“Aborting the Impact of Pro-Choice Propaganda”
by Matthew Mittelberg



This is a persuasive written for the 2010-2011 competition year. It ranked 1st place at the National Invitational Tournament of Champions, is on the Stoa Hall of Fame, ranked 1st at several regional tournaments, and ranked 1st in Persuasive on SpeechRanks.com for the 2010-2011 competitive season.

Watch it on Youtube! https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QcDGR2W1dr4

# Intro to Platform

The following pages concentrate on my experience with the Persuasive speech that I had the blessing of winning last year’s NITOC champion title. My hope is that by reading my thoughts and script you will be aided in selecting your own topic, as well as in shaping and then delivering your finished presentation.

The title of my speech is *Aborting the Impact of Pro-Choice Propaganda*. The general thesis is that the pro-choice arguments that the public believes about abortion are really just the repetition of false propaganda. I chose this topic for a few reasons that I believe you can apply when searching for your own topic:

**Expertise –** Before writing my speech, I knew something about my topic because I had already done a research paper on a similar issue before the speech season had begun. When trying to decide what topic to speak on, it is always helpful to think of an area that you are familiar with, because you will be able to research it more easily and talk about it with credibility.

**Passion –** I was absolutely passionate about this topic (a topic we all should be passionate about!). In order to be persuasive about something, you need to first be persuaded yourself. Do not choose a topic that you only half-heartedly agree with; pick something that you absolutely believe in. You will have much more fun giving your speeches, and your judges will sense that you are truly advocating something from the heart.

**Uniqueness –** Although the topic of abortion has been covered in our competitive speech and debate community many times, I felt that I had a different take on it in that I was able to frame the topic around the theme of propaganda. If you want to do a speech on a popular topic, you need to find a unique viewpoint in order to truly excel. If you can do that, go for it!

**Influence –**I know for a fact that people’s minds have been changed about abortion, and that this might eventually save some unborn children. So I can tell you from experience that there is nothing more rewarding – certainly no trophy or award – than knowing you  may have helped save someone’s life. Find a topic similar to that for yourself; something that you care about, and that you believe can change minds and make a difference. It does not necessarily have to be a topic that would save lives, but persuasive speeches are unique in that they are specifically designed to change someone’s mind. Why not seek to persuade people about something that really matters?

As you read my script and consider what topic you are going to speak about, I would encourage you to look for ideas and inspiration in three specific areas:

**Content –** Notice how I used expert quotes to reinforce what I was trying to say. Half of a good speech is the quality of the material being presented. You can achieve this by doing good research in credible sources –– including books, articles, documentaries, other speeches, and reliable Web sites. Remember, as long as the point you are making is reasonable, there is likely an expert who agrees with you. If you can find that expert and quote him or her, then your credibility will increase exponentially, and so will your rankings.

**Emphasis –** The other half of a good speech is delivery. I have bolded many of the words that I emphasized when I actually gave the speech so that you have an example of which kinds of words to give an extra “punch.” Properly emphasizing the best words is one of the biggest improvements I made last season, and it helped me move from 13th place to 1st.

**Humor –**Persuasive speeches can often be dry and boring for judges, especially if you are the last in the room and they have already listened to seven similar speeches before you. In order to get their attention it is extremely helpful to use a few dashes of humor here and there. You will not find many of those spots in my script (especially for such a serious topic), but I had a number of judges congratulate me for the appropriate moments of lightheartedness in my speech. This helped set me apart from some of my competition, and will help you as well.

# Interesting Things to Know

One of the things that I really enjoyed in giving this speech was the intro. Because the judges never get a list that reveals what the topic of your speech is, you can wake the judges up by having some fun in the beginning, before you get into the more serious issues. Bill Hybels, pastor of one of the biggest Churches in America, Willow Creek Community Church, calls it playing the game of: “I know where I’m going and you don’t.” Although I would get a judge every once in a while that did not quite understand it or like it, most judges really enjoyed the creative approach, and expressed that on their ballots. You can do this in your own speech as well, and it can help differentiate your speech from other competitors’ in the room. Keep the judges guessing long enough to get them thinking and to entertain them, but not long enough that they lose interest or get confused as to what your speech is really about.

