

SUPPORT

AFTER ABORTION



KEYS TO HOPE AND HEALING FOR MEN

A joint resource from *The Word Among Us Partners*
& *Support After Abortion*.

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The Word Among Us Partners
7115 Guilford Drive, Suite 100
Frederick, Maryland 21704

<https://www.waupartners.org>

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Key Six

Giving Hope to Others

You have now used five keys to open doors to further your own hope and healing. Now you are about to take up **Key 6: Giving Hope to Others**. As you will see, your story and your experience can be the key to helping other men start their own healing journey.

Step 1.

Here's a story about sharing hope and healing which may make you smile. (Adapted from *The Star Thrower*, by Loren Eiseley)

A man took his morning walk along a beach when he noticed hundreds of starfish washed up just above the waterline. He didn't think much about it until, a little further along, he saw a young boy throwing the starfish one at a time back into the ocean. "Why are you doing that?" he asked, somewhat cynically. "Because," said the boy, "I want them to have the chance to live." "Oh, don't waste your time, there are so many, you won't make any difference," the man said. But the boy bent down, picked up another starfish, and with a big swing of his arm, tossed it back into the ocean. Then turning to the man, he said, "It made a difference to that one." The man stopped, thought, and joined the

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boy tossing starfish into the ocean. Others saw what they were doing and soon joined in too.

Questions Following the Starfish Story

- What are you taking away from this story?
- How did the boy's response, "It made a difference to that one," make you feel?

It is such a great feeling when we realize our words or actions have made a difference in someone's life. Think of some ways you've been touched by another's thoughtfulness and how others have been touched by your words or actions.

Just like the boy throwing back starfish into the ocean, you have an opportunity to make a difference in someone's life—one person at a time.

Often, opportunities to make a difference in someone's life come in unexpected ways. Remember how it was mentioned in the second key how other men know something of what you were feeling because they had walked in your path? Well, you may find opportunities to *pay it forward* by saying, "I know how you feel; I've been there—you're not alone," to a man who opens up to you about his abortion story.

One man, Justin, had an opportunity to give hope and encouragement while having a drink with a friend. Suddenly, his friend said, "Please stop Justin. What I've got to say may shock you. But I've got to tell someone: five years ago, I took my girlfriend for an abortion." Another man, Kurt, was waiting for a delayed flight at an airport. When he eventually boarded, a man with whom he had briefly spoken, sat next to him. By the end of the

flight, the man had shared how he felt about not being included in the decision to abort his child.

For each man that either Justin or Kurt encountered, his abortion story was his *dark secret*. They hadn't told anyone because of reasons that you know only too well. They didn't know that healing moves forward with sharing their story with a trusted friend—or even a stranger. In recovery programs the phrase “You're as sick as your secrets” is used often. And it truly applies here.

But now, you hold a key that could change a life. You know that no man needs to suffer alone. You can be there for them—in person or through social media. You know **Support After Abortion staff** can provide them with people and resources to begin processing their emotions. And you can even give a copy of this booklet to them.

You don't have to talk about your abortion journey if you're not ready. It is crucial to make sure you don't cause further harm to yourself and others. You'll know when the time is right for you. Someone initially may just need a friend who understands—listening may be the best thing you can do!

Actions

- Recall some of the ways you have been touched by another's thoughtfulness. You might even want to send a text or make a phone call to thank someone. By reaching out in this way, you could make their day!
- Is there anyone you know suffering from an abortion decision that you could support by your understanding and compassionate listening?

Larry's Story

Life was definitely good in my teens and early twenties. I spent my time doing what I loved—chasing adrenaline with extreme sports like mountain biking, marathons, and triathlons. I also had a job I enjoyed with a landscaping company. I could be outside, and the pay was good. Oh, I had the usual worries over getting more money and wanting to impress women, but my life was relatively carefree.

But that changed dramatically when Cheryl, who I'd been dating almost a year, announced she was pregnant. This being her second pregnancy, she knew her options, and we talked about them. She told me that if she kept the child I would need to be involved in its life.

In my late twenties, commitment, fatherhood, and responsibilities were the last things I wanted. Although we decided together for abortion, there's no doubt that my input tipped the scales. I didn't think for one moment that the abortion would affect our relationship. But once back at her place, she changed her tune saying, "I don't want you in my life anymore. We are done. You are all about you." No amount of trying to convince her in the coming weeks with flowers and a piece of jewelry softened her. She ended things between us.

Life was no longer good. I thought I had made the best decision for me. Still, I had tremendous guilt and shame for disregarding life in the womb—I knew that it wasn't just tissue—and not offering Cheryl support to keep the child. I was full of self-loathing for my utter selfishness. I was frightened at how depressed and suicidal I was becoming. My abortion experience had changed

who I was. Drugs helped numb the pain but didn't help my job performance.

I owe it to my boss, who was prepared to give me a second chance if I went to a drug recovery program. There, I met Paul, who shared why he started using drugs—his own involvement in an abortion. We've been friends now for ten years.

Together we got involved in an after-abortion support program for men—I never knew those existed—and I began working through my unresolved thoughts and feelings. Hearing the men's stories helped me identify and acknowledge other emotions and how I needed to forgive myself. Together with Paul, I now often share my story with other men. I just want them to have hope and to know they are not alone in their pain. Life is once again good, and it gets better the more I am able to give hope to others.

What Did You Think?

- What did you take away from Larry's story?
- What are some things you related to?

Step 2.

Just like you read in Larry's story, many men begin sharing their stories in small groups to give others hope that they are not alone. In small support groups, the confidentiality of "What is shared here, stays here" is always stressed. But outside of that arena, if sharing your story with friends, ask them to respect your confidence by not mentioning it to others. It's your story to communicate with each person who is trusted to hear it.

