Because you have the truth, speak it in love and then fight with all your might to save that child's life. You don't have to be obnoxious to confront her. But you also don't whisper to your friend that her house is on fire and then shrug your shoulders and walk away!

There are many tools to help you. If at all possible, take your friend (and any willing "significant other") to the pro-life pregnancy counseling center in your area. If she won't go, see if she will talk to a counselor on the phone. Ask the center to recommend videos that can be used to counsel.

You also have the powerful tool of prayer. After all is said and done, God is the one who reaches the heart. Even if it seems you are not making any headway, your efforts on behalf of your friend and her child demonstrate that her child is valued already. Be sensitive and loving, but be bold.

Empathize

Understand that your friend has very real needs and it is not enough to just tell her not to have an abortion. We need to become involved because we really understand that person's situation.

You can help your friend see her ability to carry the baby to term by highlighting other areas in her life where she has shown strength.

Abortion brings out anger. We hate the fact that an innocent child will lose her life. Sometimes our empathy for the child paralyses us in our efforts to reach out to the mother. To save the child however, we must help the mother. Anger needs to be channeled toward the sin of abortion. Compassion and loving truth need to be directed toward the mother. She is also a person whose life must be valued.

Finally, realize that no one knows the right words all the time. Who has the eloquence to save a child's life? I have counseled hundreds of women, and I am terrified every single time! It never gets easy.

This is why the first second after you hear, "I'm going to have an abortion," flash a prayer for words and wisdom to God. He knows it's coming and promises to deliver.

In my counseling situations I have grown to love the words God spoke to Moses when he complained that he was not up to the task God set before him. The Lord said to him, "Who gave man his mouth? Who makes him deaf or mute? Who gives him sight or makes him blind? Is it not I, the Lord? Now go; I will help you speak and teach you what to say." (Exodus 4:11-12, NIV)

God loves that child who is in danger. He loves the mother and He loves you. He will equip you with strength and teach you what to say.

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If Someone You Know Considers Abortion

Four keys to responding with sensitivity and love during this difficult time.

It will happen without warning, when you are least expecting it and you're least prepared. Someone you know will come to you and confide, "I'm going to have an abortion." You've seen all the pictures and heard the facts. You know you want to protect life. But when you're confronted with this statement, suddenly your mind goes blank.

What should you say?

What should you do?

Here are four easy to remember keys that spell the word "LIFE." Use them as a "life" preserver to offer the friend who comes to you.

Listen

Take a deep breath. Calm your panic and listen to what your friend is telling you. Hear what she is saying, and what she is *not* saying!

Many of the reasons a woman commonly gives for wanting an abortion are simply smoke screens for the real issues she is dealing with. Listen and reply to the root issues as much as you can. One woman who called said, "We didn't plan this baby and can't afford it." In actuality she was aborting out of anger at her husband for not shouldering any of the responsibility in planning their family.

Listen for the maternal bonding that is already taking place between mother and baby. Recently a woman called who was crying so hard that I could barely understand her. "We've decided to have an abortion. It's the best thing."Somehow between all those tears I was not really convinced that she was sold on the idea of aborting. Listen for your friend's feelings of care for her child and draw them out of her.

Many people focus immediately on the baby, and rightly so: his or her life is in danger. But realize that your friend is also facing a crisis.

Inform

"Speaking the truth in love" should be your motto. Your friend needs to hear the truth from you. But how should you explain it?

Many people focus on the baby, and rightly so, for his or her life is in danger. But realize that your friend is also facing a crisis. The shock that accompanies the discovery of an unplanned pregnancy insulates women from the reality of their unborn child.

Many women abort their baby before they make their way through the shock. So make your information relevant to your friend's concerns.

Lovingly confront false statements. Is she aborting to save a relationship? Few relationships are strong enough to survive the strain of taking a child's life.

Is she aborting to save her own reputation? Talk to her about how she will feel about herself. How valuable is the respect of strangers or even friends when you cannot face yourself?

Is she aborting because she has sinned? Perhaps your friend is a single Christian and feels that she has committed a sin that God cannot forgive. Discuss God's love and forgiveness. Highlight how sin has hurt her so far and that covering one mistake with another can only lead to more pain.

Is she aborting because she thinks it will solve her problem? From your friend's perspective, an abortion is the solution to a difficult problem. Help her realize that aborting her baby will not take away her problems; it will simply place before her an entire new set of problems.

Discuss with your friend the facts of fetal development; she needs to know them. The easiest one to

remember is that just ten weeks after conception the baby is totally formed. All the body's systems are in place. There are even fingerprints! Between ten weeks and birth all that is added to the baby is strength, size and complexity.

But these facts are not necessarily what will have the most impact on your friend. She will probably be more interested in her own health and what risks she is taking with her own body.

Discuss post-abortion trauma. It is a fact that abortion takes a child's life. We are created to love and nurture our children and when we violate that purpose intense guilt, grief and trauma can result.

Women who have aborted often experience nightmares, flashbacks, preoccupation with babies, excruciating guilt, uncontrollable crying and difficulties in relationships. Often these symptoms do not express themselves immediately after the abortion, but when they do it is very important that a woman seek a counselor knowledgeable in treating post abortion syndrome.

Find out *now* where you can get information about the development of the unborn. It is important that you be able to get information to your friend quickly. Most women make the decision to abort and then want to get it "taken care" of as soon as possible. Help her obtain the information she needs so she realizes that abortion is not her only choice.

Fight

My heart broke when a lady who had known a friend was aborting and tried to stop her said later, "If I had to do it all over again, I would have tried harder. I wish I hadn't been so worried about what she would think of me."