

BEFORE YOU SAY

Goodbye

ANJUM J PARVEEN



BlueRoseONE^{.com}
S t o r i e s M a t t e r

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For permissions requests or inquiries regarding this publication,
please contact:

BLUEROSE PUBLISHERS

www.BlueRoseONE.com

info@bluerosepublishers.com

+91 8882 898 898

+4407342408967

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Dedication

To every soul who wakes up each day carrying an invisible battle,
may this book be your reminder that you are seen, you are
needed, you are valued, and you are loved.

— Anjum J Parveen 

Author's Note

This book was written with tenderness and responsibility. It is not a replacement for professional care, but a companion for those walking through emotional darkness. If you or someone you love is in immediate danger, please seek local emergency services or a trusted mental-health professional.

Foreword

Some books are written to inform.

Some are written to persuade.

And then there are books written to hold a trembling human heart.

Before You Say Goodbye belongs to the last kind. This book does not speak about suicide from a distance. It speaks to those who have walked its shadowed corridors, and to those who love someone who has. It does not shout solutions, nor does it romanticize pain. Instead, it sits quietly beside suffering and says, “I see you.”

Suicidal pain is often misunderstood as weakness or failure. In truth, it is the consequence of overwhelming emotional weight carried for too long without relief. This book understands that truth. It recognizes that behind suicidal thoughts lies not a wish to die, but a longing to rest, to feel safe, to be free from pain that feels unbearable.

What makes this work profound is its balance, between psychology and humanity, research and lived experience, darkness and hope. Each chapter unfolds gently, offering insight without judgment, compassion without pity, and hope without denial of pain.

This book is not a replacement for professional help, nor does it pretend to be. Instead, it acts as a bridge, between silence and expression, despair and understanding, isolation and connection. It reminds us that healing is rarely instant, but it is possible, step by step, breath by breath.

- To the reader who is struggling: may these pages help you stay.
- To the reader who is supporting someone else: may these pages help you understand.
- To the reader who has survived: may these pages honor your strength.

This is not just a book. It is a companion for the moments when the night feels too long.

-Anjum J Parveen

Trigger-Safe Disclaimer

A Gentle Note to the Reader:

This book discusses themes related to suicide, self-harm, trauma, depression, hopelessness, and emotional distress. These topics may be deeply personal or triggering for some readers.

Please read at your own pace and with care.

If, at any point, you feel overwhelmed, distressed, or unsafe, it is important to pause and seek support. This book is meant to offer understanding, comfort, and hope, but it is not a substitute for professional mental health care.

If you are currently experiencing suicidal thoughts or are in immediate danger, please reach out to a trusted person or a mental health professional right away.

If possible, consider:

- Reading this book when you feel emotionally supported
- Reaching out to someone you trust while reading difficult sections
- Skipping or returning later to parts that feel too intense

Your safety matters more than finishing any chapter.

If You Need Immediate Help:

- Contact a local emergency number
- Reach out to a mental health professional
- Call a suicide prevention helpline in your country
- Speak to a trusted friend, family member, or counselor

You deserve care, understanding, and protection, especially during moments of vulnerability.

Please remember:

Struggling does not make you weak. Asking for help does not make you a burden. Your life is worth saving.

Research References Section

This book is informed by established psychological research, clinical practice, and global mental health literature. All concepts have been interpreted, paraphrased, and presented in accessible language to support understanding rather than academic citation.

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Clinical Practice & Lived-Experience Insights

Crisis intervention models

Recovery-oriented mental health care

Compassion-focused therapy principles

Survivor narratives and peer-support frameworks

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Chapter 1

What Is Suicide?

Suicide is not a single act, nor is it a single thought. It is a process of unbearable psychological pain meeting a mind that sees no other escape. For centuries, societies across cultures have tried to explain suicide through morality, religion, or character judgment, calling it sin, weakness, cowardice, or selfishness. These labels have done more harm than healing.

Suicide is not the desire to die. It is the desire for pain to stop.

Psychological research consistently shows that people who contemplate suicide are not choosing death as a goal. They are choosing it as a perceived solution, a way out of suffering that feels endless, inescapable, and overwhelming. When the mind becomes trapped in pain without relief, it narrows its options. Life feels like a room with no doors, no windows, and no air.

Imagine holding your hand over a flame. At first, you tolerate the heat. Then it burns. Eventually, your body reacts automatically—you pull your hand away, not because you want to lose your hand, but because the pain is unbearable. Suicide functions in the mind in a similar way. It becomes an instinctive escape from agony, not a rational wish to cease existence.

One of the most damaging misconceptions is that suicide is a “choice made freely.” In reality, suicidal thinking often occurs under cognitive constriction, a psychological state where:

- Future thinking collapses

- Problem-solving ability reduces
- Emotional pain overrides logic
- Hope becomes inaccessible

The brain under extreme distress does not function the same way as a calm brain. Neurobiological studies show reduced activity in areas responsible for decision-making and increased activity in pain and threat circuits. In such a state, expecting rational decisions is unrealistic and unfair.

Many suicidal behaviors are not about wanting to disappear forever, but about wanting to be seen. They are expressions of:

“Please notice how much I’m hurting.”

“I don’t know how to ask for help.”

“I am drowning inside.”

Sadly, society often hears these cries too late—or responds with judgment rather than compassion.

In many cultures, including India, suicide is wrapped in silence and shame. Families hide it. Communities whisper about it. Survivors are blamed or ostracized. This stigma does not prevent suicide, it isolates those who are already suffering. When pain is silenced, it does not disappear.

- It turns inward.
- It grows darker.
- It becomes dangerous.

Silent Goodbye

I whispered my pain into the night,

The moon wept silver tears for me.

I didn’t want to leave this life,

I only wanted to be free.

—Anjum F Parveen

Every person who thinks about suicide is fighting a war within themselves:

- A part that wants relief
- And a part that still wants to live

This internal conflict is exhausting. Understanding suicide begins with acknowledging this truth, not condemning the person, but witnessing their pain.

Activity

- “How would society change if we spoke about suicide with the same compassion as physical illness?”
- “What language can you replace judgment with today?”

Affirmation

“I choose to see suffering before I see behavior. I choose compassion over condemnation.”

Chapter 2

Phases of Suicidal Thoughts

Suicidal thoughts do not appear overnight. They evolve, fluctuate, retreat, and return. Understanding these phases is crucial, not to label someone, but to intervene with sensitivity and timing.

Phase 1: Passive Ideation

This phase often begins quietly:

- “I wish I wouldn’t wake up.”
- “Life would be easier if I didn’t exist.”
- “I’m so tired of everything.”

These thoughts are frequently dismissed, even by the person experiencing them. But they are early warning signs of emotional overload.

Phase 2: Active Ideation

Here, thoughts shift from vague wishes to clearer desires:

- “I don’t want to live anymore.”
- “Everyone would be better without me.”

The pain intensifies. Hopelessness deepens. The mind starts rehearsing escape.

Phase 3: Planning

Planning does not always mean immediate danger, but it raises risk significantly. The person may:

- Think about methods
- Choose timing
- Consider locations
- Research lethality

This phase often coexists with secrecy and withdrawal.

Phase 4: Preparation

This is one of the most misunderstood stages. People may:

- Give away possessions
- Write notes
- Make peace with others
- Appear suddenly calm

This calmness is not recovery, it can indicate decision finality.

Phase 5: Attempt or Crisis Peak

Attempts vary widely. Many are ambivalent, caught between wanting relief and wanting rescue. Survival at this stage often brings complex emotions:

- Relief
- Shame
- Guilt
- Fear
- Renewed despair
- Non-Linear Reality

These phases are not linear. A person can move back and forth between them multiple times in life. One bad night does not define a lifetime. One crisis does not erase the possibility of healing.

Activity

Include:

- Mapping your personal warning signs
- Identifying emotional triggers vs situational triggers

Affirmation

“Every time I survive a difficult moment, I strengthen my capacity to live.”

Chapter 3

Why Does One Want to End Their Life?

The question “Why would someone want to die?” is often asked with disbelief, fear, or judgment. But the more honest question is:

“What kind of pain makes living feel impossible?”

