

# I Am Woman

by Jennifer A. Gritt



**R**oughly four months after *Roe v. Wade* legalized abortion, I was born. The youngest of three sisters, I grew up in a female dominated household at a time when women were being taught that they could achieve anything they put their minds to. It was an age of female empowerment, and I'd be lying if I said it didn't greatly contribute to who I am today.

*Wonder Woman*, *Charlie's Angels*, *The Bionic Woman* — even Daisy Duke from the *Dukes of Hazard* — these were the television heroines I idolized. Madonna's *Material Girl* served as the musical backdrop as I set my high school goals to be the best basketball player/horse trainer/writer ever. Women, I was conditioned to believe, could have it all. Power, respect, sex appeal, love, and, of course, the ability to become a mom, all wrapped up in the super-neat package called Today's New Woman. Men were just an accessory to be chosen — placed just so — and, if they didn't work out, discarded.

"We have the right to do anything we want!" was the familiar collective chant, and it was seductive. Every fiber of my being strained for recognition as a powerful societal force, ready to take on the world — a strong, independent female! This meant that no one — especially a man — was going to tell me what to do, what my career should be, or how to live my life. I had the power to choose, you see, and society was backing me one hundred percent.

I have the right to go to college! I have the right to run a corporation! I have the right to be president! I have the right to get rid of my baby in the event that I get pregnant and don't want to be! I have the right to choose! I have the....

Then something made me pause, made me lower my clenched fist and fall silent. A jolt of shame rushed through me as I realized that I could never bring myself to believe that I had the right to destroy my baby. And in a moment of hesitation, I lifted my eyes skyward and caught a glimpse of what God has been trying to tell humans all along.

My life was a gift that I did not choose and neither did my mother. And what society viewed as my right to exercise control over my body — cloaked as it was in a flag of personal freedom — was nothing more than a morbid excuse to justify eliminating innocent life.

The power of choice can never be unleashed without restraint if a society is to remain civilized and free. If a murder is committed, the offender must suffer at the hands of the law for misusing the power of choice. The same is true for stealing, assault and battery, even drunk driving. All of these actions have consequences that affect other individuals, and punishments can and will be meted out to those who commit them. So why should abortion be any different?

"Because a woman should have control over her own body," whispered the adolescent, feminist voices still haunting me. But no woman really has ultimate control over her own body. If that were the case, then we could simply will pregnancy, disease, or even death from happening.

"A baby developing in the womb is not a human being separate from the mother," the voices continued, growing louder and more defensive. Really? Not a human? It should come as no shock that sexual intercourse between a man and a woman is how human beings procreate. And it is here that the pro-choice

argument reveals its irrationality. This is where it becomes a bizarre scene in which a woman is forced to deny the biological reality of who she is and ignore the well-established understanding of human development — of human life.

Why, if a woman chooses to have sex with a man, should she not be asked to take responsibility for her action? Because no matter how much the pro-choice lobby wants to deny it, what is created at the time of conception is the blueprint for an individual human being — one that only needs time and the chance to grow, to mature, to live.

Now I do recognize that conception through rape — rare as it is — is not a woman's choice. But that doesn't change the fact that human life is created. And I truly believe that with help and guidance this type of tragedy can be accepted, handled, and healed.

Despite how seductive the battle cry for freedom of choice was — and still is — I realized that to be truly worthy of the title Strong, Independent Female, I first had to accept the awesome responsibility that comes with being a woman in today's society. I refuse to deny the unique, natural gift of womanhood for the sake of a collective chant. And I will not divorce myself from the reality of my gender and the limitations of science. I will take responsibility for my actions and respect not only myself, but humanity as a whole. And no one will ever be able to convince me to think otherwise.

So listen up all you pro-choice disciples of the Helen Reddy "I am woman" school of thought, and take heed. Because the only thing I need to be liberated from is you. Got it?

For I am woman. Hear me roar! ■

**Despite the pro-abortion appeal to individual liberty, the power of choice can never be unleashed without restraint if a society is to remain civilized and free.**