

Cognitive Dissonance within the US Medical Profession by Barb Yagley

How do people trained to heal cope with doing abortions?

The short answer is special-training.

Abortion providers have not been highly regarded within the medical profession, but the demand for their services has remained relatively constant for two generations. The medical schools have tried to reduce the stigma and increase the number of abortionists by offering (and sometimes, mandating) abortion training for students and residents. But new doctors have found that abortion is more involved than just practicing the technique on a papaya. As one Medical Student for Choice put it, *"It's a lot more invasive than I thought. A papaya doesn't bleed and scream. Women do."* [She] didn't want to have to steel herself emotionally to perform abortions, and she was coming to realize that that's what she'd have to do. Somebody else – maybe would become an abortion provider. But it wouldn't be her.¹

What do abortionists do to steel themselves emotionally? When you “see a small foot hanging from the teeth of [your] forceps” and then feel a “fluttery ‘thump, thump’ in [your] own uterus”, how do you process that experience? A few years ago, an assistant professor at U-M's Medical School wrote a paper about provider perspective of doing second trimester abortions using that very experience as an example.² She admitted that “[d]oing second trimester abortions did not get easier after my pregnancy; in fact, dealing with little infant parts of my born baby only made dealing with dismembered fetal parts sadder.” However, through a “series of values clarification exercises” and “on-going team building around some of the difficult aspects” of second trimester abortions, she and her staff have overcome the natural revulsion to dismembering tiny human beings.

Other abortionists developed different coping mechanisms, such as storing fetal remains in jars and making jokes about the little victims³.

“Beam me up, Scotty”, [the abortion doctor] said lightheartedly to the nurse⁴, who then turned on the suction which removed a 13 week old fetus before the eyes of former clinic director, Abby Johnson. Watching on an ultrasound screen, she “could see the tiny body violently twisting... then the little body crumpled and began disappearing into the cannula before my eyes. I glanced at [the patient's] face –

1 **A Hard Choice**. By Patricia Meisol, Washington Post, Sunday, November 23, 2008

2 **“Second Trimester Abortion Provision: Breaking the Silence and Changing the Discourse”**, Dr. Lisa H. Harris, Reproductive Health Matters, 2008; 16(31 Supplement); 74-81;

See also **“Abortionist Reflects on Dismembering One Baby While Feeling Her Own Flutter in Her Womb”** By Kathleen Gilbert. [LifeSiteNews.com](http://www.lifesitenews.com/news/archive/ldn/2009/oct/09101501) <http://www.lifesitenews.com/news/archive/ldn/2009/oct/09101501>

3 Dr. Kermit Gosnell of Philadelphia is the most recent one; but Dr. Stephen Brigham of Maryland is another abortionist who seems to have a fetish for fetal remains (www.lifenews.com/2010/09/06/state-5422/ and <http://www.mbp.state.md.us/BPQAPP/orders/D7121308.310.pdf>).

4 **UnPLANNED** by Abby Johnson, p.5

more tears and a grimace of pain". How is it that the two medical professionals could make a joke about a medical procedure which so visibly took the life of a tiny human being – and provoked such a dramatic career change to the clinic director?

Some have called Kermit Gosnell a “monster” but one Philadelphia columnist had different memories of this abortion doctor growing up. Elmer Smith wrote, *“Kermit Gosnell was that kid that your mother always said you should be like. He represented the best and brightest in our neighborhood, the kind of boy we all knew was going to make something of himself someday. ... He was a standout, tall with sandy hair and freckles, an exceptional student who was trusted and respected even by the adults at West Branch Y.*

I'm still trying to figure out what happened in the years since I've seen Kermit Gosnell that may have turned one of our best and brightest into a man who murdered babies for profit.”⁵

What happened to Kermit Gosnell was nearly 40 years of desensitization caused by abortion practice. Realizing that doctors now go through “values clarification” training, I haven't been able to look at commercials for our hospitals, especially U-M Hospital's “Michigan Difference” without cynicism. Perhaps if we all saw what the abortionists see in their line of work, there would be fewer abortions.

5 “This monster wasn't the kid I once knew” By Elmer Smith, Philadelphia Daily News, January 21, 2011