No one wakes up one morning and decides they want to die without reason. Behind suicidal thoughts lies a complex web of emotional wounds, unmet needs, distorted beliefs, and prolonged suffering. Suicide is rarely about one event. It is about accumulation, pain piling upon pain until the mind collapses under its weight.

The Myth of a Single Cause

People often search for the reason:

- “Was it a breakup?”
- “Was it a failure?”
- “Was it depression?”

But suicide does not work that way. Most people who contemplate ending their life are responding to multiple stressors layered over time, often beginning early in life.

Pain that is unseen, unprocessed, and unsupported does not disappear. It burrows inward.

1. Trauma: Pain That Rewrites the Nervous System

Trauma is not defined by what happened, but by what the body and mind could not process.

Childhood trauma, sexual abuse, physical violence, emotional neglect, abandonment, humiliation, leaves imprints far beyond memory. It shapes how a person sees themselves, others, and the world.

Common trauma-based beliefs include:

- “I am unsafe.”
- “I am unlovable.”
- “My needs don’t matter.”
- “Pain is normal.”

When trauma is repeated or unresolved, the nervous system remains stuck in survival mode, fight, flight, freeze, or collapse. Living itself becomes exhausting. For many survivors, suicide does not feel like self-destruction. It feels like escaping from captivity.

2. Loss: When the Inner World Collapses

Loss is not limited to death. People grieve:

- Relationships
- Dreams
- Careers
- Identity
- Health
- Safety
- Self-respect

Some losses are disenfranchised, society does not recognize them as “worthy” of grief. A failed marriage, infertility, unemployment, social rejection, or chronic illness may receive little empathy, yet devastate the inner world.

When grief is silenced, it transforms into despair. Many suicidal individuals are not trying to die. They are mourning a life they once hoped for.

3. Mental Illness: When the Mind Turns Against Itself

Depression, anxiety, bipolar disorder, schizophrenia, PTSD, these conditions do not merely affect mood. They alter perception of reality.

Depression whispers:

- “Nothing will ever change.”
- “You are a burden.”
- “You don’t deserve help.”

Anxiety screams:

- “Something terrible is coming.”
- “You cannot cope.”

Psychosis may command:

- “End it.”
- “You deserve punishment.”

These thoughts feel real because, to the suffering mind, they are real. Expecting logic from a brain under chemical and emotional distress is like asking a broken leg to run.

4. Chronic Pain and Illness: When the Body Becomes a Prison

Living with chronic pain or illness erodes hope slowly. Day after day of discomfort, dependency, medical bills, and misunderstood suffering can make life feel like prolonged torture.

People may think:

- “I am a burden.”
- “I am no longer myself.”
- “This will never end.”

Suicide, in such cases, becomes a desperate attempt to reclaim control.

5. Financial Crisis and Shame

In societies where worth is tied to productivity and income, financial failure can feel like personal failure. Debt, unemployment, poverty, or inability to provide often leads to:

- Shame
- Loss of identity
- Social withdrawal
- Worthlessness

Shame is one of the most powerful predictors of suicidal ideation, because it convinces the person they are fundamentally flawed.

6. Feeling Like a Burden

One of the strongest predictors of suicidal thoughts is the belief:

- “Everyone would be better off without me.”

This belief is devastating and often false, but it feels undeniable to the person experiencing it. They may love deeply, yet believe their existence only causes pain. This belief does not come from selfishness. It comes from misplaced compassion.

7. Existential Emptiness

Some people do not feel intense pain but deep emptiness. Life feels meaningless. Days blur together. There is no sense of purpose, belonging, or joy. This existential vacuum slowly convinces the mind that life itself has no value.

If Only

*If only my tears could speak,
They would tell you
Of silent screams at midnight,
Of empty mornings heavy with dread,
Of my wish to live,
And my longing to be dead.
—Anjum F Parveen*

Activity

Identify emotional pain, not events.

Ask: What pain feels most unbearable for me right now?

Ask: When did this pain begin?

Affirmation

“I acknowledge the reasons behind pain without judging myself for having them.”

Chapter 4

Psychological Roots Behind Suicide

To understand suicide, we must understand the psychological architecture of suffering. Suicidal thoughts are not random, they grow from identifiable emotional and cognitive roots.

1. Depression: The Weight That Flattens the Soul

Depression is not sadness. It is emotional gravity. It steals:

- Motivation
- Pleasure
- Energy
- Hope
- Self-worth

Depression distorts time. The past feels full of regret. The present feels unbearable. The future feels nonexistent. For many, suicide appears not as a desire, but as relief.

2. Hopelessness: The Most Dangerous Ingredient

Research consistently shows that hopelessness, more than sadness, predicts suicidal behavior. Hopelessness says:

- “Nothing will help.”
- “No one can save me.”
- “This pain is permanent.”

Once hope disappears, life loses its anchor.

3. Anxiety Disorders: Living in Constant Threat

Anxiety keeps the body in alarm mode. The mind anticipates catastrophe even in safety.

Chronic anxiety leads to exhaustion. Some individuals reach a point where death feels like the only way to silence fear.

4. PTSD: When the Past Never Ends

Trauma traps individuals in memory loops:

- Flashbacks
- Nightmares
- Hypervigilance
- Emotional numbing

Living feels unsafe. Sleep offers no rest. Suicide becomes an attempt to escape memory itself.

5. Personality Vulnerabilities

Conditions like Borderline Personality Disorder involve:

- Intense emotions
- Fear of abandonment
- Identity confusion
- Chronic emptiness

Suicidal ideation here is often a response to overwhelming emotional pain—not manipulation, as wrongly assumed.

6. Substance Use: Lowered Barriers, Heightened Pain

Alcohol and drugs:

- Increase impulsivity
- Reduce judgment
- Intensify depressive thoughts

Many suicides occur under intoxication, not because the person truly wanted to die, but because inhibition vanished.

7. Loneliness: The Silent Killer

Loneliness is not being alone, it is feeling unseen and disconnected.

A lonely person may be surrounded by people yet feel invisible. Humans are wired for connection. When connection breaks, survival instincts fail.

Activity

Identify emotional patterns you repeat.

Ask: What belief about myself keeps showing up? Write it without censoring.

Affirmation

“My pain has origins, and understanding them brings power, not shame.”

Chapter 5

The Desire for Help but Feeling Unable

One of the cruelest aspects of suicidal suffering is this paradox:

They want help desperately, yet feel incapable of asking for it.

**Most suicidal individuals do not want to be alone.
They want:**

- To be understood
- To be held emotionally
- To feel safe

But invisible barriers block their voice.

Why People Don't Ask for Help?

1. Fear of Judgment

Society teaches:

- “Be strong.”
- “Don't complain.”
- “Others have it worse.”

This creates silence.

2. Shame and Self-Blame

They believe:

- “I should handle this.”
- “I am weak.”
- “I don’t deserve help.”

Shame convinces people they must suffer alone.

3. Fear of Burdening Others

Love becomes twisted into self-erasure. They believe disappearing would reduce others’ stress.

4. Inability to Name the Pain

Some pain is pre-verbal, felt in the body, not language. How do you explain something you don’t understand yourself?

5. Past Invalidations

When previous cries were dismissed, mocked, or ignored, silence became self-protection.

Unspoken Words

I tried to tell you in my silence,

In the tremble of my voice...

Not fixing, not advice. not lectures.

But, presence, validation, safety & time.

—Anjum J Parveen

Sometimes, one compassionate listener can interrupt the trajectory toward suicide.

Activity

1. Write the words you wish you could say aloud.
2. Write them without fear.
3. Imagine someone listening without interruption.

Affirmation

“I am worthy of help, even when I don’t know how to ask for it.”

Chapter 6

Helplessness — Trapped in Darkness

Helplessness is not loud.

It does not scream or collapse dramatically. Helplessness is quiet, heavy, and suffocating.

It is the moment when a person stops fighting, not because they no longer care, but because they have fought for too long without relief. It is the slow realization that no matter how hard one tries, nothing seems to change. And when effort repeatedly leads to disappointment, the mind begins to ask a devastating question:

“What’s the point?”

