A sepia-toned photograph of a woman with long dark hair, sitting in bed and looking out a window. She is holding a white mug with both hands. The room is softly lit, and the overall mood is contemplative and peaceful.

Inner Healing After Abortion

*Love and Support for Women
Who Have Terminated a Pregnancy*

Marilyn Gryte

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Love and Support
for Women Who Have Terminated a Pregnancy

by Marilyn Gryte, M.S.

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*with special appreciation to
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*Dedicated to those who have made
difficult decisions and have found
the courage to thrive.*

Beginning Your Healing Journey

This book is for you if you have had an abortion for whatever reason and feel unfinished in making peace with your decision. However recently or long ago you had the abortion, whether or not you have felt supported or alone, whether you believe you would make the same decision now or a different one, this book is for you.

It is your right to heal and thrive.

It is in your power to find a new self-acceptance.

Love and care for yourself. You are beginning a journey.

You needn't feel lost. There is a path and there are trail markers and places to rest along the way.

The journey of healing involves:

- ~ recognizing the effect of the abortion on your life now
- ~ listening to your feelings
- ~ recognizing negative messages you tell yourself
- ~ learning new messages of self-respect
- ~ creatively finishing your journey
- ~ celebrating your present and future life

Sometimes you need to open a wound so healing can happen at a deeper layer. While this is painful work, making peace with your grief is liberating. All the energy you used to push away hurt and pain can be recycled back into creative living.

You deserve to feel whole and free again.

You are worthy of joy.

If You Have Just Had an Abortion

If your abortion was just hours or days ago, be very gentle with yourself. You may feel numb, overwhelmed, or feel a wave of relief. There are no *right* ways to feel. Simply recognize whatever feelings are yours right now.

If your feelings are distressing, talk with a trusted, caring person. This was probably one of the most difficult decisions you have ever made. Difficult decisions cause many feelings to surface. Know that these feelings will likely quiet with time and support.

Think about what you need and want to do to mark this event in your life. Deciding to heal and to have the best life possible is a simple and bold place to begin.

The people helping with your abortion have told you about what to watch for medically. If you have any uncertainty call them right away.

- ~ Be sure you are clear about how much bleeding, cramping or elevated temperature is acceptable and what should alert you to get more medical care.
- ~ Be sure you are clear about how much physical activity you can do.
- ~ Find out when tub bathing, sexual intercourse and use of tampons are safe. It may also be a time for rethinking sexual choices and contraception.
- ~ Inquire about post-abortion counseling services in your area so you know what resources they offer.

Limit the demands on your time and energy for the next few days. Surround yourself with supportive people, comforting things and the assurance that you will find your way in making peace with this abortion.

You are worthy of support and love.

Listening to Your Feelings

Pregnancy is an important event no matter what the circumstances or timing. If a pregnancy brings jolting complications there are no simple choices.

*No matter which way you turned,
no matter what you decided,
you had to let go of life as you wanted it to be.*

Letting go means loss, and loss brings sadness and hurt and pain and grief.

There are many reasons you might choose an abortion:

- ~ being unprepared and unable to parent
- ~ conserving resources for the children you now have
- ~ pressure from parents or partner
- ~ medical reasons for you or the baby
- ~ a distressing relationship
- ~ rape or incest

An interrupted pregnancy is often a lonely loss with few places to share feelings or receive support. Abortion brings many feelings. Some are similar to ones you have after a miscarriage; others are different.

You may question just who you are. You may feel sad and have a real sense of loss. You may have worries about relationships, confusion about responsibility, as well as anxiety and fears for your future.

It's not an easy time.

Feelings Just Are

There is no *right way* to feel and there are no *shoulds*.

Listen to your feelings. Care for them. It may help to write them down and name them—even if they seem to be contradictory. You may be feeling:

<i>Sad</i>	<i>Relieved</i>	<i>Lost</i>	<i>Betrayed</i>
<i>Confused</i>	<i>Numb</i>	<i>Shamed</i>	<i>Grief</i>
<i>Regret</i>	<i>Empty</i>	<i>Depressed</i>	<i>Guilty</i>
<i>Peaceful</i>	<i>Comforted</i>	<i>Afraid</i>	<i>Abandoned</i>
<i>Hopeful</i>	<i>Humiliated</i>	<i>Angry</i>	<i>Depleted</i>
<i>Secretive</i>	<i>Ambivalent</i>	<i>Weary</i>	<i>Unfinished</i>

Numbness

"I didn't feel anything at first. I buried the experience in my mind very quickly."

