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I was 14 years old and pregnant. The clinic my mother took me to was supposed to be a “renowned” women’s health facility with a staff of caring health “professionals”. Never in my life had I seen such a group of uncaring, unprofessional people.

The forms I was given to complete prior to the procedure was the only thing extensive or comprehensive about the care I received. I was provided minimal counseling and education in preparation for the procedure and follow-up care was non-existent. More than that, once the procedure was completed my baby’s remains were left discarded in a bucket right there for me to see. The next day my body spontaneously aborted a second fetus. Unbeknownst to me I was pregnant with twins and the victim of a botched abortion.

In the years that followed, I discovered more and more the power of prescription medication to numb my emotions and dull the nightmares. I was not above abusing pills, even to the point of overdosing. Left to my own devices I managed to destroy my marriage and end up in jail paying consequences for choices I made while under the influence of pills. I suffered severe depression and anxiety, had attempted suicide and was diagnosed agoraphobic. Yet, I struggled as to why. Sure, there were things I could blame, but it was only when I began my post abortion recovery work that it became clear how deeply rooted my pain was and how strongly my abortion experience was still affecting me. I never imagined it possible that that was the underlying cause of my being the way I was, and yet, as I moved through the steps everything began making sense. I learned to identify triggers, small, seemingly irrelevant details that would leave me in a tailspin of fear, insecurity, guilt, rage and anxiety. It did not seem possible that it all connected back to my abortion. More than learning to recognize triggers, I was equipped with tools for coping with them when they did come up.

I will be 33 years old next month. For the first time since age 14 I am not being treated for depression. I no longer suffer from anxiety. There are no more nightmares. For the first time since 1984, I am medication free.

Thanks to Victims of Choice and My Abortion Grief Guilt and Shame Is Ending Soon, I am free to move beyond my abortion experience to a place of healing. It’s not easy, and doesn’t come quickly, but it is necessary. Embarking on this journey is the greatest gift you can give to yourself.

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