Helplessness is one of the most dangerous psychological states associated with suicidal thoughts, not because it is dramatic, but because it drains the will to act, hope to imagine, and strength to resist despair.

What Helplessness Really Is?

- Helplessness is not laziness.
- It is not a weakness.
- It is not giving up.

Helplessness is a learned response to repeated powerlessness. When someone tries again and again to change their circumstances, asking for help, working harder, hoping longer, and nothing improves, their nervous system eventually adapts by

shutting down effort itself. This is not a conscious decision. It is a survival response.

The mind learns:

- Trying hurts.
- Hope disappoints.
- Effort leads to pain.

And so, it stops trying, not to die, but to protect itself from further injury.

Learned Helplessness: When the Mind Surrenders

The concept of learned helplessness was first studied in psychology to describe how repeated exposure to uncontrollable negative events leads individuals to stop attempting escape, even when escape becomes possible. In human lives, learned helplessness develops in environments such as:

- Chronic abuse
- Neglectful caregiving
- Systemic oppression
- Long-term illness
- Poverty
- Repeated emotional invalidation
- Failed attempts to seek help

When someone grows up or lives in situations where their voice is ignored, their needs dismissed, or their efforts punished, the mind slowly internalizes the belief that nothing they do matters.

Eventually, even opportunities for change feel unreachable, not because they are, but because the person no longer believes in their own agency.

The Emotional Experience of Helplessness

Helplessness feels like:

- Carrying a weight you cannot put down
- Standing at a door that never opens
- Screaming into a void that never echoes back

People experiencing helplessness often think:

- “I have no control over my life.”
- “Everything I try fails.”
- “I’m stuck like this forever.”

These thoughts are not exaggerations. They are conclusions drawn from lived experience.

Over time, helplessness leads to emotional numbness. When hope becomes too painful, the mind chooses emptiness instead.

The Body in Helplessness

Helplessness is not just mental, it is embodied.

The body may experience:

- Chronic fatigue
- Heaviness in the chest
- Shallow breathing
- Muscle tension
- Slowed movement
- Frequent illness

The nervous system enters a freeze state. Fight and flight are no longer available. The body shuts down to conserve energy. This

is why telling someone in helplessness to “just try harder” can feel cruel. Their system is not refusing to act, it is incapable of mobilizing without safety and support.

Helplessness and Suicidal Thoughts

When helplessness becomes chronic, suicidal thoughts may emerge, not from a desire to die, but from the belief that there is no other way out. The mind may think:

- “I can’t fix this.”
- “No one can help me.”
- “This will never end.”

In this state, suicide may appear not as a dramatic act, but as a final attempt to reclaim control, to end suffering that feels endless and inescapable. This is why helplessness is so dangerous: it erodes the belief that life can change.

Helplessness Often Begins in Childhood

Many adults who struggle with helplessness trace it back to early life experiences. Children who grow up in environments where:

- Their emotions are dismissed
- Their needs are unmet
- Their safety is compromised
- Their voices are ignored

Children learn very early that their actions do not influence outcomes:

- A child who cries and is ignored learns not to cry.
- A child who asks for help and is punished learns not to ask.

- A child who is blamed learns to internalize failure.

These early lessons do not disappear with age. They shape adult relationships, self-worth, and coping strategies.

Trauma and the Collapse of Agency

Trauma fundamentally disrupts a person's sense of control. During traumatic events, individuals often experience:

- Powerlessness
- Fear
- Loss of autonomy

If trauma is repeated or prolonged, the mind may generalize this powerlessness to life itself.

The survivor may believe:

- “Bad things happen no matter what I do.”
- “I am never safe.”
- “I have no control.”

Over time, this belief system fuels helplessness and despair.

Invisible Chains

*I tried to walk,
But the ground fell beneath me.
I tried to swim,
But the waters drowned me.
I tried to speak,
But silence choked me.
Now I sit in stillness,*

Bound by invisible chains

Only my soul can feel.

—Anjum F Parveen

These invisible chains are not imaginary. They are psychological restraints formed by experience, not imagination.

Helplessness in Relationships

Helplessness often intensifies in relationships marked by imbalance or emotional neglect.

People may feel helpless when:

- Their needs are consistently ignored
- Their boundaries are violated
- Their love is conditional
- Their worth is questioned

They may stay in harmful relationships not because they want to, but because they believe they cannot do better, or cannot survive alone. The thought “This is all I deserve” is a hallmark of relational helplessness.

Societal Helplessness and Systemic Pain

Helplessness is not always personal. It can be systemic. People facing:

- Poverty
- Discrimination
- Marginalization
- Injustice
- Lack of access to care

may feel trapped by systems beyond their control. When society repeatedly fails to protect, support, or validate certain groups, helplessness becomes collective, and suicidal risk increases.

This is not individual failure.

It is systemic neglect.

The Silence That Follows Giving Up

One of the most heartbreaking aspects of helplessness is silence. When someone stops trying, they may:

- Stop asking for help
- Stop expressing needs
- Stop reacting emotionally

From the outside, this may look like calm or acceptance. In reality, it is often resignation. This silence is dangerous, because it is often mistaken for stability.

Helplessness and Self-Blame

Ironically, people who feel helpless often blame themselves for it. They may think:

- “I’m weak for feeling this way.”
- “Others manage, why can’t I?”
- “This is my fault.”

This self-blame deepens despair and reinforces the belief that help is undeserved.

Why Motivation Doesn’t Work

When someone is in helplessness, motivational advice often fails. Phrases like:

- “Think positive”
- “Just push through”
- “You have to try”

can feel invalidating and overwhelming. Helplessness does not need motivation. It needs safety, validation, and gradual restoration of agency.

The First Cracks of Light

Helplessness does not disappear suddenly. It softens slowly. Recovery begins not with big changes, but with small experiences of control. This may include:

- Making a small choice
- Completing a simple task
- Being believed
- Being listened to
- Feeling safe with someone

Each small success challenges the belief that nothing matters.

Rebuilding Agency Gently

Rebuilding from helplessness requires patience. Helpful steps include:

- Setting tiny, achievable goals
- Celebrating effort, not outcome
- Learning to ask for help safely
- Reconnecting with the body
- Receiving consistent support

The agency is not forced, it is invited back.

When Someone You Love Feels Helpless

If someone you care about is trapped in helplessness:

- Do not pressure them
- Do not minimize their pain
- Do not demand change

Instead:

- Sit with them
- Validate their experience
- Offer consistent presence
- Help them take one small step

Your presence may be the first crack in their darkness.

Activity: Reflecting on Helplessness

- Take your time with this exercise.
- Write down three situations in your life where you felt helpless. For each, ask:
 1. Was there truly no way out, or did I feel powerless due to fear, exhaustion, or lack of support?
 2. If this situation occurred today, what might you do differently?
 3. Who can you reach out to when you feel trapped?

Let this reflection be honest, not harsh.

Learning to Breathe Again

When helplessness overwhelms, sometimes the only act of agency left is breathing.

Breathing is not passive, it is resistance. Each breath says: “I am still here.”

Even when you cannot change your life, you can stay present within it, one breath at a time.

Affirmation

“Even if I cannot control everything, I can control my next breath, my next thought, my next step.”

Chapter 7

When Pain Becomes Identity

There comes a moment in prolonged suffering when pain is no longer something a person experiences, it becomes something they are. Not consciously. Not deliberately. But quietly, gradually, almost invisibly. Pain seeps into language, posture, memory, and self-concept. It colors the way a person interprets the world, relationships, and even themselves. Over time, the question shifts from “Why am I hurting?” to something far more dangerous:

“Who am I without this pain?”

This chapter explores one of the most complex psychological turning points in suicidal suffering: when pain fuses with identity, and healing feels like annihilation rather than relief.

The Slow Fusion of Pain and Self

Pain does not become identity overnight. It begins as an experience:

- A loss
- A betrayal
- A trauma
- A rejection
- A failure

At first, the person believes:

“This hurts, but it will pass.”

Then time stretches. The pain lingers. The world keeps moving. Eventually, the language changes:

“This is my life now.”

When pain is chronic, emotional, psychological, or physical, it demands attention. It shapes daily routines, relationships, expectations, and dreams. Slowly, the person adapts not to life, but to pain. And adaptation becomes identification.

