

# Father No More

Whatever your role was, one thing is certain. Your natural role as a father was cut short. As put by Dr. Vincent Rue, a leading psychologist dealing with post-abortion issues among men:

*“Abortion rewrites the rules of masculinity. Whether or not the male was involved in the abortion decision, his inability to function in a socially prescribed manner leaves him wounded and confused.”<sup>2</sup>*

As a man, you naturally begin to take on the responsibility of protecting the child. It's how you are wired. But, because of the abortion, you are no longer able to fulfill this role. You may develop anger, resentment and guilt. You may not even realize where these feelings are coming from. They often come out in destructive behaviors - excessive drinking, drug use, depression, suicidal feelings, risk taking or maybe running from relationship to relationship unable to make commitments.

Men have no legal rights concerning abortion. Under the law, your opinion doesn't count. If you were against the abortion, you may feel powerless, helpless to control events around you. If you pushed hard for the abortion, you may feel selfish or like you abandoned your partner when she really needed you. Or you may just feel like running to a place where no one will ever recognize you.

Maybe you didn't even know about the pregnancy and abortion until after the fact. If you disagreed with the decision, you may feel rage, even hatred toward your partner. Your own child was aborted and you weren't even asked for your viewpoint.

One thing almost all fathers feel after abortion is a sense of emptiness. You may be plagued with thoughts of your lost child. Thoughts about what things you might have done together. Things like playing baseball, learning to fish, or maybe building a doll house for that special doll...

## What now?

There is hope! There are a few things that you have to do to start things happening. You need to want to change before you can heal. Sometimes looking at yourself and your situation can be painful. Without a real desire to heal, it's tough to make changes.

Are you an “Aborted Father” - one whose child was aborted with or without your consent? There are many ways to get help if you are a man. For a man, there are very few places you can turn. Here is a start.

## So, how are you feeling?

When your child was aborted, you probably felt relieved. But shortly after that you may have felt uncomfortable emotions coming to the surface. Emotions that you would rather not deal with.

These feelings are common among fathers like you. What you experience depends on what your role was in the abortion. You may have been involved in one of 5 ways<sup>1</sup>:

- You encouraged or supported the woman to choose abortion
- You pressured her to abort
- You abandoned her to make the decision alone
- You unsuccessfully opposed the abortion
- You learned after it happened

Here is a simple road map. It's not perfect, but it will get you started on a path to becoming whole again.

## 1. Forgive the mom

If you are feeling anger or even rage toward your partner, you can't heal yourself. You have to be willing to forgive her. Whatever her part, whatever she said or did, you still have to forgive her. It was ultimately her choice to end the life of your child.

## 2. Forgive yourself

“Before grieving can begin, you must handle your personal guilt before God and others and your anger toward the persons who made the decision...”, says Dr. Wayne Brauning, founder of MARC (Men's Abortion ReCOVERY).<sup>2</sup>

Yes, if you were involved in the abortion decision, you have made a terrible mistake. Yet, God will forgive any sin, whether minor or life-shattering.

## 3. Grieve

OK, this will probably be awkward for you. But it's absolutely necessary. Here's what Dr. Vincent Rue, says about it:

*“Men do grieve following abortion, but they are more likely to deny their grief ... rather than openly express (it) ... When men do express their grief, they try to do so in culturally prescribed “masculine” ways, i.e. anger, aggressiveness, control. Men typically grieve in a private way following an abortion ... A guilt-ridden, tormented male does not easily love or accept love... his denial of himself and his relentless feelings of post-abortion emptiness can nullify even the best of intentions.”<sup>3</sup>*

Simply put, grieving is hard for a man to do. Somehow in our society, it has become taboo for a man to show his feelings. Somehow, normal human emotions like sadness, or even crying, have become only "feminine" traits.

You need to admit to yourself exactly what you and your partner have done. Denying what has happened is a cover-up and keeps you from healing at all. You need to grieve for the little one that is no longer living. Grieve for the horrible decisions that were made. Grieve for those around you that are greatly affected by the abortion - for the grandparents that will never bounce their grand kids on their knee or read them a bedtime story. Your sorrow will probably be profound and moving. It is real sorrow for a real act that has been committed.

