

I'M NOT AFRAID TO TALK ABOUT MY BROTHER'S SUICIDE

A SISTER'S JOURNEY

Marcella's brother Michael died in 2014 at age 20

BY MARCELLA MALONE, ADAPTED FROM THE BOOK, *Grief Diaries: Surviving Loss by Suicide* ISBN 978-1-944328-03-0

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YOUR JOURNEY IS YOUR OWN

My grief journey since Michael's death has definitely been an emotional rollercoaster. It's given me a new outlook on the world and helped me to better read the unspoken emotions of those around me. It's given me a new understanding, and, most importantly it has taught me a couple important lessons.

The biggest thing I learned, and am still learning, is to not be afraid to talk about things. It is very unhealthy to hold your emotions in and appear to be something you're not. Talking about Michael helps me keep his memory alive and helps others to understand the depth of our loss. Talking about the impact of how he left this earth and how I'm coping with it has helped me to heal and shown me who is really there for me. Through conversation I have found a support that I could have never found myself through strangers and those close to me. Your journey should not be alone.

It also taught me the absolute value of those you love, and every day you are given together. It taught me not to hold grudges and to never miss an opportunity to tell someone how you feel about him or her. Life is way too short.

The biggest lesson it taught me was to never judge a book by its cover. Everyone has struggles,

and frequently those who are better at hiding them are suffering a harder battle. It takes only a few seconds to be kind, and it's so worth it.

With this positivity, I also want to tell readers that grief takes time. It's been eight years but it still feels like yesterday. Don't let others' expectations that you should feel fine cause you to suppress your feelings.

Cry when you need to, talk when you need to, laugh when you need to, and be angry when you need to. It will pass until the next episode occurs. This is the hardest part of grief.

Nobody likes to talk about death, but as the sibling, I frequently feel like my grief is overshadowed. I am there for my parents at every opportunity, and always will be. It feels wrong for me to say that some days I wish people would see the impact the loss of my brother and best friend has had on me.

Every day I'm asked about how my parents are since his death, but no one has asked me since the funeral. I answer their questions with a smile on my face, but it has given me the incentive to always check on the siblings after a loss, and let them know I'm thinking of them. I know it would mean the world if someone did the same for me.