

A Wave of Feelings Suicide Loss Devotional

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A Brief Note

If you have lost a love one or close friend to suicide, this devotional is for you. First, I am sorry for your loss and hope this devotional brings you comfort. I wrote this devotional because I lost my dad to suicide 15 years ago. I have been on a grief journey ever since. I know first-hand how painful it can be. It has taken a great deal of time and healing for me to finally feel comfortable sharing about my loss. For some time now, I have felt God's gentle tug on my heart to write and make this devotional accessible to everyone who needs it. It has been beautiful to see His plan come to fruition. I pray it helps, heals, and encourages you through this difficult time.

Lastly, this is dedicated to those we lost too soon, and to all the Suicide Loss Survivors, please remember that you are never alone.

-Kristina

Introduction

A Wave of Feelings contains seven daily devotionals. It includes a brief explanation of feelings one might be experiencing after a suicide loss. An applicable Bible verse and my own personal experience are included. I have found that some of my most healing moments were related to hearing other Survivors' stories. I felt less alone in my grief, which is why I have included my own experience. Each devotional ends with a prayer and an alternate prayer. The alternate prayer is for those who are struggling with feelings of anger, as I did for many years after my dad's death.

If you require any additional support, please know that the 988 National Crisis Line is always available via call, text, or online chat.

Day 1

A wave of feelings, I want to normalize all the emotions you are feeling right now. When you lose someone to suicide, the feelings can be extremely overwhelming. Overwhelming and confusing emotions are unfortunately common with suicide grief. This is often because suicide deaths and the situations surrounding them are complicated. It is important to remember during this time that you are human and it is perfectly normal to be experiencing complex emotions.

Psalm 34:18

“The Lord is near to the brokenhearted and saves the crushed in spirit.”

My Personal Experience

When I lost my dad, I struggled to understand all the conflicting emotions I was facing. I loved my dad, but I hated what he did. I felt abandoned and betrayed that he took his life. I was consumed by anger because I was so hurt. I missed him deeply. I additionally felt feelings of relief, because he had struggled for so many years with mental health and substance abuse. It was overwhelming to have all these emotions occurring simultaneously. I found it very isolating because I thought that I was alone in feeling so many conflicting emotions. I had no idea at the time that this was a common experience for suicide loss survivors.

Looking back now, I realize all of my emotions were valid. It was perfectly fine to have conflicting feelings. God created us to be complex humans with many emotions. It is ok for us to come to God and not necessarily know how we are feeling or what to pray for. God is big enough to handle our problems and complex emotions. Allowing ourselves the space and time to feel various emotions is an important part of the healing process.

Day 1

Prayer

Dear God, I come to you devastated because of the loss of my loved one. I know you can heal the broken-hearted, but I am lost in my grief right now. Please help me to feel less overwhelmed with the emotions this loss has created. There are things that I do not understand and I don't know if I ever will. Please help me have some kind of peace and resolution during all this pain. I know that I am not alone because you are with me. God, please continue to comfort me during this time. Amen.

Alternate Prayer

Dear God, I am not okay with this death. It has devastated my life and made me feel so alone. I feel like this happened because you don't care about me and I am angry right now. I have so many feelings that all together just don't make sense. I pray that one day I will be less angry. Even in my anger, I will continue to seek you. I need peace that only you can provide. Amen

Day 2

A wave of feelings. Exhaustion. Losing someone to suicide is considered one of the most devastating types of loss. This type of loss will impact how we function in our day-to-day lives. It can be hard in our fast-paced world to try to keep up with everything when we are suffering. It is normal to feel tired and exhausted mentally, emotionally, and physically. It takes time for your body and mind to process the loss.

Psalm 4:8

“In peace I will both lie down and sleep; for You alone, O Lord, make me dwell in safety.”

My Personal Experience

I remember being absolutely exhausted in the days, weeks, and months that followed my dad's death. I stayed up many nights trying to make sense of his actions and the events that led up to his death. I also felt a shift in my relationships, as it was exhausting to go to social events where people would ask me tons of questions. Even worse, sometimes people at the events had no idea that he had passed away. I found myself having to inform them of his passing. It was already difficult to deal with, and often the news of his death was met with shocked looks when I told them how he died.

Looking back now, I wish that I had given myself more time and space to grieve. I was demanding too much of myself mentally and emotionally. I wish I had taken more time away to rest and spent less time concerned with other people's reactions. I had no control over their reactions or what they thought, but I still felt the need to explain. It was exhausting. If you are looking for permission to rest, you have it from me. If you find that you cannot rest, that is ok. Try doing something mindless and easy. The key takeaway is to take care of yourself during this difficult time.

Day 2

Prayer

Dear God, I come before you exhausted. I have been trying to rest and it's so hard with what I am going through. I am forever grieving the loss of my loved one. This loss is affecting all areas of my life because I love and miss them. Please renew my spirit and give me energy to carry on. Continue to comfort me. Amen.

