

The side of the story you never hear.....

I was 22 years old, just 18 months earlier I was at the end of my Arts Degree completing all subjects successfully and I met my boyfriend. My innocence as a young woman was about to change, little did I realize this.

The relationship with my boyfriend rapidly progressed. Only a few months after we met I moved towns, against my family's wishes. What had begun as a beautiful relationship declined, I found myself in a psychologically abusive relationship and amongst this with someone who used marijuana regularly. I began to smoke the drug, what started as a one off progressed into every night of the week, to weekends which included mixing the drug with alcohol. What is more, I had always battled depression and was at the time being treated for my depression with medication. What a mix, marijuana, anti-depressants and alcohol.

By the time 12 months had passed the relationship deteriorated. After a failed suicide attempt, I moved out and tried to live independently, but under the intense need for what I thought was 'love' I couldn't escape my boyfriend and neither the substance abuse. I was alone, desperate and exhausted. Every day I would wake up in my little unit and vomit, my nerves were beyond my control and vomiting every day took its toll on my body, in particular my liver. I believed I was nothing and had no-one...

Once again I tried to detach myself from my boyfriend and moved back to my home town, the last place I wanted to be. Feeling like I was a failure, sad, lost and miserable suicidal thoughts pervaded my mind every day. Moving home to a family that had its fair share of struggles was tough. A mother who has battled isolation and mental illness all her life and my father a beautiful man whom had just two years earlier told me he wanted to 'kill himself' as my mother had requested a divorce. I supported my father through this time, lending him a small amount of my sleeping pills and reminding him of what he had to live for one reason which was me. But coming back to my home town I felt I had deceived my father as I 'couldn't see the forest through the trees' and did not want to live.

My father's home was more depressing as he lived in the large family house I grew up in and with just myself and dad it was tough. I decided to take refuge with my mother, however her living arrangements with a perverted and a very 'screwed up' man intimidated me and I stayed at a friend place for some time.

Eventually I became stronger and moved back with my father. It had been a few months and I had gained my driver's license and a car. This freedom was my lifeline; however things took a turn for the worse. My ex-partner and I resumed contact, eventually getting back together. My father was devastated, but accepted my decision.

The relationship became rapidly destructive. I began to smoke marijuana again trying to disguise this from my parents. What is more, I had been accepted by some of the best universities in Australia to study teaching. My life was 'all over the shop', I was confused and didn't know which way was up or down. Then I missed my period, I began to question in my mind if I was pregnant. ***This question was true I was pregnant 23 battling mental illness, a drug habit, little to no finance and in a relationship with a man who had no respect for me, my mind, heart or soul.***

I knew in my heart that I was not ready to be a mother. It was not just about being a mother; it was about the child yet unborn, but what kind of a life could I offer this little person who did not ask to be born? I looked for advice, from close family friends, one a qualified midwife, spiritual advice from my spiritual advisor and close friends.

The worst was when I told my father I was pregnant. When I told him his eyes lit up as bright as ever, this hurt me to the bitter core. My partner was happy about the pregnancy and wanted everyone to know. I didn't.

I decided to go away for week to stay at a friends place and make my decision as to what I would do. I came to believe that I had to 'make the choice' to have a termination; I could not bring a baby into this world as I could not give the baby what it would need for a good life. I had made my decision.



Upon return I told my partner, my father and my mother. My partner told me 'I was killing his baby', my father would not talk to me and my mother believed I had excluded her from the process. The state I was living in at the time did not conduct abortions and I received a referral to travel to a town close by over the border.

The pre-examination conducted included an ultra-sound at which my partner requested a picture of. I couldn't look at the picture, but requested the nurse give a copy to him. The next day I was in hospital for the surgery, I faintly remember going into the surgery hearing Kenny Rogers playing, the surgeon obviously a fan of this music.

I woke up, I remember feeling nothingness about me, something was gone and it was like I was experiencing my cycle. Eventually my partner took me to a friend's place and dropped me off and left me there. I was alone...

A few days later I remember ringing my partner, he was at the pub. He answered the phone stating 'this is the abortion clinic; no fetus will beat us'. I didn't know what to say, I felt guilt, sadness and at the same time bad. About two weeks later, my partner answered the phone in the same manner and I had enough, I ended the relationship I had to. Once he had left, he left me with a reminder that I will never forget he had hidden the ultra sound picture in my draw.

Even now I look back at that time and my memories are so clear. You don't ever forget, you just learn to live with 'your choice' and although I know I made the right decision, you cannot take away the sense of grief you feel for another life, whether it be good or bad. I know that the unborn child will always be in a better place than he or she would have been with me.

My child would have been 6 this year, I have not forgotten, the termination took place February 19, 2002. Not a day goes by when I don't pass a thought for what happened and yes I have done the 'what if's' in my mind so many times. But for all the 'what if's', the grief and loss, I know that I made my choice ***in the best interests of my unborn child***, not for me.