



# HEALING THE CULTURE

*changing the way people think about life*

We often hear people argue that women need legal abortion in order to achieve success in their lives. By this, they usually mean that having an abortion will make it easier for women to finish school, get ahead in their careers, or earn a comfortable salary. But this claim contains a very skewed notion of “success.” People who are willing to sacrifice their own dreams for the sake of another human being often feel MORE successful than when they were pursuing their own educational or career goals, or spending money on things they wanted.

Christians believe that true “success” is about making a difference to other people and allowing God’s unconditional Love into our lives. If you agree with that, then success *cannot* be defined by how many things you own, or by how smart, talented, beautiful, or able-bodied you are.

Abortion advocates frequently claim that if abortion becomes illegal, women will lose opportunities for success. But this ignores the fact that most parents believe the greatest accomplishment they’ve ever had was giving life to their children and raising them. It also ignores the fact that there are many ways to pursue your dreams without having to kill your own child.

Sometimes when people use the success argument to support abortion, they aren’t talking about the success of the mother or the father. They’re talking about the *baby’s* chances of success in life. Some people believe that abortion should be legal if, during the pregnancy, the unborn baby is diagnosed with a disability, a serious illness, or a defect. They claim these children can never be successful. The first major problem with this attitude is that these diagnoses are frequently wrong – which means that the abortion would kill a healthy baby.

Secondly, and more importantly, it isn’t true that people cannot be successful just because they are disabled. We wouldn’t say that to an *adult* person with a disability, so why is it okay to say it about someone who is *unborn* with a disability?

Just because people can’t do things in the same way that others can doesn’t mean they can’t have a successful life. The composer Ludwig van Beethoven was deaf; the famous physicist Stephen Hawking is quadriplegic, Franklin Delano Roosevelt (the 32<sup>nd</sup> President of the United States of America) had polio and was confined to a wheelchair his entire life; the Hollywood actor Tom Cruise is severely dyslexic. These people accomplished amazing things with their lives, despite their disabilities.

In extreme cases, there are some people born with disabilities that are so severe that they actually *cannot* do many physical or mental activities like walking, talking, and responding to others. But Christians believe that true success does not come from our physical or mental abilities. It comes from making a positive difference to other people, and surrendering to God’s Love. The more we make a positive difference to others and the more we surrender to God, the more free we are to find true success.

Who says that a person with severe physical or mental disabilities cannot make a positive difference to other people? Who says she cannot surrender everything to God? In fact, many disabled people find that it is easier to focus on what’s really important in life – like family, friends, love, generosity, patience, and putting their faith in God – *because* of their disability.

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