26-28 Texas Woman’s Univ. / UNT (TX)
- 4/2-3 Grand Valley State Univ. (MI)
- 4/15-24 Mesa, Adams State, Mines, CSU (CO)
- 5/5-8 UN Kearney (NE)
- 5/20-22 UCLA (CA)
- 8/26-28 Wayne State College (NE)
- 9/9-10 Colorado State in Fort Collins (CO)
- 9/11-12 Univ. of Wyoming (WY)

*We offer free, interactive workshops connected to each of the above, as well as in other places!*

**See All Events & Register:** [jfaweb.org/calendar](http://jfaweb.org/calendar)

### Recent Social Media Post

Rebekah collaborated with Human Defense Initiative on a video version of the “I’d Rather Be Aborted” post for the Instagram Reel shown here. Check it out!



Share it with Friends: [@picturejusticeforall](https://www.instagram.com/picturejusticeforall)



Justice For All Exists Because One Person Can Change the World



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# “I’d Rather Be Aborted”



REBEKAH DYER’S JFA UPDATE



APRIL 2024

Dear Friend,

“I’d rather be aborted.” “I wish I was aborted.” I’ve had people say things like this to me in conversations. I’ve seen the sentiment on a sticker on an electrical box outside Planned Parenthood and written on JFA’s Free Speech Board.

These kinds of statements demand a careful, compassionate response rather than a quick retort or an argument.

Sometimes I’ve heard pro-life people respond by saying something like, “Well, if you were aborted, you wouldn’t be here.” For many people, that was precisely the point they were trying to make: “I wish I was dead.”

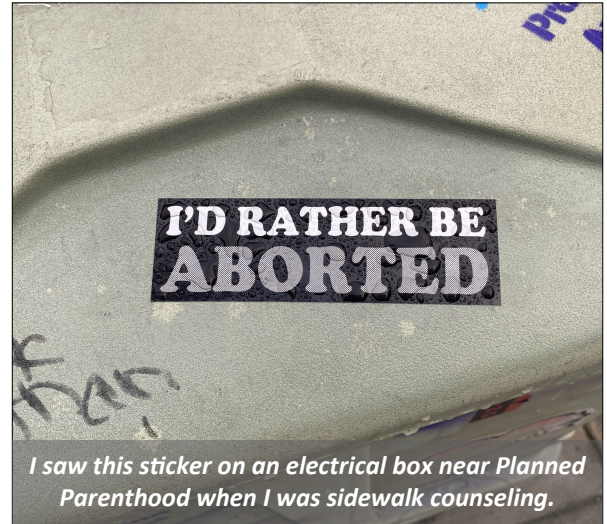
For someone to say she’d rather be dead speaks to something much deeper that needs our attention. A person’s view on the killing of vulnerable human beings by abortion is important, and we do need to dismantle bad ideas and worldviews. It is equally important, though, to care for her personal life and experience.

If a person can’t see her own value and would rather be dead, it’s likely she is going to have a difficult time understanding the incredible value an unborn child has. In my experience, most conversations about abortion aren’t purely intellectual. It’s not just about presenting good arguments for the equal rights of unborn human beings, as important as that is. It’s about so much more than this.

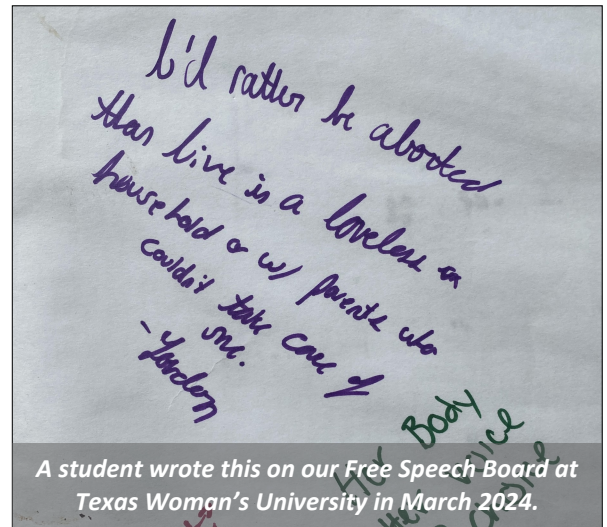
For those who may disagree with my response so far, I’d like to clarify that I’m not saying people must understand their own worth before they can see value in others. I think it’s possible for people to not see themselves as valuable and still respect and honor someone else’s right to life. What I am saying is that the fact that the person may not value her own life is an important piece of the conversation, and we shouldn’t ignore it.

