



Should I have been aborted...

What about rape?

"My biological father is a rapist. But my life isn't worth any less than yours because of the way I was conceived. I did not deserve the death penalty because of the crime of my father." Pam Stenzel

A personal story

Miss T was raped three years ago. The following is her response to abortion:

"I'm writing to say I was out shopping the other day and was handed a leaflet. I was busy so I put it on top of my son's pram and carried on. I got home, sat down with a cup of tea and started reading ... it made me cry. You see I don't agree with abortions.

"I have a two year old son but not by someone I love or loved. I was raped, but I still kept my baby. Having an abortion didn't cross my mind, not for one second. I can't believe women would even think of killing their own baby.

"More than 500 a day makes me sick. So many women want children but can't. It's so sad.

"I'm glad people are sticking up for unborn babies."

[Letter from Miss T, England]

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Abortion - - "Nobody told me..."
Rape is horrific but abortion is not the solution - many women report that their abortions felt like a degrading and brutal form of medical rape. Abortion involves a painful examination of a woman's sexual organs by a masked stranger who is invading her body.
Once she is on the operating table, she loses control over her body. It's too late to change your mind. This is what you wanted. We have to finish now." And while she lies there tense and helpless, the life hidden within her is literally sucked out of her womb.
The difference? In a sexual rape, a woman is robbed of her purity; in this medical rape she is robbed of her maternity. Rather than easing the psychological burdens of the woman, abortion adds to them, as experienced by Jackie Bakker, who reports: "I soon discovered that the aftermath of my abortion continued a long time after the memory of my rape had faded. I felt empty and horrible. Nobody told me about the pain I would feel deep within causing nightmares and deep depressions. They had all told me that after the abortion I could continue my life as if nothing had happened."

"It never ceases to amaze me that something so precious and wonderful came from something so terrible. He's my beautiful boy and I wouldn't change him for the world."
[The Sun, 21 January 2004]

Lisa, 16, was raped. She was devastated but kept her baby because "he was just as much a victim as I was and I wasn't going to make him suffer." At first, she rejected her baby but eventually she came to love him.

"I have a right to be here!"
Abortion after rape is misdirected anger. It doesn't punish the rapist, or prevent further assaults against other women. But it does kill an innocent child, a child who has the right to live. As Julie Makimaa, conceived in rape, says, "It doesn't matter how I began. What matters is who I will become"

Regaining self-respect
The biggest trauma for many pregnant rape victims is not the pregnancy but the memory of being raped. By giving birth, the woman can reclaim some of her lost self-esteem. It is proof that she is better than the rapist. While he was selfish, she can be generous. While he was destroying, she can be nurturing. The welfare of the mother and child are never at odds: both the mother and child are helped by *preserving* life, not by perpetuating violence.

True compassion
Pregnancy as a result of rape is rare. A woman is only fertile for 3-7 days during her monthly cycle and the extreme physical and psychological trauma of being raped make it difficult for fertilisation or implantation to occur. Society assumes that rape victims who become pregnant would naturally want abortions but over 75% of pregnant rape victims refuse abortion, [Pregnancy and Sexual Assault, *New Perspectives on Human Abortion* (1981), Dr. Sandra Mahkorn]. The rape experience cannot be undone; both mother and child need compassion and support, not a second act of violence. Abortion after rape is false compassion.

[Based on articles from www.spjnc.org.uk/students/abortion/rape (1), (3) www.afterabortion.org/rape.html (2) and www.feministsforlife.org/Q&A/Q2.html]