# Influential Ideas

I believe that this speech was successful for a combination of reasons. Some of those I have outlined already, such as finding a topic I was knowledgeable and passionate about, and shaping it in a way that was unique from other speeches. I also had some appropriate humor in my speech. But the biggest reason I believe this speech helped me win four consecutive tournaments was this: **delivery**. Near the beginning of the season I had most, if not all of those other elements – but got 13th, 7th, and 4th placings. What really changed things was the extra work I did on the delivery – focusing on each individual phrase and the best words to emphasize, which hand motions were the most powerful, making sure my facial expressions truly reflected what I was saying, and using the best posture and body language to show that I was in control of the room and confident with what I was discussing. This is the best advice that I can give you about your speech: **never stop analyzing and improving your delivery.** Do whatever you have to –– all the way up to the end of the season –– to make sure you are doing everything you can to deliver it at your absolute best. Record yourself on video and go over the recordings just a like professional athlete. Ask your friends, relatives, and especially anyone you know that has experience in public speaking to analyze and critique your speech. Do these things until each and every detail is exactly the way you want it to be. For me that made the difference between 7th at a small tournament and 1st at the Championship. If you do it, I can guarantee that you will have more success.

I hope you have been encouraged and inspired in your own efforts in platform speaking. No matter what your level of experience, with good content and hard work there is no limit to how far you can go. Personally, my Championship year was also my first year really participating in persuasive speaking (though I had experience with debate).  So –– whether this is your first year, or you are a seasoned veteran –– give it your all! Find the best topic, do the best research, write the best script, and give your best delivery. Never stop improving.

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# Aborting the Impact of Pro-Choice Propaganda

Before I begin, which of the following popular myths do **you** think is actually true? Is it: Your first instinct is always best.Is it:It’s not safe to go swimming within an hour of eating. Or is it:If you swallow gum it will stay in your stomach for seven years.

You’ve all heard these myths before, and the answer is **none** of them are true! Another more **serious** example of this is the myth: George *Bush lied to us!*

That’s a phrase which has been said so many times that it’s easy to start believing it.

He duped American citizens, he lied to Congress, and he tricked the rest of the world into believing that Saddam Hussein had weapons of mass destruction, and that this was reason enough to invade Iraq.

Although **no evidence** has been shown to prove that Bush actually lied, just ask most people today. They’re **still** convinced that he lied. But what makes them so sure? Well, they’ve heard the myth so many times that it starts to sound true! That’s the nature of propaganda: say something often enough and people will start to believe it. According to Vincent Ryan Ruggiero, author of *Becoming a Critical Thinker*: “One of the … simplest and most effective techniques of manipulation is simple repetition. …Realizing this, spinmeisters and hucksters repeat their lies and distortions over and over to trick us into accepting them. (84)

In this speech, I’d like to address a different example in which the repetition of false information has had**far worse** consequences than saying “George Bush Lied!” In fact, I believe it is **the most important** issue of our day. It is the falsehoods about **abortion** that are relentlessly repeated in order to persuade and deceive the public. The renowned Christian theologian Francis Schaeffer stated, “Of all the subjects relating to the erosion of the sanctity of human life, abortion is the keystone.” (13)

So as we address this all-important topic of abortion, my thesis is that we need to not only **overcome,**but **defeat** the pro-choice propaganda by exposing the deception contained in three of their most popular areas of distortion: Personhood, Parenthood, and Privacy.

**Myth number one: Personhood – A fetus is not a person.**

Here’s a lie we’ve been told so many times by the pro-choice lobby that many have been fooled into believing it. Dictionary.com defines personhood as: “the state or fact of being an individual or having human characteristics and feelings.” In spite of this commonly understood definition, the supreme court says that an unborn baby doesn’t have personhood until he or she is viable, or could survive outside the womb. So, according to the court, a human being has “personhood” when the Government **subjectively** **assigns** it to him or her? Are they **serious**? This is completely **arbitrary**!

The **scientific** perspective is that an unborn baby is a person at the moment of conception. The book *Biological Principles and Modern Practice of Obstetrics* explains this: “The term conception refers to the union of the male and female pronuclear elements of procreation … The zygote thus formed represents the beginning of a new life.” (17, 23)

So at the moment of conception you are a **human**. As an adult, you didn’t come from a fetus any more than you came from a teenager. You **were** once a fetus, just as you **were** once a teenager. Those are simply descriptions of various stages of human development – but they didn’t make you human; you started out as one.

We know this because there are only four major differences between an unborn baby and one that has been born: size, level of development, environment, and degree of dependency. Scott Klusendorf, a Bioethics expert and President of the Life Training Institute, suggests the acronym "SLED" “S” “L” “E” “D” to help us remember these differences. None of these are a determining factor in deciding whether something is a person. Let’s look critically at each difference.

•The “S” in SLED stands for Size: *unborn babies are smaller than ones that have been born*. Doesthat mean that I’m less human or I should get less rights than, say, Shaquille O’Neal? No, I’m just as human as he is because being a human being does not depend on your size.

