

You Deserve To Live For Teens



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You Deserve To Live, For Teens

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1. INTRO

Life is hard. Life is a struggle. But look at the animal kingdom (and humans are animals) you will see that most animals struggle to survive. Struggle seems to be a law of life.

How does a baby bird escape the egg? Struggle. How does a baby animal escape the dark prison of its mother's womb? Pain, trauma and struggle.

How does a seed become a flower when it is faced with the concrete of impossible circumstances? It blooms in the place where it is planted.

Pain and struggle are a normal part of life. The sooner we realise and accept this, the easier it will be to learn strategies to COPE with life, to process the pain of life, to be at peace with ourselves.

And to be better equipped to deal with the challenges and realities of this one life we have. This one life we deserve to live.



>The Problem<



Photo by Motortion www-stock.adobe.com

bullying
abuse
low self esteem
depression
suicidal thoughts

2. Bullying

Many of us have been bullied. Most do not cope with it very well. Some fight back, many will not. Both have consequences. If we fight back we might get bullied worse. If we don't fight back we can blame ourselves and become prone to self-doubt, self-criticism, LSE (low self-esteem) negative thought patterns and depression.

Types of Bullying

There are three main types of bullying:

Physical bullying Verbal bullying Social bullying

Where does bullying happen? Bullying can be easy to see, in front of others (overt) or hidden (covert) and hard to see. Overt bullying involves physical actions such as punching or kicking, or verbal bullying such as name-calling or insults. Covert bullying can be very hard for others to see or take place when no one is watching. It can include repeated hand gestures, whispering, threatening looks, excluding someone, or restricting where they can sit or who they can talk with.

Cyberbullying is often hidden as it occurs on devices, websites and apps that adults don't know about or don't access. It's easy to remain anonymous. As young people increasingly use digital technology, the boundaries between the physical and the online environment can become blurred, so it's important to look at other situations as well and to take all bullying seriously.

Reasons Why People Bully

Emotional Trauma

They're Insecure

They've Been Bullied

They Have Poor Social Skills

They Feel Anonymous

They Lack Empathy

Source: <https://bullyingfree.nz/about-bullying/different-types-of-bullying/>

Dealing With Bullies

No matter what type of bullying you experiences, it's painful. Here are some ways you can help deal with bullies. Acknowledge that the behavior is unacceptable. The first and most important step is to be aware the bullying behavior is happening and that it is NOT acceptable.

Your Response

Don't bully back

Tell someone

Hold them accountable

Discuss bullying with an adult, a parent or teacher

Get a safety buddy

Recognise that the bullying isn't about you

Avoid reacting, and WALK AWAY when possible

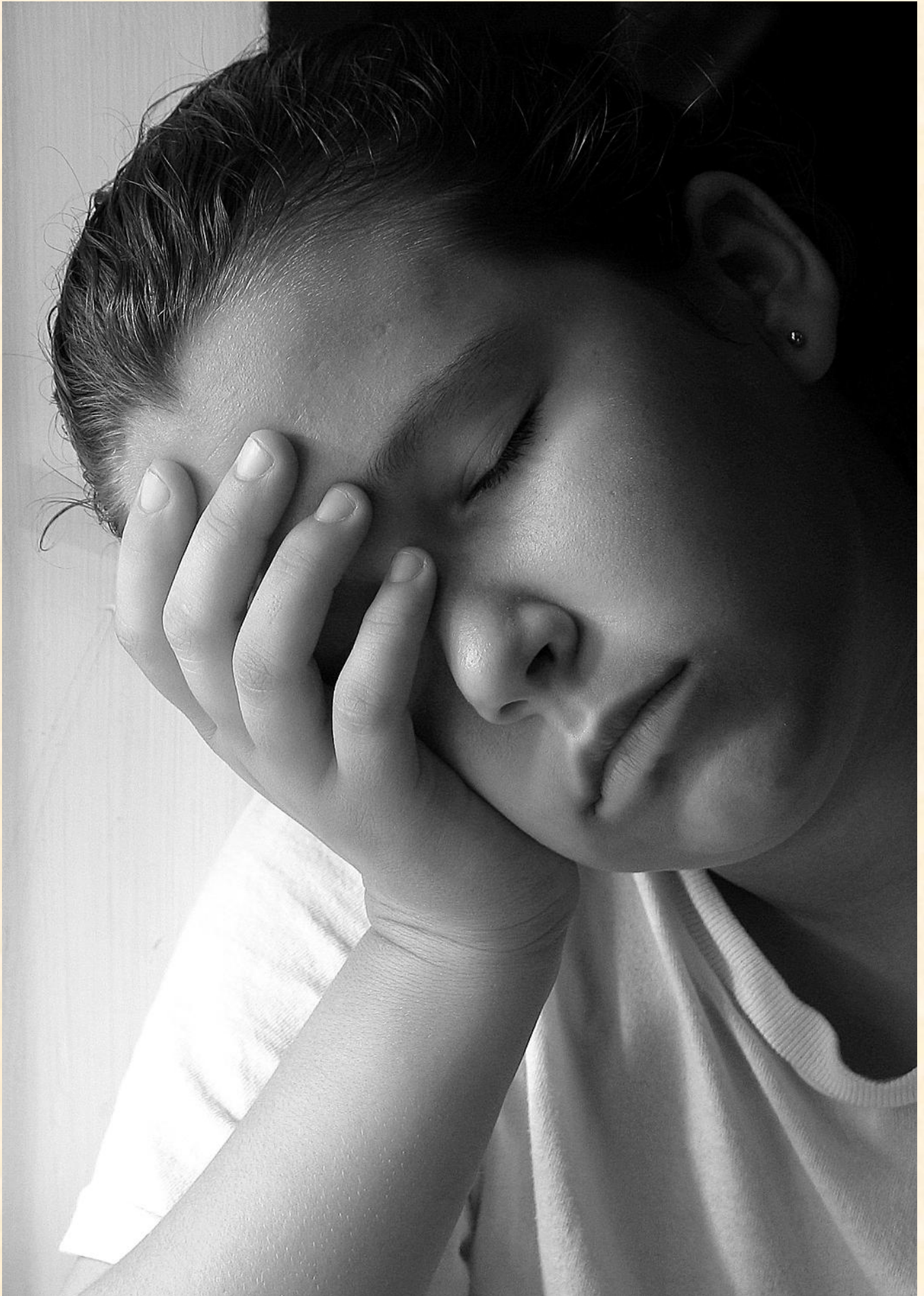
Minimise the risk of crossing paths with the bully

Practice empowering body language: people feel more confident and empowered when they stand up straight, broaden their shoulders, stand with feet apart, and point their face up, not down. Bullies tend to feel more intimidated by people they perceive as confident.

How to Deal With Bullying Bullying is NOT okay and should NOT be ignored. By better understanding why someone might be bullying you, you can address the issue head-on and help stop the bullying. And remember, another person's choice to bully is about them and their internal trauma—not you. People are more likely to experience depression if they have been bullied, particularly if the abuse occurs over a long period of time. If you have been bullied and are experiencing symptoms of depression, talk to someone about it.

Source: www.verywellmind.com/common-reasons-why-people-bully-5496259

HURT PEOPLE HURT PEOPLE



3. Abuse

Effects of Child Abuse on Teens Child abuse affects each victim differently, though the effects of the abuse often are severe and last for a long time. Children who are repeatedly exposed to stress and abuse do not have the same levels of healthy brain development as their non-abused peers.

Their brains are more reactive and less adaptive, putting teens who were abused as children at an increased risk for emotional and behavioral problems. They have difficulty expressing their feelings, and they struggle to regulate their emotions. As they age, they continue to have trouble dealing with their feelings, which leads to depression and anxiety before or during the teenage years. They also may develop PTSD (Post Traumatic Stress Disorder) and suffer from repeated flashbacks.

