

Surviving Suicide: Battered but not Broken

By Anna Palm



The grief I felt when my husband died by suicide many years ago was overwhelming. All deaths bring sadness and a time of mourning. However, death by suicide brings other issues that families may not otherwise have to deal with. Our family and friends — everyone it seemed — asked, “Why?” That is common after a death by suicide, but it can add an additional element of regret and/or guilt for the family and friends who wonder if they should have seen the signs and been able to prevent this death. After months of questioning and praying for answers, I came to realize that, this side of heaven, there are no suitable answers, just as in many other types of deaths.

My husband was sometimes sad, but he appeared to brush his troubles aside and not dwell on them. To most people, he was a happy, easy-going person who didn't let disappointments or problems bother him. However, it seems there came a day when that was no longer the case. His death was totally unexpected and without warning for me and our family members. Nowadays, the media and physicians are trying to make us more aware of the signs of depression and bullying, issues that sometimes result in a death by suicide. Despite these efforts, family and friends continue to be shocked when a suicide occurs. It seems to me that many of those who die by suicide are very good at hiding their true feelings, perhaps even from themselves.

The months following my husband's death were a struggle, but God comforted me, and He blessed me with a very special family and wonderful friends who offered the support I needed. I was battered but not broken; the dark days ebbed away, and joy returned. The Lord has blessed me with a life that is filled with more love and happiness than I ever imagined possible.

During the good and the bad times, I focus on God's blessings and praise Him for all the joy He brings into my life. As Paul says in 2 Corinthians 1:4 (CEV): [The Father] *comforts when we are in trouble, so that we can share that same comfort with others in trouble.* I pray that God allows me to do just that. God's grace is truly amazing. Q