

Some years ago, **Robin Williams** was famously quoted as saying that “Suicide is a permanent solution to a temporary problem.” On the face of it, this sounds very logical. The problem is that the thought of ending one’s life via suicide is a very emotional choice, often related to issues that have brought grief into that person’s life, many times as a result of mental illness. Emotions are rarely impacted by logic. For the person contemplating taking their own life, their problems often seem insurmountable and hardly temporary. For many, it’s seen as a “**permanent solution to a permanent (or never ending) problem.**” The error of using logic to deal with emotional issues is something that we have focused on for years at The Grief Recovery Institute.

There are a number of reasons that people might choose suicide. Discussing the reasons behind this is not the purpose of this article. There are a variety of websites that deal with suicide and suicide prevention that can be located with a Google search. Our focus, at the Grief Recovery Institute, is in helping people deal with the aftermath of this act. Suffice it to say that a majority of those who choose to end their lives never take into consideration how those that they leave behind will be negatively impacted by the action they have taken. According to the Center for Disease Control (CDC), suicide is the **10th leading cause of death in the United States**. Sadly, it’s not just the United States that is impacted by suicide. This is an action that impacts people worldwide!

The problem with the use of the term, “Suicide Survivor.”

People who have been emotionally impacted by suicide are frequently referred to as “suicide survivors.” In truth, this clever label is really a misnomer. The only true suicide survivors are those who fail to be successful in taking their lives. Those who are left behind to deal with the emotional pain of such a loss are, in fact, griever. Giving them any other label simply serves to try and avoid the term “griever.” Offering people a label does little to help them recover from their emotional pain.

The concept of giving griever different labels has become quite popular in the past few years. **Complicated Grief**, **Delayed Grief**, **Anticipatory Grief**, **Masked Grief**, and **Cumulative Grief** are but a few of the common ones. Sometimes that “label” can form a deterrent to taking recovery action. If someone tells you that you are suffering from a particular kind of grief, but does not offer you possible steps to moving beyond that power, it’s very easy to simply accept that label as your lot in life and continue to suffer. Our society is very good at telling people what is wrong with them, but not necessarily offering solutions for taking recovery focused action.

Why is it that those dealing with the suicide of a loved one suffer so much?

Suicide can leave an aftermath of **overwhelming feelings** in its wake. The question of “why did they do it,” is often one that can never be completely answered, even if they have left a note. Most of us have never learned any

mechanism that can help us deal the emotional incompleteness associated with this question.


Following a suicide, those that are left behind also spend a great deal of time wondering if there were signs that we missed or ways we could have prevented it from happening. These are normal and natural thoughts faced by these grieverers. It's easy, in hindsight, for anyone to see different choices they might have made when faced with such a tragic event. Once again, it's a situation of trying to use logic to deal with an emotional event. There is no question that, had they known that this person was actually planning to take their life, these friends and loved ones might have acted differently. The obvious problem is that we can never really know what is going on in someone else's head, no matter how we try to convince ourselves otherwise.

Sadly, as well, some people find far less positive and useful support from those around them after such an emotionally painful loss. While attitudes have changed with the passage of time, as more has been said and written about suicide, many are still hesitant to share with others that this was the cause of death. Within many, there is still a sense of fear in telling others that a loved one took their own life, based on the concern of how others might react. This may be a particularly problem within some faith communities, where suicide is still viewed as a "sinful" act. This inability to comfortably share with others the emotional pain with which we are dealing further complicates the grieving process. The fears of

questions and comments that might come from others results in these grievers further suppressing their emotions, rather than actually taking steps to effectively move through the grief and recovery process.


FOR _____ DATE _____

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 Grief is normal and natural. It is not a pathological condition or a personality disorder.

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 The Grief Recovery Method®

What is grief?

Grief is the normal and natural response to any major change that happens in our life! When this change is

caused by a sudden and unexpected death, those that are left behind are often faced with an enormous amount of “unfinished business” in that emotional relationship.

These griever find themselves thinking of all of the conversations and discussions that were never completely resolved. They think of things that they wish might have might have been different in that relationship. They also find themselves facing a future that is far different than the one they had expected, that person still being a part of their life. Simply described, they tend to focus on the things that they wish might have been different, better, or more in that relationship.

Such questions and emotional issues are common for all griever. Unfortunately, most people never learned or were never given any useful tools on how to deal with them. Most of use spend a lifetime **learning how to suppress** our feelings of pain and sadness, rather than learning how to move beyond their devastating and strangling power.

The good news is that there is a positive and effective way to move through this difficult grieving process!

The Grief Recovery Method is a truly effective approach to dealing with any emotional loss if your life. Its design makes it a particularly effective mechanism for those dealing with the loss of a loved one by suicide.

This Method is all about dealing with unfinished business in relationships.