The “I wish I had been aborted” statements could be coming from a suicidal place, but they could also be a way someone is trying to describe a painful part of her current experience. Pain and suffering wear on people and can lead them to use language that expresses a desire to die even if they may not literally mean that.

The personal, painful places in people’s lives often come up when I’m talking to people at universities across the country. While it can be challenging to deal with the emotional trauma people have, it’s good to understand



I saw this sticker on an electrical box near Planned Parenthood when I was sidewalk counseling.



A student wrote this on our Free Speech Board at Texas Woman's University in March 2024.



those parts of people's lives because those experiences matter. They inform how this person sees the world and how she views other people.

The truth is better understood and more easily received when people know we love them. Taking time to listen carefully to others and being slow to speak is a special gift we can extend to everyone.

Be willing to go slow with people. Listen to what they are saying. Listen to what they are *not* saying. Watch their body language and their expressions. Their stories and the reasons for their views are worth your time.

I think if we start with this relational approach with people, we will reach their hearts, and that in turn can make them more inclined to hear the intellectual arguments we will make. This can play a great part in influencing how they think about the value of their lives and the lives of unborn children. When we do this, I believe we will not only help people by helping bear their burdens, but we will also help foster a world that is safer for vulnerable human beings in the womb.

Once we take care to be relationally sensitive to the "I'd rather be aborted" statement, we need to focus on a question that is often overlooked in conversation: "What is the unborn?" That is a question that we must answer when discussing abortion because the whole issue largely hinges on how people answer that question.

People for and against legal abortion do not disagree that issues like poverty, abuse in foster care, not feeling ready for a child, and similar concerns are important. What we disagree about is how many people are involved in these situations. If abortion is not killing a human being like you and me, then only one human is involved, and abortion should be legal. But if the unborn is a human like you and me, then in every pregnancy we have more than one human being – the mother and the child – and both of them should be protected legally from violence.

Once we clarify this, I think it's interesting to think about the "I'd rather be aborted" statement in terms of "forcing" a particular view of suffering on someone else since the result of abortion is a dead human being. Generally when people use the "forcing a view on someone else" language, it's not accurate since "force" involves some kind of violence or threat of violence. Often people are accused of this when they are just having conversations and exchanging ideas in the public square. Having conversations isn't violence. But abortion *is* violence. It ends the life of the unborn child. If one person says she'd rather be aborted, that view of life and suffering should not be forced on an innocent child via abortion.

One person may believe it's better to die than to suffer. Maybe she wishes she had been aborted. It's important to sympathize with her feelings of despair and not dismiss them. Since more than one human being is involved in pregnancy, though, we should also consider the rights and perspective of this other individual.

Maybe the unborn child will appreciate and be grateful for her life even in the midst of suffering. Maybe she will see her suffering as an opportunity to overcome and be stronger. We don't know given that we cannot communicate with her. *Yet*. So who are we to force a particular view of suffering (that it is worse to suffer than to live) on her by killing her before she even gets a chance to express what her will and desires are?

If we can clarify that the unborn child is human like you and me, then it doesn't make sense to use future suffering of the child or our own current suffering to justify killing her. What makes us think that we have the right to look at someone else's life, judge how much she might suffer, and then kill her so she doesn't have to go through the suffering? Someone else should not be given the power to look at your life and end it based on her beliefs about your future suffering and the best way to address suffering. In the same way, we cannot and should not make that call for someone else's life.

For the unborn and their parents,

Rebekah

*Note: A version of this article was originally published on April 8, 2024 at Human Defense Initiative ([www.humandefense.com/id-rather-be-aborted](http://www.humandefense.com/id-rather-be-aborted)).*



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