“This Is Just Who I Am”

Many people who struggle with suicidal thoughts describe themselves not through traits or dreams, but through wounds. They say:

- “I’m broken.”
- “I’m damaged.”
- “I’m too much.”
- “I’m difficult to love.”
- “I’m a lost cause.”

These are not metaphors. They are identity statements. When pain becomes identity, hope feels foreign, and threatening. Because if pain is who I am, then healing means losing myself.

Pain as the Only Constant

For those who have lived with pain for years, pain becomes predictable.

It hurts, but it is familiar. Healing, on the other hand, feels uncertain. It raises terrifying questions:

- What if I fail again?

- What if hope disappoints me?
- What if relief is temporary?

Pain, at least, does not betray expectations. This is why some people unconsciously cling to pain, not because they want to suffer, but because suffering has become the only stable ground they know.

Trauma and Identity Collapse

Trauma is not just something that happens to a person, it alters how they understand themselves. After trauma, many survivors report:

- Loss of former identity
- Feeling “split” or fragmented
- Disconnection from their old self
- Mourning who they used to be

They may say:

“I don’t recognize myself anymore.”

In this void, pain steps in as a replacement identity. It gives structure to the chaos:

- I am the one who hurts.
- I am the one who survives pain.
- I am the one life keeps breaking.

This identity may be painful, but it is coherent.

When Healing Feels Like Betrayal

For some, especially those who have suffered injustice or abuse, healing can feel like betrayal. They may fear:

- Forgetting what happened
- Minimizing their suffering
- Letting perpetrators “win”
- Invalidating their own pain

Pain becomes a witness. A proof. A reminder that something wrong occurred. Letting go of pain can feel like erasing history. This is why healing must never mean denial. It must mean integration, not erasure.

The Role of Memory

Memory binds pain to identity. The mind revisits:

- Past mistakes
- Traumatic moments
- Words that wounded
- Choices that haunt

These memories replay not as stories, but as evidence:

- This is who I am.
- This is what I deserve.

Over time, memory becomes a courtroom where the self is always guilty. Breaking this cycle does not require forgetting, it requires changing the meaning assigned to memory.

Pain as Proof of Depth

Some individuals, especially sensitive or introspective ones, begin to equate pain with depth, intelligence, or authenticity. They may believe:

- “Happy people are shallow.”
- “Suffering makes me real.”
- “If I stop hurting, I lose my depth.”

This belief often forms in environments where emotional expression was only validated through suffering. Pain becomes the only way to feel seen.

The Fear of Emptiness

One of the most terrifying aspects of releasing pain-as-identity is the fear of emptiness.

People ask:

- “If I’m not hurting, who am I?”
- “What fills the space pain leaves behind?”

Pain may have consumed so much internal space that imagining life without it feels like standing at the edge of a void. But emptiness is not absence, it is potential.

Identity Built on Survival

Many who contemplate suicide have identities built around survival. They have been:

- The strong one
- The resilient one
- The one who endures
- The one who never gives up

While this identity is admirable, it can become suffocating. If survival is all you are allowed to be, there is no room for rest, joy, or vulnerability. And when survival becomes exhausting, the self collapses.

The Exhaustion of Carrying a Single Story

A human being is not meant to carry only one story. When identity narrows to pain, life loses dimension. Everything becomes filtered through suffering:

- Love becomes risky
- Hope becomes foolish
- Joy becomes suspicious
- The world shrinks

And in that shrinking, suicidal thoughts may appear, not because life is meaningless, but because it has become too small to breathe in.

The Weight of Being One Thing

*They taught me to survive,
So I survived.
They taught me to endure,
So I forgot how to rest.
They praised my strength,
Until strength crushed me.
Now they ask why I'm tired,
When I was never allowed to be whole.
—Anjum F Parveen*

This poem reflects the tragedy of identity reduction, when a person is allowed to be strong, but never allowed to be human.

The First Question That Changes Everything

Healing often begins with a quiet, dangerous question:

“What else might be true about me?”

Not:

- “Am I happy?”
- “Am I healed?”

But:

- “Am I more than this pain?”

This question does not erase suffering. It simply loosens its grip.

Reclaiming Identity Slowly

Reclaiming identity does not mean abandoning pain. It means:

- Adding new chapters
- Allowing complexity
- Making space for contradiction

You can be:

- Hurt and hopeful
- Broken and worthy
- Tired and still alive

Identity expands through permission.

The Role of Compassion in Identity Repair

Self-compassion is not indulgence, it is repair. When someone learns to speak to themselves gently, identity begins to soften. Instead of, “I am broken,” they begin to say,

“I was hurt.”

This subtle shift moves pain from identity to experience.

When Pain Loosens Its Hold

There may be moments, brief, unexpected, when pain loosens. A laugh. A moment of connection. A quiet peace. These moments can feel unsettling. Some people panic:

- “Why don’t I feel worse?”
- “Am I betraying my pain?”

This fear is natural. But these moments are not betrayals, they are reminders.

Learning to Trust Neutrality

Healing does not always arrive as happiness. Often, it arrives as neutrality.

A day without overwhelming pain. A moment without self-hatred. An hour without despair.

Neutrality is not emptiness, it is rest.

Identity Beyond Suffering

You are not your trauma. You are not your pain. You are not your worst thoughts.

You are the one who experienced them. This distinction is subtle, but life-saving.

Activity: Separating Self from Pain

Take your time.

Write down three statements you often say about yourself that involve pain

(e.g., “I’m broken,” “I’m too much”).

Rewrite each statement by moving pain from identity to experience.

“I am broken” → “I have been deeply hurt.”

Notice how the second version feels in your body. This exercise is not about positivity, it is about accuracy.

The Courage to Imagine a Self Beyond Pain

Imagining a future self without pain can feel impossible. That’s okay. You do not need to imagine happiness. You do not need to imagine success. Only imagine the possibility. Possibility is enough.

Affirmation

“I am more than what happened to me. I am more than what I feel today. I am allowed to become someone new.”

Chapter 8

Questions That Haunt Suicidal Minds

There is a silence that screams louder than words, the silence inside a mind contemplating suicide. In that silence, questions arise. Not gentle questions. Not curious ones. But relentless, looping, aching questions that echo through every thought, every memory, every breath. These questions do not come seeking answers. They come seeking relief. They circle the mind like restless spirits, demanding attention, pulling the person inward, away from the world, away from connection, away from themselves. Each question carries weight, not because it is logical, but because it is soaked in pain. Suicidal minds are not empty. They are overcrowded.

The Nature of These Questions

The questions that haunt suicidal minds are not philosophical puzzles or abstract reflections. They are emotional interrogations born from despair, guilt, exhaustion, fear, and longing. They arise when:

- Pain feels endless
- Hope feels dishonest
- Identity feels shattered
- The future feels inaccessible

These questions are not signs of weakness. They are signs of a mind trying desperately to understand its suffering.

“Will Anyone Care If I Die?”

This question is rarely about death. It is about visibility. Many people who contemplate suicide have spent years feeling unseen, emotionally ignored, misunderstood, dismissed, or minimized. Their pain may have been invalidated, compared, or silenced.

When someone asks, “Will anyone care if I die?”, what they are truly asking is:

- “Has my existence mattered?”
- “Did my pain register with anyone?”
- “Did anyone really see me?”

This question often arises not because no one cares, but because the person cannot feel care anymore. Depression numbs perception. Trauma distorts memory. Pain rewrites emotional reality. The tragedy is this:

People often care deeply, but pain blocks the ability to receive that truth.

“Would Everyone Be Better Off Without Me?”

This question is one of the most dangerous cognitive distortions in suicidal thinking.

It emerges from:

- Chronic guilt
- Feeling like a burden
- Internalized shame
- Learned beliefs of unworthiness

The mind creates a false narrative:

- “I only bring pain.”
- “I ruin everything.”
- “Others would be happier if I disappeared.”

This belief does not reflect reality, it reflects self-erasure. When someone believes their absence would improve the world, they have already begun emotionally disappearing.