You may have felt emotionally numb at first or denied that the abortion was an important event. Being numb may have helped you get through the day and the decision you needed to make. Numbness, like an anesthetic, cushions painful feelings. When you shut down painful feelings, though, you shut down joyful ones as well. In time you may be ready and more able to reach through the numbness.

Ambivalence

Feeling both sadness and relief is an example of ambivalence. It's actually having opposite feelings at the same time. This may not be a question of what you really feel, but listening to each feeling as it comes.

"I am at peace with my decision, but I will never forget the emotions or the ambivalence I went through."

Naming the tangle of feelings is a step in untangling them. Notice which feelings are the strongest and which surprise you.

Relief

"I felt relief and sadness, but mostly relief that it was over."

When you feel relief, usually something you were concerned about or dreaded is over or isn't happening after all. You may feel relief that you:

- ~ will not be parenting a new baby
- ~ had a choice about becoming a parent
- ~ had some say about the birth of a baby with abnormalities
- ~ are fertile and can become pregnant
- ~ have some support for the decision you made

Relief doesn't mean you don't also feel sad or angry. You may feel relief and also have a deep sense of loss.

"I felt sadness, guilt, relief, gratefulness that the experience was supportive, legal, safe—grateful I had a choice."

Sadness

Once pregnancy begins, the rhythm of the months may stay in place. Keen awareness of the due date or how old your baby would be now, other pregnant women and babies, baby things and baby advertisements—all these things may remind you of your abortion.

"My child would have been due mid-February. Every year I think about how old she would be."

A sense of emptiness, vacancy, sadness may be strong even if your decision is one you wouldn't change. Grief accompanies every significant loss in our lives, and it is natural to feel sadness whether it be for the pregnancy, for the circumstances surrounding the pregnancy, or both.

Give yourself permission to grieve.
It is part of healing.

When you feel loss and sadness you know something you wanted or had is gone. What specifically have you lost that you wanted? It may have been:

- ~ this pregnancy, this baby
- ~ the idea that you don't "make mistakes"
- ~ feeling safe about your sexuality

- ~ the assurance of a bond with your partner
- ~ an uncomplicated pregnancy
- ~ the loss or feared loss of approval from others
- ~ the loss of your own approval

"An abortion is a very personal choice. Even if you're sure it's the right choice, it's OK to feel sad too."

Guilt and Regret

Guilt is the gnawing sense of having gone against your values. Guilt is useful when it helps you look at the choices you make. Guilt oversteps its role when it abuses you and batters your personal worth. Living with guilt is like living with an abusive partner. Many women stay with an abusive partner because it is familiar and predictable. Similarly, many women stay with guilt because they don't know how to create a new identity for themselves.

Guilt is unproductive when it begins shaming and paralyzing you from healthy action. Let guilt know it has gotten your attention and ask it to team up with regret and work with you in finding healing.

Regret is an aching sense of loss, of having missed out on something better.

- ~ Guilt says, *You shouldn't have done that. You're bad.*
- ~ Regret says, *You wish things had been different.*

Regret tells us to grieve and make peace with what is.

Anger

"It left me empty inside and angry at the circumstances which led me to make the difficult decision."

Anger is often a top layer of feeling covering up hurt or fear. You feel powerful when you are angry. You feel vulnerable when you are hurt or afraid. Anger provides energy, focuses attention, prompts you to action. Anger may also serve to distract you from sadness. Healing involves not only expressing the anger, but dipping down into the sadness and grieving the loss.

"I felt anger at my boyfriend's ambivalence, sadness that everyone including my parents objected to my decision, shame for feeling I wasn't allowed to grieve my loss."