Risk of Addiction

Teens who are verbally abused commonly develop LSE (low self-esteem) and often turn to alcohol and drugs in an attempt to self-medicate and dull the pain. Overall, teens are more likely to engage in risky behavior than adults, and teens who are victims of child abuse are even more likely to do so. Teens who are addicted have a sudden change in their peer group, become careless about their appearance, perform poorly in school, and have difficulty in school or with the law.

Source: <https://safe-families.org/blog/2016/how-child-abuse-affects-teens/>

With emotional abuse, the insults, insinuations, criticism, and accusations slowly eat away at the victim's self-esteem until he or she is incapable of judging a situation realistically. He or she may begin to believe that there is something wrong with them or even fear they are losing their mind. They have become so beaten down emotionally they blame themselves for the abuse.

Beverly Engel, Psychotherapist

4. LSE Low Self-Esteem

Self-esteem is how you feel about yourself If you have high self-esteem, you may believe you are a good enough person with a high value, but if your self-esteem is low, you may have recurrent self-doubt and even question whether you are good enough or worthy of anything.

Healthy self-esteem is a lifelong process Maintaining a balanced self-esteem is an ongoing process that can help you feel better about yourself and be confident to try new things and stand up for what you believe in.

With low self-esteem, it can be like looking through negative glasses at your whole world. It may make you feel that your relationship is not good, or won't last, and that problems may not be fixable. You may judge other areas of your life negatively too, and it is a bias that can lead to anxiety, depression and despair.

Top tips to improve self-esteem

Think about your positive self What have you achieved in life, what are your strengths, what are you proud of, what do you feel good about?

Balanced self talk *"There are people who care for me." "I am doing the best that I can." "I try to do the right thing." "I can get through this."*

Respect yourself It is up to you to respect yourself by keeping healthy, and including activities in your life that you enjoy.

Take action Help someone or be kind, spend time with someone who likes you, do something you really enjoy, do something you are good at, or treat yourself.

What are your strengths (eg. kind, grateful, thoughtful, patient, sensitive, creative)?

What are you most proud of (eg. creative projects, art, helping others)?

What do you do that makes you feel good about yourself (eg. keeping fit, caring for animals, caring for others, not being part of the in-crowd, being different)?

Balanced helpful thinking What you tell yourself about yourself on a daily basis can either build your self-esteem or eat away at it. If your self-talk is constantly negative, you may start to believe that is all there is. Habitually reprimanding yourself with negative labels when you have done something that hasn't worked out well, can reinforce your negative thoughts about yourself.

Give some recognition to the good in you, to the things you do well

Find balanced and authentic statements to build your self-esteem. Some examples are: *“I am doing the best that I can”*; *“I try to do the right thing”*; *“I am kind to others”*; *“There are people who care about me”*; *“I am honest”*; *“I achieve what I set out to”*, *“I will get through this stage of life”*.

Respect yourself Taking care of yourself can give you confidence and self-respect that is good for increasing your self-esteem.

Look after your health through physical exercise, good nutrition, sleeping well, and making sure to de-stress frequently. Include activities you enjoy, and spend time with your friends.

Take action to increase self-esteem Being kind to others can boost your self-esteem and remind you that you can make a positive difference and feel good about yourself. This seems simplistic but is actually true.

Spend time with people who like & support you When you do something you enjoy, it is often something you are good at, and the positive emotions you get can boost your mood and confidence.

Treating yourself in a positive way can work like a personal hug, a way to say: “I like me” which is an excellent self-esteem builder. Some examples that may suit you include taking a long, hot bath, listening to your favourite music, reading, having a therapeutic massage, spending time in your own private space or on a hobby.

Source: <https://stepstone.org.nz/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/Low-Self-Esteem.pdf>



Benefits of high self-esteem

Growing out of low self-esteem into higher self-esteem can benefit your overall well-being and quality of life. Here are some key advantages:

Improved Mental Health: When you have high self-esteem, you are more likely to experience lower levels of anxiety, depression, and stress. It means you can enjoy better mental health and be more resilient in life's challenges.

Increased Confidence: High self-esteem fosters strong confidence and self-assurance in your abilities. When you believe in yourself, you are more likely to take on new challenges, pursue your goals, and embrace opportunities.

Better Relationships: Healthy self-esteem positively impacts your relationships with others. A positive self-image makes you more likely to form and maintain healthy, fulfilling relationships. You can set boundaries, communicate effectively, and engage in mutually supportive interactions.

Achievement and Success: Self-esteem plays a crucial role in achieving personal and professional goals. With high self-esteem, you believe in your capabilities, which leads to greater motivation, persistence, and resilience in the face of setbacks. It enhances your performance and increases your chances of success.

Enhanced Emotional Well-being: High self-esteem enables you to manage your emotions better, leading to a more positive outlook. It means you can experience greater happiness and cultivate inner peace. High self-esteem also reduces the risk of developing self-destructive behaviors or engaging in substance abuse.

Source: <https://www.powerofpositivity.com/low-self-esteem-causes-fixes/>

**THE SOLUTION TO LOW SELF-ESTEEM IS TO GET
OVER YOURSELF AND FIND A HIGHER PURPOSE.**

MARIANNE WILLIAMSON

5. Depression

Why do I feel like this?

Our feelings get the better of us When we are young our whole life seems to be about feelings, and when we are abused or disappointed in some way, our emotions sink without a trace. It's at times like this we are most open to depression, discouragement and yes even suicidal thoughts, ending it all, just ending the pain somehow. (But that is the worst irreversible decision you could ever make).

Thoughts can become cyclical and habitual. As soon as we are faced with some sort of abuse, or difficult or impossible situation our minds short-circuit to the suicide option. The neural pathway has been established, and it's really difficult to replace or unlearn this thought pattern. *But you can.. in time.* What you need to do is **RECOGNISE THE NEGATIVE THOUGHT** and habitually replace it with a positive one:

I feel lousy today	<i>I will get through this somehow</i>
Life is pointless	<i>I just haven't found the point yet, but I will</i>
I'm depressed today	<i>but I've got me through days like this before</i>
I'm lonely	<i>but I can make a good friend, in time</i>
Life is crap	<i>but it's not all crap, and crap is part of life</i>
I hate _____ (activity)	<i>but I can actually learn <u>something</u> from this</i>
I hate _____ (person)	<i>but I can choose to forgive them</i>

Who cares anyway?

It's common for people to feel alienated or disconnected from their friends or family who don't 'get' what it's like to be you, with your particular set of circumstances, emotions, and challenges. In fact, it's really hard to feel someone else's pain, and the truth is it's hard for other people to get your pain, my pain. Human beings are not good at understanding other people.

So who does? Mainly family and friends. *As I look back on my life (as an older person) I see that family and friend connections are really hard for me to make (as my social skills are poor) but the few relationships and friendships I do have, have become precious to me.*

In my time of need, I rely on my family and friends BUT there are times when my pain has been so intense, that I have to withdraw from even family and friends to seek *the comfort of isolation, to try and figure this all out by myself, while attempting to keep on top of my emotions.*

As an introvert I find the isolated place is where I take my depression, frustration, grief, anger and loneliness. It's in that quiet place, day after day, where I am able to process the turmoil that is ripping my heart to shreds and eating/destroying me from the inside out. This has not been an easy lesson to learn. We are wired for pleasure, not pain. So when pain arrives, we flee from it and bury in a heap of denial and frustration.
Note: Find a quiet space where you can just be yourself every day.

I feel depressed all the time

Depression is a major cause of suicidal thoughts The depressed mind gets caught in a downward spiral, which is like a death grip. It's incredibly difficult to understand the origin of the negative patterns of thought. The causes can be various, difficult to understand.

When I was seriously depressed everyone around me said: Go on anti-depressants. It's the logical thing I suppose but I was brought up by a father who didn't believe in drugs of any kind, not even conventional medicine. He never went to a doctor in his life. Never took a pill for anything. Believed in a comprehensive and varied diet and natural medicine. That's how he brought me up. So, when I was offered hard drugs in student flats in my 20s, I said no. When I was offered anti-depressants by the doc, I said no. I believe anti-depressants can help relieve symptoms for some, but they cannot fix the root cause of your problems or your pain!

