

Reach UP



The Magazine to Empower and Enrich Today's Woman

Winter 2018



Lifestyle
Christmas is the Season for Giving

Lifestyle
Getting out of the Rut



My dear friend,

Soon it will be Christmas, and many will be celebrating the birth of Jesus. What a wondrous event! But did you know about the tragic turn of events that took place two years after His birth?

These events aren't a bright spot in the account of the life of Jesus. Yet what happened then is happening now – just in other ways. The king of Jesus' country, Israel, felt threatened about the talk of another king having been born. Clearly without any good moral sense, the jealous king sent troops to the town in which Jesus was born and commanded them to kill – that's right, slaughter – any baby boy two years of age and under.

One of the saddest scripture verses described this scene: "A voice was heard in Ramah, Rachel weeping for her children, refusing to be comforted because they were no more" (Matthew 2:18). The loss those mothers must have felt is nearly indescribable.

You might ask, "Why are you bringing this up in a women's magazine that's meant to encourage and uplift? This is depressing!"

I'm bringing it up because there is a real enemy who wants to destroy and kill our children. That enemy is satan (doesn't deserve a capital letter). His methods of destruction might be abortion, abuse, or sex trafficking, all of which we've talked about one time or another in *Reach UP*.

The enemy also stirs up thoughts of hopelessness, leading to suicide. These present-day problems affect us deeply. Suicide is a permanent solution to temporary problems. In June, July, and August my family dealt with the suicides of three young men. It has been heartbreaking and alarming.

In this issue, Mary Jean Teachman writes from her own experience of loss. We ask that you spread her message to everyone. Be alert. Let's be an army of one-to-one-to-one to stand in the face of this awful threat.

My prayer is that that we will be women who "make our communities livable" (Isaiah 58:12, MSG). I pray that our children will not suffer from neglect, but thrive; that you will be able to smile at the days ahead and know that you have made a difference for good in the life of your child, your friends, and your neighborhood.

Reaching UP with you,

Crystal Knapp
Editor-in-Chief



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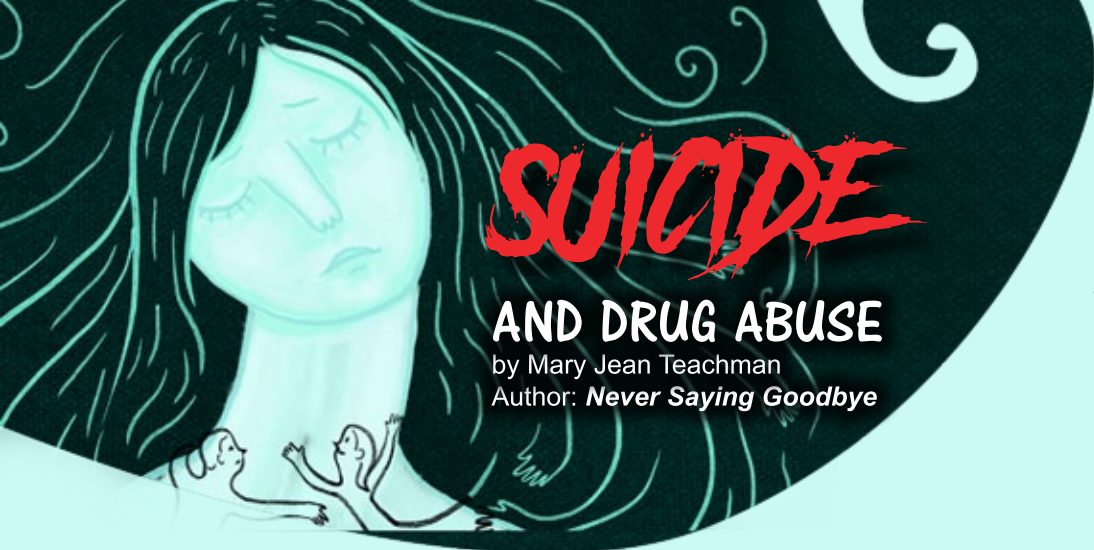
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SUICIDE

AND DRUG ABUSE

by Mary Jean Teachman

Author: *Never Saying Goodbye*

Suicide and drug abuse is an epidemic today. I know that sounds scary, but it is the truth.

