

“Mom, I’m Pregnant”

BY Lynda Bell

There are three words that no mother ever expects or wants to hear from their young teenage daughter. The words, “Mom, I’m pregnant,” were spoken to me by my middle daughter when she was just 15 years old.

At that moment, time stood still. My beautiful young daughter, the really good athlete with the winning personality and smile to match, was going to become a mother; no, actually she already was a mother.

All I could say at that moment was, Jenna, we will get through this. I then asked her to excuse me for a few minutes as I needed to go to my room to collect myself.

I calmly walked to my room, shut the door, and sobbed. I didn’t want Jenna to see me this upset as I knew she was equally upset especially for fear of the unknown.

I called my husband and we cried together. I decided then and there that we would do whatever it took to get Jenna through this. I also decided that life would be tough for Jenna and this new little life; the last thing I was going to do was make it tougher!

The next few days are a bit of a blur as we discussed many options. My husband and I wanted her to stay home and finish school and we would help her with the baby. She and her boyfriend had other plans.

Her boyfriend was going to join the military so they could marry and he would be able to support his new family. We felt she was entirely too young to marry. Her boyfriend was almost four years her senior, and he wanted to care for Jenna and the baby.

The irony was that we did not allow them to date in the first place because of their age difference. Quite frankly, I told her that it was not wise and that these age differences almost always ended with the young girl becoming pregnant and I did not want that to happen to her.

Of course she said that would not happen, and they certainly found a way to be together. After much consultation with our pastor and others we allowed her to be married. Yes, I know what you are thinking, we could have had him put in jail, but then we would have lost our daughter completely.

I also wondered aloud if we were crazy to let her get married, but we knew we had no choice. They married and he headed off to Boot Camp while she stayed with us, and we cared for her throughout her pregnancy.

At the age of 16, Jenna delivered a beautiful baby boy named Tyler. He was so tiny and beautiful. We were all in love with this little new life.

It is true what most say about mother-daughter relationships during pregnancy. As she was in the throes of her most intense pain, it was her mother she wanted, it was me who yelled at the midwife to get her an epidural, and when met with resistance from that same midwife, was ready to fight for my baby as she was in the process of delivering her baby. Needless to say she received her epidural!!

Later as things began to calm and life was almost normal, I began to think on certain things. Why when faced with a crisis pregnancy did my daughter choose life? Why did she come to me?

The situation could have turned out so differently. I began to remember certain instances that I now believe set the stage for my daughter to choose life.

My older daughter Stacy had a very good friend who became pregnant as a teen. We will call her Sarah. Stacy came to me and told me that Sarah was so afraid to tell her mother because she was sure that her mother would make her have an abortion.

I told her to have Sarah call me. When she did call me I assured her that she should tell her mother. I also told her that I was sure her mother loved her, and would respect her decision to have the baby.

I then went out on a limb and told her that if her mother tried to force her to abort, she could come and live with us at our home. She couldn't believe I had offered this. Quite frankly, I was a bit surprised myself as my husband had absolutely no idea of my offer!

Without realizing it, I had put my faith into action, was literally practicing what I had been preaching! It is easy to talk the talk but this was a time for action! As I had predicted, Sarah told her mother and she responded exactly as I had predicted and things went well for Sarah.

My daughters were watching me! I also decided many years earlier that I would not engage in any negative talk about the behavior of any pregnant teens. I had heard some pretty tough comments in the past from some well-meaning people and purposefully did not participate in that negative talk. I tried to speak and act with compassion, not judgment.

This is certainly not an endorsement of destructive behavior and sexual activity outside of marriage. This is simply not pronouncing judgment upon those girls who find themselves in that situation! This is the time for compassion.

I am not going to pretend that life is easy for these young ladies who choose life for their babies, but I promise you, it is far better than the alternative. But the saga of Jenna continues.

As I stated earlier her husband had joined the military and they had just received their orders. I just knew she would be stationed someplace close to me, someplace where I could hop in the car or on a plane and be there quickly.

But the Lord had other plans! When Jenna told me where they were being stationed I thought this was a cruel trick. My 16-year-old child was headed to Hawaii with her husband and my now 6-week-old first grandchild.

The day arrived to put Jenna and Tyler on the plane. With a huge lump in my throat and tears welling up in my eyes I knew I had to be brave for my daughter. I choked all my emotions back and acted bravely. I filled my daughter with encouraging words about what a wonderful mother she was. I reminded her how she had detected an early problem with Tyler that resulted in a nine-day hospital stay.

Of course, me, the mom, the expert, told her when Tyler had some pale pink blood in his diaper that it was probably nothing. Thankfully, she did not listen to me as she insisted we load the baby up and take him immediately to the pediatrician.

We did and the doctor just gushed over Jenna and told me that mothers in their 30s overlook this. The baby had a severe urinary tract infection. She instinctively knew something wasn't quite right.

As I talked to her and reassured her, I knew that I was really reassuring myself. She was fine, I wasn't! As they began calling for passengers to load the plane, I almost couldn't stand it. But I was cool, that is until she walked away, out of my sight.

Then I pounced on the flight attendant who was taking the boarding passes. I asked her if she was going to be on the plane. She said she was. I began to cry, as I said, "Did you see that young girl with that new baby, well she is my baby and she is only 16, please watch out for her, please help her with the baby, please!" She is so young, I raved.

I know I must have looked like a blubbering fool but I couldn't help it. The kind attendant just nodded her head and told me not to worry. I cried all the way back to my car!

An eternity later Jenna called me. I almost laughed when she told me how nice they were to her on the plane, even helping her with the baby off of the plane. She just couldn't get over the kindness. I never told her about my tearful request. It is a secret to this day, at least it was!