Listen up Pills help some people, I'm not knocking them BUT before you go that route consider the non-drug route first. If I got through this emotional wilderness journey without pills, you can too. Also, always remember for every pill you take there are ALWAYS side effects.

Strategies to help beat depression:

Daily exercise is the Number One Strategy against depression!

Fresh air and sunshine are free anti-depressants.

Music is a free anti-depressant.

A hot bath relaxes and detoxifies the body, stimulates the nervous system.

A hot sweet drink (like tea or coffee) is better than Comfort Food.

A healthy diet is essential long-term. Make an online study of healthy food.

Supplement your diet with supplements, particularly for mood swings.

Counselling will help get to the root of your unresolved issues.

Read books or material on-line for the issues you are facing.

Give your struggles up daily until you see a breakthrough.

6. Suicidal thoughts

Tips for getting through this

Get to a safe place. Call emergency services or go to a hospital if you think you might harm yourself. Find emergency service and hotline numbers at the back of this booklet.

Put off any immediate plans Make a promise to yourself that you'll wait rather than doing anything in the moment. At the end of the day, you are in control of your life and what comes next—there is no pressure, deadline, or obligation to follow through with any of your thoughts.

Visualise your friends and family In the heat of the moment, it's easy to indulge suicidal thoughts. Whenever you're tempted to give into these thoughts, try thinking about the people in your life who love you and would miss you if you weren't around. Your life matters and has an impact on the people around you, whether you realise it or not.

Tell someone exactly how you're feeling Use phrases like "I've experienced these feelings for a long time..." "I'm considering..." or "Recently, I've been struggling with..." to start the conversation. A trusted friend or adult can help walk you through exactly how you're feeling and give you advice and pointers on how to get through this.

Never feel embarrassed or weak about asking for help It's important to realise that "*asking for help is a sign of strength and not weakness.*" View it in reverse. If someone came and asked you for help, would you judge them or not help them? It's important to extend the same kindness and patience to yourself that you would to others. Sharing your thoughts can be a helpful way to give yourself a reality check.

Do a grounding exercise to change your mind state

Staying grounded requires you to focus on specific aspects of your surroundings, which helps you temporarily escape your suicidal thoughts as you center yourself in the here and now.

Reframe your thought patterns with positive thinking exercises

If you're struggling to escape your suicidal thoughts, try guiding your thought patterns in a more positive direction.

Practice gratitude List three things you're thankful for, even if they seem mundane. Example: air to breathe, sunshine, nature, physical health, food, internet, friends, your pet, a comfortable bed, somewhere to live, school.. (*Yes school! You will appreciate it more later in life!*)

Slow down your breathing Breathing deeply and slowly can be a great way to ground and separate yourself from your negative thoughts. Give some of these strategies a try, like:

4-5-8 breathing: Inhale through your nose for 4 seconds, hold the breath in your chest for 5 seconds, and then exhale it through your mouth for 8.

Slow breathing: Get comfortable, close your eyes, and pay close attention to the way you're breathing. Identify the way the breath travels throughout your body, slowing down your breath as you go.

Try doing a distracting activity to get your mind off things Any type of positive distraction can be helpful when you're struggling with suicidal thoughts, whether that's walking around your neighborhood, re-watching your favorite TV show, or doing some arts and crafts. You could also:

Play games built into the Google search engine, like Solitaire

Cook/bake a new dish

Use Google's digital coloring book

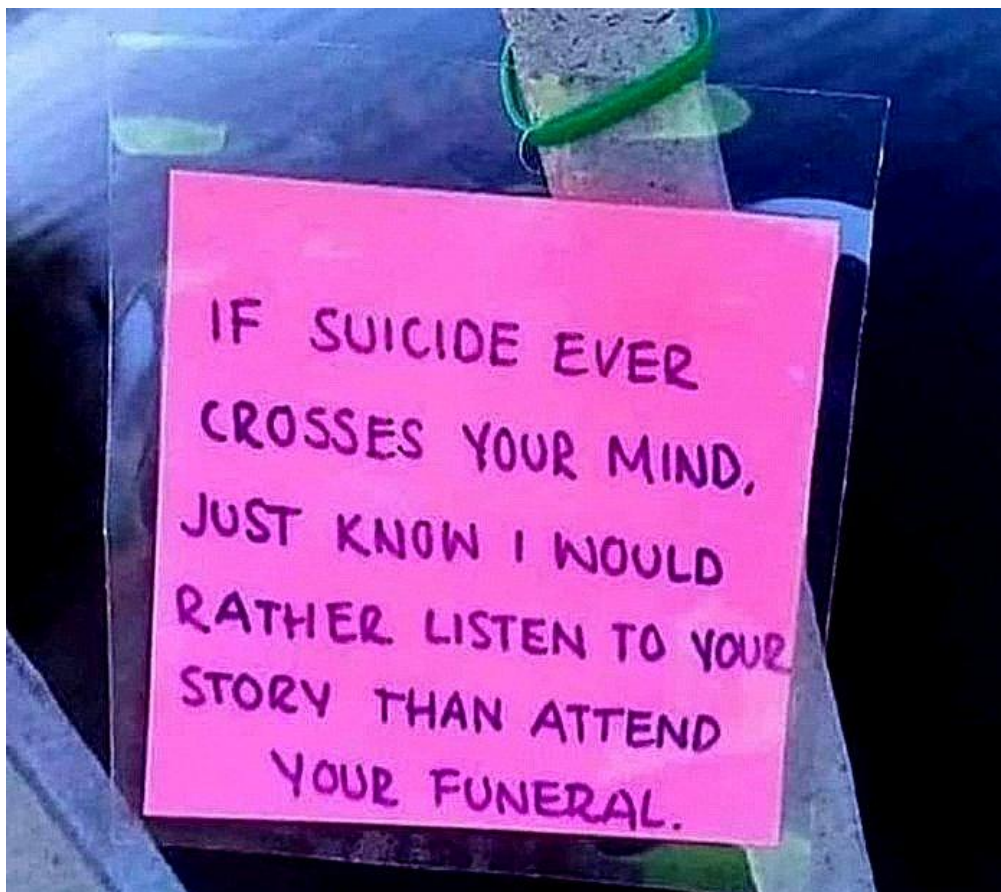
Eat at your favorite restaurant

Re-read a favorite book that you have enjoyed

Go for a long walk

Hang out with your dog in the park

Source: <https://www.wikihow.com/Cope-with-Suicidal-Thoughts>



Natural anti-depressants

without the negative side-effects



Meet Your Happy Chemicals



Endorphins

The Pain Killer

Relieves stress & blocks discomfort

- Using essential oils
- Watching a funny movie
- Eating dark chocolate
- Exercising



Dopamine

The Reward Chemical

Motivation & concentration

- Completing a task
- Performing self-care activities
- Striving towards a goal
- Eating food



Oxytocin

The Love Chemical

Increases trust/relationships

- Playing with a dog/cat
- Playing with a baby
- Hugging a loved one
- Giving/receiving a compliment



Serotonin

The Mood Stabilizer

Well-being & happiness

- Improving social behavior
- Meditating
- Running
- Walks through nature
- Having Sun exposure



>The Solution<



Photo Vidal Baielo Jr

IDENTITY

**we are born into a family
we are raised in a community
we are part of a nation
we are a human being
we are born with talents and gifts**

7. Identity is the answer

If you know who you are, you don't have to end it all to get through, grief, loneliness, bullying, despair, depression, discouragement, shame, guilt, abuse, acute or chronic pain, physical or emotional pain or hopelessness, being picked on, ostracised, excluded, ridiculed, marginalised, sneered at, spat upon, hit, humiliated or harmed in any way.

There is a way through ALL of these issues. Every single one!

The answer is NOT to end it all. The answer is to find out **WHO YOU ARE** and to find the way through the mess you feel you are in.

Yes, life is messy at times, but messes are NOT permanent.