•The “L” in SLED stands for Level of development:*unborn babies are less developed than ones that has been born.* Does that mean that a 12 year-old boy isn’t a human because his voice is in a tug of war with puberty? No, he’s just as much human as I am because being a human doesn’t depend on how developed you are.

•The “E” stands for Environment: *unborn babies are still in the womb, so they argue that because they haven’t been born into our world yet they’re not human.* But does that mean that astronauts in space aren’t human? After all, they’re not on earth anymore. No, because being a human doesn’t depend on where you are.

•The D stands for Degree of dependency: *unborn baby are more dependent on their mothers than ones that have been born.* Does that mean that infants aren’t human because they wouldn’t be able to survive without their parent’s attention? No, because being a human does not depend on how reliant you are on other people.

Up to this point, I haven’t talked about my 20-year-old sister Emma Jean. Her room is right down the hall from mine, and she’s one of my closest friends. We have a blast together, whether watching movies, going to fun places like Disneyland, hanging out on family vacations, and just talking about **life**. And, you know, sometimes when I think about her ... I get **so angry**.  You see my sister Emma Jean was born**3 months early**. At birth, she would have **failed** 3 of these 4 tests, and because of that many people would have **aborted** someone just like my sister.  She was much smaller than most babies – 2 pounds, 5 ounces, had lung disease, was on a respirator, and had a 50/50 chance of survival. **Countless** babies in her condition are aborted every year. But that’s the **worst** decision possible, because **my sister** and all of those other little babies are **fully human**– **even** with all of those challenges. Honestly, I don’t know how any of us can help but get angry when thinking about that. This horrendous practice must be stopped.

**Myth number two: Parenthood – Some women aren’t ready for parenthood.**

The premise of this is **true**. For many women keeping their baby would be an unwise choice because they’re still in school, too young to know how to be a good parent, or don’t have a job. So it **would** be tempting to agree with the Pro-choicers on this…**if** I didn’t know about the perfect third option – adoption. Adoption is a path that allows these women to **avoid** the burden of motherhood, but also the atrocity of abortion. Not only that, it’s **free**! According to the National Safe Haven Alliance: “Each state has a law in place to allow an unharmed infant to be relinquished to the proper authorities, no questions asked.”

This means that if a woman wants to give her baby up for adoption, all she would have to do is bring her baby to a police station soon after the birth. Much better, if the mother goes through an adoption agency, all expenses will be paid by the new adopting parents, and she can usually decide the criterion for the those parents, including religion, age, and other factors. This is **truly** a win-win situation, because not only does her baby live, but that child can be put into a **home** where they will be **loved** and cared for.

**Myth number three: Privacy - A woman has the right to control her own body.**

The answer to this common cliché is: yes, a woman does have the right to control her **own** body – but **what** does that have to do with killing the body of the precious child ***inside*** of her? That tiny boy or girl is a **distinct** human being! She has her own brainwaves, heartbeat, blood type, finger prints, and even her own emotions. So a woman's right to control her own body **in** **no way** negates her responsibility to **protect** and **nurture** the body of the precious child inside of her. Besides that, most of the Pro-choice advocates don’t **really** want women to make informed choices about their own bodies. They adamantly oppose laws that offer women the chance to see an ultrasound, because according to lifenews.com: [after seeing an ultrasound] “…about 80 percent of women change their mind about abortion...”

The abortion industry doesn’t want women to have their babies and thus **cut** into their lucrative profits; rather, they want to keep them **ignorant** and, in effect, **choose** for them. You see, most Pro-choice advocates aren’t really Pro-choice – they’re**Pro-abortion.**

I hope that these thoughts will help you respond to the myths that are used to deceive the public and perpetuate abortion. The three myths I responded to were again 1. A fetus is not a person – however we saw evidence that unborn babies are **undeniably** human beings. 2. Some women aren’t ready for parenthood – again, this is true, but misapplied, because there is the perfect alternative – adoption. And 3. A woman has the right to control her own body – a woman does have that right, but **not** the right to kill the body of the precious child **inside** of her. By unraveling these three myths from the abortion industry, I hope you now see through the propaganda that deceives so many, and that you feel more confident in defending a strong pro-life position – one that is not only right, but literally saves lives.

Let me end with a quote from the book *The Questions Christians Hope No One Will ask,*which explains the urgency of fighting for the rights of all unborn Americans:

 “The U.S. Constitution declares that “no state shall deprive any person of life, liberty or property without due process of law”—yet . . . we have **failed** at all three. African-American human beings were denied liberty, Native American human beings were denied property, and unborn human beings are currently being denied life. . . . “History has proven us **wrong** about Native Americans. History has proven us **wrong** about African-Americans. **We cannot afford to wait for history to prove us wrong about the unborn.”** (177)

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