

You're Not Alone.

She was beautiful, strong, and smart, everything a girl her age would dream of being. She didn't have many friends, but enough that she was content. She was ever so grateful she had those few friends who loved, supported and guided her. On the outside she appeared happy, so no one knew that it was a disguise to hide what was underneath. No one knew what she was going through.

She daily hid behind an invented smile. When the solitude of night came and darkness descended she would think about what she had done to deserve the heartache that filled her. Once life had been easy but gradually the biscuit that was her life began to crumble and things became a struggle. The complications multiplied and then she noted deterioration in her relationships, all relationships, even the one that had been so stable, so valued, and so significant.

She was anxious that she wasn't good enough, that he would find someone better. Though, in reality, others could see he would never do better. She was an intensely caring and thoughtful person who put others first. How could he find or want better?

Her daily struggles became more real, more invasive, more debilitating with the passing of each day. She wanted to disappear, to end it all. The day came when she found the darkness unbearable, there was no light in her life, no hope, nothing to make her believe life was worthwhile. She was a burden to herself and to all she knew. She'd done everything she could, she'd tried her absolute hardest to keep going, to keep her head above water yet she was sinking, deeper and deeper every day.

She ended her precious life a few days later. Her battle was over and ours had just begun and perhaps that is part of the tragedy.

Every sixteen minutes one person takes their life because they've had enough and they can't see any possible way forward. The majority of these people are young people, young people who require help. We, individually and as a community, need to make it clear to all people that we are here for them, that they can talk to someone,

that their lives are valuable and that there are people who can help. We need to ensure we share the message that there is light after darkness. It should be our aim to build resilience and understanding, to cultivate caring and support.

Many teenagers take their own life because they feel they are alone. We need to work extremely hard to send the message that they're not alone and every day provides a fresh start. Teenagers are crying out for help or silently shielding others from their depression.

This is a crisis in my generation. Too many people take their own life. No one should feel so desperate and so alone. Life can be incredibly hard and challenging and people truly believe they can't take it anymore but everyone needs to know and remember that when they take their own life it's not over. In reality, it's anything but over. The family and friends of the deceased have to live with the regret, the unanswered questions and heartbreak. Those who remain behind berate themselves for not asking the right questions, for not knowing what their loved one went through that led to the ending of life. They will never forget. Each year the day of death will pass and they will remember and wish that person was still with them.

Talk to your children, friends and family members. Smile at those who sit on their own. Say hi, wave, take a minute to sit and chat. If you suspect something is wrong with someone let them know that you're there for them and that they can talk to you and that they're not alone. To defeat the darkness of depression and the insidious nature of self-loathing people have we must let others know that they matter. People matter to me and they need to matter to us all.

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