There is a way through each and every issue. You can get through this. You WILL get through this *in time and with a bit of help from your friends, your family or a counsellor. And/or spiritual help from God or 'the universe' of which you are a part.*

wrong identity



Photo Miriam Mitchell www.quotesgram.com

BEFORE YOU DIAGNOSE YOURSELF WITH DEPRESSION OR LOW SELF-ESTEEM, FIRST MAKE SURE THAT YOU ARE NOT, IN FACT, JUST SURROUNDED BY ASSHOLES. WILLIAM GIBSON

8. Raised in a biological family

All of us have a biological mother and father. If we are raised by these two people to the age of 18 and beyond (and these two provide for us and care for us) there is a greater chance we will do better in life than if they split up. The stability of that parental relationship ('Identity 101' in our Identity Quotient) is a major factor in us feeling okay about ourselves.

Of course, there are many variations to this. Sometimes mum and dad stay together, sometimes not. Sometimes they may stay together but there is abuse or neglect as part of the family equation. Or you may be in an adoptive family, which can be a loving environment to grow in.

Our parents are role models (though we don't realise it at the time) and if they are loving & caring this sets us up to be loving caring people in adult life. We may in turn become loving caring parents to our own kids. The reverse is true. If there has been any dysfunction in the home this sets us up with a predisposition for dysfunction, depression, emotional struggle.



Photo Yuri Arcurs www.alamy.com

**FAMILY ISN'T ALWAYS ABOUT YOUR GENE POOL,
IT'S MORE ABOUT THE ONES WHO ACCEPT YOU AS YOU ARE,
WHO LOVE TO SEE YOU SMILE, AND LOVE YOU NO MATTER WHAT.**

9. Raised in a local community

'It takes a village to raise a child' African Proverb

This proverb means that an entire community of people must provide for and interact positively with children for those children to experience and grow in a safe and healthy environment. Wikipedia

I was raised with my 2 older brothers in small-town NZ (Masterton) to the age of 11. I have nothing but happy memories of my upbringing there. We had a happy home life, my parents were loving caring people, I had a great bunch of friends, I enjoyed and was good at school. I had an outdoor lifestyle, life was sweet. All this came crashing down when my immigrant parents uprooted us 3 boys and moved back to England where they were from. The result was disastrous for us. I was bullied relentlessly at low-socio economic schools in England, and at age fourteen I was molested. Life went from happy and idyllic in Masterton, to very unhappy and nightmarish in England. I have spent a long time coming to terms with that bullying and abuse. I have battled low self-esteem, relentless depression and frequent suicidal thoughts. but I am here today because I found a way through ALL of my issues.....

So, the community we are raised in (if it is loving, caring, not abusive and threatening) contributes majorly to our Wellbeing Quotient and how you feel about yourself, your self-image, your identity, and your purpose.



Photo Origin & Copyright Unknown

10. Raised in a nation

*I've travelled through 35 countries with my career a musician. It has been amazing to see how different nations view life, have a different worldview, how values differ from place to place, and what we think as 'normal' is often weird and strange to other people of other cultures. One lesson I learn is this: we as New Zealanders often view individual achievement as something negative. This is called **The Tall Poppy Syndrome** (except in sport). Also, we as New Zealanders can be sometimes very casual and laid back (to the point of indifference about a range of things). So, our NZ culture often cuts people down to size, is negative about achievement.*

Some of the negativity we may feel about life may come directly from our culture, not our family upbringing. This is a revolutionary thought. Maybe NZ's high suicide rate is partially due to the negativity in the culture!

Also, we are a **secular humanistic society** which does not always value traditional family values. It allows liberal thinking to pervade our politics and our education system, another contributing factor to a climate of 'what's the point of this life?' In comparison, a culture like Norway which has strong traditional family values has a lower suicide rate and scores very highly on the Worldwide Happiness Index.

Source: www.worldpopulationreview.com

Norwegian kids learn traditional dancing and often have traditional family values



Photo Origin & Copyright Unknown

**ARE NZ KIDS PROUD TO BE NEW ZEALANDERS
ON OUR National Day FEB 6th? IF not, WHY not?**

11. You are a human being

*Human rights are not a privilege conferred by government. They are every human being's entitlement because of their humanity. **Mother Teresa***

*As human beings, our job in life is to help people realise how rare and valuable each one of us really is. That each of us has something that no one else has – or ever will have – something inside us that is unique to all time. **Fred Rogers***

*It's not wrong to be upset. It's not wrong to cry. It's not wrong to want attention. It's not even wrong to scream or throw a fit. What is wrong is to keep it all inside. What is wrong is to blame and punish yourself for simply being human. What is wrong is to never be heard and to be alone in your pain. Share it. Let it out. **Bryant H McGill***

*In life, friendships change, divorces happen, people move on, others die. Money and jobs will come and go. Live long enough and your health and body will change. It goes with the territory of being human. The fact that you are still here gives you an advantage. Don't look back. Look straight ahead!! Decide to use all of your knowledge, skills, experiences and your life lessons from your mistakes, defeats and setbacks, to start over again. Life changes. You may not have the same life as before, but you can still enjoy your life! **Les Brown***

No matter where you live the biggest defect we human beings have is our shortsightedness. We don't see what we could be. We should be looking at our potential, stretching ourselves into everything we can become.

Mitch Albom from the Book 'Tuesdays With Morrie'

