

My name is Anna Spitzinger, I'm 24 years old and I am from Windham, ME. I will never forget the day I found out I was pregnant. After graduating from Cheverus High School in 2005 I had planned to attend my first choice school, Elon University in North Carolina, as an International Business major and a Spanish minor. Upon returning to Elon after my first Christmas break I discovered I was pregnant. At 19 I was not married, I had no job, and even more haunting and overwhelming was I had to break my parents' trust and hearts. My father drove down to North Carolina and brought me home a few days later. Reality hit. I was faced with, quite certainly, the biggest decision I had ever and will ever make. For many friends and family the decision was not so hard. It seemed like a given. This could all just go away. I had a promising future and if I kept the baby my life would be over. I would never get the opportunities or have the experiences that other young women would have. In my heart, however, I knew that it was not a decision to be taken so lightly. The next week my parents and I made an appointment at a local abortion-provider to find out how far along I was and to get more information about my options. Sitting in the waiting room I remember feeling empty and alone. When I was called into the examination room I laid on the table thinking "maybe there has been a mistake, maybe I'm not even pregnant." The nurse came in with the ultrasound machine and went

over what she would be doing- first confirming “the pregnancy,” and then determining its size. It quickly became obvious there was to be no discussion at all, let alone about options. I noticed the screen was not facing me. As the image came on the screen she stated, simply, “I see the pregnancy.” Well what exactly does that mean? I thought. I asked to see what she was looking at, but she told me that until my mind was made up I was not allowed to see. “Not allowed?” I thought it was my body, my choice? As the picture printed, the nurse placed it face down on her clipboard. The entire time there was not even an utterance of the words “baby” or “fetus.” She confirmed “it” was 7 weeks old, told me I had limited time to make a decision, handed me a slip of paper, and I was dismissed. I felt utterly blank as I left the clinic. There is no feeling for me to describe to you- just numb.

Over the next few days I took the time to learn on my own about the process of an abortion from start to finish, the demands of being a young mother, and how an adoption would work. A week after my initial appointment I sat down with my parents to tell them I was going through with the pregnancy.

Since then my life has gone through many changes. My daughter, Ava, was born on August 22, 2006, and as fate would have it this is also my dad’s

birthday. I decided it would be best for both me and my child if the father and I were not together. I graduated from the University of Southern Maine in Portland as a Dean's List Student in 2009 with a bachelor's degree in Finance. And although my Friday nights turned into Goodnight Moon and bed at 8:30, my idea of a good time has become my personal rendition of the hokey pokey and my relaxing afternoon consists of 5 loads of laundry and changing Barbie's clothes a handful of times, there has never been a single second that I have regretted my decision. My life has not ended, it has only changed, and for the better. I work hard every day to support our family and break the stereotype of the young single mother. My Ava is a delightful, curious, content, and utterly *beautiful* 4 year old. She will start kindergarten in the fall.

Luckily I had the wherewithal and the parental support to take the time to make an informed decision. I can tell you honestly that I did not get any of that information from my appointment at the abortion provider. First hand I can tell you that women and their partners are making the heaviest, most life changing emotional, physical, financial, mental and medical decision of their lives with less information than they would need to buy a car, choose which movie to go see, or even which food to feed their pets. I am not here

because I want you to believe in one thing or the other, I am here because I want you to believe in informed decisions.

Thank you for listening to my story and please support educating women and their partners on a life altering medical decision.