When You Feel Judged by Others

"The abortion protesters were there the day I had my abortion. My husband had to sneak me out the side door. It was very traumatic. To this day I can still hear them screaming how I killed my baby."

Being confronted with anti-abortion messages may stir up self-doubt. You may ask yourself whether you made the *right* decision.

- If you would make the same decision again if things were the same, you may feel misunderstood or unsupported.
- If you would make a different decision now than you did then, you may feel regret, guilt or be judging yourself.

Be gentle with yourself and remember, *no matter which way you turned your task was to let go of your life as you wanted it to be.*

Part of healing is taking responsibility for your own opinions and decisions, regardless of the *shoulds* of others.

Special Situations

If You Have Had More Than One Abortion

"I cried through all three abortions and grieved for the babies but believed it was the best decision."

There's a lot of cruel judgment aimed at women who have had more than one abortion. For that matter, there's blame and judgment toward women who have had one. People who are simplistic in their thinking may say you used it as birth control. How trivializing this view is when you wrestled with a huge decision, made an appointment for an unpleasant medical procedure and had to find a way to pay for it. How absurd to think a woman simply chooses this for contraception.

It doesn't matter if your circumstances were the same or different each time, you still need to heal. You may need to grieve and find closure

with each abortion or you may have made peace with one but not the others. No matter how many abortions you have had you are deserving of support and healing.

This is a time to care boldly and gently for yourself. This is also a time to explore what barriers come in your way of contraception being effective.

When Abortion Was for Medical Problems

"The amniocentesis showed the same problem from which our first child died. It was a painful decision but I felt peace knowing my child would not suffer."

Medical science can often tell in the first weeks of pregnancy if a baby has serious problems or if your life is in danger from the pregnancy. You may, however, have found out later in the pregnancy about a dilemma and this may be adding to the guilt and shame in deciding to have an abortion.

The decision to terminate a pregnancy of a wanted child is wrenching. Your feelings are very similar to parents of a stillborn baby. You grieve the loss of the healthy baby you wanted to deliver.

Angry Relationships

You may have unfinished business with some people involved in your abortion experience. When you hang on to anger or a sense of betrayal you are giving others the power to determine your peacefulness. Confronting others actually or symbolically is a way of releasing yourself from the experience and reclaiming personal power.

If there are those you need to say things to directly, write your message out and then decide whether to say or send it. Keep it brief and respectful. You'll feel better about yourself knowing you sent an honorable message. Remember *wanting* a certain kind of response is understandable. If, however, you *need* a certain response to heal, you are handing over your well-being to somebody else. Send your message only if you are quite sure you can exhale and be at peace for having had your say—regardless of the response you get.

Often it is helpful to have your say even when you know it will not help your healing to actually send it. Try writing a letter about your feelings, then consider what you want to do:

- ~ Read your letter to someone you trust.
- ~ Burn the letter and scatter the ashes.
- ~ Let your writing sit awhile. If you still need to, mail the letter so it can never be delivered or returned (To My Hurtful Abuser, Angerville, USA). Be certain it will not be interpreted as a threat and that it contains no identifying information.

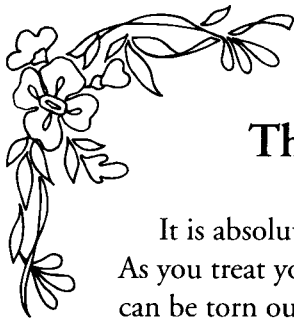
If you need to press charges or request compensation, make an appointment with a competent attorney.

Another way to deal with anger is to speak the words aloud. Reclaim your power by declaring loudly and clearly your commitment to heal from the hurt and let go of the anger.

"I hurled rock after rock into the river yelling, 'I hate what you said to me! I deserved some kindness!' When I'd vented my anger I quietly but boldly declared, 'You don't get to have power over me anymore. I will find peace and be whole.'"

Pregnancy from a Traumatic Encounter

If you became pregnant from rape or a traumatic relationship you may want to talk with others recovering from a sexual assault. A local Rape Crisis Center may offer support groups. A caring place to be heard and understood can really help. If you are still in a hurtful or abusive relationship, ask about a group for women in this situation. There are safe places for women and children and legal counsel for your protection. No human being deserves abuse. Every woman is worthy of respect!