The Burden Myth

Feeling like a burden is not the same as being one. People who feel burdensome often:

- Care deeply about others
- Feel responsible for others’ emotions
- Were taught to suppress their needs
- Learned early that love was conditional
- Measure their worth by usefulness

When illness, depression, or trauma reduces their ability to function, their self-worth collapses. The question “Would I be better off?” becomes an act of misguided compassion, a belief that sacrifice equals love. “Why Am I Like This?” This question carries shame. It is asked when:

- Others seem to cope better
- Suffering feels personal rather than circumstantial
- The person blames themselves for their pain

Instead of asking “What happened to me?”, the suicidal mind asks “What is wrong with me?”

This shift turns pain into a moral failing. But pain is not a character flaw. Trauma, mental illness, loss, and chronic stress shape behavior and emotion. They are not evidence of defectiveness.

“Will Death Finally Bring Me Peace?” This question reveals exhaustion, not desire for death.

When someone asks this, they are not romanticizing dying. They are imagining rest. They are imagining:

- Silence from intrusive thoughts
- Relief from emotional pain
- Freedom from constant struggle
- An end to inner chaos

Death is imagined not as annihilation, but as sleep. This is why suicidal ideation often intensifies when a person is deeply fatigued, emotionally, mentally, spiritually. They are not running toward death. They are running away from pain.

“What If I Fail and Make Everything Worse?” Fear is deeply embedded in suicidal thinking.

Despite popular myths, many suicidal individuals are terrified, not fearless. They fear:

- Surviving with injury
- Becoming dependent
- Causing more pain
- Being judged
- Losing dignity

This fear can paradoxically keep them alive, but it also intensifies distress. They feel trapped between:

- The desire to escape pain
- The fear of making life worse
- This limbo can feel unbearable.

“Is This the Only Way?”

This question arises when options feel exhausted.

Often, the person has:

- Tried therapy
- Tried medication
- Tried coping strategies
- Tried being strong
- Tried asking for help
- Tried staying quiet

When nothing seems to work, the mind collapses into false binary thinking:

Live in pain forever or end everything?

The truth, that other paths exist, becomes invisible. Pain narrows perception.

Cognitive Constriction: The Tunnel Vision of Despair

One of the most well-documented psychological phenomena in suicidal crises is cognitive constriction. It means:

- Reduced ability to see alternatives
- Rigid thinking
- Black-and-white conclusions
- Emotional tunnel vision

The mind loses flexibility. Even logical solutions feel unreachable. This is why suicidal thoughts must be treated as medical emergencies, not moral failures. The brain under extreme distress cannot problem-solve accurately.

“Am I Weak for Thinking This Way?”

This question reflects internalized stigma.

Society often glorifies resilience without acknowledging cost. People are taught:

- “Be strong.”
- “Others have it worse.”
- “Don’t be dramatic.”
- “Just be positive.”

So when suicidal thoughts arise, shame follows. The person believes:

- “I should be stronger.”
- “I shouldn’t feel this way.”

But strength is not the absence of pain. Strength is surviving despite it.

The Conflict Between Wanting to Live and Wanting Relief

One of the most misunderstood aspects of suicidal ideation is ambivalence. Most suicidal individuals:

- Want the pain to stop
- Want to live without suffering
- Want to be loved
- Want to feel safe

- Do not want to die, they want change

This internal conflict creates intense psychological tension:

- A desire to escape
- A desire to stay

This is why timely compassion can save lives.

Questions as Unspoken Requests

Every haunting question is a disguised request.

- “Will anyone care?” → Please see me.
- “Am I a burden?” → Please reassure me I matter.
- “Is this the only way?” → Please show me another path.
- “Will death bring peace?” → Please help me rest.

Understanding this reframes suicidal ideation as communication, not intent.

Questions Without Answers

*If I ask you why I hurt,
Will you tell me to be strong?
If I ask you if I matter,
Will you change the subject?
If I ask you to stay,
Will you call me dramatic?
I am not asking for death,
I am asking for a reason to live.
—Anjum F Parveen*

How Loved Ones Often Misinterpret These Questions

When suicidal individuals voice their questions, loved ones may respond with:

- Logic
- Minimization
- Fear-based reassurance
- Frustration

Statements like:

- “Of course people care.”
- “You’re not thinking clearly.”
- “Don’t talk like that.”
- “You have so much to live for.”

While well-intentioned, these responses may feel dismissive. What the person needs is presence, not persuasion.

Learning to Sit With the Questions

Healing does not begin by answering every question. It begins by allowing them to exist without judgment. Some questions cannot be answered immediately. Some answers unfold slowly. Some answers change over time. Learning to sit with uncertainty builds emotional tolerance.

Reframing the Questions Gently

Reframing does not mean invalidating pain. It means softening absolutes.

- “Will anyone care if I die?” → “Who has shown care, even imperfectly?”

- “Would everyone be better without me?” → “What evidence supports this belief—and what challenges it?”
- “Is this the only way?” → “What options feel invisible right now?”

This process requires patience and support.

Activity: Writing Back to the Questions

Take a notebook. Write each question honestly.

Then respond, not as a judge, but as a compassionate witness. Imagine responding to a dear friend. Let your answers be imperfect, uncertain, gentle.

When the Questions Begin to Change

As healing begins, the questions shift. They become:

- “What do I need right now?”
- “Who can I reach out to?”
- “What helps me feel slightly safer?”
- “How can I get through today?”

These questions are quieter, but powerful. They signal reconnection with life.

Affirmation

“My questions are not signs of weakness. They are signs of pain seeking understanding. I am allowed to ask, to doubt, and to hope.”

Chapter 9

Why Does Something Still Stop Them?

Even at the darkest edge of despair, when the mind feels consumed by pain and the heart feels exhausted beyond repair, there is often something, small, fragile, almost invisible, that stops a person from stepping into finality. It is rarely dramatic. Rarely heroic. Rarely loud. More often, it is quiet. A thought that interrupts the spiral. A memory that refuses to fade. A responsibility that tugs at the heart. A love that lingers, even when the person feels unlovable.

This chapter explores that quiet resistance, the inner force that keeps people alive even when they believe they have nothing left.

The Myth of Total Hopelessness

Contrary to popular belief, most people who contemplate suicide are not completely hopeless. They are ambivalent. They stand at the crossroads of:

- Wanting the pain to end
- Wanting life to mean something again

This ambivalence is not a weakness. It is proof of life still fighting within them. If there were truly nothing holding them back, there would be no hesitation, no questioning, no inner conflict. The very fact that they pause is significant.

The Power of Attachment

One of the strongest forces that stops people from ending their lives is attachment. Attachment does not always look like happiness or emotional closeness. Sometimes it looks like responsibility, loyalty, or quiet love. People stay because of:

- Children who need them
- Parents who depend on them
- Siblings who look up to them
- Friends who would be shattered by their absence
- Pets who wait at the door
- People who might not survive the loss

Even when someone feels worthless, attachment reminds them, someone else's life is tied to mine. This awareness can become a powerful anchor.

Children as Anchors to Life

For parents struggling with suicidal thoughts, children often become the strongest reason to stay alive. They think:

- Who will protect them if I'm gone?
- Who will comfort them when they cry?
- How will my absence shape their future?

Even when parents feel like failures, they often recognize the lifelong impact of loss on a child's developing mind. The love for a child can override self-hatred. Not because the parent believes they are good, but because they believe the child deserves more than grief.

Love That Outlives Pain

Sometimes it is love, not current love, but remembered love, that holds someone back.

- A grandparent's kindness.
- A teacher's belief.
- A friend's laughter.
- A partner's smile.

These memories whisper:

- You mattered once.
- You were loved.
- You are capable of connection.

Even when present relationships feel broken, past love leaves traces that resist erasure. Love does not disappear when pain arrives. It hides, waiting.

Pets: Silent Guardians of Life

Many people report staying alive because of their pets. It may sound small, but it is profound. Pets:

- Offer unconditional presence
- Depend entirely on their caregiver
- Provide comfort without judgment
- Create routine and responsibility

For someone drowning in despair, a pet's need can become a lifeline:

- Who will feed them?
- Who will care for them?

- Who will love them like I do?

