

WHEN SUICIDE TOUCHES YOUR LIFE

From Hurt to Healing

A guidebook from one who has been there.



DARLENE BROCK

SMART LIVING IN SMALL BITES

To read more, the entire book is available on Amazon.

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This book is written by the author to share her life experience with the sole purpose of providing insight, encouragement, and hope. The information provided in this book is for informational purposes only and is not intended to substitute professional counseling or treatment.



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The Grit and Grace Life website and now the *Smart Living in Small Bites* series would not be what they are without the excellent writers who pour their hearts into every word they write. Their willingness to be vulnerable takes courage. They are some of the strongest women I have ever known.

Finally, and truly most importantly, I could not have found purpose and healing without a relationship with my God and Savior, Jesus Christ. His grace, mercy, and gentleness have led me through not just the loss of my father but many other good and bad days in this life. Surrendering my life to him was the best decision I ever made. He is, without fail, faithful and true.

And thank you, dear reader, for taking this journey with me. I pray my words fill your heart with the comfort of knowing that someone else understands. May you find the healing and hope that brought me out of a very dark time and created a strength in me I never thought possible.

DEAR READER

There are journeys in life that none of us want to walk. Heartaches we probably didn't see coming. Losing someone you care about to suicide is definitely one.

Having taken that journey with the loss of my father, I understand where you are. I also know where you can go and how to get there. Because I did.

It's not easy nor without its own challenges, but I can assure you there is healing to be found.

This book is to help you walk through your hurt and uncertainty as I did mine. Within these pages, you will have an opportunity to write your own story, embrace the mixed emotions that come, and set your own course toward healing.

My hope and prayer is that the memories you have will return sweet and the hope you find will ring true.

Thinking of you as you take this journey,

Darlene



MY STORY

I knew my father was having a difficult time in life. It was so very unlike this man, whose smile warmed the hearts of perfect strangers, to see that smile so infrequently. But at the age of 50, having left his position as an accountant, he could not find a job in his field. There were challenges he was facing that he kept to himself, and the depth of depression that descended upon him was not fully known to those who loved him. That is until the day my mother found him in the garage having taken his own life. My father had committed suicide.

I was a 23-year-old newlywed living in Nashville, Tennessee when I received the call. This was my daddy. The man who came to my aide when I thought there were monsters under my bed. The man who woke me up each morning for school by whispering through the door, knowing anything loud would make me throw things across the room. The man who forbade me from dating the hippie boys, finally giving up when he returned home from work countless times finding another one in our living room. The man who gave me away at my wedding, believing I had someone who would care for me well.

My husband and I packed, I know not what, then began our journey from Nashville to Northern Indiana late on the night of the phone call. The ink darkness of the night wasn't just in the sky—I felt smothered by it from all sides. Everything was surreal, as if I was living another's life.

I Will Never Forget Facing My New Reality

We arrived at my parents' home the next day to a building filled with family. The house had been filled that way before with bantering and laughter in every room, but not on this day. As we parked in the drive, my older brother met us at the car. Walking toward one another, he reached out to me to simply hold me in his arms, nothing said, only tears flowed.

As my husband and I walked through the front door I had entered countless times before, my uncles joined us. One on either side of me, as if they were guarding their niece from the hurt they understood I was walking into. An arm was stretched around my shoulder as I walked toward the sofa. I didn't know what I wanted—to find answers, to get details of what happened.

What I really wanted was to go back in time. Looking into their eyes, with half questions on my lips, my tears continued to flow. They sat me down and answered as I found the strength to ask, "How did he do it? Why didn't we know? What was he thinking?"

Truly, the responses didn't really matter, as the questions had no acceptable answers; he was just gone. This didn't have to happen. I didn't even get to tell him goodbye. My new life had just begun, and he would not be part of it. It felt as if someone shot a cannon, and the cannonball had blown right through my core with no way to stitch up the gaping hole.

This Is the Phrase I Clung to in the Hardest Moments

The next three days were a jumble. My emotional pendulums swayed from anger, through emptiness, to grief, and then back again. I barely noticed that the church was packed for the funeral. I heard very little except a phrase that was repeated several times by the pastor, as he spoke kindly of my father, “Don’t mistake the man for the moment.” I clung to that phrase.

