

Abortion can save lives, too

Does a fetus have a soul?
Last Sunday at a family gathering my sister-in-law and I debated that question.

We both have three children, comfortable homes, supportive families, strong personalities. But that's where our affinities end.

Sue is ardently pro-life — as bitingly sure and clear in her beliefs as a sunny January morning. And I am the family radical: liberal, vegetarian and an unwavering pro-choice feminist.

We'd been discussing animals — eating them, wearing them, caring for them — and Sue wondered aloud how I could speculate that my dog had a soul and yet advocate abortion.

I paused. How do I explain the validity of my own convictions to someone who holds divergent religious and moral beliefs?

How do I explain the time in my life seven years ago that turned my convictions about reproductive choice from an abstract, ideological construct into a belief firmly grounded in the conviction that abortion could save my life?

For me, the abortion debate does not revolve around the possible existence of a soul in a 3-day old fetus or a 3-month old fetus, but instead it has at its heart the lives and souls of 34-year-old women and 11-year-old girls.

The debate goes beyond the rhetoric about innocence, murder and lost potential to singular women living individual lives.

My life. In January of 1988, at age 27 during the winter of my discontent (as I disquietly remember it now), I was ready to die. I had everything to live for — I was young, happily married with three beautiful children — the youngest still a breast-feeding baby.



Cindy Lange-Kublick

Still I faced each endless day that frigid winter willing it to end. And yet when night fell I was gripped with terror, because I knew that after spending hours quietly waiting for sleep to overtake me, I would once again find myself fully awake at 4 a.m.

I couldn't sleep, couldn't eat, couldn't think straight. Worst of all I couldn't feel — somewhere in the far reaches of my mind, I knew I loved my children, my husband, myself — but I was numb, spiritless, blue.

And I didn't know why. A fuzzy, heavy, wooden quality colored and covered my entire being. Depression cannot be fully explained in mere words — stupor, melancholy, sorrow — it has to be felt.

Sometimes as I lay awake listening to the house and the night and the quiet breathing of my children, I thought about suicide. And I was afraid.

And sometimes when I thought about ending my life, I thought about my children dying. And I was terrified.

Someplace in the foggy recesses of my mind I thought that maybe, just possibly, I might harm them.

And I loved them more than my own life.

So I wanted to die. Eventually I began to sleep.

Then I began to eat and to cry and to feel my feelings.

And by spring I felt alive again. My children made me angry again and I yelled at them and I was glad.

When I touched my baby's smooth cheeks and held him to my breast, I knew not just intellectually that I loved him; I felt it.

But I knew with every fiber of my being that I could not have another child. Not then, maybe not ever. I just could not risk feeling that pain again.

I'll never actually know the hows and whys of my depression. I don't know if it was a glitch in my brain chemistry, a variation of the postpartum blues or simply a cosmic curveball thrown into the mix of my life.

Last Sunday was the 22nd anniversary of the Roe vs. Wade decision that legalized abortion in this country. It was a day of both mourning and celebration.

For me, this January marks a seven-year passage from those cold, dark days in the winter of 1988 — and I finally feel free.

Eventually I answered my sister-in-law's question.

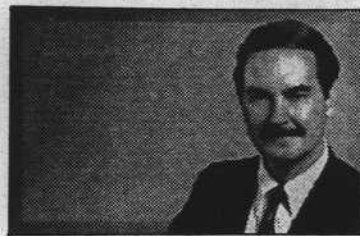
"Yes," I said, "I believe a fetus has a soul."

And I do, too. And so do the thousands of women who choose abortion.

And no one — not my sister-in-law, my husband, my minister and certainly not the government of the United States of America — is going to tell me which soul matters most.

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Democrats mistake agonizing for action



Cal Thomas

the political and academic left."

So, then, Ronald Reagan was correct when he referred to the old Soviet Union as an "evil empire," despite the hoots and hollers that came from political, academic and journalistic liberals.

As welcome as these admissions by Sen. Mikulski and columnist Rosenfeld are, it should be noted that they come long after most other people had already reached these conclusions. Still, if someone of Mikulski's unchallenged liberal credentials can now see that the welfare state has failed — and that Democrats who cling to it are not holding on to a life raft but to a sinking ship — this could produce a basis for negotiations with the new congressional majority that might promote the legitimate welfare of those who have been on the dole as well, as those who have been paying for it. The acknowledgment of evil empires could also help give direction to a nonexistent U.S. foreign policy.

Democrats have two choices. They can pretend, as Vice President Al Gore did at the Democratic National Committee meeting, that everything is fine. "We will re-elect the man who through the strength of his convictions has given the United States of America new strength," said Gore. To what convictions is he referring?

Or, Democrats can listen to Barbara Mikulski, who wrote, "We have too often substituted agonizing for action, and it has paralyzed us."

The choice for Democrats is irrelevance and loss of the White House in 1996, or getting back in the game by admitting mistakes and promoting government programs that help people take responsibility for their lives, not encourage them to sit back and wait for handouts.

The election of liberal Sen. Christopher Dodd to head the Democratic National Committee and the strong possibility that the equally liberal White House aide Harold Ickes will direct the president's re-election campaign are troubling indications that the party will remain addicted to its failed policies and won't hear the pleadings of Mikulski and Rosenfeld. They are shining a light to lead the dispirited Democrats out of the deep, dark hole they have dug for themselves.

