

No Regrets

Candice

I had an abortion at 15 and I don't regret it. Call me names - immoral, slut, selfish. I don't care.

I was three months pregnant when I found out. During this time, my mother was in rehab for drug use and I was left at home with my grandmothers.

I took the whole situation objectively. I had unprotected sex and got pregnant. I was worried that I would have to stop school because of this. It was a point in my life where I might have to give up my dreams for the future. I did not even know what my dreams for the future were.

Fifteen was an age of raging hormones and weak judgments. Asking your parents about sex means being scolded. Everybody was doing it anyway. And so I did too. I was delayed for a few weeks and felt different. My childhood best friend bought pregnancy test kits. I wasted the first one because I did not know how to use it properly. The second test read positive. I did not really feel anything but I knew from that moment – I want that thing out of my body.

We lived in the province. Internet is not an option yet for researching on abortion. Days passed. Weeks passed. I did not know what to do. I was having sleepless nights because I know something in me keeps growing and I needed it removed as soon as I can. The big problem is I don't know how or where.

After a few more days, my aunt already noticed that there was something wrong. This started when I told them I don't want to push through with my planned 18th birthday party, and apparently she keeps track of my sanitary pads consumption. We told my mother about it on her graduation day from the rehab. There was a bit of crying, of blaming herself. When she calmed down, she asked me what I wanted to do with the baby. I was firm from the start - I said I wanted to have an abortion. She said they will support me if I wanted to keep the baby. I stood my ground. I said no.

It was summer. I left the house early with my mom and aunt and travelled to Valenzuela. I wasn't allowed to eat. They said I have to fast so the medicines would work properly. It was a small apartment disguised as a travel agency to explain why a lot of women go here. I was asked to take a couple of tablets and they injected anesthesia on my thigh.

There was another woman in the waiting room, suffering from painful contractions. She was alone. They said she got the cheaper package, which didn't include anesthetics. I was lucky my family got the more expensive "painless" package that charges depending on how far along you are - five thousand pesos per 4 weeks. They said the baby is around 3 months. A whopping fifteen thousand pesos.

During the procedure, I did not feel any physical or emotional pain. I was more afraid of the complications that I could possibly get from this like what I've been seeing on TV. I felt so tired when I got home but I woke up hopeful. It felt like being born again. Yes, how insensitive of me to compare the feeling to being born when I just killed another life. Well I waited for the nightmares, the guilt, the sadness, and the regrets. But they never came.

Fast forward to eighteen years after. I now have a 14-year old daughter, just a year short of my age when I had an abortion. My greatest fear for her is to have to go through the same situation as I did – not because I regret it but because I know that I can do something to prevent that from happening. She is at an age where sexual urges are high, and because of this, I made sure she could talk to me about anything, even about sex. I established an environment at home where she feels free to ask without being judged.

I wrote this because I am tired of girls being made to regret decisions that involve their own bodies. I am tired of women having to do what they don't want to do because of the fear of being judged. Motherhood is a gift but it is also a decision.

So if I could go back to the exact same situation where I had to choose between keeping the baby or not would I still do it? Yes, and hopefully in a more sanitized, safe place for abortions.