

Incompatible with Life

by Lydia Cidor

“Incompatible with Life”, the words no mother wants to hear. And yet, they’ve become so common. Some doctors have begun the habit of diagnosing babies as “incompatible with life”. They believe some children have no hope for survival and that continuing the pregnancy could harm both the child and the mother. However, this so-called diagnosis is more of a judgment and the doctors are not always right. Children are a gift from God and should be protected.

In the book, *Letters to Gabriel*, Karen Santorum shares the letters she wrote to her unborn son, Gabriel, while she was pregnant. In her letters, Karen reveals that Gabriel has a severe and life-threatening abnormality. The doctors tell Karen and her husband, Rick, that Gabriel won’t survive and their best option is to terminate the pregnancy. Rather than ending the life of their child, the Santorums chose to trust in God and pray for a miracle. By choosing life and attempting to save her baby, Karen subjected herself to painful and risky surgery. However, she knew that if Gabriel died it would be God’s will, not hers, that would ultimately end Gabriel’s life.

In today’s society, many people believe the lie that their only option is to terminate. So what can we do? By examining the causes and effects of abortion in our nation, we can look to create viable solutions. First and foremost, is it the truth? There are many stories just like Karen and Rick’s where doctors told parents that their baby was incompatible with life and would not survive. However, the parents chose to trust God’s plan and some now have healthy children. Hannah and Craig Sudlow, a couple just like Karen and Rick, have a similar story. Hannah was pregnant with her baby Evelyn when she was told that Evelyn had Trisomy 18 and she would surely die. The Sudlow’s doctors told them to abort but they were committed to carrying out the pregnancy. Their medical provider dropped them, and Hannah and Craig went five weeks without an overseeing physician. Now, Evelyn is over three years old and Hannah and Craig can’t imagine their life without her (Head).

Now secondly, is it fair to all concerned? The Cambridge Dictionary defines fair as [treating](#) someone in a way that is [right](#) or [reasonable](#), or [treating people equally](#) and not [allowing personal opinions](#) to

[influence your judgment](#) (FAIR). Babies are innocent and have done nothing wrong. We can not choose one person's convenience over another person's life.

Now thirdly, will it build goodwill and better friendships? The pain, loss, and emotional need felt by women who have abortions are profound. If you visit the Planned Parenthood website, it says that most women are relieved and don't regret their decision to get an abortion. It also says that serious, long-term emotional effects are rare (Parenthood). However, this is not true. A study done by the Medical Science Monitor found that women whose first pregnancies ended in abortion were 65% more likely to score in the 'high-risk' range for clinical depression (Cougle). The American Pregnancy Association found depression, anxiety, anger, regret, and guilt as common emotional and psychological effects following an abortion (Abortion).

Finally, will it be beneficial to all concerned? After becoming pregnant at age seventeen, Pattie Mallette was encouraged by her family and doctors to get an abortion. However, she decided instead to carry out her pregnancy and she later gave birth to her son, Justin Bieber, who is now one of the world's best-selling music artists. Jack Nicholson, Tim Tebow, Celine Dion, and Sean Lennon are just a few of the many celebrities who were almost aborted. Imagine how many babies were killed that had the talents and skills that could have impacted the world. By ending a child's life, we are not giving them the opportunity to live out their full potential.

Pro-choice advocates believe that since it is their body, it should be their right to decide what they do with their body. Women do have the right to manage their own health. However, maintaining that right does not give the mother permission to kill her baby. The mother passed the right to life to her baby when she conceived. Other women see abortion as their only way to be truly equal to men. However, pregnancy isn't a hindrance to equality, it is something that makes women special. The ability to conceive is a wonderful gift that women should use to honor and glorify God.

So, how can we prevent abortions? We must start with knowledge, education and responsibility. Stopping unwanted pregnancies is key to truly stopping abortions. We also need to make adoption the first option instead of abortion, by cleaning up the foster-care system and making it easier for loving and caring

families to be able to adopt. We must show love and kindness to women going through crisis pregnancies. We shouldn't just be pro-life but pro-love too. Through friendship and love, we can show God's power and the true gift of life.

In her blog titled *How Incompatible is Incompatible with Life, Really*, Nancy Head said, "Doctors are not the authors of life and death. God gives us people to love for as long as they and we are here to give love and receive love" (Head). We must speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves. The Santorums allowed Gabriel to live out the life God gave him, no matter how long. Even though Gabriel only lived a few hours, the Santorums trusted that God would use their tragedy for his glory. One choice, the choice to choose life, forever changed Karen and Rick's lives. Will you allow it to change yours?

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