

OMIT THE COMMIT

My millennium started with my sister's suicide in August of 2000, which was followed by my nephew's suicide in August 2004.

Although I'll never get used to the word suicide, in fact I hate the word, we don't have any other word to describe this way of dying.

And it is the way someone dies, it's the way someone leaves the world, but it doesn't define who they are.

Unfortunately, as we all know, there is a hell of a lot of stigma that surrounds suicide, and when someone dies by suicide, inevitably the neighbors and the town folk (as if they are immune to the possibility in their own lives) talk in whispers and gasps about "that" family and our beloved person who is no longer here.

And while they whisper and conjure their theories in judgment of how this person could possibly do this to themselves or their family, or how it's such a cowardly and selfish act, or how there must be a lot of issues and mental illness in "that" family, we survivors, those who are left behind in the aftermath of this tragedy, those who must live with this unspeakable loss, who must now carry the crushing burden of sorrow and grief, sort through all the whys and questions, all the pain and anguish, and get no answers.

What we do know is that they were in unfathomable and unimaginable pain, but not anymore.

What we do know is that their brains were sick in a way that science has yet to understand.

And what we also know is that they did not commit a crime and they did not commit a sin.

When we use the word “commit,” it is always associated with crime, sin and judgment, and so we need to stop using this word when we talk about suicide.

In order to chip away at the stigma surrounding suicide, we need to start consciously changing our language. So let’s replace the “commit” with phrases like:

He died by suicide.

She took her own life.

And let’s stop judging people’s lives, brains, and souls that we will never be able to fully understand.

OMIT THE COMMIT!

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