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## Even Famous Faces Hide... Abortion Trauma

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Marilyn Monroe. Princess Diana. Judy Garland. Sharon Osborne. Monica Lewinsky.

In addition to fame, these women shared a number of traits: *self-destructiveness, depression, and affairs outside of marriage*. But the bond that really united them was abortion. Each one had an abortion during her lifetime.

"Abortion is a wound to the soul," said Dr. Theresa Burke, author of the book, *Forbidden Grief*. Burke conducted a workshop on post-abortion syndrome at the 2005 Pennsylvania Pro-Life Convention in early October.

Burke first stumbled upon the problem of post-abortion syndrome as a psychology student studying eating disorders. During a group therapy session, the topic turned to abortion. Burke said it was like a bomb going off in the middle of the group. After that, Burke, said, "I developed an obsession with the subject".

Burke cited a Los Angeles Times poll which showed that 56 percent of the post-abortive women surveyed admitted feeling guilty about their abortions, while 26 percent regretted them. She said that the idea that women turn to abortion as a matter of choice is a "complete fallacy of the way that women experience it". In fact, Burke said, most women surveyed say they were forced into their abortions by husbands, boyfriends, parents, or grandparents.

The psychological fall-out from abortion can be devastating, according to Burke. An abortion may be followed by panic attacks, feelings of paranoia, or flashbacks. Women may avoid doctors because physicians remind them of abortionists, or may stop making peanut butter and jelly sandwiches because the jelly reminds them of the blood clots they suffered after their abortions. Seeing pregnant women may fill them with rage, or they may have a fear of leaving their child with a babysitter because they worry the child will get hurt. Christmas might be painful because it is a reminder of a birth, while rainy days may be

reminiscent of the day a woman had an abortion. One post-abortive woman stood outside in a storm, waiting for God to strike her dead to punish her for what she had done.

“A lot of people experience all these symptoms, but they don’t know what causes them”. Burke said. Burke spoke of a woman named Tina who tried to deal with her abortion by carrying a towel around under her clothes and trying on maternity wear. She was happy while she was wearing maternity clothes, but grew somber after she returned to the car and removed the towel that had allowed her to pretend she was pregnant. In this way, she was reenacting both the joy of pregnancy, and the pain of losing a child to abortion.

According to Burke, actress Judy Garland had an abortion at age 20. Her weight then dropped to 90 pounds as she became anorexic. She started developing pregnancy fantasies and experienced post-partum depression after her daughter Liza Minelli was born. She was afraid of being alone with Liza that she slit her wrists when she found out that her nanny was going to be off for the day.

Former White House intern Monica Lewinsky had an abortion shortly before her affair with former President Bill Clinton, whose mistress, Gennifer Flowers, also had an abortion. Reality TV star Sharon Osbourne had an abortion as a teenager and has been plagued with bulimia for decades.

Burke said that, for many people, abortion is a symptom of other problems. She said that, in the support groups she leads, about half of the people involved have a history of being sexually abused.

“The felt they had no other choice but to inflict violence on themselves and their child”, Burke said.

Burke also pointed to the Laci Peterson case as an example of the dangers pregnant women face in our society. Laci and her unborn son Conner were killed in California in one of the nation’s best known double-murder cases. According to Burke, homicide is a leading cause of death for pregnant women.

*If you are suffering from the pain of abortion, you are not alone. You can find help and healing through Rachel’s Vineyard Ministries. For more information, visit [www.rachelsvineyard.org](http://www.rachelsvineyard.org).*



**Rachel’s Vineyard Ministries**  
808 N. Henderson Rd.  
King of Prussia, PA 19406  
610-354-0555—1-877-HOPE-4-ME