

Toni Braxton Ashamed of Abortion, Thinks God Is Punishing Her

Toni Braxton's new memoir, *Unbreak My Heart*, reveals many unknown details about her personal life, including the revelation that she once had an abortion.

"In my heart, I believed I had taken a life—an action that I thought God might one day punish me for," she wrote in her book, which released Tuesday.

The 46-year-old singer and author recently discussed the matter with *ET*'s Nancy O'Dell.

"I never thought I would have to do that," she said when recalling her abortion.

Braxton was on the acne drug Accutane—which has serious side effects for fetuses—at the time, but she said other factors affected her decision.

"I felt selfish because I was thinking, 'I'm going through bankruptcy—there's things going on with my life and I can't give this kid any future.' I was feeling hopeless for no reason, when I look at it now for no reason, what was I thinking?" she said.

"I am not really embarrassed about it; I am more ashamed of myself for doing that because I could've figured something out financially—that was just an excuse I was making for myself," she said.

The chart-topping songstress filed for bankruptcy in 1998. She married her ex-husband, Keri Lewis, in 2001, and the couple has two children together.

When asked if she still feels the guilt of her decision, Braxton said she feels like she has three kids and oftentimes has to remind herself she only has two.

"In my head I feel like I have three kids," she explained.

Braxton also talked about learning that her youngest son, Diesel, has autism. She said she used to believe the diagnosis was a punishment for her abortion.

"I thought it was because of the abortion, God was punishing me," she recalled. "And it took a long time for me to get past that."

She wrote in her book, "I have sometimes wondered whether God was punishing me for the abortion I had years ago by allowing my son to have autism. Or by giving me so many health issues."

Braxton also wrote about her religious upbringing. She said her family's "religious extremism" led to her conservative upbringing and views on life.

She explained that her mother, Evelyn, brought the family to the conservative Pillar of Truth Church, which encourages speaking in tongues. The church also mandated covering one's body from head to toe and did not recognize any holidays.

"I began connecting religion, God and church with judgment, anxiety and guilt," wrote the singer, who admitted to sometimes faking being able to speak in tongues. "The times that bound us together became the ties that strangled us. Our family had fallen into religious extremism."