

# How to talk (NOT FIGHT) about abortion

## Find Common Ground



We want people to feel understood, not attacked. It helps to underscore where we agree or have similarities. Emphasize common ground...

1. **In your general experiences and interests** (*I also have a younger brother. I also was born on the coast. I'm also addicted to Diet Coke!*)
2. **In the context of pregnancy and abortion** (*I get why you grieve your miscarriage. I also thought pregnancy was really difficult. I appreciate you are uncomfortable with later abortion.*)
3. **In your language choices.** Wherever possible, use language the other person is familiar and comfortable with, and avoid language that emphasizes different "teams" or "tribes"

## Tell Your Stories

Sometimes people think pro-lifers oppose abortion because we've lived lives of privilege and don't understand how difficult circumstances can be. In reality, many of us take this position precisely because of our profound, life-changing experiences.

### Examples include people:

- harmed by theirs or their partners' abortions
- relieved they didn't abort
- grateful they weren't aborted
- grieving aborted family members



**Everyone has a story.** What motivates you to do the emotionally draining, socially unpopular work of speaking out against abortion? When explaining why you're pro-life, you can offer the universal arguments—or the personal journey that brought you to this cause. Storytelling makes ideas more relatable, memorable, and emotionally engaging. Consider sharing yours.



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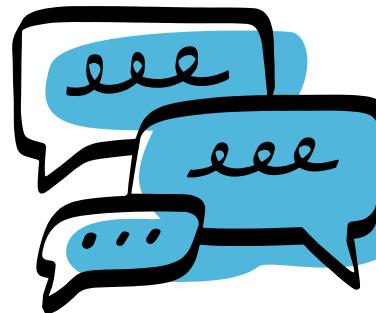
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# Listen Reflectively

Just as our stories shape our pro-life views, our friends and family may have powerful stories that led them to a pro-choice position—and strong feelings about defending that position. **Let them tell you. Ask clarifying questions.** Make your goal for the conversation not to change their mind, but simply to understand them correctly.



When they've said what they need to say, tell them "**I'm going to try to repeat back what I've heard from you, and you tell me if I've gotten it right.**" And if they have corrections, listen and incorporate those. Try until you can state their case in a way they agree with. **Show that you care about understanding them.**

Then ask them to do the same for you.



## More Ideas

**There are many ways to improve difficult conversations when there's passionate disagreement.**

### AFFIRM GOOD MOTIVATIONS.

People often support abortion rights to protect personal freedom, limit state control in private matters, and ensure access to medical care. These desires are rooted in compassion. Affirm that.

### EXPLAIN YOU WANT TO UNDERSTAND.

Decrease the pressure of the conversation by stating upfront that you don't have to persuade each other, but you should understand one another. *"Even if we don't ultimately agree, I see value in simply grasping each other's perspectives."*

### TELL THEM WHAT YOU'VE LEARNED.

Keep the conversation collaborative by acknowledging when the other person tells you something you didn't know. The conversation should be less "you vs. me" and more "two people thinking together."

### ALLOW TIME BETWEEN TALKS.

Minds usually change on a timeframe of months or years, not minutes. And often a lot of the change happens between, not during, conversations. Allow people time to wrap their minds around new ideas.



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