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You'll know when you're ready to begin telling your story. Be willing to be vulnerable and to be yourself. There is no right or wrong way to share. You'll know what to say and how much to say.

This brings me to an important question that you may or may not feel ready to consider. If you are not prepared to answer it, do not put pressure on yourself. The question is:

- *Who is there that should know about your abortion involvement?* Perhaps your current spouse or partner, or a family member?

Take a moment to think about this question. Perhaps make a list of the names of people who come to mind. Consider how you would want to approach them. You could seek input about doing this from a trusted friend or counselor. Remember: if this thought makes you feel uncomfortable, then perhaps now is not the time to move on it.

If you're invited to share your story with a broader audience, you may well be revealing others' stories. Your story is their story too. While it is vitally important to share the truth of your story to the best of your ability, it is equally important to think of the other people in your story. It can be a good idea to not use real names, for example, so as not to damage someone else.

Another point: if accepting an invitation to share beyond a small support group setting, you ought to mention it ahead of time to anyone involved in your abortion story if you are in contact with them currently.

That said, are you ready to begin thinking about *paying it forward*? Have you ever thought of the positive impact you could

have on another man's life? It is such a privilege to bring hope to another person. It will further your own healing.

Isn't it incredible to think that your story could be the key to open a door for another's healing? You'll be amazed at how opportunities will come to share your experience. Remember the stories of Justin, Kurt, Larry, or the boy tossing starfish back into the ocean? They were changing one life at a time. And we're confident that when the time is right, you will be too!

Actions

- Take a picture of the resources and support organizations starting on page on page 54. Then you'll have it at your fingertips ready to pass onto others.
- Think of where you can share a PDF or print copy of this booklet for others to view.

Points to Review

- I can change one life at a time for any man suffering with his abortion story. Because he knows that I've walked the same path, I will assure him that he's not alone.
- There are different platforms on which to share my abortion journey.

Final Thought and Meditation

“Vulnerability is not winning or losing; it’s having the courage to show up and be seen when we have no control over the outcome. Vulnerability is not weakness; it’s our greatest measure of courage.”—Brené Brown

“Start where you are. Use what you have. Do what you can.”—Arthur Ashe

There Is More for You

Please don’t think of this as the final key. That’s because we hear the rattling of many other keys that will open more and more doors for you on your healing journey in the coming days, weeks, months, and years. Perhaps you will find them in the resources listed at the back of this booklet. You’ll know what they are. Please pick these keys up for yourself and share them with other men recovering from an abortion decision.

Start Your Support Here

Support After Abortion (SAA)

844-289-HOPE (4673)

supportafterabortion.com

National Agencies

Alcoholics Anonymous (AA)

212-870-3400

www.aa.org

Narcotics Anonymous (NA)

818-773-9999

www.na.org

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline

800-273-8255

www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org

National Domestic Violence Hotline

800-799-7233

www.thehotline.org

National Human Trafficking Hotline

888-373-7888

Text 2 337 733

www.humantraffickinghotline.org

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Co-Dependents Anonymous

888-444-2359

www.coda.org

RAINN: Rape, Abuse, Incest National Network

800-656-4673

www.rainn.org

National Alliance on Mental Health

800-950-6264

www.nami.org

Grief Resource Network

828-726-9554

www.griefresourcenetwork.com-crisis-center/hotlines

Grief Anonymous

www.griefanonymous.com

American Pregnancy Helpline—Miscarriages

866-942-6466

www.thehelpline.org

Crisis Text Line

Text 74174

www.crisistextline.org

Start Your Support Here

Faith Based Agencies

Project Rachel: Hope After Abortion

888-456-HOPE (4673)

www.hopeafterabortion.org

Esperanza Posaborto

888-456-HOPE (4673)

www.esperanzaposaborto.org

Rachel's Vineyard Ministries

877-HOPE-4-ME

www.rachelsvineyard.org

Lumina/Hope & Healing After Abortion

877-586-4621

www.postabortionhelp.com

Project Joseph

469-720-2273 (CARE)

healing@projectjosephdallas.org

Men and Abortion

513-729-3600

www.menandabortion.net

Online Support

Abortion Changes You

www.abortionchangesyou.com

Support After Abortion

Prayer Lines

Christian Broadcasting Network with the 700 Club

Prayer Line

800-700-7000

www.1.cbn.com

Joy FM Prayer Line

877-800-7729

www.florida.thejoyfm.com

Trinity Broadcasting Network Prayer Line

888-731-1000

www.tbn.org

Daystar Prayer Line

800-329-0029

Bethel Church Prayer Line

530-255-2066

www.bethel.com/ministries/healing-rooms/

Breakthrough Prayer Line

800-424-8644

Life Outreach International Prayer Line

800-947-5433

www.lifetoday.org

Start Your Support Here

Morris Cerullo Prayer Line

866-756-4200

www.mcwe.com

Crossroads Prayer Line

866-273-4444

www.crossroads.ca

Family Broadcasting Corporation Prayer Line

800-365-3732

www.familybroadcastingcorporation.com

There Is Support After Abortion

If you are a man that has been affected by an abortion experience, this booklet can help you. You are not alone in how you are feeling right now. Many men have been affected by abortion and have gone through a range of emotions and differing experiences and are now on the path to hope and healing. You will find their stories and the steps they took in this booklet.

If you want to speak to someone right now, contact **Support After Abortion**. Our staff is here to help you and provide you with compassionate care that leads to healing and restoration.

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844-289-HOPE (4673)

<https://www.supportafterabortion.com>

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