WHEN I'M SAD I SHALL
EAT CHOCOLATE AND
SING HAPPY SONGS

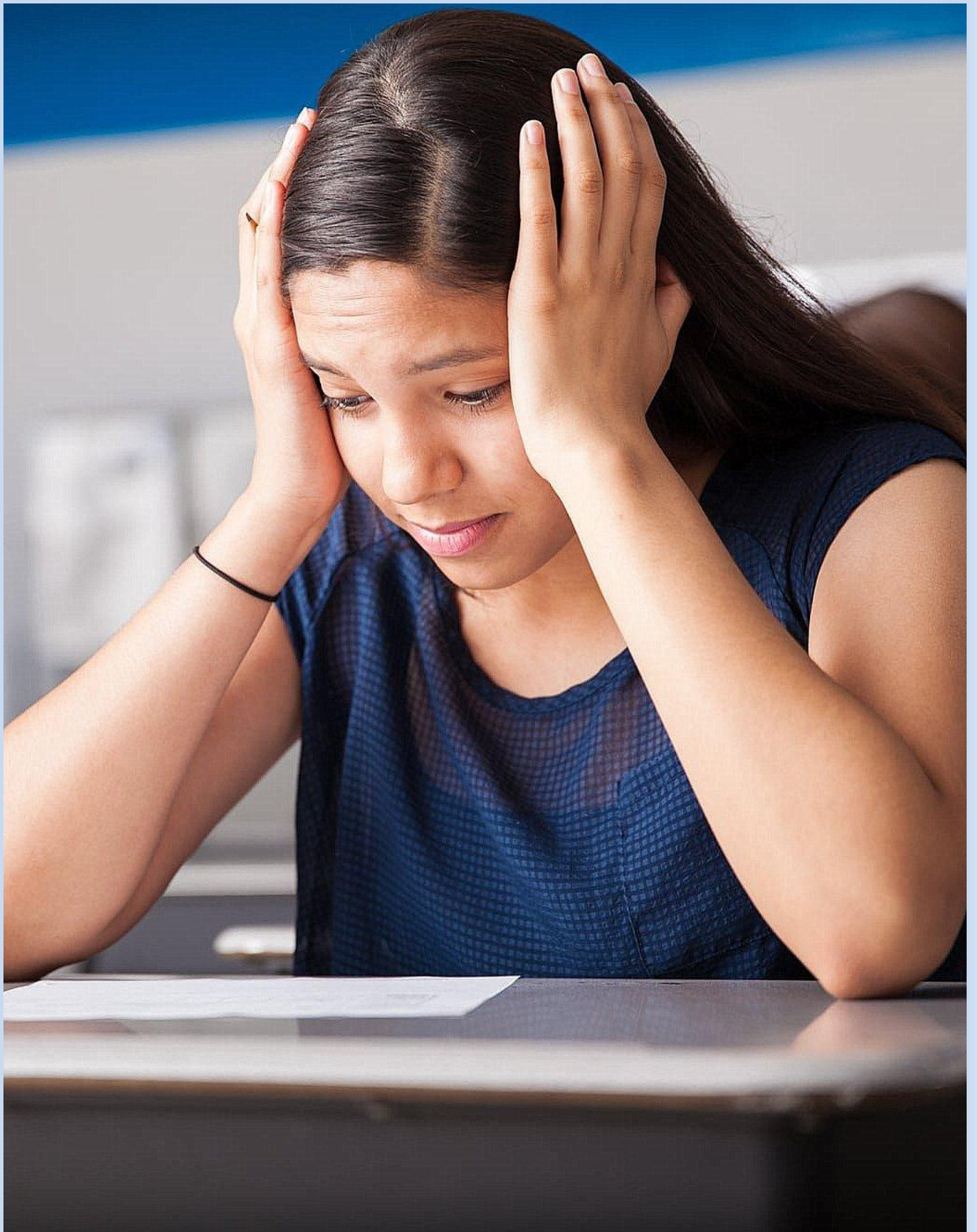


Photo Antonio Diaz www.iStock.com

12. You have talents and gifts

As a dysfunctional teen I had no friends and zero social life. My life revolved around books and music. I read 50 to 80 books a year (before mobile phones) and I became absorbed with the music of Bob Dylan, who was a major iconic singer then. I taught myself guitar so that I could learn and play Dylan & Beatles songs. I was reading books and doing music every day of my life. In my last year of High School dad asked me what I wanted to do with my life. I said I wanted to be a singer like Bob Dylan. Dad said 'It's not a career path son, go to university!' Which I did, but I hated university because all I wanted to do was listen to music and do music. It was an impossible dream because I was intensely shy and introverted. But in fact, eventually I became a folksinger like Bob Dylan and have had a career as a musician, recording many albums of my original songs and travelling the world. Totally amazing really. And I am SO VERY THANKFUL I did not end my life when I was a teenager!

All of us are born with talents and gifts. Things we like to do without anyone asking or telling us to do them. Things we are naturally good at. Things we enjoy doing. These talents and gifts can be a KEY to finding the purpose for our life. Exploring and finding your gifts and talents may go a long way towards discovering who you are and why you have been born for such a time as this on Planet Earth.

- If you like animals you could become a vet or run an animal shelter
- If you like the outdoors you could study to become a DOC worker
- If you are good with languages you could work in the tourist industry
- If you love reading books, you could become a librarian or a writer
- If you are good with kids, you could become a pre-school teacher
- If you love clothes you could become a dress designer
- If you like working by yourself you could start your own business
- If you are a computer nerd you could work in the IT industry
- If you are good with your hands you could become a builder
- If you love food you could become a chef
- If you've had a difficult life, you could eventually become a counsellor
- If you like a particular subject at school, choose that as your vocation!

FOLLOW YOUR CALLING..

It IS THE MEANING OF YOUR LIFE

> Why? <



Photo Stu Walmsley www.austockphoto.com.au

teen years are difficult
 coping strategies
 social skills
 social media
 sexuality vs spirituality
 the purpose of pain
 nz has a high suicide rate
 you can get a new life.. in time

13. The teen years are difficult

During the teen years and into adulthood, adolescents develop the ability to think abstractly, reason hypothetically, and engage in deductive logic. They are no longer limited to reasoning about physical, concrete objects and can instead manipulate ideas, principles, and theoretical constructs. Adolescents can think systematically and reason about what might be as well as what is (not everyone achieves this stage). This allows them to understand politics, ethics, and science fiction, as well as to engage in scientific reasoning. Adolescents can deal with abstract ideas; for example, they can understand division and fractions without having to actually divide things up, and solve hypothetical problems.

Source: <https://www.simplypsychology.org/piaget.html>

The power of hormones Starting as early as age 8, the body begins to produce the hormones that are responsible for the changes of puberty. Hormones are the chemicals that cause the physical growth and sexual development that will carry them through into adulthood. As these substances take hold of a teen's body, we notice that emotions and sexual feelings are much stronger. They will probably experience mood swings, weight gain, and growth spurts. In addition, they may also feel more impulsive and more inclined to take risks, like experimenting with drugs or alcohol, driving without a license, or having unsafe sex.

Teen hormones affect not only adolescents' bodies and minds, but also their behavior. Peer pressure, LSE and raging hormones can lead teens to take chances and engage in risky behaviors that can have a negative effect on their future. So, as kids enter their teen years, it's important for them to have a support system they can rely on. Parents, siblings, counsellors, teachers and coaches can provide wisdom and guidance as teens navigate this challenging developmental time in their lives.

Source: <https://www.newportacademy.com>

Teenager Post # 37555
I only understand
like 9% of life

Why are the teen years so difficult?

Being stuck between childhood and adulthood

Mood swings

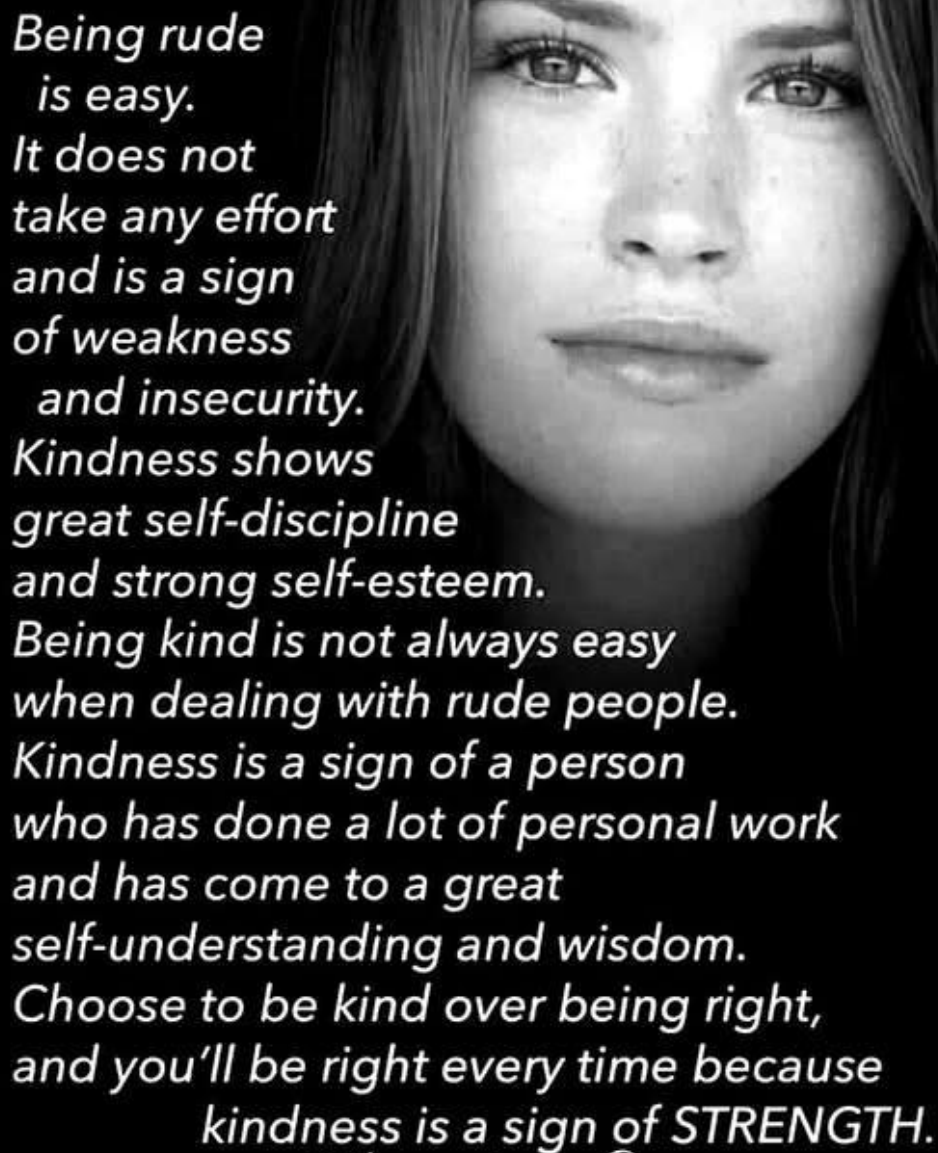
Dramatic behavior

Pimples

Parent lectures and nagging

Feeling pressured and totally clueless about my future

Source: <https://raisingteenstoday.com>



*Being rude
is easy.
It does not
take any effort
and is a sign
of weakness
and insecurity.
Kindness shows
great self-discipline
and strong self-esteem.
Being kind is not always easy
when dealing with rude people.
Kindness is a sign of a person
who has done a lot of personal work
and has come to a great
self-understanding and wisdom.
Choose to be kind over being right,
and you'll be right every time because
kindness is a sign of **STRENGTH**.*