Alternate Prayer

Dear God, I am really struggling with how to deal with the loss of my loved one. I feel like it is so unfair. I am upset that my life has changed forever and I don't have any control over it. I am so sad that they are not here and I am angry that this happened. I know I need comfort and peace, but it's hard to trust in you right now. Be with me and comfort me. Amen

Day 3

A wave of feelings. Worry. After losing someone to suicide, it can be hard for worry and anxiety not to fill your life constantly. Often, suicide loss is unexpected and it can be hard to process the unknowns of how or why this happened. I want to let you know that it is perfectly ok to want answers and want to understand. However, sometimes even with answers, our anxiety and worry still prevail. It is vital for us not to let worry and fear run our lives, even after losing someone unexpectedly. This may seem impossible right now, but as long as you are working towards it. You are making progress.

Psalm 121:1-2

“I look up to the hills, but where does my help come from? My help comes from the Lord who made heaven and earth.”

My Personal Experience

After my dad's death, I had a hard time processing how life could change so quickly. The reality that I could just lose someone I cared about so much forever was earth-shattering. It took me by shock and I felt constantly nervous about what could happen next. Anxiety consumed many parts of my life and it is something that I still struggle with today. I am continuing to work on placing my faith in God and His plan.

For my high school graduation, as I walked across the stage I had them read my favorite Bible verse.

Psalm 121:1-2

“I look up to the hills, but where does my help come from? My help comes from the Lord who made heaven and earth.”

It carried me through some of the hardest times and comforted me even when I was angry at God.

Day 3

Prayer

Dear God, I am struggling with worry and anxiety. It has been hard for me to believe in the goodness of your promises after the loss of my loved one. I worry about what else bad could happen in my life. Please help me understand that you have not given me a spirit of fear but of strength. Please give me comfort during this time and faith to trust in your plan. Amen.

Alternate Prayer

Dear God, I am hurting. I don't understand why my loved one had to die. I am so hurt by the pain of losing them, I'm finding it hard to believe that you have something good planned for my life after all this. Give me the strength to get through this difficult time. Help me not to be plagued by worry, fear, and anxiety. Amen

Day 4

A wave of feelings. Restore. I have heard many survivors define their lives as before the suicide and after the suicide. This was the case for me as well and it turns out it is completely normal. Losing someone to suicide is a very significant event in our lives. During this time, it can be confusing, challenging, and frustrating. While we are trying our best to process everything, it takes a toll on us mentally, emotionally, and physically. Grief is a journey, not a sprint. Trying to speed up grief only makes things worse (trust me, I know).

Psalm 23:3

“He restores my soul; He leads me in the paths of righteousness for His name's sake.”

God has the power to restore all things. God can restore our grieving hearts. While we will not be the same as we were before, God can help us heal. There is nothing on earth or heaven that can restore like God can. God knew your loved one, He knew their struggles, and He loved them. God also loves you and He will go to the ends of this earth to have a relationship with you. He will seek you out, even when you feel like all hope is lost. God can and will restore.

My Personal Experience

I remember after losing my dad, I had this overwhelming feeling that I would never be the same. For years, I tried to get back to my “old self”, who I was before my dad passed away. Sadly, his death changed my life forever and I was changed too. I would never be the same person I was before. After many years of working to accept this, I felt God slowly working in different areas of my life. As time passed, I started to not only accept my “new self” but also love her. She was strong, determined, and compassionate. It is this journey that has led me to want to help others. God is restoring my life and allowing me to help others in need.

Day 4

Prayer

Dear God, I know that restoration comes from you and only you. During this time, please restore areas of my life. Show me ways that I can honor the memory of my loved one. Please be with me as I work through my grief and pain. I ask that you restore my family and me after this loss. Amen.

Alternate Prayer

Dear God, I am questioning how you will ever make something good out of this. I need restoration and healing, but I don't know what that looks like in my life. Please reveal to me ways I can move forward in my grief and get support. Help restore me and my family after this loss. Amen.

Day 5

A wave of feelings. Peace. The feeling of peace can feel absent in the midst of a suicide loss. Many people describe the time after a suicide loss as the most difficult time of their lives. This is often because a suicide loss affects almost every aspect of a person's life. It can be challenging to ask for peace during this time because you may feel that you in some way contributed to your loved one's death. This is a common feeling, along with shame, regret, blame, and guilt. It can be difficult to ask for peace and comfort, but I encourage you to do so when you feel ready.

2 Thessalonians 3:16

"Now may the Lord of peace Himself give you peace at all times in every way. The Lord be with you all."

God, is a God of love, peace, and comfort. He does not want you to carry around unnecessary shame. Carrying shame inhibits our ability to see and reach our full potential. Shame can weigh on relationships and our self-esteem. Allowing God to remove shame in our lives not only gives us peace, but gives us freedom to rise to our full potential. God wants to grant you freedom.

My Personal Experience

It took years for me to receive any kind of peace about my dad's death. I was confused, angry, and distraught that he took his life. Underneath all that pain was guilt, shame, and sadness. Years after his death, I started to realize the amount of pain he must have been in to think that was the only option he had. I felt sorry for the amount of pain he was in and that he felt like he needed to end his life. As I began to accept this reality, I realized that I was not to blame for his death in any way. Of course, if given the chance to save him, I would have. This has not only provided me with some peace, but it also freed me from the shame I was feeling.

