Hope after Suicide - one woman's journey from darkness to light

By: Wendy Parmley
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Wendy Parmley’s story of survival, Hope after Suicide, will resonate with every survivor of suicide. She shares the healing journey that came many years after the death of her mother in 1975. After thirty-six years she picked up her pen and began to write.

Wendy’s story begins with a prologue of her bike accident in 2011, in which she was severely hurt and unable to resume the life she had been living. Her chronic pain and depression left her in bed for long periods of time. She says of this time, “I saw my childhood in visions of the “Happy Valley “in perfect brand new homes, in perfect rows- the perfect neighborhood in the middle of a perfect town.” She knew it was time to take off the mask she had worn for too long.

During this dark period she begins to understand the depression her mother surely felt, but never talked about. She feels her mother’s spirit urging her to tell the story from the beginning, so Wendy’s book opens to the very day when her life changed forever- April 16, 1975. She was twelve years old and had three younger siblings.

Terror filled the house as she listened to her father’s screams after finding his wife. He immediately shielded Wendy from the scene in the bathroom where her mother shot herself, by locking the door. In confusion, she gathered her brothers and sister around her, afraid for them, afraid for herself.

Not knowing the truth about what happened to her mother until many years later, she took on the role of surrogate mother for her siblings and helper for her father. This was, for Wendy, the beginning of learning to bury the truth, and her feelings.

With an open heart Wendy takes the reader on her journey of learning how to be honest with herself in order to really receive healing. Using vivid details she describes the ups and downs of her life after her mother’s death until the bike accident, when the floodgates opened. She says her heart had been buried underneath years of debris, dirt and rocks, which smothered her feelings. Attending therapy after the biking accident she began to unpack each painful memory, learning how to be gentle with her twelve-year-old self. She writes that she opened her heart to receive God’s unconditional love, as well as the love her mother had for her. Suicide hadn’t changed that, but Wendy had to receive it. Indeed, survivors cannot deal with the reality of facing the suicide of a loved one until they are ready.

Wendy exhorts survivors to unearth the hidden secrets that lay buried beneath their own denial or pain, in order to discover the good and make space for the light.