“Don’t mistake the man for the moment.”

Walking to our cars from the church, we joined the line that slowly made its way to the cemetery. Upon arrival, my mother, older brother, sister-in-law, younger brother, my husband, and I began one of the most difficult walks in my life: from the cars to the designated folding chairs where we would sit to complete the graveside portion of laying my father to rest.

Words were spoken, a final prayer said, and then we sat as friends and family filed by to extend their condolences before returning to their cars. I remember one lady, I’m sure well-intentioned, as she greeted me and exclaimed loudly, “Praise Jesus, he’s in heaven now!”

If the casket had not been placed between us and the gaping hole that had been dug, she would have been thrown in there. That was the last thing I wanted to hear. I didn’t want my dad in heaven; I wanted him here. I wanted him to open the door as I arrived for Christmas and to fall asleep in the middle of the living room after his Sunday meal.

The rest of the author's story has been intentionally removed. To read more, the entire book is available on Amazon.



"Grief knits two hearts in closer bonds than happiness ever can; and common sufferings are far stronger links than common joys."

—Alphonse de Lamartine

YOUR STORY

Every person's story is nuanced. Yet, we share a common hurt and need. Telling our own story—even if it's just for ourselves to read—is an important step toward hope and healing. Write your story below.



"There is a sacredness in tears. They are not the mark of weakness, but of power. They speak more eloquently than ten thousand tongues. They are the messengers of overwhelming grief, of deep contrition, and of unspeakable love."

—Washington Irving

PROBLEMS TO FACE

No one can prepare you for what follows when you've lost someone to suicide. I think this is true of most life tragedies and challenges. Each has its own set of problems, and some are often unexpected.

With this loss you and I share, the first hurdles are often the practical. Shortly after my father's death, we worked through those created by his loss. First, the financial challenges my mother would face, then the emotional ones. We addressed the area of the home where my father died, then moved furniture in the rest of their home to help my mother be able to live in it until we could create another path.

But for me, the problems I faced were primarily emotional, and they didn't come all at once. I believe that is true for all who have lost someone to suicide.

Looking back at what those were and introducing them to you in this section reminded me how much I hurt and how far I've come. But to start the healing process, we must look at the problems we face.

I have outlined mine and encourage you to do that for yourself, too. Whether you have experienced the ones I faced or others, take the time to read, write, and ponder. Take your time with this process; it's vital to explore fully, and when you do, the next part of your healing journey can begin.

Disbelief

My father was a well-liked man, happy and always hopeful. His easy laugh and ready smile were what I knew of this man I called “Daddy.” But even though the laughter had become less frequent and his smile disappeared, I was stunned. If he could make this choice, he was different from the man I knew. Certainly, I heard the news wrong; he could never take his life. This could not be real.

Did your loss not seem real? Has disbelief led your emotions?

The rest of the problems faced and the steps taken have been intentionally removed. To read more, the entire book is available on Amazon.

HAS SUICIDE TOUCHED YOUR LIFE?

Maybe it feels too hard to handle on your own. Do you wish you could talk to someone who understands—someone who's made it through, could walk with you, and lead you toward hope?

In this book, you will find that woman.

- *Read her story—a story like yours.*
- *Discover the problems she faced and the steps she took.*
- *Find courage through her confidence and hope.*
- *Pen your own story and struggles on the pages provided.*
- *Take comfort in realizing you don't have to walk alone.*

Discover the journey toward hope in *When Suicide Touches Your Life*. This compelling guidebook takes you through the depths of despair to the hope of healing. As author Darlene Brock shares her story of the devastating loss of her father to suicide, you will be given the opportunity to navigate your own loss.

As one who understands the depths of your sorrow, Darlene gently nudges you toward healing and hope. Her words will help you find strength in the face of pain and peace in the chaos left by suicide's wake. Her hope is that this book will be your guiding light toward a life of healing after a loss like no other.



Another guidebook in the *Smart Living in Small Bites Series*.