Attitude to Inspiration

Every generation has its challenges

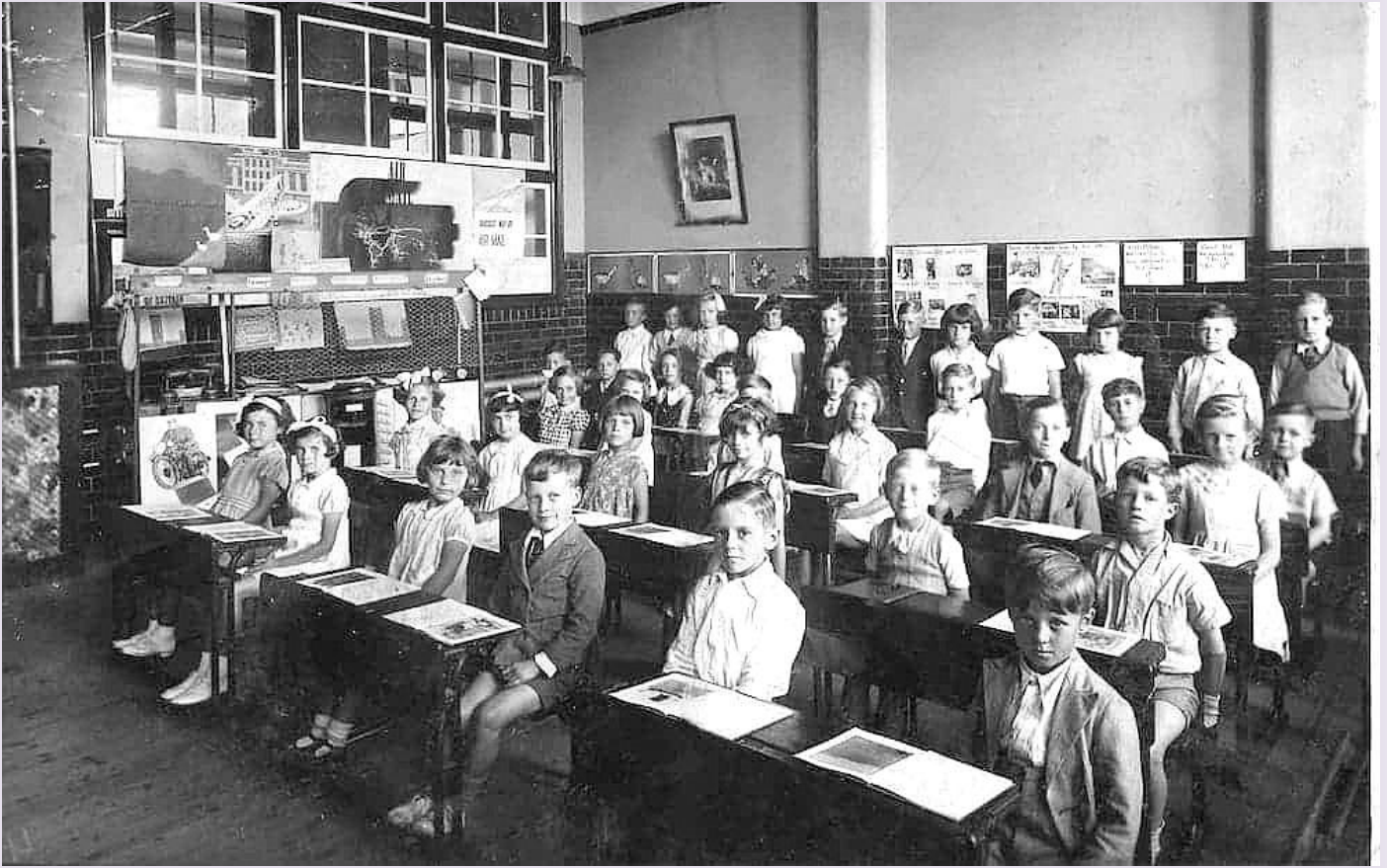


Photo Origin & Copyright Unknown



Photo www.depositphotos.com

14. Coping strategies for teens

Healthy coping skills The teen years can be some of the most emotionally difficult times of our lives. When I think back to being sixteen, I can faintly recall a blur of emotions, intensity, social pressures, and an awkwardness. I can't even imagine how difficult it is these days with the internet and social media adding to the challenging backdrop of the teen years. Here is a list of coping skills that has been worked on by professionals and teenagers themselves:

- Breathing deeply and visualising a safe calm place**
- Drawing or painting**
- Listening to my favourite music**
- Going to the library**
- Organising my space**
- Sitting in the sun and closing my eyes**
- Drinking a hot sweet drink**
- Complimenting someone**
- Exercise: stretching, walking, jogging, or the gym**
- Reading a book or magazine (not on your device)**
- Writing yourself 'a note to myself' & keeping it in my pocket**
- Dancing alone, with or without music**
- Taking a short walk and telling myself positive things**
- Going outside and *listening* to nature**
- Calling a friend**
- Writing positive affirmations on cards and decorating them**
- Planting a flower in a pot or some veges in the garden**
- A craft activity, like a collage of my favourite things**
- Watching a funny or inspirational movie**
- Writing an honest journal (keep it locked & well hidden)**
- Writing a poem or song about the reality I'm facing**
- Swimming, running or biking**
- Making a gratitude list**
- Writing something positive about myself for every letter of the alphabet and then decorating it**

Source: <https://psychcentral.com>

**AS A COPING STRATEGY, WORRYING IS
HIGHLY OVER-RATED. RanaL CURRIE**

The best six doctors anywhere and no one can deny it are:

Sunshine



Water



Rest



Air



Exercise



Diet



15. Social skills

What are social skills? Social skills are verbal, nonverbal, written and visual communication abilities people use when interacting with others. They can be referred to as interpersonal skills. An interaction takes place between two people when there is a combination of any of these skills. It requires active listening, eye contact and body language.

Why are social skills Important? Social skills are necessary during the teen years as they help establish relationships with peers, handle conflicts, and build self-confidence. During this stage of life, teens can become sensitive to what their peers think of them. This can make them shy or withdrawn. So, developing social skills can help avoid becoming anxious, defensive or withdrawn.

Social skills matter because they allow teens to form healthy relationships with others. At a time when teens are learning who they are and where they fit in the world, it becomes important for them to develop these skills. Making friends is easier with improved social skills.

Summary of learnable social skills

Active listening and communication skills

Body language and nonverbal cues

Building and maintaining friendships

Conflict resolution and problem-solving

Empathy and emotional IQ (ability to handle emotions)

Source: <https://mentalhealthcenterkids.com/blogs/articles/social-skills-activities-for-teens>



16. Social media

Why do young people use social media? Social media is a way for teens to stay in touch with their friends. Teens have always talked after school, long before social media: hanging out at the bus stop, at the park, chatting on the phone. Now it's just a different platform. It is an important part of socialising and connection in the modern world. It can also be a connection for good mental health and wellbeing. 73% of young people (in Aus) turn to social media for mental health support when needed.