I know the pain that is involved when a loved one takes his or her life. My son, Arthur Forrest Tull, left this planet by committing suicide. I didn't think I would ever recover. The following days were dark, dismal, sad, and full of remorse. I couldn't go on. I thought it was my fault and that I could have prevented it. The truth is, I could not have prevented it and it was not my fault. But the guilt hung around like a dark cloud. His loss was almost too much to bear.

It took time for me to realize why Forrest did it. He left a suicide note to explain that he loved all of us and hoped we would understand that he was in too much pain to stay here. It was so hard for me to accept that, but I knew that I had to. I slowly healed by taking a new path: helping others facing the same situation. It was important for me to help prevent another family member or friend from going through the loss of a loved one by suicide. I joined MIRA, a mental health organization, and concentrated on finding ways to help people who had lost loved ones to suicide and drug addictions.



Here's what I want to share with you if you're tempted by the thought of suicide: You don't have to be a victim of your thoughts. **GET HELP!!!**

Talk to a doctor or someone you trust if you are feeling depressed, crying a lot, feeling as if you are not worth anything, that no one loves you, or that your life isn't worth living. You can quit being afraid and stop feeling different. It's not as scary when you find out there is help – help for everyone.

One extreme reason people might consider suicide would be a brain disease. The good news is these problems are treatable. If you had diabetes or pneumonia, you would get help. In the same way, you can get help for the brain. It is important to know that because many people who suffer from brain diseases like depression, bipolar disorder, mood disorder, phobias, panic attacks, anxiety disorder, and not being able to cope with life's ordinary demands and routines may not realize that.

It is very important to get help because these diseases, when left untreated, can lead to suicide. People are hurting so much that they feel as if they cannot live anymore. But they can live, and live well with help.

Maybe you feel shame because of your messed-up emotions. That may be just because of embarrassment. Please don't think that way. Get help! Many people are living today who didn't commit suicide because they asked for help. That is the best thing that anyone can do – get help. Join the overcomers!

Remember, suicide affects many lives, not just the person who commits it. All of their loved ones and families are so sad because their sister, brother, child, mother, father, husband, wife, or friend left them. They are in sadness for so long – in fact, for the rest of their lives. Take it from a mother who lost her son: I miss him every day. Please don't do that to the people you love. Be brave and get help. You are loved, even if for the moment you think you aren't. You truly are.

KEEP THESE HELP RESOURCES:

You can call 24 hours a day, Suicide Prevention Lifeline at **1-800-273-8255**.
www.spsamerica.org

For help, mentoring or bracelet: www.umtr2me.org

Crisis Text Line: Text HOME to 741741 if you find yourself suicidal. *(They request that you don't clog up their lines with test texts.)*

GETTING OUT



OF THE RUT

by Mysheka Ross
Founder,
The Lighthouse of Restoration Organization
Author, *25 Years to Life*

Find yourself glum, or even mad because you made a decision that didn't end so well?

Getting into a rut is easy. It's getting out that's hard. What I've learned this far is, the only way you can get out of the rut is to hold yourself accountable. Be honest with yourself about your situation and the decisions that you have made that landed you in a rut.

Do you want out?

Do you want change in your life?

Do you want a healthier way of thinking and doing things?

Are you open to change?

If you answered Yes to any of these questions, commit today to change your life!

COMMIT TO CHANGE YOUR LIFE

Sit down and write two lists. Title one "What's working" and the other "What Isn't Working." When you create a list, you can visually see progress, and it will encourage you to keep moving forward. You will gain confidence, and in doing so, you will have strength to work toward accomplishing your next goal.

Then make a third list. This list will consist of your goals. Whether it be, short, or long term. Remember, to count the small victories.

what's working?

what isn't working?

