

## Surviving Life's Darkest Moments

*This article is based on an interview that I heard through a podcast of On Being. Krista Tippett was interviewing Jennifer Michael Hecht who wrote the book, Stay: A History of Suicide and the Philosophies Against It.*

It seems as though suicide has become an epidemic in our society, and yet no one talks about it. Currently, suicide is killing more college students than alcohol. For those under 44, suicide is the 3<sup>rd</sup> highest cause of death. In some places, it is the 2<sup>nd</sup> highest cause. Suicide is killing more people than car accidents.

As faithful Christians, we need to not only prepare ourselves to deal with our darkest moments – we also need to help our loved ones to learn how to deal with their darkest moments.

First, you are an integral part of the community/the people around you. You can never know how much you mean to the people around you. You being in their life provides them with a part of their reason for being. To take that from them damages their life and damages their hope in living this life. Sometimes that damage goes to the core of who they are and they are left to wonder how someone that they loved so much could choose to cause them such deep pain.

As you look at the people around you, you may see them at one of the better times in their life. Most of us have had to go through seriously difficult times in life, we just don't talk about them much. If you are in the depths of darkness some time, you are not alone. It is almost a rite of passage. But remember, like the others of us, you can make it through that darkness. You may not be able to feel His presence, but Jesus is there with you – and He will show you the way out.

Stay. You owe it to the people that love you and you owe it to your future self. Most of us have experienced terribly difficult moments in life. But you have also experienced amazingly wonderful moments in life. We go through different moods at different times. It would be terrible to let your worst mood rob all of your future wonderful experiences.

You don't know who you are going to meet in the future. You don't know what it would be like to work in a different job. Maybe you haven't seen the birth of your children or grandchildren. Maybe you haven't yet gone skydiving or scuba diving... learned to paint or play a musical instrument. Maybe you would love to take a course in history or art or chemistry or biology or religion.

These are all of the things that your future self may see or do – and a thousand more that you cannot imagine.

One person who had to deal with depression often – actually wrote a note to themselves when they were in one of their better moods. They wrote, "I'm happy right now. Please don't do anything to prevent this from happening again."

For the teenager, you should realize that the most interesting part of your brain – the part that helps you really get what you want – has not fully developed. Your frontal lobes develop from 16 to 25. Your best self is still on its way.

For the adult, they have found that a suicide in the family – especially the suicide of a parent can cause their children to disproportionately commit suicide.

In summary, we need each other. You are a part of all of our lives. And whether you know it or not, we love you.

- Pastor Steve