What are the benefits of social media for teenagers? Being socially connected is important for the psychological development and the online environment is where many teens connect to:

- develop better social skills
- feel less isolated
- learn about new cultural and societal ideas and issues
- access information about mental health and wellbeing
- be creative and share their own ideas with friends
- be better equipped to be active citizens in society
- develop real world skills to help them become more independent
- learn about world events outside of their immediate environment.

What are the risks of using social media? The most common risks are:
spending too much time online and being disconnected from the real world
being the victim of online bullying or image-based abuse
damaging your online reputation developing reduced self-esteem
having your personal information shared online
being harassed or annoyed by someone you do not want attention from
being the victim of an online scam

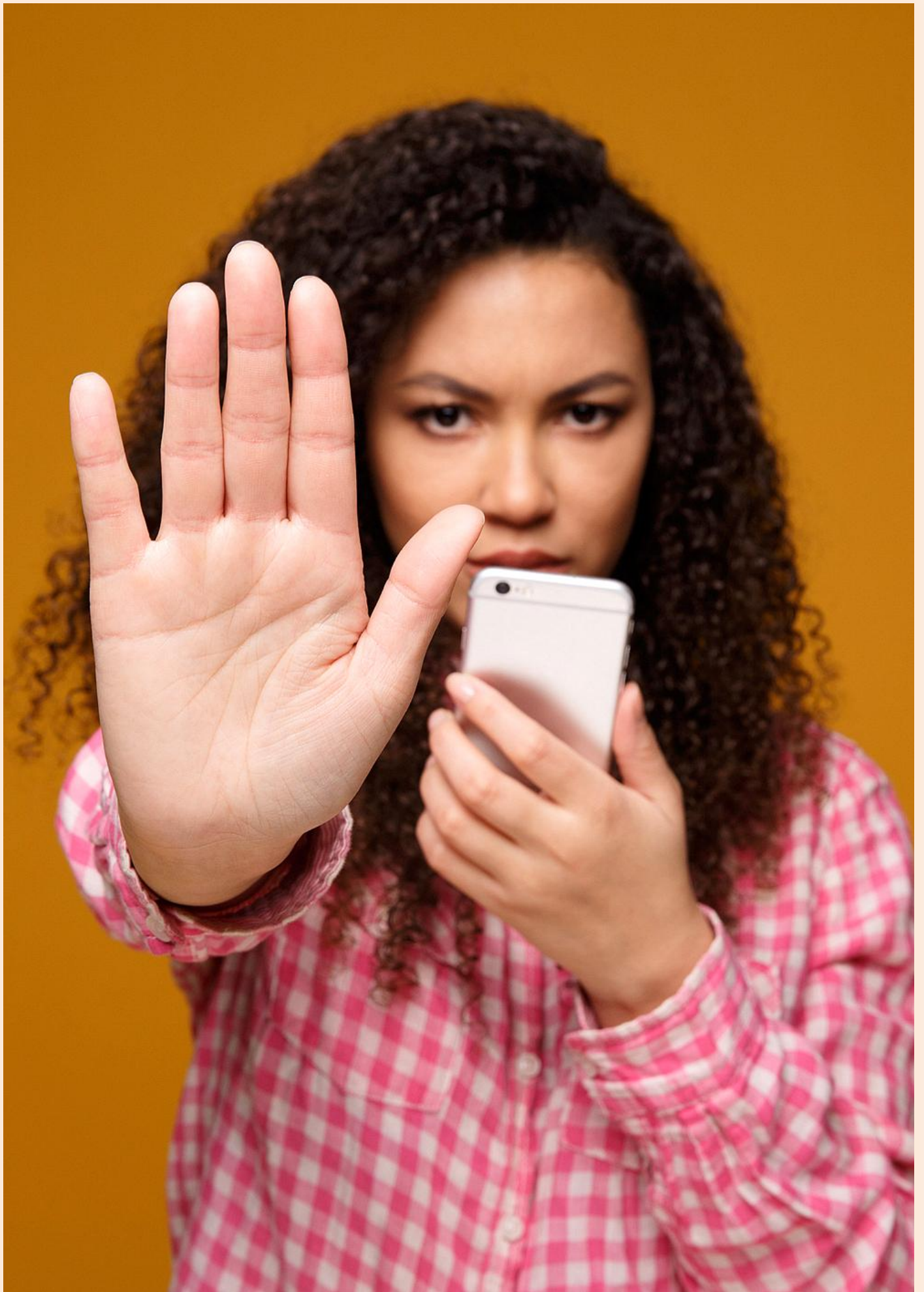
How can social media affect mental health? Excessive social media use can impact mental health through comparison with peers, fear of missing out (FOMO), online harassment and cyberbullying and exposure to unrealistic standards or misinformation. It may also affect their body image, sleep patterns and ability to focus on school work.

Source: www.parents.au.reachout.com

Social media tips to stay safe

- Follow the rules
- Think before you post
- Be aware of your privacy settings
- Be cautious of requests by strangers
- Avoid overusing social media
- Cultivate the life skill of kindness

Source: <https://health.choc.org/handout/social-media-tips-for-kids-and-teens/>



17. Sexuality vs spirituality

Which is more important, sexuality or spirituality? One is temporary (our bodies will die eventually) and one is eternal (the bible says we can have 'eternal life in heaven' IF we follow the strict entry criteria to heaven).

So which is more important?

My observations over the years suggests that those who seek to define themselves by their sexuality are setting themselves up for failure and disappointment. Our gender is a small part of family, community, nationhood, humanity or the gifts and talents we have (Chapter 7).

Whereas those who seek a greater purpose in life through spirituality have a greater chance of finding meaning, inner peace (not turmoil) relevance, community, care and self-respect, no matter what they have been through or the pain they are currently facing. Spirituality can be helpful in processing emotional pain. Yes, it's true.

My life does not have purpose and meaning because I'm male. It has purpose because I know where I have come from (my family). I love the community I was raised in (Masterton, my hometown). I am a patriotic kiwi, and I discovered my musical and literary talents as a teenager. They eventually came to fruition in my twenties and thirties. Now in my old age, I am still a singer/songwriter like Bob Dylan, as I wanted to be and was inspired to be in my teen years. And I became a Christian at age twenty six, which gives my life a greater meaning and purpose. Jules Riding



Photo www.shutterstock.com

18. The purpose of pain

Four Ways Your Pain Has a Purpose

You discover your own strength Pain is an opportunity to see how strong you are. If you wanted to see how much weight you could bench press at the gym, the only way to find that out would be to continue to put on more and more weight until you discover your threshold, your limit. Likewise, pain is the only way to truly discover how strong you really are.

Pain expands your endurance If you've never run more than a couple of hundred yards in your life, it doesn't matter how much you would want to, your body couldn't physically run a marathon. It simply doesn't have the endurance. If you're training to run a marathon for the first time, you don't start out by running a marathon. You run a mile. And then you run three, then five and so on. Over time, you develop the endurance to handle the task of running a full marathon. Similarly, pain expands our endurance and gives us the ability to persevere through trials.

Pain matures you Maturity helps you see the world differently. A 3yr old sees the world differently than a 33yr old. When a 3yr old doesn't get their way, they'll have a tantrum. But when you're 33 you see the world differently. You don't have a tantrum when things don't work out for you. Your perspective has changed because you have matured.

Pain teaches you what pleasure never could Think about two college students. The first student didn't have an easy childhood. They had to work for what they wanted, making plenty of mistakes along the way and learning lessons gained through trial and error. They developed a resilience born from the discovery of the strength within them. The second student has never had to want for anything. Their parents handed everything to them, shielding them from trials and pain. If they ever got in trouble, a parent was in the principal's office asap to help them avoid consequences. Which one is better prepared for the real world? The first one, obviously. Why? Because pain teaches you what pleasure can't.

