

A Caveat on Suicide: It Is Not The Answer

Information about NDEs generally relaxes the fear we normally harbor about physical death. That does not mean, however, that suicide should be viewed as an easy way out of depression or challenges in life that seem insurmountable. Research on NDEs and communications with people who have passed on provide feedback from people who have committed or attempted suicide.¹ In general, the feedback is a warning that suicide is not the answer.

One of the realizations commonly reported is that suicide does not solve any problems. All the problems that led to the urge to escape through suicide remain to haunt on the other side or in a new life. Someone who has committed suicide may be shown the higher purpose of the problems he was facing and the enormity of the opportunities lost.

In addition, the suicide victim in his life review experiences all of the pain that his decision caused others, from his loved ones to strangers who read about it in the newspaper and feel grief that someone so young should have died in that fashion. Non-suicide NDEers have reported seeing (while on the other side) suicide victims following loved ones they left behind saying, "I'm sorry! I'm sorry!" as if the loved one could hear.

Each of our lives is intertwined with others. People that a suicide victim would have helped and children he would have raised are disrupted due to his untimely departure. A suicide victim may see instances in which his example encourages others to try suicide.

Another concern is that not all NDEs are pleasant experiences. Rather than being embraced by a loving being of light, a person committing suicide, God forbid, might find himself in what has been called the realm of bewildered spirits. People in this realm emanate darkness. They have been reported to present themselves as dressed in black and staring blankly. They show no concern or curiosity about where they are. As one journeys deeper into the darkness, he may encounter more active mischief. Love and light can overcome all of this, but the person who committed suicide would have to find those attributes within himself and let them shine or call for help to God with earnestness and full sincerity.

This does not mean that people who commit suicide are not loved on the other side or are singled out for punishment. We are all loved no matter what we have done, but we may not be in a state of mind that is open to recognizing and receiving it. Also, much of what may seem like punishment is merely the result of awakening to the consequences of the suicide decision and realizing that the problems did not go away. In fact, the physical life was the most favorable opportunity available to resolve the problems. There is always a path forward to healing and self-realization. There is always help.

If you or someone you know is seriously contemplating suicide, get help in dealing with the urge as well as the underlying problems that feed it. Consider a suicide hotline, a therapist or

spiritual counselor. If in school, confide in a counselor or teacher and ask for their help. In addition to getting help, a person contemplating suicide could find someone who needs help or a place to volunteer like an animal shelter or a soup kitchen. This awakens one to a purpose in life. It has been said that the fastest way to heaven is on the arms of someone you are helping.

If you have lost a loved one to suicide, there are some things you can do to help your loved one. First, prayer is real. It can awaken light in a person or activate grace. Sincere acts of charity or kindness in memory of your loved one has a similar benefit. Release unconditionally all resentment, grief and negativity that you have toward your loved one. As long as you are in pain, he is in pain. He could be following you saying, "I'm sorry! I'm sorry!" Tell him through your thoughts that it's OK. Think of him fondly and remember the better attributes and good times. All of this will help him to forgive and move on. It will help you, too.

Finally, if you know of a reputable medium and are open to working with one, you could arrange for a session, which would give your loved one an opportunity to express his thoughts in a way that you can hear more plainly. Do not ask the medium to call on the loved one because we should not disturb those who do not want to be disturbed. Simply open up the channel in a spirit of love and light and allow him or other loved ones to speak if they wish to do so. There are plenty of mediums who are qualified to help, but you really need to do your homework to make sure that you have one with good skills, a good reputation and impeccable ethics.

¹ P.M.H. Atwater, *The Big Book of Near-Death Experiences: The Ultimate Guide to What Happens When We Die* (Hampton Roads 2007), 71-81; Bruce Greyson, MD, "Incidence of Near-Death Experiences Following Attempted Suicide," *Suicide and Life-Threatening Behavior* 16(1) (Spring 1986): 40-45; Bruce Greyson, "Near-Death Experiences and Antisuicidal Attitudes," *OMEGA* 26(2) (1992-93): 81-89; Bruce Greyson, "Near-Death Experiences and Attempted Suicide," *Suicide and Life-Threatening Behavior* 11(1) (Spring 1981): 10-16; Kenneth Ring, PD, Evelyn Elsaesser Valarino, *Lessons from the Light: What We Can Learn from the Near-Death Experience* (Moment Point Press 1998), 228-229, 252-253, 257-260; Jon Klimo, PhD, Pamela Rae Heath, MD, *Suicide: What Really Happens in the Afterlife* (CreateSpace 2006); Craig R. Lundahl, PhD, Harold A. Widdison, PhD, *The Eternal Journey: How Near-Death Experiences Illuminate Our Earthly Lives* (Warner 1997), 6-7, 20, 67-68, 122-126, 234, 254-256; Anne Puryear, *Stephen Lives* (Gallery Books 1997).