Things To Do Just for You

It is absolutely essential that you take good care of yourself. As you treat yourself gently, healing will come. This loving list can be torn out and stuck on your refrigerator or mirror.

- ♥ Buy yourself a flower
- ♥ Send yourself a card
- ♥ Soak in the tub with scented bubbles
- ♥ Treat yourself to a massage
- ♥ Curl up with a really good book
- ♥ Go for a walk
- ♥ Listen to your favorite music or affirmations
- ♥ Spend time at the ocean or river
- ♥ Bake bread
- ♥ Gather leaves
- ♥ Buy yourself a present and have it gift-wrapped
- ♥ Get a blank book and write your story inside it
- ♥ Take a special trip or go on an outing
- ♥ Spend the day with a friend
- ♥ Paint a picture
- ♥ Begin an exercise program or class



You Deserve a Good Life

"I went for a long walk and pondered the ways I'd been so compliant and how I had habitually stifled my own choices. I decided it was time to start looking out for what I wanted from life."

* Dare to dream.

Set a goal.

Make a plan.

Do it!

* Sign up for a class you've wanted to take.

* Look at your job.

Do your best work possible.

If you need to make a career change, start looking.

What education do you need?

Who can help?

* Want to learn a creative craft? How about now?

* Ask yourself what really interests you and pursue it.

* Join a support group.

* Volunteer for one of your favorite causes.

* Create or find a symbol of healing and wear it.

* Other ideas:



Unfinished Business

A sense of uneasiness or dread means your healing work is not finished. There's something you still need to do to find peace. If you recognize yourself in this list, take heart. Knowing you have unfinished business is a step toward healing.

Signs of unfinished business may include:

- ~ Persistent guilt, regret or anger over the abortion
- ~ Negative messages about your own worth and value
- ~ Expecting other painful things to happen
- ~ Wondering if God is punishing or will punish you
- ~ Feeling disconnected from your spirituality
- ~ Wanting to be pregnant again to undo the experience
- ~ Feeling shame and unworthy of joy
- ~ Feeling depressed, isolated and alone
- ~ Focusing on *if only's*
- ~ Lowered confidence in making decisions
- ~ Feeling defensive about the abortion
- ~ A sense of secrecy that you cannot share
- ~ Recurring dreams
- ~ Using alcohol, drugs or unsafe sex to numb yourself
- ~ Avoiding healthy relationships
- ~ Getting into abusive relationships
- ~ Not allowing yourself to wish and hope
- ~ A pattern of abandoning dreams and sabotaging goals

As we said, *take heart!* You *can* do something.

Rituals for Making Peace

Personal rituals can mark significant beginnings and endings. These often help create closure and bring peace.

Writing a Letter To Your Never-Born Child

Writing your feelings in a letter to your child can be a powerful step toward releasing them. It can help you come to terms with your baby and with your own concerns.

Say what was happening in your life at that time.
Share your sadness and hurt.

You may choose to read your letter to your partner, a close friend or counselor. You may want to keep the words private but share what it was like to write the letter. You may choose to keep the letter or to be free of it by burying it or burning it and scattering the ashes in the garden, on the river, at the sea. Ask yourself what would be most helpful and follow your heart. Here is one woman's letter:

To My Never-Born Baby,

My heart aches when I think of that time. Your father and I were both in high school. He was as scared as I was. We were too young to be parents, but old enough to know how much you deserved, and that we couldn't provide it. My folks were sure being pregnant would disrupt my life. I knew they couldn't make me have an abortion, but I needed their support.

Having the abortion was the hardest decision I've ever made. Nothing about it felt natural or simple. Sometimes I've been overwhelmed with guilt. I've wept many tears, and at times you've haunted my dreams. I still have a hard time forgiving myself. I felt trapped with no easy choices.

I'm so very sorry I couldn't welcome you then. I wish your time had been now, now when I'm ready in my life to be pregnant again. How much I could give you now that I couldn't then. I do care and want us both to be at peace.

