



Rebecca's Reflections



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The Power of a Picture

This past semester at the University of Oklahoma (OU), I had a five minute conversation with “Peter,” a man from Senegal. The end of our conversation took a turn I was not expecting. I began the dialogue by asking him to take a survey, each question of which asked for a “yes” or “no” response. Halfway through the survey the conversation went as follows:

Rebecca: I have a picture that accurately depicts how U.S. law allows women to treat the unborn. It is very graphic. Are you willing to view it before answering our final question?

Peter: Yes.

Rebecca: [Showing Peter a picture of an embryo after a 9-week abortion]

Do you believe abortion should continue to be legal in the first trimester for any reason the woman wants it?

Peter: No.

Throughout the survey, each of his responses consistently indicated that he believed the unborn are valuable humans, so at the end of the survey, I continued the conversation by asking this follow-up question:

Rebecca: In the survey, you answered that you do not think abortion should be legal in the first trimester. Have you always felt this way?

Peter: If I hadn't seen that picture, I would have said it *should be legal* in the first trimester, but I changed my mind when I saw this picture.



Several years ago, high school students from Lincoln participated in an outreach at the University of Nebraska—Lincoln (UNL). The two high school students pictured above, wearing the brown and red shirts, were conducting a survey with the UNL student seated on the stairs. This survey was similar to the survey I conducted with “Peter.” Although he already held a Justice For All Exhibit brochure in his right hand, the UNL student grabbed a second brochure to better examine the picture.

His response was not what I expected. If he had not viewed the picture of the abortion, we would have likely had a very different conversation. In that moment, both this young man and I were shown the power of a picture.



However, not every student changes his mind the moment he sees a picture of abortion. Often, students still have many questions about the humanity of the unborn or about women's rights. They have hesitations about the consequences of illegalizing abortion. Yet, even during a conversation with a student who has these concerns, a picture like the one I showed Peter helps express a truth in much greater depth than words alone can.

Sometimes a picture has the power to prick even a hardened conscience. I've found in my life, in fact, that it can take a lot to reach my conscience. It's easy for all of us to become apathetic about a particular subject if apathy is the very thing that allows us to live more

comfortably. This pricking of the conscience is the same thing that can force a student to stop avoiding the subject of abortion. Viewing abortion imagery makes him uncomfortable with the consequences of his pro-choice views, and thus develops within him an internal conflict.

It's this internal conflict between a person's initial pro-choice concerns and the reality he is now faced with that prompts him to ask important questions. Thus, a conversation ensues, whether internal or verbal. This is why I train pro-life advocates in the art of dialogue. I want each pro-choice student who sees the reality of abortion to be able to have a conversation when this internal questioning begins. I want each of these conversations to take place with pro-life advocates who can answer questions with truth and love; pro-life advocates who can guide pro-choice advocates to understand why they feel internally conflicted; pro-life advocates who can help those who've disagreed with them to finally see that it should not be legal to violate the dignity of human beings by killing them.

For Peter, though, words weren't necessary. His heart was soft, and there was enough power in the picture alone to transform his view. Please pray that God would similarly soften the hearts of students who will see images of abortion this year on the campuses I visit. Please also pray that each of us who believe abortion should be illegal would continue to prepare for the moment we have the opportunity to have a conversation. Finally, pray that we would actively seek opportunities to share this message with the many people who, unlike Peter, need to have a conversation after seeing the pictures in order for their views to change.

Thank you for all your support, which has allowed me to equip others to have these conversations. If you would ever like to be trained in this way, please join me on a mission trip! Let me know if you are interested. I would be honored to work side-by-side with you in the very places to which your support has sent me.

Defending life together,

Rebecca J. Haschke

