

Suicide

My friend Michelle is one of the most beautiful and intelligent human being I've ever seen in my life. Her charisma, charm and the dedication she has for others are undisputable, although all of her qualities seen by me and others family members, to her on opinion it does not mean anything in her life.

I met her about 6 years ago, I got to know her well enough to the point she would share her life and experiences she went through with me, after a while it seemed that I would be the only person she would ask for help and confide in. She would cry for hours and just didn't know why she had those horrible thoughts and feelings in her mind all the time. She would say to me over and over that she just wanted it all to end, and she just would like the pain to go away. I suffered with her, I cried with her, I saw her agony and I just did not understand why somebody with so many qualities was feeling the way she felt. Michelle had a really difficult and at times traumatic life since childhood that many did not know about, her father left her mom and her when she was 6 months old.

Growing up she always wanted to have a father, she was adopted when she was 4 and never really had a good relationship with him and although her father lived not vary far from her, he never cared to even come and pay her a visit, or sometimes He would call and say he would pick her up, she would pack her bags and wait on the corner and he would not show up. I've never seen anybody want a father's love so bad as she did I heard from her mouth innumerous times that she just wished that she had a man in her life to care for her only the way a father could.

Michelle's mother after her husband left had to figure out life and work to support the home and she was very sick at the time, she had severe obesity and there were several times in her life that her mother was practically was dying. Michelle had to figure out life on her own and take care of her little brothers too.

Michelle suffered severe sexual abuse as a child, one of the times by her mom's friend that was visiting her mom for a period of time. The event was so traumatic, it hunted her, and they all did to the point of, becoming obese herself, starting to see a counselor and taking prescribed medication for severe depression at her early years.

Going through school, she always felt abandoned and rejected. Because she started gaining a lot of weight, she said she felt ugly and useless in her eyes. Being teased by other children for years because of her weight really took its toll, she definitely went through hell and she just wanted to die and be done with life.

Michelle was an excellent student, always had the best grades and she started working really early so that she could help her mother support the home. She had her own apartment when she was 17. She did not have the opportunity to go to college because with time health problems and severe depression got in her way.

Michelle loved to dance; she was a professional teacher for a studio for 3 years and competed on the highest level of competition power tap for many years. In her category she won 1st place overall grand champion and was a member of the All American Team competing all over the western side of the United States . I can't count the number of trophies that she would bring home but none of that mattered to her. She never saw herself the way others did. But in the dance world it was a challenge because it was an issue for others that she was a big girl. She said that no matter how good she got

or how hard she tried they always saw her same, "The fat Chick on the team". She stopped early in life because she just could not handle the pressure and so she decided to teach but had to quite that too due to a work injury she damaged her back and had to file for disability at 26. This all happening at such a young age made her feel like a complete failure. She had so much promise in the world of art but because of her depression and her constant thoughts of wanting to end her life because she just felt tired of feeling like a waste of space on the planet.

As time passed by, she got more and more depressed. She never seemed satisfied and she was in so much physical and emotional pain she started taking really heavy medication, at times she would overtake because she said that she just wanted to numb out the pain, she wanted to forget everything. I witnessed several times while she was overtaking her medication that she began to really act out of the ordinary. She was completely lost in her own head, she didn't care about anyone else and at that point she started cutting herself. Her family put her in the hospital for about a month until she could learn how to deal with her medications and her health issues. But after that things just got worse.

She would cry nonstop for hours, and the only way she could release her pain was cutting her arms and legs. Sometimes would make cuts so deep into her arms that she needed stitches. She overdosed on her medications I think 3 times and her parents had to take her to the hospital to get her stomach pumped. She could never sleep at night and her mood would change suddenly for no reason and you didn't want to be the one that was in the way at that time, she just wanted to die. For her life did not have any

meaning, nothing had a point, she was useless and ugly, nobody cared about her, she had nobody in this life, so she felt that dying was the only option.

Michelle was diagnosed by doctors with schizophrenia, and she had to be hospitalized again. Family members and I were afraid she really would go through with her plans of taking her life.

Today Michelle still receives medical treatment; she was seriously injured mentally and need medical care. It caused a great amount of burden and stress for the whole family. She always said that was the main reason she wanted to go, because she did not want to be a burden to others, she might as well end it so that her problems do not affect others any more.

We discussed what pre-disposes one to depression and what leads to suicide, I could not help but to think about Michelle's life. All of the things we learned about what signs to look for and what the frequent causes were fit her situation to a very specific degree. She was a very broken person at that time and has since really pulled her life together, she realizes now that the things that she was doing at that time were not only damaging to herself but she was hurting the ones around her that really did and do love her.

Today she is living with someone and is a wonderful mother. If I could have looked into the future back when she was struggling so badly I never would be able to say that I would expect to see her here alive, not to mention starting a family and really working on getting the help she needs. I am also grateful that I have been given the knowledge that I have about her condition. I feel more educated about what it was she was going through and why she felt so much pain. I don't pity her, she would never

accept that but I do have a deeper understanding of how I can be there for her and what it is I can do to protect her as a friend from heading down that road again. It's even more important now that she has her beautiful daughter. I do believe that she is truly happy right now, but I also know because of what I have learned about suicide and ones desire to do so, she had to work at being happy every day. I know that the things in her life that lead to her mental break and the ultimate decision to end her life were not all situational, I am now clearer that she has a chemical imbalance in her body and has to work at keeping her mind healthy as much as her body. It is possible for almost anyone to get into a situation like this so I think it's important that we all try our very hardest to take care of our mental health. We need to be more real with ourselves and others about the signs and symptoms of depression and really look out for each other. If we see these things happening we need to educate ourselves and make sure that we are doing everything in our power to help someone that is in need.

Euclides Cruz