



Why Go On?

“Some studies have shown that for every death by suicide, 200 people have attempted suicide and 400 [other] people have thought about it.” —**THE GAZETTE, MONTREAL, CANADA.**

IF YOU met Diana,* you would find her to be an intelligent, friendly, and gregarious young woman. But beneath Diana's charming exterior lurks a crippling despair that leaves her feeling utterly worthless for days, weeks, or even months at a time. “Not a day goes by that I don't think about dying,” she says. “I truly believe that the world would be a better place without me.”

Diana says that she would never kill herself. Still, at times she sees little point in going on with life. “My greatest wish is to be killed in an accident,” she says. “I've come to view death as a friend—not an enemy.”

Many people can relate to Diana's feelings, and some of them *have* contemplated—or attempted—suicide. Experts point out, however, that most people who try to kill themselves do not really want to end their life; they merely want to end their suffering. In short, they believe that they have a reason to die: what they need is a reason to live.

Why go on? Consider **three reasons to keep living.**

* Name has been changed.

MYTH: Talking about suicide—or even using the word—encourages people to try it.

FACT: Bringing the topic out into the open often helps a person with suicidal thoughts to consider other options.

1 Because Things Change

Suicide has been called “a permanent solution to a temporary problem.” As hard as it may be to believe, a distressing circumstance—even one that seems beyond your control—may well be temporary. In fact, it can change for the better unexpectedly.—See the box “Their Circumstances Changed.”

Even if that does not happen, it is best to tackle your problems one day at a time. “Never be anxious about the next day,” Jesus said, “for the next day will have its own anxieties. Each day has enough of its own troubles.”—Matthew 6:34.

But what if your circumstance *cannot* change? For example, suppose you have a chronic illness. Or what if your despair is the result of an irreversible situation, such as the breakup of a marriage or the death of a loved one?

Even in such cases, there is something you can change: your outlook on the situation. By learning to accept what you cannot change, you become more likely to view things from a more positive standpoint. (Proverbs 15:15) You are also more likely to look for ways to cope with the situation rather than resort to drastic means to end it. The result? You start to take a measure of control of what seems to be an uncontrollable situation.—Job 2:10.

“We are hard-pressed in every way, but not cramped beyond movement; we are perplexed, but not absolutely with no way out.”—2 CORINTHIANS 4:8.

REMEMBER THIS: You cannot scale a mountain in a single step; however, you can take on the challenge one step at a time. The same is true of most obstacles you face, no matter how mountainlike they might seem to be.

WHAT YOU CAN DO TODAY: Talk to someone—perhaps a friend or a family member—about your situation. That person may be able to help you view your situation in a more balanced way.—Proverbs 11:14.

THEIR CIRCUMSTANCES CHANGED

Consider four faithful people mentioned in the Bible who suffered despair to the point of not wanting to go on.

Rebekah: “If this is the way it is, why should I go on living?”—Genesis 25:22.

Moses: “Please kill me right now. . . . Do not make me see any more calamity.”—Numbers 11:15.

Elijah: “Take my life away, for I am no better than my forefathers.”—1 Kings 19:4.

Job: “Why did I not die at birth?”—Job 3:11.

If you read the Bible accounts about these people, you will find that their circumstances changed for the better—and in ways that they could not have foreseen. The same might be true for you. (Ecclesiastes 11:6) Do not give up!

“Throw all your anxiety on [God], because he cares for you.”—1 PETER 5:7.

According to the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention, “studies have consistently found that the overwhelming majority of people who die by suicide—90% or more—had a mental disorder at the time of their deaths. Often, however, these disorders had not been recognized, diagnosed, or adequately treated”

REMEMBER THIS: It is usually not possible to climb out of a deep pit of depression by yourself. With a helping hand, however, you *can* succeed.

WHAT YOU CAN DO TODAY: Seek out a reputable physician who treats mood disorders such as depression.

2 Because There Is Help

Death can seem preferable to life when you feel that there is nothing you can do to improve your situation. But consider some avenues of help that are available to you.

Prayer. Prayer is not merely some psychological crutch; nor is it a last resort for desperate souls. It is real communication with Jehovah God, who cares about you. Jehovah *wants* you to tell him your concerns. In fact, the Bible urges us: “Throw your burden on Jehovah, and he will sustain you.”—Psalm 55:22.

Why not talk to God in prayer today? Use his name, Jehovah, and speak from your heart. (Psalm 62:8) Jehovah wants you to come to know him as a friend. (Isaiah 55:6; James 2:23) Prayer is an avenue of communication that can become available to you anytime, anywhere.

People who care. Your life matters to others—including your family members or friends who may already have expressed concern for you. People who care also include some whom you may never have met. For example, at times in their ministry, Jehovah’s Witnesses encounter distraught people, some of whom have admitted that they were desperate for help and had considered ending their life. The door-to-door ministry has given Jehovah’s Witnesses a unique opportunity to help such people. Following Jesus’ example, Jehovah’s Witnesses care about their fellowman. They care about *you*.—John 13:35.

Professional assistance. Suicidal thoughts often indicate the presence of a mood disorder, such as clinical depression. There is nothing to be ashamed of if you suffer from an emotional illness—any more than if you suffered from a physical illness. In fact, depression has been called “the common cold of the mind.” Just about anyone can get it—and it *can* be treated.*

* If thoughts of taking your life are strong or persistent, find out what resources are available to you for help—perhaps a suicide-prevention hotline or hospital emergency room. These are staffed by people who are trained to provide assistance.

3 Because There Is Hope

The Bible acknowledges that life is “filled with trouble.” (Job 14:1) Today, everyone is touched by tragedy of one sort or another. But some people feel utterly hopeless about life, as if there were no light on the horizon, no prospect for a better future. Is that how you feel? If so, be assured that the Bible offers genuine hope—not just for you but for all humankind. For example:

- The Bible teaches that Jehovah God intended something far better for us.—Genesis 1:28.
- Jehovah God promises to make our earth a paradise.—Isaiah 65:21-25.
- The fulfillment of that promise is certain. Revelation 21:3, 4 says:

“The tent of God is with mankind, and he will reside with them, and they will be his people. And God himself will be with them. And he will wipe out every tear from their eyes, and death will be no more, neither will mourning nor outcry nor pain be anymore. The former things have passed away.”

That hope is not mere wishful thinking. Jehovah God fully purposes to bring it to reality, and he has both the power and the desire to do so. The hope that the Bible holds out is reliable, and it provides a strong answer to the question “Why go on?” ■

“The meek will possess the earth, and they will find exquisite delight in the abundance of peace.”—PSALM 37:11.

REMEMBER THIS: Although your emotions may toss and turn like a boat on a turbulent sea, the Bible’s message of hope can be like an anchor that keeps you stabilized.

WHAT YOU CAN DO TODAY: Start investigating what the Bible teaches about a genuine hope for the future. Jehovah’s Witnesses will be glad to help you. You can contact them locally or find valuable information at their Web site, jw.org.*

* Suggestion: Visit jw.org and look under **PUBLICATIONS > ONLINE LIBRARY**. From there, search keywords such as “depression” or “suicide” to find more help.

