

A Sibling *Dealing with Suicide*

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Blake Andrew Eggett
December 4, 1987 –
October 28, 2005

When I was a sophomore at Riverton High School, age 15, my brother took his life on October 28, 2005. Blake Andrew Eggett was a senior also attending Riverton High School, age 17. (More information about Blake in Larry Eggett's "Suicide & Healing".) We were two years apart in age and very close. I had lost one of my best friends, and closest brothers. I felt like no one understood what I was going through, including my other family members.

Previous to Blake's suicide, Blake gave me a lot of signs of him being depressed and suicidal, but I did not connect the dots and did nothing about it. He sent a mass email to all of his friends including me in which he said, "Life is not worth it." I let my parents know about it. Yet there was a second email that he didn't send me but a mutual friend told me about. Instead of getting help from anybody, I decid-

ed to confront Blake about it directly. He told me he was fine and not to worry about it. I believed him. That is one example out of many. For many years I blamed myself for not doing more to help my brother, even though my parents told us not to blame ourselves for his suicide. I kept wishing I did something more.

The first few weeks after his death I felt like a part of me died right along with him. I noticed that although my parents were grieving, they continued to keep positive. I felt like I needed to also be positive so I put on an act like I was doing ok as well, even though that is not at all how I felt inside. I slept whenever I could because that was the only time I felt a little bit of peace and distance from the extreme pain that I was feeling. After a while, I was tired of portraying that I was alright. I hated going to church because it pulled the pain closer to the surface and it reminded me of Blake. I hated to go to school because I would see our mutual friends, or even his friends that had began to move on. My grades suffered greatly because of this. I felt like my whole world was changed around, and I was constantly reminded of the pain of losing my brother, and that he took his life. I saw everyone else living normal lives, and I was angry, and depressed.

My parents noticed this dramatic change in me and took me to the doctor for depression. The doctor diagnosed me with situational depression. He prescribed me an anti-depressant and sent me on my way. My parents also wanted to start attending family

counseling with me to deal with Blake's suicide. I was resistant and went once with them. We didn't go again because I told them I didn't want to have counseling.

I got tired of pretending I was okay, but I didn't want to deal with the healing process. Instead of trying to work through the deep emotions I was feeling, I soon realized that it was easier to avoid the healing process and I really started going off course. I got into a negative group of friends, who "dealt with pain" in very negative ways. I found myself doing things extremely against my previous moral values to try and figure out how to be happy. Let me tell you right now, that doing that does not bring you happiness or peace. I was constantly conflicted in so many emotions and thoughts, that I was even more unhappy than I was before. Avoiding the grief does not work. Using alcohol or other substances will not help you heal, or take the pain or memory of a loved one away. It might seem like an easier solution at the time, but the truth is, you need to go through the healing process - whether that be now, or years down the road.

I started to make a turning point in my life about a year after Blake's death. I decided I did not want to be depressed and got rid of my medicine (I'm not saying that you should do that if you have medicine prescribed by a doctor). In my case I did not need continuing medication since I was diagnosed with situational depression. What I needed was a change in attitude and a realization that the end of

my brother's life did not have to be the end of mine. I was determined to find happiness. I got involved again in church activities, and in school. My school did a fundraiser around Christmas time for Wasatch Youth Support Systems which helps youth like my brother. I donated a lot of my pay checks to the cause, and even ended up shaving my head along with my friend to raise money for this charity. I did not ignore the pain and hurt I felt, but I started to focus on the needs of others also. I did not start counseling again, but I wrote in my journal, and I was open about my brother's death. I also turned to my beliefs and morals that I had prior to Blake's suicide. I found strength in God which I found crucial to my healing process. A transformation was occurring, and it is an on-going process. It did not happen overnight, and it has not yet stopped.

I wish I could tell you an exact solution. I wish there was an answer for everyone, and I wish I could tell you how to stop the pain. I wish I could even get your loved one back for you again. All I can do is tell you what I have found through my experience, and others I know.

For Youths, Adolescents, or Siblings Dealing With a Suicide

Forgive yourself along with your loved one. We tend to wish we can change the past, but the best way to honor your loved one, is to create a new future for yourself, and work on changing things that you have control over.

As an adolescent, we have a tendency to focus on ourselves, and our problems. I am not saying that your pain is not real, and your loved one did

not matter. It is important for you to take time and to heal yourself, but it is equally or more important to try and see the world outside of your situation. You still have talents and so much to offer the world. Serving other people gives me the most comfort and peace.

Depression is an illness just like anything else. Your loved one died from an illness. Although suicide is not a positive solution to that illness, know that it is an illness. Educate yourself and learn about what your loved one has gone through. Learning more about depression myself, helped bring me peace, and even helped me forgive myself.

Everyone deals with death differently. Your parents and other family members are also dealing with this tragedy. You might feel alone while trying to heal, but try seeing the situation from their stand-point.

If people ask about your loved one, or how they passed, be open with them. This might come with time, because it might be painful and difficult. Help the world begin to understand depression and suicide.

Talk through your feelings-through counseling, journal writing, friends or family. Try to understand how you feel, and why you feel that way. Although I turned down chances to have counseling, I wish I would have stuck with it. They want to help, and probably can help you sort through your feelings better than anyone because they are trained.

We have four components: bio-physical, psychological, social, and spiritual. The last is not always talked about, but it definitely exists. To work on dealing with our grief, it is important to work on balancing all aspects of

yourself. However you define yourself spiritually, I encourage you to reach out to this part of you. People identify themselves as religious, and are not always what we would define as "spiritual" so I am not specifically talking about a religion. For me, balancing my spirituality did include my LDS faith, and it was the most important part of my healing process.

For Parents of Adolescents Dealing With a Suicide

Realize that you all have lost a loved one to suicide. Also realize that everyone affected by this event is at different stages and understandings in their life. That means you will probably be dealing with it very differently. Many of the suggestions I gave above are very applicable to you as well.

There are very negative stigmas attached to being a teenager in our society. It is important to know though that there are biophysical explanations for them. Everyone jokes that when a teenager is asked "What were you thinking?" and they respond that "they weren't thinking," it is just an excuse. There actually is a lot of truth in that statement. It is hard for them to think of future consequences either good or bad. Also they have very ego-centric thinking. Everything in their life is centered around them. It takes discipline, hard work, and time to see life from another's perspective at this age. These, and many more are due to an adolescent's brain not being fully developed. Why I say this, is that patience, and knowledge is key for you to more fully understand your adolescent's point-of-view.