In a world that feels indifferent, being needed can be enough to survive another day.

Fear as a Protective Force

Fear is often misunderstood in suicidal contexts. People assume suicidal individuals are fearless. In reality, fear often keeps them alive. Fear of:

- Physical pain
- Permanent damage
- Surviving with disability
- Causing trauma to loved ones
- Making an irreversible mistake

This fear is not cowardice. It is the nervous system trying to protect life. Fear is a signal that something inside still wants to live.

Spiritual Beliefs and Moral Anchors

For some, spiritual or moral beliefs serve as powerful restraints. They may believe:

- Life is sacred
- Suffering has meaning
- Suicide carries spiritual consequences
- Their life has a purpose beyond current understanding

Even when faith feels fragile, it can provide a framework that discourages finality. Spiritual beliefs can act as a pause button, allowing time for pain to pass.

The Tiniest Flicker of Hope

Hope does not always appear as optimism. Sometimes it appears as:

- What if tomorrow is different?
- What if this feeling passes?
- What if help exists that I haven't found yet?

This “what if” is powerful. It keeps the future slightly open. And as long as the future is not completely closed, life remains possible.

Hope Is Not a Feeling, It Is a Decision

One of the most important truths about hope is this:

- Hope is not something you feel.
- Hope is something you practice.

People often say:

“I have no hope.”

What they mean is:

“I cannot feel hope right now.”

But hope does not require emotion. Hope can be:

- Making it through today
- Postponing a decision
- Reaching out for help
- Choosing not to act on an urge

Hope is action in the absence of certainty.

Why Staying Is an Act of Courage

In a world that romanticizes escape, staying is revolutionary.

Staying means:

- Facing pain without guarantees
- Choosing uncertainty over finality
- Allowing life the chance to surprise you

Staying is not a weakness. Staying is bravery in its rawest form. It takes immense courage to wake up each day and continue when everything hurts.

The Future You Cannot Imagine Yet

One of the most tragic distortions of suicidal thinking is the belief that the future will always mirror the present. But the mind in pain cannot imagine relief. This does not mean relief will never come. It means the brain is temporarily incapable of envisioning it. Many survivors later say:

- “I’m grateful I didn’t act on those thoughts.”
- “I couldn’t imagine this life back then.”
- “I’m glad I stayed.”

Not because life became perfect, but because it became worth continuing.

Meaning Can Be Created, Not Found

You do not need a grand purpose to stay alive. Meaning does not arrive fully formed. It is built slowly through:

- Small joys
- Relationships

- Contribution
- Healing
- Growth
- Compassion

Your life does not need justification. Your existence is enough.

Turning Pain into Purpose

Many people who survive suicidal crises later transform their pain into purpose. They become:

- Advocates
- Helpers
- Listeners
- Creators
- Survivors who guide others

This does not mean suffering was “worth it.” It means suffering did not have the final word. Pain can become wisdom.

The Reason I Stayed

I stayed because your name

Would echo in empty rooms.

I stayed because my cat

Would wait at the door.

I stayed because somewhere

Inside me, a voice whispered,

“Not yet.”

I stayed because pain

Is loud, but life is patient.

And patience saved me.

—Anjum F Parveen

Choosing Life One Moment at a Time

You do not have to choose life forever. You only have to choose it now. Then again later.

Then again tomorrow. Life is not a single decision, it is a series of pauses. Each pause is a victory.

Activity: Your Anchors to Life

Write down:

1. Three reasons, no matter how small, that have stopped you before
2. One person or being that matters to you
3. One thing you are curious about experiencing again

These are not obligations. They are lifelines.

When You Cannot Find a Reason

If you cannot find a reason to stay alive today, borrow one. Borrow hope from:

- A friend
- A therapist
- A stranger who believes in you
- This book
- The future version of yourself

You are allowed to lean on borrowed hope until yours returns.

Affirmation

“I may not feel strong, but something in me still wants to live. I honor that part of myself. I choose to stay, one breath, one moment, one day at a time.”

Chapter 10

How to Stop and Prevent Suicide

Suicide prevention is not about saying the right words at the right time. It is not about heroic rescues or dramatic interventions. It is not about fixing someone's life or erasing their pain. Suicide prevention is about presence. About listening. About creating safety when the world feels unsafe. About reminding someone, again and again, that their life is worth protecting, even when they cannot believe it themselves.

This chapter is for:

- Those who are struggling
- Those who love someone who is struggling
- Those who want to understand how lives are quietly saved every day

Prevention is not a single act. It is a process of care.

Understanding Suicide Prevention Beyond Myths

Before learning how to prevent suicide, we must dismantle harmful myths that stop people from helping, or from seeking help.

- Myth 1: Talking about suicide puts the idea in someone's head

Truth: Talking openly reduces risk. Silence increases it.

- Myth 2: Strong people don't think about suicide

Truth: Many suicidal individuals are incredibly strong—often exhausted from being strong too long.

- Myth 3: If someone really wants to die, nothing can stop them

Truth: Most suicidal crises are temporary. Intervention saves lives.

- Myth 4: Suicide is selfish

Truth: Suicide is driven by pain, not lack of love.

Breaking these myths creates the foundation for prevention.

The Core Principle of Prevention: Safety First

When someone is suicidal, the priority is safety, not solutions. They do not need:

- Advice
- Motivation speeches
- Comparisons
- Minimization
- Fixes

They need:

- To feel heard
- To feel believed
- To feel protected

Safety comes before meaning.

Listening: The Most Powerful Intervention

Listening is not passive, it is active, intentional, and courageous. What it means to truly listen. True listening means:

- Giving full attention
- Allowing silence
- Not interrupting
- Not correcting emotions
- Not rushing to reassurance

When someone shares suicidal thoughts, they are offering something fragile and sacred. How you respond matters.

What Helps to Say:

- “I’m really glad you told me.”
- “That sounds incredibly painful.”
- “I’m here with you.”
- “You don’t have to go through this alone.”

What Hurts to Say:

- “Others have it worse.”
- “You’ll get over it.”
- “Be grateful.”
- “Don’t think like that.”

Listening does not require answers, only presence.

Validation: Naming Pain Without Fear

Validation is not agreement. It is an acknowledgment. When you validate someone’s feelings, you say:

“Your pain makes sense given what you’ve experienced.”

Validation reduces shame, which is one of the strongest drivers of suicidal ideation.

Validation Sounds Like:

- “Anyone in your situation would feel overwhelmed.”
- “I can see how exhausted you are.”
- “Your feelings are real, even if they scare you.”

Validation creates emotional safety.

Asking Directly About Suicide

One of the bravest acts in prevention is asking directly:

“Are you thinking about hurting yourself or ending your life?”

This question does not cause suicide. It opens a door. Many people feel relief when asked directly, they no longer have to carry the secret alone. If the answer is yes:

- Stay calm
- Thank them for honesty
- Ask about immediacy and safety
- Do not leave them alone if risk is high

Removing Means: Reducing Immediate Risk

Suicidal crises are often impulsive. Reducing access to lethal means saves lives. This includes:

- Securing medications
- Removing sharp objects
- Limiting access to harmful substances
- Ensuring supervision during acute distress

This is not control, it is care. Temporary safety measures create time. Time allows emotions to settle. Time saves lives.

Professional Help: A Lifeline, Not a Failure

Seeking professional help is not weakness, it is wisdom. Mental health professionals are trained to:

- Assess risk
- Provide coping strategies
- Treat underlying conditions
- Offer crisis support

Types of Professional Support

- Psychiatrists (medication management)
- Psychologists (therapy)
- Counselors and social workers
- Crisis intervention teams

Medication, therapy, or hospitalization may be necessary, and lifesaving.

Therapy as a Space for Survival

Therapy is not about fixing everything. It is about:

- Creating a safe container
- Understanding patterns
- Processing trauma
- Learning emotional regulation
- Rebuilding identity

For suicidal individuals, therapy provides continuity, someone who stays when others cannot.

Crisis Lines and Emergency Support

Crisis resources exist for moments when pain becomes overwhelming. Calling a crisis line:

- Does not mean you are weak
- Does not obligate you to act
- Does not mean you will be judged

It means you are choosing to stay alive. Even one conversation can shift a crisis.