In order to get to where you want to be, you have to be willing to commit to your change, your new focus, and your dream. You have to hold yourself accountable. In order to get out of the rut, you have to get sick and tired of the things you're doing that are hindering you from getting to where you want to be in life.

When you decide to hold yourself accountable, you will feel uncomfortable at times. That's okay. Change feels uncomfortable.

In the end, you will feel better about yourself because you are taking the steps to better your life as a whole. In the end, you will feel better about yourself because you are taking the steps to better your life as a whole. This is certainly true about decisions you made that weren't the greatest. Face those and growth happens.

Years ago, I wasn't open to facing the decisions I made that weren't healthy for me. I wasn't ready for change. I wasn't ready to face the disappointment that I caused myself. At the time I didn't know how to let go and forgive myself.

Glad to say that changed and I have so much I want to share.

Join me today and commit today to change your life for a better tomorrow!

CHRISTMAS

is the *Season*

for
GIVING

by Cindy Hochart, RN, MBA, PMP

Have you heard that during the Christmas season suicide rates are at their highest? Well, that turns out **NOT** to be true. It's a myth that has been kept alive through retelling it over and over. According to the Centers for Disease Control, December is actually the month when the suicide rates drop to their lowest point. That's more like it! The month we celebrate the birth of Jesus should be full of joy and thanksgiving.

Christmas is the time of year when we focus on family and giving to others. The very act of giving is healing. Giving to others takes our attention off our own problems and focuses on the needs of others.

In tough financial times, Christmas can mean increased stress from the pressure to buy gifts for family and friends. However, remember that giving from the heart does not mean a purchased gift! Some of the most appreciated gifts are those that we give of ourselves. But what might those be?

To come up with a meaningful gift, really think about what is important to the person receiving the gift. Think about what they love. Think about what their challenges are. Is there something you can do to make their life easier? Consider these three options for gift giving that counts:

1. Acts of Service.

Provide a gift of your time to relieve a burden or provide a treat. For instance, you could do free house cleaning, wash a car, or donate a night of babysitting.

2. Gifts of Experience.

A loving experience will be remembered long after a purchased gift is forgotten. Creating an experience that makes a memory doesn't have to be expensive. It really is the heart that goes into it that counts. Put some thought into what they like. If they love movies, how about a movie night with their favorite movie, complete with popcorn. Do something they love and make it all about bringing them pleasure.

3. Personally Crafted Gifts.

I still have a lopsided, oversized ceramic mug made by my daughter in 7th grade. I love it because it was made for me by someone I love. Again, think about what would bring the person pleasure. Is there a way you can make something to bring them joy?

Another thing that can really decrease your gift-giving stress is to discuss it up front. Together you can set up gift exchange guidelines. This doesn't have to be an awkward discussion, and it doesn't have to be about money. Just let them know that you really want the holiday season to be about love and sharing rather than focusing on money and buying. When you come to an agreement about a meaningful gift exchange, your stress goes down. The focus goes back to ways to express love, and that's what gifts should do.

Get **REAL** FOR GOOD

During the Holidays

by **Bobbi Jo Reed**
Founder, The Healing House,
Kansas City, MO
Author, *Beautifully Broken*



This is the time of year when we get to be thankful for all things — or we are supposed to.

Being real with your thankfulness can be a hard task for anyone, and much more for the recovering addict. They may be struggling with not getting things back as fast as they like. Or maybe a mom is finally starting to recover from a long drug addiction, but she thinks she needs to be super mom for the holidays and buy the entire world for her kids (yes, this could be dad too).

The holiday season is one of the worst times of the year for the addict. We all have some painful holiday memories, or we worry about those awkward family gatherings where we feel our past will be thrown in our face. Or maybe we aren't ready to face the reality that we were very sick for a very long time.

So, with that being said, please know that the holidays coming does not mean that we have to miraculously be perfect. Good thing, because our families will most certainly not be perfect either.

Always remember that just because you are getting better does not mean your family is eager to forgive and

forget. There won't be a "poof!" and instantly you have the perfect family you always hoped for and dreamed they would be.

