



ANDREW ON WEDNESDAY

The suicide notes

"Picturing myself dying in a way I choose myself seems so comforting, healing and heroic. I'd look at my wrists, watch the blood seeping, and be a spectator in my last act of self-determination. By having lost all my self-respect it seems like the last pride I own, determining the time I die."

- Kyra,
Suicide Note

Locally, I must have come across at least three stories these last few weeks of people who either attempted or successful executed suicide.

The more time passes the more it hits me how many individuals around are resorting to this final act of despair. Statistics are shocking. An average of 2 'successful' suicides per month (and who knows how many more are unrecorded, are unsuccessful and others who contemplate this action but never get down to it). This must be saying something about us and about the way our communities are panning out. Let's face it, that there are people who have mental health issues to contend with, that are complex and multifarious, is a fact. Other people who might have found themselves in what they feel is a *cul de sac* with no hope of turning things around is also a datum. Others who have to cope with drug or other addictions that have pulled them down or people with dire financial issues they feel they cannot resolve, exist.

But is this a good enough reason why people break up in this way?

More than anything else I believe that it is a white flag for our society, we have forfeited our obligations, because people are yielding in front of the challenges they are being faced with and we just sit pretty, weakly and feebly.

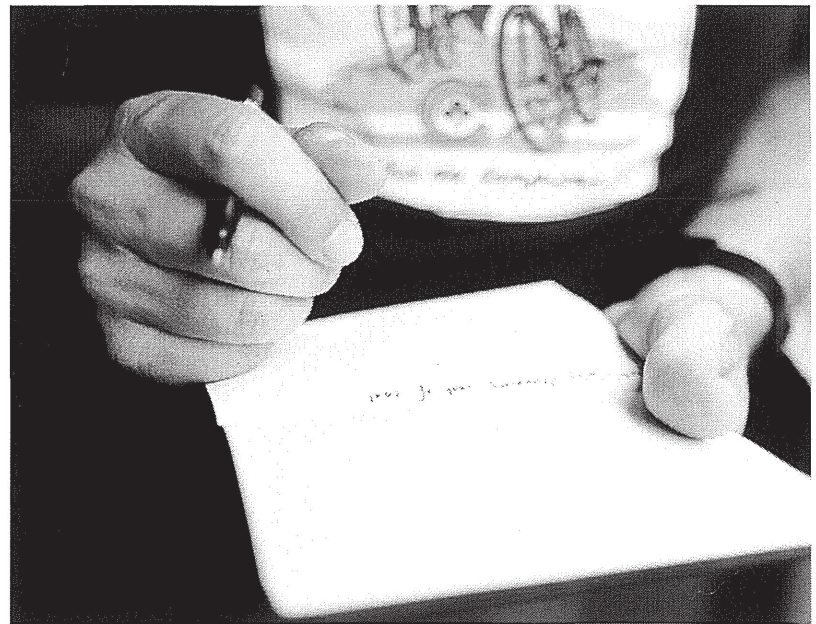
"Dear Mom, I love you with all my heart. I just wasn't meant for this world! I hope I can find a place of peace and happiness, a place I am child enough to live, yet man enough to survive. I love you! I hope you can truly believe me. Maybe on my journey I'll find Jesus, Pray for me mami. Pray I will find happiness. I hurt so bad inside! I want it all to go away. I want a new beginning. I am not afraid to die mom. I'm just so afraid of tomorrow! - John, Suicide Note

Our communities, for some reason or another are failing these people.

No, it is definitely not their immediate families who are deficient and it is so unfortunate that they are made to feel guilty and shamefaced as if they would have any liability in these happenings.

It is family who would have been there all along and tried everything under the sun to make sure that these individuals get the best possible comfort and solace.

It is family who are the ones who need to contend with the stigma and humiliation thrown



at these people after this dreadful act that would have thorn them to pieces.

It is family who have to fare with this sense of shame and disgrace that they are made to endure because of the insensitivity of people towards them.

Not even the individuals who are experiencing this sense of helplessness are to blame.

True, the motivation why people opt for such an extreme action remains difficult to conceptualise. For some it is a pathology, for others a life situation or a moment of desperation. Whatever it is I believe we should all take responsibility for that 40-year-old man who wanted to rid himself of being a trouble to others or a 26-year-old who could not handle the challenges he was being faced with or a 16-year-old who believed that everyone was against her.

But why is that people get into such a desperate situation in the first place? Why should adolescents, young people, middle-aged people, the elderly, lose hope to the extent that this black cape shrouds them?

"You're only interested in my weight. I'm miserable skinny and I'm miserable fat. Why don't you care that I'm miserable? It's gone on too long. It can't get better. I'm worn out, I have no more to say to anyone; I have nothing left to paint because everything comes out black." - Cynthia, Suicide

note.

An estimated quarter of suicides are accompanied by a note. Suicide notes vary from an appeal for redemption to it being a political statement; from a desperate sense of tiredness to that of extreme loneliness; from a confession to claims of what is to be done with estate and personal. The reasons why people write a suicide note have been attributed to self-blame, to avowals of pain, to sharing of veiled secrets, to seeking repentance and giving advice. But if there is a common thread in all of them, it is that these notes covertly or overtly convey proclamations of love and a desire for understanding. At the same time well aware that their actions will impact the ones they love so deeply, the notes are wrapped in pain. All of these notes say a story.

"No one knows what's in my head, and nobody ever will. Mom and Dad have their own problems. They'll probably get divorced soon. This family is really screwed up. I hate it. If I die, they'll have one less problem..." - Shirley, Suicide Note.

"When I was 14, I learned what transgender meant and cried of happiness. After 10 years of confusion I finally understood who I was. I immediately told my mom, and she reacted extremely negatively, telling me that it was a phase, that I would never truly be a girl, that God doesn't make mis-

takes, that I am wrong. If you are reading this, parents, please don't tell this to your kids. Even if you are Christian or are against transgender people don't ever say that to someone, especially your kid. That won't do anything but make them hate them self. That's exactly what it did to me." - Leelah, Suicide Note.

"To all my friends and loved ones, I ask of you one last favour: don't let my spirit die. Remember me for the laughs and the good times, the thrills we all had together. I hope I made a place in all your hearts and touched each and every one of you in a special way. I have chosen to die, but I haven't chosen to be forgotten. I must find a new world, a world of peace and happiness. I want you all to know I am not afraid to die, only to quit living. I'll miss you." - Mark, Suicide Note

Some because of their unhappiness feel that it is the best way to tackle the issues. There is a ubiquitous sense of suffering that they cannot get away from, except by terminating life. Much as I disagree and much as my heart goes out to these people, but shouldn't we respect this desire? Living for these people would have become unbearable.

"I must end it. There's no hope left. I'll be at peace." - Sharon, Suicide Note

If you think you need help contact Helpline 179 or the Police and Emergency Services on 112

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