

28 Plays Later – Challenge #22

Compassion... understanding... open-mindedness... aren't we all so friggin' awesome (!) But can we truly be tolerant and respectful of people who are wrong... I mean, people who have views that differ from ours?

So let's try and see the world from their point of view?

But - you have to make sure that you do this without being sarcastic, without trying to prove them wrong... but from an honest place of understanding and acceptance!

UNPLANNED PARENTHOOD

By

Melissa A. Bartell

Time: Now.

Place: A den in a suburban home.

LIGHTS UP ON BRYAN, A 40-SOMETHING AMERICAN MAN WHO IS SITTING AT HIS DESK. HIS LAPTOP IS OPEN IN FRONT OF HIM, AND THERE'S A MICROPHONE (LIKE A BLUE YETI) SITTING TO THE SIDE OF IT. (THE LAPTOP SCREEN SHOULD BE JUST THE FRAME, SO WE SEE HIS FACE) HE PUTS A PAIR OF CLOSED-BACK HEADPHONES ON AND ADDRESSES THE CAMERA ON HIS LAPTOP (AKA THE AUDIENCE).

BRYAN: Hello, and welcome to another episode of my podcast, Bryan Babbles...

GENERIC OPENING MUSIC IS HEARD. IT'S PROBABLY SOMETHING FROM ONE OF THE PODSAFE MUSIC SOURCES. ROYALTY FREE.

BRYAN: I'm Bryan Nelson, and today I want to babble about abortion. Specifically, I want to talk about why I'm against it.

I know this is a contentious issue. I live in the world. But today my oldest daughter, Erika, asked me why I hate women when I told her she couldn't donate her allowance to Planned Parenthood, and I want to try and give her an answer.

First, I don't hate women. Erika's mother was a strong, independent woman. When we divorced, it wasn't because I was leaning more republican and she was leaning more democrat, although we were; it was because we'd gotten married when we were barely more than kids, and our needs and desires had outgrown each other's. We're still friends, and we're both active in our children's lives.

The woman I'm married to now is also a strong and independent woman. She's a lawyer and I teach social studies. She makes more than I do, and I'm proud of her for doing so.

I've tried to teach Erika, Debra, and Caitlin that they shouldn't be limited in their career choices because of their gender, and I try to support their aspirations. When Erika brought home a pamphlet about a camp for girls who were interested in STEM fields, I happily wrote the check so she could go. Sure, sometimes I worry she'll accidentally blow up the garage with one of her experiments, but mostly, I love that she loves science as much as her little sisters love theatre and fashion.

So, when she asked me why I hated women, it rocked me. Because I try to support all the women and girls in my life, as best as I can.

BRYAN HITS A BUTTON ON THE COMPUTER AND REMOVES HIS HEADPHONES. HE EXITS THE STAGE, THEN RETURNS WITH A MUG OF COFFEE.

HE RESUMES HIS SEAT, PUTS THE HEADPHONES BACK ON, AND PRESSES THE BUTTON ON THE COMPUTER.

BRYAN: I'm going to pause for a minute to sip some coffee. It's chilly in here tonight. (laughs)
I'd also like to remind all my regular listeners that if you go to the webpage for my show you can become a Patreon subscriber and help me cover my hosting bill. Patreon's who contribute at least five dollars a month get one of these coffee mugs, with my logo.

BRYAN SHOWS OFF HIS COFFEE MUG. THE LOGO IS A THOUGHT BUBBLE WITH "BRYAN BABBLES" IN IT.

BRYAN: Anyway, I don't hate women. But I can't stand the thought of abortion. (pause)
Now, I know what you're thinking: he's one of those bible-thumping Christians who is going to insist that abortion is a sin.

Well, maybe it is, and maybe it isn't, but to me it's an abhorrent waste of life. Okay, people on the other side will say it's only potential life. But I think once you can detect a heartbeat, you have to admit there's life there.

I also don't think women who abort their babies do it lightly. But I do think they do it out of desperation, and if they took more time to think it over, most of them wouldn't do it.

I understand that no woman makes a baby on her own. I understand that a man's life is not affected in the same way by an unplanned pregnancy. I also understand that there are circumstances, like rape and incest and if completing a pregnancy will kill the mother, that can't be handled with a blanket ban.

I'm not saying we should require women and girls who have unplanned pregnancies to raise those children. Some people really aren't meant to be parents, and I would never want a child to grow up without love.

But killing – and it *is* killing – an innocent is wrong. Morally, wrong. Anti-human. Anti-humane.

I know, we can't legislate morality. But we can mitigate immorality. And one of the ways we can do that is with adoption.

I guess this issue is close to me because I was adopted as a baby. My parents – the people who raised me, who loved me – had tried for years to have children. My mother had three miscarriages before they finally stopped trying. She said she'd reached a point where she couldn't even go to friends' baby showers anymore because their happiness made her sad, and she couldn't handle being the one to ruin their joy.

My birth mother... she was a college student, and not prepared to be a parent. So she made the selfless choice to give me up. I know it wasn't easy for her. But I literally wouldn't be here if she'd gone through with the abortion she had initially considered.

I'm grateful for her selfless act.

And I'm grateful for the family who chose me.

Every year, I have a birthday, and we celebrate that, but we also celebrate my adoption day. (chuckles) When I was a kid my friends were jealous about me having two parties, but my adoption day thing is quiet. Just my parents and me, usually going to dinner.

There was never a time I didn't know I was adopted. But when I would throw it in my parents faces, when I would yell, "You're not my mother!" I would be reminded. "You're the child we *chose*. You're the child of our *hearts*."

My youngest, Caitlin, has grown up hearing the same thing. Her birth-mother was a teenager who got pregnant in high school. Her parents wouldn't allow an abortion, and I know she felt forced into her pregnancy. I don't know how to fix that. I only know my baby girl wouldn't be here if she'd gone to the Planned Parenthood clinic.

And Erika? My awesome wonderful mad scientist in training? As much as she believes in a woman's right to abortion – and she's strong in her opinion – she also loves her sister with the same passion and strength. They are as much sisters as if they were blood.

Erika, I hope you're hearing this. I hope you know I didn't refuse your request because I hate you, or think you're bad.

I hope your views change someday.

But I'm also proud of you for having opinions that you've formed based on reading, and not rhetoric.

And even if you decide to donate money to Planned Parenthood when you're older. Even if you convince your mother to donate for you, I'm still your father, and I love you.

Life is precious, Erika. Your life. Your sisters' lives.

All life.

BRYAN SIPS MORE COFFEE AND THEN CUES HIS CLOSING MUSIC.

BRYAN: Thanks for listening to this episode of Bryan Babbles. This show is protected by a creative commons non-commercial, share-alike, attribution international four point oh license. Please visit my website for show notes and music credits, including links to reliable pregnancy counseling services and adoption agencies. Tune in next time, when I babble about why I'm opposed to the death penalty.

THE MUSIC SWELLS AND THE LIGHTS FADE TO BLACK.