Your Mother

Writing a Letter From Your Child

A second letter, this time *from* your unborn baby, may be very freeing. *Write for your child as if he or she is capable of understanding and caring.* This is possible regardless of what you believe about life and death.

Choose a quiet, comforting place and a private time. You may like to surround yourself with a soft quilt, flowers, a cup of tea. Rather than carefully planning what you will write, simply let it flow. First write or talk to your never-born child. Talk about your struggle, then ask to be released.

Receive whatever follows as a gift, such as came with this letter:

Dear Mother,

I see how much you've hurt since you were pregnant with me. I see how much your guilt and shame is interfering with your life and joy. I know there were no simple choices no matter where you turned. You've hurt enough—more than enough. I care about you and ask you to heal. I want you to be happy.

I understand. I forgive you. I release you.

Your baby who would have been

Talking With Your Child

If you would rather, you can talk to your child and have your child reply to you. You can do this alone in a private place, ask a trusted friend or a counselor to help you or record your message.

Create a quiet, relaxing space and picture your child near. Give words to your tangled feelings, the dilemma you were in, the unwelcomed choices. Try saying, *I regret. . . I appreciate. . .*

Imagine your baby cupped in your hands. Say everything you need to say. Let the tears flow if you feel like crying. Rest awhile. Then speak aloud for your child. Let your child give understanding, caring and releasing in whatever way you most need to hear. When you feel finished, say a goodbye. Give yourself some quiet symbol of peace afterwards (a flower, a candle). If doubts return, stop and tell them,

Let me be. We've talked it out; we're both OK.

Other Rituals for Closure

There are many personal ways to create a fitting goodbye. If something here sparks your own idea, it has served its purpose. Consider:

- ~ Painting a picture of sadness and liberation
- ~ Writing a poem
- ~ Composing or playing a piece of music
- ~ Planting something special
- ~ Putting a note in a helium balloon and letting it go
- ~ Writing huge words of support and affirmation and taping them to the walls around your space
- ~ Lighting a candle, releasing your feelings to the flame and letting it burn itself out
- ~ Volunteering for a project you find meaningful
- ~ Doing whatever *ah ha!* this list lights up for you.

Your task is to recognize and honor your own need for closure. Give yourself permission to do whatever is helpful, no matter how simple or unusual. *Honor your heart.* Trust it as your inner guide to healing. Remember you deserve to heal; it is both your right and responsibility. You need to heal for your own well-being. You need to heal for the well-being of those you love.

Symbolic Burial

You may wonder what happened to the fetus after the abortion. The usual procedure is medical cremation. Even if you cannot now bury the fetus, you can do something.

"I am now planning a personal closing experience. I just needed permission to grieve and hold a ceremony."

One cemetery in Oregon has created a burial place to honor babies who die before birth. Burial of miscarriages, cremains of stillborns and symbolic burial are done in identical small burial boxes. No matter how long ago your abortion, you may still choose this as a ritual of closure. You may wish to bury a pair of booties, a letter, a flower.

Choose a small box or jewelry container.

Place inside whatever your heart tells you to.

It may be helpful to write a note to bury with it.

Dig a small grave under a tree, in the garden, in the mountains, by a favorite rock or hill.

Be alone or with supportive people.

It may be helpful to say aloud:

I bury _____ and make peace with _____

I let go of _____

I release _____

I leave my hurt and guilt here.

Bury a bulb if you like. Plant flowers or a tree. Leave a flower or anything that feels fitting or comforting.

"After ten terribly tormented years, my husband and I finally buried symbolic mementos. This gave me great relief. Since the burial I feel more peace than I ever have. I know I will always feel pain, but not to the depths I have in the past. I will continue to grow from this experience. The burial was my closure for this issue. My unborn baby was finally put to rest and I gave myself permission to continue the life that I had put on hold for so many years."

Asking for and Getting Spiritual Support

If your abortion was spiritually wounding it is important to seek spiritual healing. Religious groups span the whole spectrum of belief about abortion, and in any group, individuals span the spectrum in caring and acceptance. Find the group that fits you best.