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Masochists love infomercials

The following is a paid columnist's message. The views presented do not necessarily reflect those of the Daily Nebraskan, its management or staff.

If you are a night person, as I am, then the first paragraph may sound hauntingly familiar to you. If it doesn't ring any bells for you, then let me give you the scenario.

A similar disclaimer will be shown on the television for a few seconds, and then the screen fades to black. Suddenly, the lights shine 1000 highly charged bright colors, exciting music blares; then from behind a cloud, Vanna White appears.

"Hello, I'm Vanna White, tee-hee," she'll beam, "and I have some great news for all of you losers out there with ugly teeth ..."

The infomercial has begun.

For a half-hour, someone with the acting talent of Vanna White will try to sell you a product or a service. Thirty minutes of nothing but a commercial is a very painful thing to see, but like a bad highway accident, we watch.

To those of you who haven't seen an infomercial, I commend you on your good taste, and I'll draw a comparison for you.

Let's say that watching a normal, 30-second commercial featuring, say, the Pillsbury Doughboy is equivalent to getting shot in the head. An infomercial would then be the death of 1000 deaths, where the victim is dismembered little by little, starting with the pinky finger.

Why do I watch? I love pain.

No, only kidding. I watch because there are nights when I don't want to read or write or play solitaire, and I find infomercials strangely sedating.

I also find that if I watch them



Todd Elwood

for their entertainment value, I discover that they rarely have any. But the infomercials try very hard, and it's amusing to see that.

They are usually disguised as something that would actually hold a person's interest. They have formats akin to talk shows and news programs and other real TV formats, but with a twist. That being they never break for a commercial; they are the commercials.

One begins by showing an impressive news set. An anchor-type person will begin the "news" broadcast. "Today, in some other country — What's this?"

Then, he'll say in great surprise, "Ladies and gentlemen, I've just been handed an important news flash. We go now to our conveniently set-up camera in the lab of Dr. Ripinoff."

A scholarly-looking, doctor-type will then announce to the world that he has just invented a breakthrough product that will solve the world's problems by forever ridding the underside of your toilet bowl of that annoying mildew stain. And lo and behold, he even has an 800 number to call for ordering the miracle product.

Another favorite of the infomercial is the talk show. Here a mediocre actor from a '70s TV show will be interviewed by the creator of a very fine product.

"So, Mr. Washdup, what have you been doing since leaving 'Police Woman'?" this inventor will ask.

"Well, I'm currently suing M&M's, but what I really want to talk about is your product. Your synthetic 'Hair For Cool Guys' is great! And although I haven't landed a role since '78, I'll look great in court!"

There are even award shows for infomercials. I didn't believe it at first, but it's true.

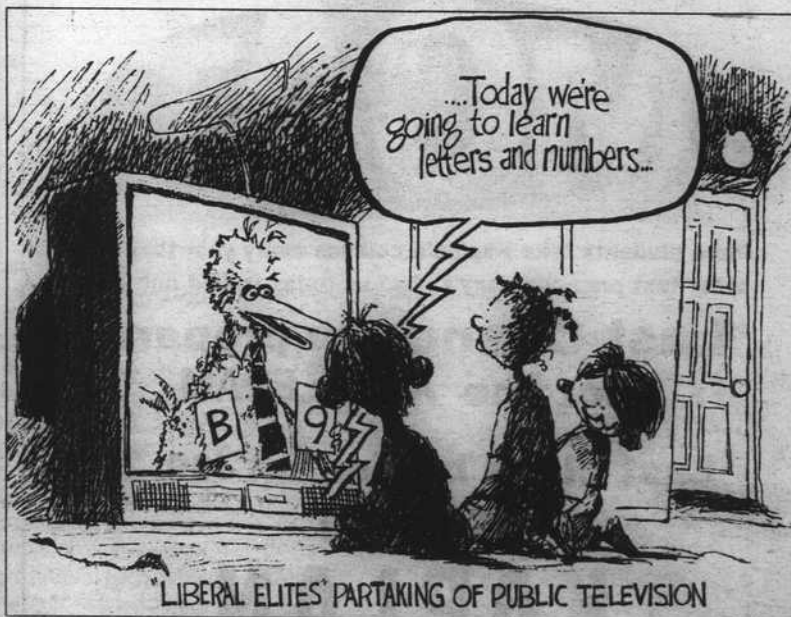
The National Infomercial Marketing Association hands out awards yearly to the top show in a variety of categories.

Some of the categories and winners: Bruce Jenner for Best Nose-Job; LaToya Jackson for Best Leaching Off a Family Name; a surprise tie going to Susan Powter and Tony Little for Best Acting Like a Freakish Hamster on Uppers During a Workout Video; and Dionne Warwick came away with the award for Best Actress in the "C'mon, You've Got To Be Kidding" category.

But the highlight of the evening had to be the lifetime-achievement award. It was a tear-jerking moment that honored Ron Popeil. The very appreciative and emotional Popeil immediately offered to spray the head of every bald man in the room for almost nothing.

The infomercials obviously work, though, because they remain on the air. I'm not sure who is actually buying this stuff, but I'll find out. Right now, though, I think I'll call my psychic friend and get some use out of my home beef-jerky maker.

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"LIBERAL ELITES" PARTAKING OF PUBLIC TELEVISION

Mike Luckovich