#### 4. And what about the relationship?

It is not uncommon for the relationship to fail after an abortion. And the failure often comes from your side. It goes like this: You wanted relief from the responsibility, and got it. But now, your partner reminds you of a very bad time in your life. One that you would rather forget. You reason that the best thing would be to break up. And perhaps that could be true. But, if this is a person you really love and want to spend your time with, you have some "fixing" to do.

As the person who made the final decision, your partner is hurting. She may be subject to something called "Post Abortion Syndrome". We have been talking about the same thing, only from a man's point of view. As you gather strength from forgiving her, forgiving yourself, and grieving for your loss, be there for her. Let her use your strength to heal.

Be ready for all kinds of emotions. If she feels you pushed her into abortion, you are in for some difficult discussions - admitting wrong, asking for forgiveness, trying to make up for something that can never really be made up for. It's a long road, don't try to face it alone.

Trying to carry this burden yourself is an impossible task. There is little chance that you will be able to understand the power of self-forgiveness until you experience the forgiveness of God. If you don't really know God, perhaps that is where to start this whole process. The healing of your soul and the healing from the effects of abortion can go hand-in-hand. Many of the people at the help centers listed at the end of this piece do what they do because of their belief in the forgiving and saving power of Jesus.

And many of these centers are now reaching out and offering resources for aborted fathers.

Why not begin your healing today? Get some help, and get a new start on the rest of your life.

##### **Fathers and Brothers Ministries**

350 Broadway, Suite 40  
Boulder, CO 80303 (303) 494-3282  
Support and counseling for men.

##### **P.A.C.E. (Post Abortion Counseling & Education)**

CareNet  
109 Carpenter Drive, Suite 100  
Sterling, VA 20164 (800) 395-HELP  
Refers for post abortion peer counseling services throughout the country.

##### **National Organization of Post Abortion Healing And Reconciliation (NOPAHR)**

P.O. Box 07477  
Milwaukee, WI 53207-2203 (414) 483-4141  
National office of Project Rachel, a ministry of the Catholic Church. Confidential help from people struggling with post abortion issues. Open to all.

##### **Healing Hearts Ministry**

2717 York Rd., Oak Brook, IL 60521  
(630) 990-0909 or (888) 217-8679  
One on one and support group counseling.

##### **Rachel's Vineyard Ministries**

P.O. Box 195  
Bridgeport, PA 19405 (877) HOPE-4-ME  
www.rachelsvineyard.org  
Post-abortion weekend retreats and support groups.

##### **Heartbeat International**

7870 Olentangy River Road, Columbus, OH 43235-1319  
(800) 395-HELP. Materials and training.

##### **Ramah International**

1776 Hudson Street  
Englewood, FL 34223 sydna@aol.com  
www.ramahinternational.org  
Training programs, resources, research, world abortion issues.

Other web sites: [www.afterabortion.org](http://www.afterabortion.org), [www.afterabortion.com](http://www.afterabortion.com),  
[www.priestsforlife.org](http://www.priestsforlife.org)

Links to and listings of organizations, web sites or materials do not imply endorsement of those services.

### Sources and Resources

1. Williams, Warren, Restoring Fatherhood Lost, *Post Abortion Review*, 4(4), Fall 1996, accessed online at: <http://www.afterabortion.org/PAR/V4/n4/LOSTDAD.htm> on 2-14-08.
2. Brauning, Wayne, Men and Abortion, Grief and Healing, *Post Abortion Review*, 4(4), Fall 1996, accessed online at: <http://www.afterabortion.org/PAR/V4/n4/WayneBrauningMenandAbortion.htm> on 2-14-08.
3. Rue, Vincent, The Effects of Abortion on Men, *Ethics and Medics* 21(4):3, 1996.

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## Where are the *Fathers* of Abortion?

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