"My husband and I were at a Catholic retreat based on forgiveness. The priest talked about sins that people felt were unforgivable and how we carry around the pain and turn our backs on forgiveness. That was the first time I could even approach the concept of forgiveness and I needed it. I shared the abortion with this priest. He told me God had forgiven me and my baby had forgiven me. I needed to hear this. What I'm working on is self-forgiveness."

Consider talking with a pastor, priest, rabbi or spiritual leader you can trust. Say you are on a journey of inner healing and wanting support. Ask how comfortable he or she is with abortion. If the person you seek out comes across with a tone of judgment, find a different person. Some spiritual leaders have received special training in supporting women and their partners after abortion.

Celebrating Your Journey

Taking charge of your well-being and affirming your own worth is a courageous journey. You deserve to celebrate! If abortion anchored you to the past, then healing pulls the anchor free.

You will know when you are ready to begin looking ahead. Freedom offers new choices, and choices may feel scary. Take time to get your bearings. Begin to allow yourself new wishes and dreams. Fasten your sights on a goal, test the direction of the wind and gently set sail.

You will know you are moving ahead when you feel lighter, freer—when you catch yourself imagining a meaningful future. Let go of *shoulds* and listen to your *want-to's*.

Losses in your life deserve to be marked by personal rituals. Joyful times of personal growth need celebration, too. Turn to the middle of this book and look at some ways to celebrate yourself. It's time, and you deserve it.

Looking from the Past to the Future

"I remember my mother's death, my abortion and a heartbreaking relationship. I remember a really difficult decision about leaving home. All these had similar feelings attached to them."

The losses in your life are all linked together. You may have strong memories of other sad times. Memories of fear, aloneness or other hard decisions may surface. Things that happened in the past color your feelings. In the future, a sight, sound or a medical exam may trigger flashbacks to the abortion procedure and earlier griefs. Allow the feelings to come, cry if you need to cry, and let them go.

Future Babies

Trying to get pregnant again, being pregnant or having a miscarriage may bring up feelings about the abortion again. This is perfectly normal. A welcomed pregnancy may bring sadness about the pregnancy you ended even while it brings great joy.

As you think about the time ahead and future children, what do you think about yourself?

- ~ How do you see yourself differently?
 - In what ways have you grown?
 - In what ways are you stronger and wiser?
- ~ How about your sense of confidence?
 - Are you affirming both your ability to make difficult decisions and to recognize your self worth?
- ~ How much do you appreciate who you are as a person?
 - You deserve to feel good about yourself.
 - You deserve a great future.

"At first I felt guilty about feeling relieved and liking myself more. Now I know I can make really tough decisions and take control of my life. I'm moving on."

For Partners

As a partner of a woman who has chosen abortion, you are also affected by the decision and may be surprised by your own confusion, relief, or sense of loss.

You may feel some of the responsibility for the abortion and may need to sort out your own emotions and make peace.

You may have actively participated in the decision or you may not have been told about the pregnancy until it was over. If you did not want the abortion but had little or no say about it you may have a tremendous sense of helplessness, sadness or anger.

"I can see why she did it. The thing is, if she had told me, maybe I could have been supportive. All I could do was offer to pay for it, and she didn't want that. She didn't want anything to do with me."

If you encouraged or urged her to have the abortion you may be feeling relief or believing she blames you. You may be blaming yourself, too. Regardless of the circumstances, you, too, deserve support.

- ~ Share your thoughts with her or someone available to you.
- ~ Give yourself permission to heal.
- ~ Be prepared for the two of you to have different emotions.
- ~ Own your role in the decision.
- ~ For both of you this may be a time of reevaluating sexual choices and birth control.
- ~ Honor your own needs for closure and healing.
- ~ Apply whatever part of this book fits for you.

"We struggled with the feeling that 'happily married people' don't do this. Even though it was our choice, it was still a deep loss with much guilt."

How Partners, Family and Friends Can Help

It's easy to feel helpless when someone you care about is hurting. Your warmth and understanding will mean a lot to her, and there are specific ways to help.

