**Symptoms of Post-Abortion Trauma**

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| * Bouts of crying * Depression * Guilt * Inability to forgive yourself * Intense grief/ sadness * Anger/ rage * Emotional numbness * Sexual problems or promiscuity * Eating disorders * Lowered self esteem | * Drug and alcohol abuse * Nightmares and sleep disturbances * Suicidal urges * Difficulty with relationships * Anxiety and panic attacks * Flashbacks * Multiple abortions * Pattern of repeat crisis pregnancy * Discomfort around babies or pregnant women * Fear/ ambivalence of pregnancy |

**The Effects of Abortion – Comments from Rachel’s Vineyard Website**

**The abortion ruined my self-esteem**. I do not stand up for my beliefs and rely heavily upon what others think I should do and or be, and especially if they are well-educated, I feel they are more knowledgeable and are able to make better decisions then myself.- Linda

**My abortion has left me with a feeling of emptiness.** I feel as though I am not as good as everyone else because of what I did. I went against everything I believed in because I lacked courage. I am angry at him, at my friends, and especially at myself. This Christmas, my baby would have been born. I can't stop thinking about it. I just keep picturing my baby. - Marguerite

**I feel unholy, guilty and selfish**. I feel I have failed the Lord and my upbringing. I still can't believe I could have done what I did. I want to feel I have been forgiven, and I will be in heaven with the Lord. - Gerry

**The abortion that I have had has caused me to shut out all emotional contact with both men and women**. I am so afraid of opening myself up to a relationship for fear of getting hurt. I feel like I have done the worst kind of evil in this world -- murder -- and to think that I did not even know then that it was murder. I knew but I didn't feel. How could I have been so unaware, uncaring, insensitive, stupid? - Patricia

**My abortion has left me with a empty place in my heart and life**. My family feels somewhat incomplete, when we are all home together, I get the sense that someone is so definitely missing. I have felt a great deal of sorrow and regret over the effect this has had on all of us. As a mother, I struggle with the reality that I destroyed my child. - Teresa

**This abortion has affected me by making me feel so much less about myself**. It has made me feel I don't deserve to live. I have hurt myself, by burning, cutting or any other type of self mutilation so I can feel alive. I have been so numb. I want to live a normal life and I want my daughter to be able to grow up without me being a constant shield over her. I feel she may be taken from me for what I have done and that I must protect her. I want a happy normal life for her and for myself. – Lisa

**The abortion has caused me to be depressed for the past 12 years (since the abortion).** It has interfered with my bonding relationship with my children, especially the oldest. However, it has continued to interfere with the rest of my relationships, including my ability to love (freely) my husband. And, of course, it has decreased my self-esteem which was low to begin with. I have an overwhelming sense of guilt because of my decision to follow through with the abortion. -Donna

**My abortion has caused a severe lack of self-esteem and self-worth.** Yet, it has caused me to be a strong supporter of pro-life issues. I've suffered alone and the result has been self-imposed isolation from society to the point of being terrified to attend public functions. My need to nurture my surviving children has resulted in a "smothering" effect. I have been unable to look people in the eye for fear they may see my secret. - Monica

**My wife and I had an abortion before we were married**. We tried to put it behind us, out of our minds. But everything changed. My wife grew distant from me physically and emotionally. It felt like we were going through the motions. There was this unspoken chasm between us that we just couldn't cross. I felt angry, alone and when she would bring it up, I felt so ashamed and threatened by her and my own pain that I just shut her down. This only made things worse. - John

**For eighteen years I suffered over my abortion.** I was angry at myself for not being strong enough to have the children. I condemned myself as I thought God had. I did not feel that I deserved to be forgiven for what I had done. I wanted to be punished, and since no one punished me severely enough, I punished my own self. I did not feel worthy of God's love or forgiveness. Last year, I found that forgiveness. I accepted God's forgiveness -- it was always there. I also forgave myself. I have not accepted these children as mine -- probably because of how they got here -- through incest. - Catherine

**My abortion has left me empty, alone and in despair**. It has taken me to a place I almost couldn't come back from. The self-hatred I see every time I look in the mirror has been my constant companion for the last ten years. - Lori

**The lies have affected me the most**: the Big Lie that it all is and all the tangled webs of lies that make it up, compromise it and cover it up. The truth is that I have been affected; one of the lies is that you just move on unaffected. My heart turned cold. I just strived to survive in an empty existence - not a true life. I pretended I wasn't hurt but I was terribly so. - Anne

**I now realize that the abortion made me lose a part of myself that I never knew was there** -- a trusting and loving person towards others and myself. It built up a wall towards those who were involved. I have seen a side of them that was more selfish than anything. My experience took a part of myself that I lost for years. - Susan

**One thing that my abortion has done to me is to cause or encourage an eating disorder.** I know my abortion has caused much self-hatred that was expressed in my eating disorder and many other problems. - Anonymous