

IT JUST WASN'T MY TIME

Anonymous



This is the first time I have officially told the story of my most serious suicide attempt. There are details of that afternoon, three years ago, and the days that followed that are not clear to me. Though I think it is important to clarify exactly what happened, for me and my family, I haven't done that for a couple of reasons. First, I've been busy working on my recovery, from alcoholism and drug abuse, from depression and anxiety—in other words; misery, despair, and the self-destructiveness that so often goes along with these feelings. Second, my suicide attempt was so unexpected and traumatic to my family, particularly to my children, that I haven't wanted to further upset them by bringing up questions about what actually did happen, from their perspective.

Suicidality, the idea of wanting to kill myself, is an idea that once it took hold of me would not let go. I was in the darkest period of my depression and alcoholism. My anxiety had me completely isolated—hiding from everyone and everything, even my own children who are very dear to me. That's the thing about the aggressiveness of the idea of killing yourself. Once it takes hold of you, it won't let go and it doesn't care about anything but carrying out its mission.

From my perspective, all I wanted was release from unrelenting sadness and paralyzing fear. I didn't value myself or my life at all and no amount of pep talking, reasoning or appeals to stay alive for my children mattered. All that existed was the pain and I needed it to stop.

As I said, I am an alcoholic. Which came first—the depression and anxiety or the alcoholism, I don't know. I started out as many people do, drinking with friends in high school and having fun. It served the purpose for a long time of lifting my mood and releasing me from fear, worry, and self-consciousness. Ironically this release, the lowering of social inhibition that allows impulsive behavior, is what moved the small inklings of possibility of killing myself to evolve into what seemed, for a while, a very good idea, and then an obsession. As I went through days of isolation and became afraid to leave my house, I became less and less attached to the world outside and more attached to the idea of killing myself. Every time I got drunk, which was nearly every day, the possibility of ending my life right that minute, intruded and took over my thoughts.

I woke up one morning knowing that day was to be the day. I didn't really have what I needed in the house to carry out what I had to do. I planned on using a combination of alcohol and drugs. Eventually, as I began to panic about not achieving unconsciousness quick enough to suit me, I started downing all the pills I could find to help me go to sleep. I remember thinking, "it's not happening, it's not happening, I have to get unconscious." Finally, I added rubbing alcohol and that is what took me out. This was around noon on what would have been a normal school day for my then teenage daughter. Once I had passed out the next thing I remember is some emergency or ambulance people shaking me and saying, "What have you taken? Have you been drinking?" Even in that state I remember thinking, "duh," but at the same time being angry that I was still alive and dreading whatever was to come next. That's nearly all I know of how I got out of my house alive that afternoon.



An ambulance took me to an emergency room where I eventually woke up much to my dismay and they got me stabilized. They moved me to a psych ward. I remember talking to one of my children on the phone stating emphatically that I didn't want to see or talk to anyone in my family. The first night I was on the psych ward, I had serious pains in my chest and neck. I thought it was the greasy pork chop I had eaten for dinner. Turns out I was having a heart attack for which, the next morning, I was rushed to surgery where I had two stints placed in my heart. I felt so miserable I didn't really care. The heart attack seemed neither surprising nor disturbing to me. From the psych ward I went to the Addiction Recovery Unit. I was angry and confused.

After that I stayed sober for about six months and then, miserable and confused, I went back to drinking. I continued on for nearly two year much the same as I had before. Finally my children and a series of events leading me lower than I had ever been, pushed me back onto my recovery path. I spent some more time, this time voluntarily, though certainly not happily, on a psych ward. Knowing I had to quit drinking, I entered a long-term substance abuse facility where I spent nearly a year. In that facility I got a lot of healing from my fellow travelers, the other women in the program, from the staff and from the 12-step community. I was healing and I was, ever so timidly, poking my head out from a hole I had been in. I was searching for a life I could at least tolerate and I got so much more.

Once I realized I was building some momentum in my recovery, which means making connections with others, being really heard and doing the 'work' (on myself) I so desperately needed to do, I jumped on it. Now I have close to two years of sobriety. I am working in a field I love and in the process of repairing relationships with friends and family.

I read a quote that said, "Eventually I became more curious than afraid." This has happened for me. I have become more attached to the idea of life, of living, than to death and dying. It is my curiosity about what might happen next, how good it might get, that pulls me forward—away from death towards life.