- ~ Listen. Don't try to fix anything.
- ~ Trust she will find her own way to inner healing.
- ~ Suspend judgment and opinion.
- ~ Do no harm. Respect her choice, even if you disagree.
- ~ Listen to her story from start to finish.
- ~ It's OK to cry with her.
- ~ Bring her soup, lunch, ice cream or a flower.
- ~ Give hugs.
- ~ Offer back rubs.

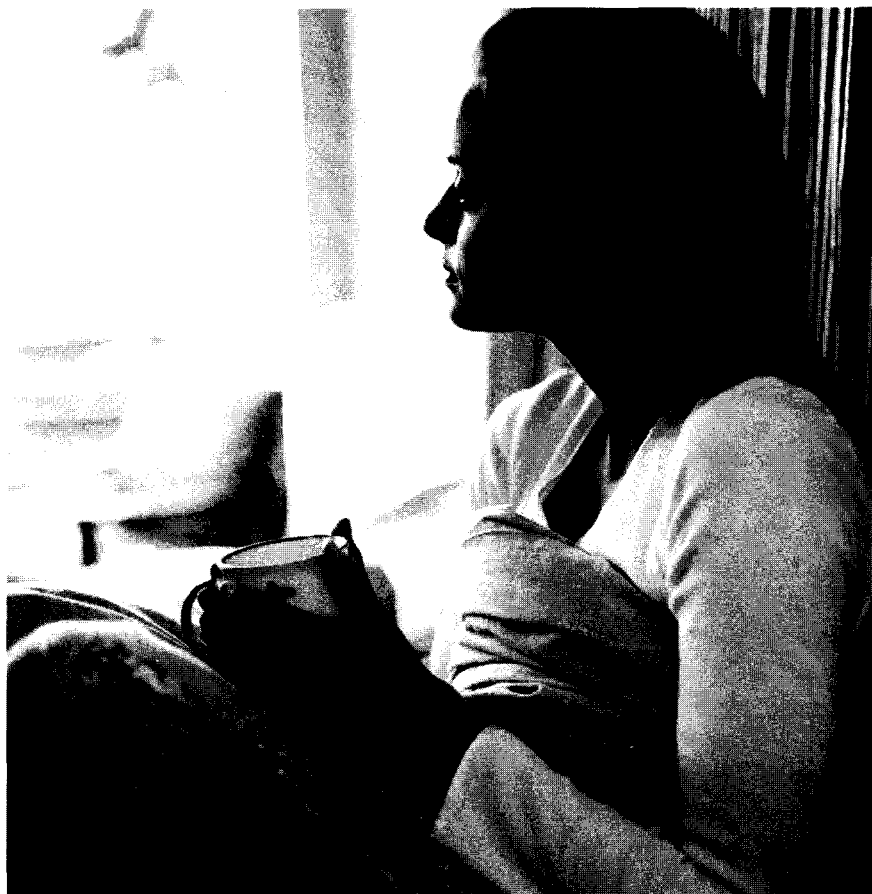
You can:

- ~ Recognize how difficult this decision was for her.
- ~ Offer caring and permission to feel whatever she feels.
- ~ Remember the date of the abortion. Even a year later it will feel good for somebody to quietly say they remember and care.
- ~ Know that it's normal for her to grieve.
- ~ Do your own personal work of closure and grief.
- ~ When you say, "How are you?" be ready to listen.

"If my friend had an abortion I would just hold her and cry with her and let her know I respect her decision and acknowledge her pain and loss."

This is a time for unconditional love and understanding.

This is a time to grieve and to grow.



We hope this little book helps.

Resources

Abortion Conversation Project, *Promoting Conversation, Reducing Stigma*, offers resources for women and abortion providers including “Healthy Coping After Abortion.” www.abortionconversation.com

Backline offers a network of support for all aspects of pregnancy, parenting, abortion (before or after) and adoption. Their Talk Line is free, confidential and accessible from anywhere in the United States. To reach a Talk Line Advocate, call 1-888-493-0092. www.yourbackline.org

Choice Link Up links you to accurate health information and reproductive rights sites, including post-abortion resources. www.choicelinkup.com

Exhale is a free after-abortion talkline. Multilingual counselors available on request. Call 1-866-4-EXHALE (1-866-439-4253). www.4exhale.org