Creating a Personal Safety Plan

A safety plan is a written agreement with yourself, a roadmap for dark moments. A Safety Plan Includes:

1. Warning Signs

Thoughts, feelings, behaviors that signal risk

2. Internal Coping Strategies

Breathing, grounding, music, writing, walking

3. Social Distractions

People or places that reduce isolation

4. Support Contacts

Friends, family, professionals

5. Emergency Resources

Crisis lines, hospitals

6. Reasons to Live

Personal anchors to life

A safety plan turns chaos into structure.

Staying Connected: The Power of Presence

Isolation intensifies suicidal thoughts. Connection reduces them. Connection does not require deep conversation. Sometimes it is:

- Sitting silently
- Watching a movie together
- Sharing a meal
- Sending a message

Consistency matters more than intensity.

The Role of Community in Prevention

Communities save lives. Support groups, faith spaces, creative circles, and advocacy networks offer belonging. Belonging counters the belief: “I don’t matter.” Humans heal in connection.

Self-Prevention: When You Are the One Struggling

If you are suicidal, prevention begins with self-compassion. Self-Protection Means:

- Taking thoughts seriously
- Reaching out early
- Reducing isolation
- Seeking help without shame
- Choosing delay over action

You do not need certainty to stay alive. You only need support.

Delaying the Decision

One of the most effective prevention strategies is delay. Tell yourself:

- “I won’t act on these thoughts today.”
- “I’ll revisit this tomorrow.”
- “I’ll talk to someone first.”

Suicidal urges rise and fall like waves. Delay allows the wave to pass.

Building Protective Factors Over Time

Long-term prevention includes:

- Treating mental illness
- Strengthening relationships
- Developing coping skills
- Building purpose
- Creating routine
- Practicing self-care

Life becomes safer when it becomes supported.

The Bridge

*You didn’t pull me from the edge,
Or tell me where to go.
You sat beside me,
And made the ground feel solid again.
You became my bridge,
Not by carrying me,
But by staying.
—Anjum F Parveen*

When Prevention Feels Impossible

There will be days when prevention feels unreachable. On those days:

- Lower expectations
- Focus on survival
- Accept help
- Stay connected
- Rest

Survival is enough.

A Message to the Reader

If you are reading this chapter because you are struggling, please hear this:

You are not broken.

You are not weak.

You are not alone.

Your pain is real, but it is not permanent.

There are people, places, and possibilities you have not yet encountered.

Stay.

Activity: Your Personal Prevention Commitment

Write down:

- Three warning signs you notice in yourself
- Three things that help calm you
- Three people you can contact
- One reason, even a small one, to stay alive today

Keep this somewhere safe.

Affirmation

“My life is worth protecting. I am allowed to ask for help. I choose safety. I choose support. I choose to stay.”

Chapter 11

Embracing Self-Love Amidst Darkness

Self-love is often misunderstood. It is not confidence. It is not self-admiration. It is not always liking yourself. For those who have walked through suicidal darkness, self-love begins much more quietly. It begins with not abandoning yourself.

This chapter is about learning to stay with yourself when everything inside urges escape. It is about rebuilding trust with the one person you have lived with through every wound, every failure, every silent night, you.

When the Relationship with the Self Is Broken

Long-term emotional pain fractures the relationship a person has with themselves.

Many people who struggle with suicidal thoughts carry an inner voice that is:

- Harsh
- Critical
- Shaming
- Unforgiving

This voice often sounds like:

- “You’re a failure.”

- “You’re weak.”
- “You should be better by now.”
- “You don’t deserve rest.”
- “You ruin everything.”

This voice is not true. It is usually an internalized echo of:

- Childhood criticism
- Emotional neglect
- Abuse
- Rejection
- Trauma
- Unrealistic expectations

Over time, the self becomes both the wounded child and the punishing authority. Self-love begins by interrupting this cycle.

Why Self-Love Feels Impossible After Trauma

For someone who has been hurt deeply, especially by people they trusted, self-love can feel undeserved or unsafe. They may believe:

- Love must be earned
- Pain is punishment
- Kindness leads to vulnerability
- Self-compassion equals weakness

Some feel guilty being kind to themselves when they have survived while others have not. Others believe they must suffer to atone for perceived failures. This is not self-awareness. This is learned self-rejection.

Self-Love Is Not a Reward for Healing

One of the most damaging myths is:

“I will love myself once I’m better.”

But self-love is not a destination you arrive at after fixing yourself. Self-love is what allows healing to happen at all. You do not earn gentleness by becoming perfect. You offer gentleness because you are hurting.

What Self-Love Looks Like in Darkness

In darkness, self-love is practical, not poetic. It looks like:

- Getting out of bed even when you don’t want to
- Eating something simple when appetite is gone
- Taking medication without shame
- Asking for help even when your voice shakes
- Resting without justifying it
- Crying without apologizing
- Staying alive when giving up feels easier
- Self-love is choosing not to punish yourself for being human.
- Rebuilding Trust With Yourself

When someone has experienced repeated failure, trauma, or emotional collapse, they often stop trusting themselves. They think:

- “I make bad decisions.”
- “I can’t handle life.”
- “I always mess things up.”

Rebuilding trust with yourself does not mean believing you will never fall again. It means believing that if you fall, you will not abandon yourself. Trust is rebuilt through consistency, not perfection.

Learning to Speak to Yourself Gently

The way you speak to yourself shapes your nervous system. Harsh inner dialogue keeps the body in survival mode. Gentle self-talk creates safety.

Instead of:

“Why am I like this?”

Try:

“Something in me is hurting.”

Instead of:

“I’m so weak.”

Try:

“I’m exhausted.”

Instead of:

“I should be better.”

Try:

“I’m doing the best I can today.”

Gentleness is not denial. It is accurate compassion.

The Body as an Ally, Not an Enemy

Many people in emotional pain feel disconnected from their bodies. The body becomes associated with:

- Panic

- Fatigue
- Pain
- Shame
- Dissociation

Rebuilding self-love includes reconnecting with the body gently. This can include:

- Warm showers
- Stretching
- Walking slowly
- Feeling the ground beneath your feet
- Placing a hand over your heart
- Breathing consciously

Your body is not betraying you. It is responding to what it has endured.

Rest Is an Act of Self-Love

Survival often trains people to stay alert, productive, and vigilant. Rest may feel unsafe.

Some people believe:

- Rest equals laziness
- Slowing down invites collapse
- If I stop, everything will fall apart

But rest is not giving up. Rest is repair. Your nervous system cannot heal without rest. Allowing yourself to rest says:

“I matter, enough to pause.”

Forgiving Yourself for What You Couldn't Do

Many suicidal individuals carry immense guilt. Guilt for:

- Not being strong enough
- Not meeting expectations
- Not saving relationships
- Not living up to potential
- Not healing faster

Self-love includes forgiveness, not for moral failure, but for human limitation. You did what you could with the resources you had at the time. Hindsight is not fair.

The Difference Between Self-Love and Self-Indulgence

Self-love is often confused with avoidance. But self-love does not mean:

- Ignoring responsibilities
- Avoiding growth
- Staying stuck

Self-love means:

- Supporting yourself through growth
- Setting boundaries without guilt
- Choosing progress without punishment

It is possible to be compassionate and accountable at the same time.

Learning to Set Gentle Boundaries

Self-love includes protecting your energy. This may mean:

- Saying no without explanation
- Reducing contact with harmful people
- Letting go of relationships that drain you
- Choosing environments that feel safer

Boundaries are not walls. They are doors you control.

Finding Yourself Again After Losing Yourself

Many people in suicidal darkness say:

“I don’t know who I am anymore.”

That loss of identity is painful, but it is also an opening. You are not required to return to who you were. You are allowed to become someone new. Someone softer. Someone wiser. Someone kinder to themselves.

Small Acts of Self-Love That Change Everything

Self-love grows through repetition. Some small acts include:

- Drinking water intentionally
- Making your bed
- Listening to music that soothes you
- Writing your feelings without editing
- Spending time in sunlight
- Wearing comfortable clothes
- Reaching out instead of isolating

These acts may seem insignificant—but they send a powerful message:

“I am worth caring for.”