Source: www.beliefnet.com

**I've seen a baby cry then seconds later she laughed.
The beauty of life, the pain never lasts. J Cole**



Photo Larissa Lofitskaya ID 10764579 www.dreamstime.com

19. NZ has a high teen suicide rate

I have pondered NZ's high teen suicide rate for a long time, and to answer the question why, I compare NZ society (a liberal country) with Norway (a conservative country). The result is interesting and may provide some insight into this topic:

Norway has strong family values and traditions that go back hundreds of years. Norwegians move less frequently (so their communities are more stable for the raising of kids) and Norwegians are fiercely patriotic on their National Day (May 17th) In comparison, NZ's liberal democracy has redefined and undervalued marriage as the basic 'building block' of society. NZers move more often than Norwegians (so kids are more likely to experience locational instability as they grow). And NZers are not fiercely patriotic and don't celebrate their Nationhood on their National Day.

NZ an island paradise? Think of NZ and what likely comes to mind is beautiful nature - fjords, mountains and magnificent landscapes, vast, empty and endless. But for years, the country has been struggling with another form of isolation - depression and suicide. A new report by Unicef contains a shocking statistic - NZ has by far the highest youth suicide rate in the developed world. A shock but no surprise - it's not the first time the country tops that table. The Unicef report found NZ's youth suicide rate - teenagers between 15 and 19 - to be the highest of a long list of 41 OECD and EU countries. The rate of 15.6 suicides per 100,000 people is twice as high as the US rate and almost five times that of Britain.

Why New Zealand? There's a combination of reasons, and it's important not to only focus on one statistic, warns Dr Prudence Stone of Unicef NZ. The high suicide rate ties in with other data, showing for instance child poverty, high rates of teenage pregnancies or families where neither of the parents have work. NZ also has "one of the world's worst records for bullying in school", says Shaun Robinson of the Mental Health Foundations NZ. He explains there is a "toxic mix" of very high rates of family violence, child abuse and poverty that need to be addressed to tackle the problem.

Beyond the bleak numbers there's another possibility that some see as a possible cause for the troubling situation. Health and support services across Western countries have for years been fighting the stigma attached to depression perceived as weakness. This might be more of a problem in NZ than in other countries. "There is a tradition of the hardened-up mate culture within NZ," says Dr Stone. "It puts pressure on men to be of a particular mould, pressure on boys to harden up to become these tough beer-drinking hard men. " However, she says there's been a slight change in recent years, with musicians and film makers emerging as role models for a different kind of New Zealand male - people that are "not your typical All Black big tough type" but show there can be a playful approach to masculinity.

Source: <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-40284130>

**IF WE KNOW WHO WE ARE, WE DON'T HAVE TO
END OUR LIFE TO PROCESS THE PAIN WE ARE IN**

20. Get A New Life.. in time

If your present life is sad or broken, you can get a new one, in time.

If you don't enjoy your life, you can learn to enjoy your life, in time.

If you are facing an impossible situation, chill. It may seem impossible BUT in fact, the problem will be solved or simply dissolve.. in time.

If you can't see your way through this emotional mess, you don't have to! Emotions come and emotions go. They will settle down.. in time.

You might feel like you can't cope, but you can learn to cope with all the challenges that life brings, in time.

If you are disappointed, you can get over disappointment, in time.

If you don't like your parents, you will eventually leave home, in time.

If someone has broken your trust, then trust can grow again, in time.

If you are lonely, you can make a lifelong friend eventually, in time.

If you are depressed, you can learn coping strategies, in time.

If everything seems hopeless, many people have been in the same place. Hope does exist and you can find hope again, in time.

If you feel you have no future, or the future looks bleak, remember sunshine follows rain. But be patient, it does take time.

If you don't understand why you had to go through this, you will, in time.

If no one understands you, relax. Many teens feel this, but the teen years do pass (thank God), in time.

If you don't understand this life, eventually you will **but it does take time.**

**EACH ONE OF US IS GIVEN ONE LIFE, WITH A BEGINNING,
A MIDDLE and an END. YOU CAN GET THROUGH YOUR
CURRENT ISSUES and LIVE A FULFILLING PRODUCTIVE
REWARDING and HAPPY LIFE... IN TIME.**

**YOUR LIFE ISN'T BEHIND YOU; YOUR MEMORIES ARE
BEHIND YOU. YOUR LIFE IS ALWAYS AHEAD OF YOU.
Today is a NEW DAY. SEIZE IT! STEVE MARABOLI**

Postscript

Copycat suicide Two wrongs don't make a right! There is no logic that says we have to follow the tragic example of others who decide to end their life. That was their choice. It is your choice to live your life. To fulfil your potential and promise, to develop and follow your talents. To learn to live your life to the full. Not end it in a double tragedy. *(Not to mention the 'after-life' has a protocol that you know nothing about, and there is no guarantee that by ending your life you will be with the one you are copying or following!)*

Drugs and alcohol If we've had bullying or abuse in our lives we are more prone to addictive behavior. It somehow compensates for the unresolved pain we are in, which it does short-term, but long-term can actually destroy us physically and emotionally. History is littered with gifted and talented people who didn't take their own life but who did destroy it with drugs and alcohol.

PORN Similarly, porn can be addictive as it attaches itself to the pleasure centre of our brain. It compensates for the gaping holes in our life. But long-term porn sets us up for failure. We think it's harmless but it teaches us nothing about human relationships. Porn makes it harder for us to form meaningful long-term relationships with either sex, because it subverts the basis for relationship: mutual care, respect, communication. If you think porn is harmless, you've already bought the lie.

Antidepressants I'm not an expert in this field, and I'm sure that antidepressants help some people in the short-term.. BUT with the feedback I've had over the last twenty years on this subject, the majority of people are not helped by these medications. Either they don't help at all, or they made things worse, not better. So be warned, they are not a quick fix even though many will recommend you go on meds for your issues. Better to take a long-term approach with counselling, lifestyle changes (particularly exercise and diet) and confronting negative attitudes by finding out who you are, what your gifts, talents and interests are.

Gender Confusion & Self Harm Issues are not addressed in this booklet.

If you rearrange the letters in Depression, you'll get: 'I pressed on'. Your current situation is NOT your final destination.

NZ help lines and resources

Who to call when u r desperate

NATIONAL HELPLINES

Helpline: Need to talk? Free call or text 1737 any time for support from a trained counsellor

Lifeline 0800 543 354 or free text 4357 (HELP)

Youthline 0800 376 633, free text 234
or email: talk@youthline.co.nz or online chat

Samaritans 0800 726 666

Suicide Crisis Helpline 0508 828 865

Depression Helpline

0800 111 757 or free text 4202

What's Up 0800 942 8787 (*for 5–18 year olds*)
Phone counselling is available
365 days of the year, 11am–11pm
Online chat is available from 11am–10:30pm
7 days a week, including public holidays

If it's an emergency and you feel like you
or someone else is at risk: **Call 111**

Source: www.mentalhealth.org.nz

This site has a wide list of resources

It's not a sign of weakness to ask for help

It's a common misconception that it's a sign of weakness to ask for help. However, knowing when you need an assist is a sign of strength. It is one of the hardest things for people to do, showing courage and a willingness to admit vulnerability. Asking for help doesn't mean that you are dependent on anyone. Instead, it shows a willingness to grow and learn as you gain knowledge from those who know more about it than you do. There are many benefits to asking for help, proving that it's not a sign of weakness.

Source: www.powerofpositivity.com

Five reasons **NOT** to end your life

You will regret it forever

It doesn't end the pain it transfers it *to your whanau & friends*

Whatever you're facing you **CAN** work through it

How will you fulfil your life purpose if you die?

Life is **ALWAYS** better than death, choose life!



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The only person who is educated is the one who has learned how to learn and change. Carl Rogers



When you
depend on
other people
to build
you up,
you're also
giving them
power to
break you
down.

You don't
need their
validation
to know
your worth.

Attitude to Inspiration

Be confident in who you are.
Live your life without
attaching yourself to the
validation of others.

Jameasha Coleman (colemanjameasha)

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