



VOICES OF INJURY PREVENTION

In my life growing up, I grew up with a mom that made threats of suicide, my whole life, I remember when times were tough, and she would make threats of suicide. The threats became almost joke in the family that she would make reference that she was going to the beach. It was always that she was going to the beach but everybody knew she wasn't doing anything but reading a book.



Note: Story is a transcript from recorded version

I fast forwarded my life to March 2011, my husband and I have suffered through five deployments, he being the one deployed. I had lost my sister the year before to esophageal cancer, and my then 17 year old son was completely out of control. In that night of March 2011, it was always with my son at that in his life, it was one thing that would be said that would set him off. That night turned physical because he got in my face and my husband stood up to defend me. And, and the garage door is open, and the bright lights are on out in the garage, and we're just screaming at each other.

At one point, it just became too much for me, and I told my son, just leave. I don't want you to be here, go. And I walked into the house, and I walked into my bathroom, and I remember looking at myself in the bathroom mirror and I thought, what good are you doing in this world? You know? You've kicked your son out of the house. And I remember thinking to myself, I will not be the coward that my mom is, always threatening to take her life and never having the guts to do it.

And I remember thinking, in the sake of vanity that I didn't want die being ugly, and so I started to prepare myself for how I wanted to look when they would find me dead. And I started to walk out of bed room, into the living room, and I just fell down to the tile floor, and then I started throwing up. And I could hear my husband's footsteps pacing and I could hear him talking, and I just remember thinking I could hear the fear in his voice, I remember, I could hear his tears because he was so afraid, and so upset.



I don't remember a lot of that night but I remember riding in the ambulance. I remember them telling me to keep talking to me so I would stay alert. And I remember, as we got to the emergency room which was about 30 minutes away, I remember you see it in the movies, or in a TV show, when those gurney wheels hit the asphalt, that thud, that noise it makes, and I remember just kind of jolted me, and that cold night air hit me. In that moment, there was so much shame, so much embarrassment for what I felt. I don't remember the first couple of days. I don't remember that night.

In the first coming weeks, I just remember that I kind of felt like I was just floating through. I wasn't really engaged. I was just kind of floating through the days, and as the weeks and the months came, it's like I relate it to if you've ever had an injury running, and you hurt your ankle, but you're like oh I can still run, and so then you feel the pain in your knee, or maybe you feel it in your hip, because you're favoring one part of your body and compensating somewhere else. And I did that with alcohol because it was just easier to not have to think about what was going on here, or here, or face the shame that I felt. And so I drank. And that drinking led to other injuries in my life.

But then one day I met Carrie, and I met her down on the beach through another friend in Waikiki. And I had an instant connection with her, and so, 2013 at that time so what do you do? You find them on Facebook, and then I saw a post that she had made, about her stepson having taken his life by suicide, and that she was going to start an out of the darkness community walk in his honor. And I volunteered, I thought was going to volunteer to run a 5K, that's all I thought it was, and it became about being part of a committee to help, and I remember every week I would go to the meetings, and all these people at this table had lost someone to suicide, and I remember I had so much guilt. Because my husband was sitting next to the person that could have died by suicide, and I didn't, but they had already lost somebody and that was it, their final chapter. And I just sent Carrie a text and I said, I want to tell you that I'm someone that survived a suicide attempt. And she texted me back and all she said was, if you need a friend to hold your hand, if you want to tell your story, I will always be there for you.

That day of the walk, even though I didn't want to go because I was so afraid, I decided I had already, I made it this far. I'm going to the walk, so I show up there and every, there's a color, There is a bead color for each mental illness that goes along with it, and mine for struggling personally was green, and she came up to me and she said, if you want to wear your green bead you can, but you don't have to, but if you want to I'll walk to the table with you. And we walked up to that table together and I don't know we just looked at each other and we cried. And I put them around my neck, and I felt like I publicly, finally told everybody that I personally struggle with mental disease. I still wear this necklace every day to remind myself of those green beads



that I never forget, that I shouldn't be ashamed and publicly tell my story. And because of doing the walk last year, this year I was able to be a guest speaker at the walk, I was able to share my entire story to a group of people.

I've since started a blog to share my, not just the negative, but the powerful stories that go along with it, the inspirational stories, how other people have impacted my life to become a better person. In the days that followed I remember thinking that God kept me alive that night for a reason. And it wasn't until I met Carrie that I was really able to understand how I can actually live that purpose out loud and share my story with others to hopefully help them in preventing death by suicide.

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