Men and Abortion is an often overlooked aspect of the abortion experience. There is a website of understanding and support. www.menandabortion.com

National Sexual Assault Hotline provides free confidential counseling 24 hours a day by counselors at community rape-treatment centers across the country. Call 1-800-656-4673 (HOPE)

Peace After Abortion by Ava Torre-Bueno is available for further reading. www.peaceafterabortion.com

The Pregnancy Options Workbook offers an in-depth look at all options when making a difficult decision about pregnancy. Includes “Healing After” section. www.pregnancyoptions.info

A Note from Marilyn

As a counselor I work with many people healing from painful life experiences. Whether the loss is the death of someone loved, the loss of a relationship, an abortion, a background of abuse, loss of self-esteem, health, hopes or dreams, I find each loss asks its turn to be mourned. The journey of healing is one of grieving and making peace.

Loss is a life-altering experience.
And so is healing.

Whenever I have the privilege of being company to someone on this journey I witness a return of their energy, creativity and an increased capacity for joy. They experience life as deeper and lighter and more meaningful again.

Healing is your right.
Celebrate your journey.
Welcome joy.



Marilyn Gryte, MS, is both a Licensed Professional Counselor and grief educator. She has a clinical practice in Albany, Oregon and travels nation-wide presenting bereavement seminars. Her lengthy background in OB nursing gives her a caring and understanding for those faced with difficult pregnancy decisions. Marilyn is the author of *No New Baby*, a resource for young children whose Mommy has a miscarriage (also available in Spanish) and *Stepping Through the Awkwardness: How to Help Someone Who Is Grieving the Death of a Loved One*. Both are available from Centering Corporation (www.centering.org).

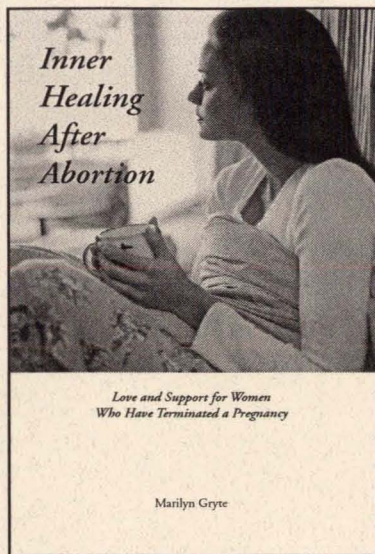
Inner Healing After Abortion is available from:
mgryteinnerhealing.com

Inner Healing After Abortion

It isn't always easy.

An interrupted pregnancy is often a lonely loss with few places to share feelings or receive support. Abortion brings many feelings. Some are similar to ones you have after a miscarriage; others are different.

In this tender book by counselor and grief educator,
Marilyn Gryte,
you come to terms with your decisions,
your loss and your own value.



Inner Healing After Abortion

is a newly revised 24-page booklet for women who have had an abortion and are feeling sadness, confusion, or are not at peace with their experience. It is a practical, compassionate, affordable guide.

Author **Marilyn Gryte, MS**, Licensed Professional Counselor, is a grief counselor with a background in OB nursing and childbearing loss support.

Inner Healing After Abortion does not discuss whether or not to choose abortion. It does not describe medical procedures. It is written without a political agenda or a religious point of view. This booklet acknowledges that pregnancy is a significant event, regardless of what happens next. A woman may decide an abortion is right for her and still feel the need for inner healing.

"If you are having a difficult time with feelings after an abortion experience, you will be in good hands reading Marilyn Gryte's Inner Healing After Abortion. This is an affirming, wise book. ~ Peg Johnston, President, Abortion Conversation Project

"Marilyn Gryte has offered a gift to anyone who has had an abortion experience. This book offers loving and practical tools for women. . .it shares sound wisdom for coming to peace with one's decision." ~ Grayson Dempsey, President, Backline

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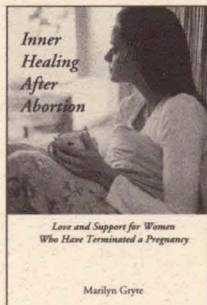
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