So, you must accept what your boundaries are and learn to stick with them.

If that means that you, the (former, but ever aware) alcoholic cannot go to Aunt Mitsy's for Thanksgiving because your dear old Aunt likes to toss the eggnog back like it's going out of style, then don't go! Don't take the chance that you won't be able to abstain. If your family doesn't understand, it's okay. You must do what's best for you. And that is alright!

Utilize your resources, tools, like your "newfound family" in a recovery group. Or sit at home and binge watch some television. But, whatever you do, do not wallow or feel bad for yourself.

Yes, you have done this to yourself, but you will get through this! That is a guarantee! Keep putting one foot in front of the other. Even if you walk through the living room to answer the door and stub your toe on the coffee table, break the lamp, and trip on the dog, it's all going to be okay. A little clumsiness and a little bad luck never

gets in the way for too long. Just pick yourself up and dust yourself off. Remember that God did not bring you this far just to have a stubbed toe or a broken lamp get in the way of His miracles.

And try, really try, to "put on" gratefulness by remembering that deep inside, you are grateful for everything that is happening in your life. You can be grateful for the things you see and also the things happening that you cannot see. Getting this far is a miracle for which to thank God.

And never forget the miracle that you are — that you mean something, and that God did not keep you alive or save your life for nothing! If you keep putting one foot in front of the other, eventually this year's holidays will be one of many you look back on and smile that you got things right.

So let me end with this. Start a gratitude list now and keep adding to it throughout the next six weeks. Remember the positive, and know that Joy always comes in the morning.

Have a wonderful holiday season and remember that God loves you and so do we!!!!



Disconnect to Connect!

WHAT?

DISCONNECT to CONNECT!

by Elaine Mizuo

We all know that social media keeps us connected with our loved ones and keeps us informed about things going on around us. But are you letting it take over your life?

Are you a mother of young children? Then as you go through your day, try to balance your networking time and your family time.

Are you...

waking up and being absorbed in Snapchat?

Instead, how about.....

making sure your child is ready for the school day and leaves on a positive note?

Are you...

taking your young child out in the stroller, but staying busy texting your friends?

How about...

putting your phone away and talking to your child? Help them discover the world around them. You will get to see the world again through a child's eyes.

Are you...

often sending out afternoon tweets?

How about...

asking about your child's school day? They need to know you care before they will talk about it.

Are you...

on Instagram in the evening?

How about...

putting your child to bed and reading a story together? One family calls it "cuddle ops." Make memories that last a lifetime.



Texting, pinning, tweeting, and emailing are all a part of life today, but make sure you are not doing them at the cost of ignoring your little ones. They will love you for the attention you give them. Their growth and development, their security and positivity – all these rest on your interaction. If you move your attention from your device to your children, you will not look back with regrets when they're running out the door as young adults. Your memories will be forever in your heart and mind.

Star-Child

by Shirley Erena Murray
Words © 1994 Hope Publishing Company

Star-Child, earth-Child,
go-between of God,
love Child, Christ Child,
heaven's lightning rod,

Refrain: This year, this year,
let the day arrive
when Christmas comes for everyone,
everyone alive!

Street child, beat child,
no place left to go,
hurt child, used child
no one wants to know,
Refrain

Grown child, old child,
mem'ry full of years,
sad child, lost child,
story told in tears,
Refrain

Spared child, spoiled child,
having, wanting more,
wise child, faith child,
knowing joy in store,
Refrain

Hope-for-peace Child,
God's stupendous sign,
down-to-earth Child,
Star of stars that shine,
Refrain

Given to you by:

As stars to the maker

We are the work of God's hands.

As plants to the gardener

We are the work of God's hands.

As clay to the potter

We are the work of God's hands.

Be awake to integrity

Silence

by Ruth Burgess

Be brave.

Be gentle.

Be awake to justice.

Be joyful

Be humble

Be awake to holiness

Be brave

Be steady

Be honest

Be hopeful

Be awake to love.