



New Grandbabies – Abortion Reality Check

By Trudy M. Johnson, M.A., LMFT

I had compartmentalized my voluntary pregnancy termination so many years ago while in college. Now as I was holding this wee little bundle of a grandchild I was hit with emotion I didn't know how to handle.

Working with women who reach a new level of reality concerning the deep dark secret of their abortion choice, I never cease to be amazed at how the birth of that first grandchild can be an incredible trigger. On one hand I am always comforted that I am not alone in this place of pain. On the other hand, I never cease to be amazed at how much buried angst resides in the hearts of women who've made a choice decision.

I had reached some level of healing over a period of years. But abortion is (I say probably much too often) the gift that keeps on giving. I was visiting my son and his wife after the birth of my first grandchild. I was excited about the visit. I thought the plane to Ft. Lauderdale from Colorado would never get there. I thought I was prepared for seeing Collin Grant. The name fits him appropriately now. But at the time, I thought it was an awfully grown up name for a brand new baby. I imagined that "first hold." But in retrospect there was no way to fathom what looking down in that little face wrapped in the soft flannel blanket would mean to me. Words can't describe the emotion that welled up strong inside of me.

I thought I was prepared, but I wasn't. This is often the reaction I hear from other ladies who also go through the experience of that "first grandbaby hold." The impact of the generational flow of life is beyond comprehension and very powerful. When you add the component of grief surrounding your own decision for voluntary pregnancy termination, the experience is a double edged sword. The little bundle is a reminder of the hope of the future and a reminder of things not meant to be from the past.

Future and past meet and even collide. Women of choice are often overcome with an unexpected flow of happiness and grief when they meet their first grandbaby. If you have chosen a voluntary pregnancy termination you need to know that grief after an abortion choice is real. While our culture says that

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abortion is the closure, what I see from my personal vantage point and also the professional venue, the abortion is a start of a long process to resolution.

Here are some things to consider if you are a Grandmother with voluntary pregnancy termination in your past.

- 1). The grief you feel is real. You are experiencing disenfranchised grief over your abortion experience. There is no permission to grieve your choice. There is no public forum to even talk about what you feel.
- 2). You are not alone. Over 50 million women have made choice decisions. The majority of us feel just like you do. We want to cry, but don't feel like we deserve that option.
- 3). Grieving an abortion is a process that can take many years and can run in cycles. An event like holding your first grandchild can trigger all those feelings of confusion and sadness to rise up inside of you.
- 4). There is a lot of hope and many places to talk about your abortion experience where people understand how you are feeling. You can go to www.amazon.com and type in "help after abortion" to find books on the subject.
- 5). You can find a support group where other ladies feel the same as you. There is a lot of comfort available in a support group setting. The best Web site I've found for this help is www.abortionrecovery.org They will have a listing of counselors and support groups and other helpers available 24 hours a day.

Be encouraged! You are not alone in your overwhelming celebration of new life and sadness over life that wasn't allowed. Collin Grant is an amazing person. I feel so privileged to be "his Gammy." I will always remember holding him that very first time. Even when he walks down the aisle at his high school graduation, I will think of him as that little person all wrapped up in the soft blue blanket. I grieve, but not without hope.

That little baby gave me hope for new beginnings. I wish this hope for all my sisters of choice who sit silently in their prison of silence over a past voluntary pregnancy termination.

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