

## Abortion Changes You!

*The following is the Introduction to her book, **Changed—Making Sense of Your Own or a Loved One's Abortion Experience** by Michaelene Fredenburg:*

“Over the years I’ve heard many heartrending stories about abortion. Although each story is unique, a common thread moves through them all—abortion changes you. Yet it is difficult to find a safe place to help abortion participants—and those who are closest to them—explore this tragic truth.

**I am troubled by the increasing polarization of the abortion debate—a debate that tends to hinder reasoned discussion and keep those who are personally touched by abortion from reaching out.**

I primarily wrote this book for those who are touched by abortion.

**However, I hope that people who haven't been personally touched by abortion will read this book as well.**

The purpose of this book is threefold:

- Communicate to those who've been touched by abortion that they are not alone,
- Heighten awareness of an abortion's impact on various family members and,
- Friends create a place of safety for participants to begin exploring their feelings and seeking resolution.

### **You Are Not Alone**

At current abortion rates, one in three women in the United States will have had an abortion by age 45.

That means a significant percentage of men will have also participated in abortion—either knowingly or unknowingly.

Although abortion has touched many of us, we rarely share our personal experiences.

Shame or guilt may play a role in hiding our abortions. And the rancorous public debate certainly doesn't encourage dialogue about this personal and extremely sensitive topic.

We sometimes lack the language to discuss the conflicted emotions that trouble us.

Whatever the reason, silence perpetuates the myth that we stand alone in our abortion experiences—or at least that we're alone amidst the emotional debris.

### **Heighten Awareness of an Abortion's Impact**

In addition to the tens of millions of men and women who've experienced abortion firsthand, there are countless other family members, such as the woman's parents and her children, who are also impacted by the decision to abort.

It is rare for someone not to know a family member or friend who's had an abortion.

Regardless of whether or not a person's family members or friends were directly involved in the abortion decision, they are still touched by it.

Grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins, and siblings are left grappling with the loss of a family member—a loss that typically isn't openly acknowledged.

They may also be disturbed by the emotional fallout they observe in the woman or in her partner.

They often feel helpless and confused.

How do you grieve a loss that isn't acknowledged by our culture?

How do you reach out to someone you love without causing them more pain?

### **Create a Place of Safety**

Many men and women are seeking to make sense of their own or a loved one's abortion experience.

I hope this book will aid them in their search by creating:

- A place of safety in which to consider the impact of abortion
- A place where they can explore their feelings and identify their losses
- A place removed from politics and activism and labels

This book seeks to convey the real experiences of real people.

I invite you to begin by reading and reflecting upon the following voices.

And as you read, I hope you'll be able to address your own emotions regarding abortion and to gain a better understanding of what others have experienced.

I also hope the stories in this book will begin to equip you with new language So you're better able to sensitively and compassionately communicate with others about abortion.

**Although the stories in this book are real, I've chosen to conceal the true identities of the people involved. Because abortion touches multiple family members and friends, it's unlikely that all those who've been impacted will reach a place of healing and wholeness simultaneously. Just as their loss and pain are tragic and real, their timelines for healing are also varied and unique. Therefore, the healing process shouldn't be forced or interrupted. Further information about healing can be found in later chapters, starting with the chapter called 'Healing Pathways.'”**

*I highly encourage you, whether you have been touched by abortion or not, to go to the website:*

*[www.abortionchangesyou.com](http://www.abortionchangesyou.com)*

*I also highly encourage you to read Michaelene's book: **Changed—Making Sense of Your Own or a Loved One's Abortion Experience.***

*Fr. Mike*