

How we deal with 'way out' thoughts

Stories from young people

Introduction

We are young people who have to deal with 'way out' (or 'suicidal' or 'die') thoughts. There are many difficulties that arise. One of them that concerns many of us is that the 'way out' thoughts sometimes don't leave us easily and that can bring fears that those who support us may find it difficult to continue to do so; 'I do have a lot of supportive friends, some with problems like me. But because suicidal thoughts don't go away it can get hard to talk. It can be so annoying and it can get repetitive for those who care for me. I worry they won't continue to support me.'

And another concern is that asking us to live can be like asking us to 'move a mountain'; 'life doesn't feel worth it for the amount I have to give, in order to get somewhere. With the amount of work I'm going to have to put in, the mountain feels too tall. It's like having bloodied feet and having to keep walking. My back is tired, my shoulders are always sore. I don't know which way to go. It feels like the chaos symbol but the other way around; instead of everything going out, everything goes inwards through each other and intersects – the voices, the thoughts, the ideas. I feel like I'm missing things, like instead of a soul I have a hole in my chest. Asking me to live is like asking me to move a mountain.'

The following words offer just some of the ways we are dealing with way out thoughts despite all the immense difficulties they can bring and the mountains that have to be climbed.

Like her, my story isn't over yet

My tattoo has helped me. It is a semi-colon. I keep looking at it. I got this tattoo with one of my best friends, who also got one. I'm connected to her how. I think how would she feel if she found out I had taken my life? How would she feel? Like her, my story isn't over yet. There's a reason I'm here.

I surround myself in any type of love

When I get in that state I tell my mum, I go outside, I look at the moon. I surround myself in any type of love; family, friends or animals. I try and remove myself from the situation. And I think 'don't let it beat you'. I'm competitive; I don't want it to beat me.

I know that I am loved

There are times when I only feel a sense of sadness and I can feel quite helpless. I keep going because of my family. I know that I am loved. My dad is so beautiful, he sends me photos of things which are important to me, just to cheer me up. I love how he goes to so much effort to orchestrate the photos and this shows me how much he wants me to be happy. He always tries so hard to ease the stress and is always so involved. The care and concern that he shows me lets me know that I am loved.

He knew they would help keep me safe

I relate to the 'others do care' story. I have an older brother. He acts like a typical older brother and I often think he really isn't interested in me and my life, and doesn't really care. The first time I wanted to kill myself I yelled at him about how I wanted to die. That was the first time he'd seen me have a breakdown. He showed that he cared even though he's that kind of big brother where I often think he doesn't. He brought my cat and dog up to me because he knew they would help keep me safe while I was waiting for the ambulance. We're really close now because of this.

When I can't live for myself I live for my family

I can live for others too. When I can't live for myself I live for my family. Experiencing daily suicidal ideas can overshadow everything the people who look after me have done. But looking back on every hard experience I see that mum has been by my side. I look back on Christmas day last year, I was ready to die and I had a plan. I sat on the floor panicking and screaming and telling my mum to leave me, to leave the house, but she just wouldn't. I have a support system who have unconditional love for me despite everything I've been through and put them through. To take my life would disrespect everything my mum and my family have done for me.

I couldn't help others with my own death

One of the things that keeps me here is thinking 'I wouldn't be there to help my friends and family to deal with my death'. I like to help others more than helping myself. I would feel bad for not being able to help others in my own death.

By that time I'll have something else to live for

I was watching a TV show years ago and a kid died. My mum said 'I couldn't handle it if one of my kids died'. And I knew I couldn't do it to her. So I thought – and I know this gets a little dark – I'll have to wait until she died until I end my life. However I think by that time I'll have something else to live for.... And she's pressuring me so she can have grandchildren!

That's enough right now

For me, thinking about all the people my death would hurt doesn't really stop 'way out' thoughts. I reason to myself that if the people who loved me knew the pain I was in, and had been in for years they wouldn't blame me for taking the 'way out'. I feel guilty that I don't love them enough to want to stay alive, but the 'way out' thoughts don't care. I won't be there to deal with the consequences, not my problem. One thing I have found recently that helps is thinking about what I'd miss in my friend's lives if I died. Maybe I'm too much of a fuckup to ever be happy or do anything with my life, but I know that they will go on to have jobs and babies and partners and birthdays and I want to be there for that. I want to see what they will look like when they are forty years old, I want to know how many children they will have or if they will have any at all; if they stay in the same jobs they started when they finished university or if they will travel the world and become rich and famous. I know that almost anyone can be a good friend and someone could replace me in a heartbeat, but for me that's enough to keep me going right now. I would be living not for anyone else, but for myself, and when I am distressed that is the only thing that can make the thoughts go away. It's a role that only I can fill, and I am good at it, and I get contentment from it. That's enough right now.

Fear motivates me

I use fear to my advantage. Fear is what motivates me. Fear is what motivated me to come here. It is what motivates me to get out of my home. It motivates me to stay alive; it's stopped me from ending my life for the fear of what it will bring to other's lives. When my mother attempted to end her life I realised I would never want anyone else to experience such a thing. Until I find other reasons for staying alive, fear is a short term solution until I recover I guess. Fear motivates me.

I would miss out on the changes

I like to remind myself a lot of the things I'd miss out on. I'd miss my horse. I know he's reliant on me. And I'd miss not just things like not being able to get married, but little things too like if my favourite band releases a new album or stories that are sad. Even if they are not necessarily hopeful things, stories are always interesting. The world and stories are always changing and I would miss out on the changes.

I want to be her big brother

The one thing that stops me is my 7 year old sister; just the thought of her makes me think. Every time that I have got close to hurting myself, I think of her. I imagine what it would be like for her to lose an older brother and how sad she would be. I want nothing more than to be there for her and be her big brother. These thoughts help me to go on and pull myself out of bad places.

It's perfect

I realise that my little sister – who is ten – helps, but doesn't realise she does. She has a big impact on me even though we have such a huge age gap. She puts such a good view on mental health. Even when I am upset, even when I am doing what my mum says as, 'faking it until I make it', my little sister hugs me and tells me it's going to be okay. There was one time, six or seven weeks ago when I was going to OD. She sent me a text that read 'where are you? Are you coming home?' I couldn't do it then. When people talk about our 'safety nets' I have my people; my mum, my boyfriend and others. Adults so often don't know what to say or what to do. But my little sister is the one who can stop me as she's so little and so positive. She just jumps into my bed and watches a movie with me. It's perfect.

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