

it wasn't your fault

if you are reading this because someone you loved died by suicide, please hear the most important thing first: this is not your fault. suicide loss is one of the most isolating forms of grief there is. it arrives with shock, with unanswerable questions, and often with a silence from the world that deepens the pain. you are welcome here, and there is nothing you need to explain.

you did not fail them. you loved them. the love did not disappear with their choice, and neither did your worth.

WHY THIS GRIEF FEELS SO DIFFERENT

suicide grief intertwines with trauma, guilt, and stigma in ways most losses do not. you may replay every interaction, searching for signs you missed. you may feel you should have known, should have done more, should have been enough. this is the mind trying to make sense of something that resists sense, not evidence of any failing on your part.

THE GUILT, AND THE TRUTH BESIDE IT

“i should have seen it.” suicide is complex, and even those closest, even professionals, often cannot predict it. hindsight invents a clarity that did not exist in the moment. you were not given the full picture; no one is.

“i should have done more.” you did what you could with what you knew at the time. love, even fierce love, cannot always hold someone here. that is not a measure of how much you loved them.

survivor guilt, “why them and not me.” this is one of the heaviest weights of suicide loss. it is a symptom of grief and trauma, not a truth about your worth or theirs.

“i felt relief that the worrying is over.” if you cared for them through a long struggle, relief can sit beside devastation. it does not mean you wanted this. it means you are human, and you were tired.

the guilt is not a verdict. it is the shape that love and shock take together. the love is the truth of you. the guilt is only the grief.

IF YOU FOUND THEM, OR WERE THERE

witnessing or discovering a suicide is a specific trauma that few understand. you may carry intrusive images, flashbacks, or a sense of unreality. please seek trauma-informed care, this is not a grief you are meant to process alone, and reaching for help is a strength.

let every feeling have room. grief, guilt, anger, love, and even relief can share a single heart. none of it makes you anything but human. and through all of it: it was not your fault.

IF YOU ARE STRUGGLING

if you are in pain right now, or finding it hard to keep going, please reach out. you are not alone, and there are people ready to help, day or night.

SADAG (South African Depression and Anxiety Group): 0800 567 567

Lifeline South Africa: 0861 322 322

SADAG operates a 24-hour helpline; if you are in immediate danger, please contact your local emergency services.

you did not fail them. we are very glad you are here.

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