Day 5

Prayer

Dear God, it is very hard for me to experience any kind of peace right now. Please allow me to let go of any shame, guilt, or blame I have related to my loved one's death. Please put people in my life who can support me as I grieve. Thank you for giving me peace. Amen.

Alternate Prayer

Dear God, I don't even know if I can ask for peace. I am filled with regret, shame, and blame. I feel isolated and alone as I grieve my loved one. I want to believe that you care. Please put people in my life whom I can lean on. I pray that one day I will be able to accept the peace you provide. Amen

Day 6

A wave of feelings. Value. As a child of God, you have value. This concept can be difficult to accept after a suicide loss. You may be thinking, if my loved one or I were so valuable to God, how could this have happened? The reality is we live in a very dark world. The enemy thrives on chaos, darkness, and isolation. The enemy seeks to diminish our value and our loved ones' value by telling us that we have nothing to offer in God's eyes. This is a lie. We know that God himself has called each of us out for a specific purpose. We also know that God valued us so much that He sent his son to die for our sins. This was all done so that we could be forgiven and set apart from the darkness of the world.

Romans 8:38-39

"For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, 39 neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

My Personal Experience

God cared about my dad as much as I did. He cared about his mental health struggles and He cared that my dad was hurting. God cared. While this may be something that you cannot accept right now, that is ok. It took me almost 15 years to really understand this in my own life. My dad's life still had value even though he took his own life. Negative stigmas and myths about suicide often shape the way we view our loved ones after their death. These stigmas and myths are often prevalent in our society and, unfortunately, in religious systems. That is why it's very important for us to have an understanding of how these societal ideas affect our grief journey.

It was hard for me to see anything else in my dad's life other than his suicide death. Through my grief journey, I slowly began to remember other parts of my dad's life and memories we had together. For example, he loved to surf. I have many pictures, videos, and surfing trophies that remind me of his love for it. He also taught me how to surf, which is a treasured memory. I can now appreciate that his life was much more than the way he died. The same is true for your loved one. Your loved one was more than the way they died.

Day 6

Prayer

Dear God, thank you for valuing me and my loved one. While sometimes it may be hard to feel valued in your eyes, I pray that you continue to remind me. Please help heal wounds, heartaches, and pain related to my loved one's death. I want to continue to be open and vulnerable about my feelings. I pray for peace and comfort. Amen.

Alternate Prayer

Dear God, please help me see myself and my loved one through your eyes. It is difficult for me to remember my loved one without thinking of their death. I pray you remind me of memories that can bring comfort, joy, and healing. Amen.

Day 7

A wave of feelings. Hope. It can be extremely hard to see your future without your loved one. Suicide often leaves behind a tidal wave of emotions, problems, and pain. How is it possible to see hope through the pain? It is no easy feat. At first, it can feel impossible and daunting because the grief can be all-consuming. It's ok to feel the pain of your loss and have hope for the future. Those two things can co-exist; it just may take time.

God wants us to be hopeful about the future. If we give God permission, He will work in our lives and often use some of the most painful moments for His purpose.

Romans 12:12

“Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, and faithful in prayer.”

My Personal Experience

My personal experience is that it took me many years to be able to truly feel joy again. It also took me a long time to have hope in my future and who I could become after such a significant loss. I got to the point where I hoped I could heal from the terrible pain of grief, but I was unsure if and when it would happen. It started small when I began seeing a counselor, then a few years later, I joined a Suicide Loss Grief group. As I prioritized processing my grief, I started finding little pieces of purpose. It was a strange experience because I knew I was meant to eventually do something with all of this. Once I started to see that I was not alone in my experience with suicide loss, I saw the opportunity to help people. There had been many people along the way who had helped me. I thought if I could follow in their footsteps and help just one person feel less alone, it would be worth it. That brought me hope for the future. I could see how I could use the pain of my loss to relate to others and hopefully help them.

Day 7

Prayer

Dear God, please continue to help me heal from the loss of my loved one. It has been so difficult to see my life without them and I miss them every day. If you have a plan for this pain, please reveal it to me when I am ready. I want to have purpose in my life and I want my loved ones to be remembered for who they were, not just how they died. Please show me ways that I can honor their memory. Amen.

Alternate Prayer

Dear God, I am still not sure if this pain and grief will amount to anything, but I have to believe that there is a purpose for me. Going through this I know that I am strong and I want to have hope. Please reveal to me ways that I can have hope for the future. Amen.

Closing Prayer

Dear God, I pray that I can eventually find hope and healing after losing my loved one. I am still hurting, and I miss them dearly. Please help me find ways to work through the emotions that I am feeling. I pray that you put intentional people in my life who will support me through this loss.

Psalm 30:2: “Lord my God, I called to You for help, and You healed me.”
Amen.

Additional Resources

Further resources can be found at neverlosethewave.com under the Resource tab.

For a personal memoir specifically about suicide loss, check out *Never Lose the Wave* by Dr. Kristina Rose Culpepper.