When Self-Love Feels Fake

Some days, self-love will feel forced. That's okay. You don't have to feel love to act lovingly. Action comes first. Emotion follows later. Treat yourself as you would treat someone you deeply care about, even if you don't feel it yet.

Staying With Myself

I used to leave myself

At the first sign of pain.

I called it strength,

But it was abandonment.

Now I sit beside my sorrow,

Not to fix it,

But to let it know,

I am not going anywhere.

—Anjum F Parveen

Reclaiming Dignity

Self-love is reclaiming dignity after shame. It is recognizing that:

- Your pain does not make you defective
- Your struggles do not erase your worth
- Your survival is meaningful
- You do not need to justify your existence
- You are allowed to take up space

Loving Yourself While Still Hurting

Self-love does not require happiness. You can:

- Hurt and still care for yourself
- Struggle and still be worthy
- Feel lost and still be lovable

Self-love is not a feeling state. It is a commitment.

A Note to the Self

You may want to write a letter to yourself, not from the future, not from an ideal version, but from the part of you that has stayed. The part that survived nights you didn't think you would.

That part deserves recognition.

Activity: Rebuilding the Inner Relationship

1. Write down three ways you are hard on yourself
2. Rewrite each with gentleness
3. List five things your body or mind needs right now
4. Commit to one act of self-care today

This is not selfish. This is survival evolving into care.

Affirmation

“I am learning to treat myself with kindness. I am allowed to rest, to heal, and to grow slowly. I choose to stay with myself.” 🌻

Chapter 12

The Power of Connection and Compassion

There is a wound that pain carves deeper than despair, the wound of isolation. It is the feeling that no one truly sees you. That even when surrounded by people, you are alone.

That your inner world is too heavy, too dark, too complicated to be held by another. Suicidal suffering often grows in silence. Healing, however, grows in connection.

This chapter is about remembering that you were never meant to survive alone and that connection, even imperfect connection, has the power to pull a soul back from the edge.

Why Isolation Feeds Despair

Human beings are wired for connection. Our nervous systems regulate through relationships. Our sense of identity is shaped through being seen, heard, and valued by others. When connection is absent or broken:

- Pain intensifies
- Thoughts spiral
- Hope fades
- The mind turns inward and becomes harsh

Isolation convinces a person:

- “I don’t belong.”
- “I am invisible.”
- “No one would understand.”
- “I am alone in this.”

These beliefs are not true. They are symptoms of disconnection.

The Difference Between Being Alone and Feeling Alone

You can be physically surrounded by people and still feel utterly alone. Feeling alone comes from:

- Being misunderstood
- Being dismissed
- Being emotionally unseen
- Being unable to express pain safely

Many people who struggle with suicidal thoughts are not lacking people, they are lacking safe connection. Healing begins when at least one relationship feels emotionally safe.

Why Reaching Out Feels So Hard

Reaching out is not easy when you have been hurt before. Many people hesitate to connect because:

- They were ignored when they spoke up
- Their pain was minimized
- They were judged or shamed
- They learned that vulnerability led to rejection

So they protect themselves by withdrawing. Isolation becomes a shield, but also a prison. Reaching out again requires courage, not confidence.

Connection Does Not Require Perfect Words

One of the biggest barriers to connection is the belief:

“I don’t know how to explain what I feel.”

You don’t have to explain everything. Connection can begin with:

- “I’m not okay.”
- “Can you sit with me?”
- “I’m having a hard day.”
- “I don’t need advice, I just need company.”

You are allowed to reach out without clarity.

The Healing Power of Being Witnessed

There is something profoundly healing about being witnessed without being fixed. When someone listens without interrupting, correcting, or judging, it tells the nervous system:

“You are safe here.”

Being witnessed allows pain to release its grip. You do not need solutions first. You need presence.

Compassion: The Language of Healing

Compassion is not pity. It is not rescuing. It is not trying to make pain disappear. Compassion says:

- “I see you.”
- “Your pain matters.”
- “You don’t have to face this alone.”

Compassion does not rush. It stays.

Receiving Compassion When You Feel Undeserving

Many people struggle to receive compassion. They think:

- “Others need it more.”
- “I shouldn’t burden anyone.”
- “I don’t deserve kindness.”

This belief often comes from environments where love was conditional. But compassion is not a transaction. You do not have to earn it. Receiving compassion is not selfish, it is human.

Learning to Let Someone In Slowly

You do not need to trust everyone. You do not need to share everything. Connection can be built gradually:

- One person
- One conversation
- One honest moment

Trust is rebuilt in small doses. You are allowed to go at your own pace.

The Role of Friendship in Healing

Friendship can be a powerful antidote to despair. Not because friends fix pain, but because they remind you:

- You matter
- You are remembered
- You are valued for who you are

Friendship does not require constant joy. It survives through:

- Silence
- Laughter
- Shared moments
- Mutual presence

Even one friend can make life feel more survivable.

Compassion From Strangers

Sometimes compassion comes from unexpected places. A kind word. A stranger's smile. A support group. A therapist. A fellow survivor. These moments matter. They remind us that humanity is larger than our pain.

Support Groups: Shared Pain, Shared Strength

Support groups offer a unique form of connection. In these spaces:

- Pain is normalized
- Stories are understood
- Shame dissolves
- Hope is shared

Being among people who “get it” can be life-changing. You are no longer alone in your story.

Helping Others as a Path to Healing

One of the most powerful ways people rediscover meaning is through helping others.

This does not mean self-sacrifice. It means:

- Sharing your story
- Offering empathy
- Listening

- Volunteering
- Being present for someone else

Helping does not erase pain, but it transforms it. It reminds you that your survival matters.

Compassion Toward Yourself and Others

Compassion is circular. As you learn to be compassionate toward others, you slowly learn to extend it to yourself. As you practice self-compassion, you become more open to receiving it from others. Healing happens in this exchange.

Rebuilding Belonging

Belonging is not about fitting in. It is about being accepted as you are. You belong wherever you are allowed to be real. You belong wherever your pain is not minimized. You belong wherever your presence matters.

Threads of Connection

*I thought I had to heal alone,
Carry my pain quietly.
But when I reached out,
Hands met mine in the dark.
Thread by thread,
We wove something stronger than despair.*
—Anjum F Parveen

When Connection Feels Overwhelming

Some days, connection will feel like too much. That's okay. You are allowed to:

- Take breaks

- Set boundaries
- Ask for space
- Protect your energy

Healthy connection respects limits.

Technology and Connection

In moments of deep isolation, even digital connection can help. Messages.

Calls. Online communities. Crisis chats. These are not replacements for human contact, but they are bridges. And bridges save lives.

Learning to Ask for What You Need

Connection deepens when needs are named. You can say:

- “I need reassurance.”
- “I need distraction.”
- “I need someone to listen.”
- “I need help.”

Needs do not make you weak. Needs make you human.

Activity: Strengthening Your Circle

1. Write down three people or spaces where you feel safe
2. Identify one way you can connect this week
3. Write one sentence you could use to reach out

Connection begins with one step.

Affirmation

“I am worthy of connection and compassion. I am allowed to reach out and be held. I do not have to heal alone.”

Chapter 13

Hope in Small Steps — Rebuilding Life Gently

Hope is often imagined as a sudden light. A revelation. A breakthrough. A moment where everything finally makes sense. But for those who have lived close to despair, hope rarely arrives like that. Hope arrives quietly. It arrives disguised as small choices, the decision to wake up, to breathe through another hour, to try again even when nothing feels different.

This chapter is about understanding that hope does not rescue us all at once; it grows with us, step by step.

Why Big Hope Feels Unreachable

When someone has been in emotional darkness for a long time, large promises of hope can feel overwhelming or false. Statements like:

- “Everything will be okay.”
- “This will pass.”
- “Just stay positive.”

often feel invalidating rather than comforting. For someone in pain, the future feels heavy, not inspiring. That is why healing does not begin with big hope. It begins with manageable hope.

The Power of the Next Small Step

You do not need to rebuild your entire life today. You only need to decide:

- What is the next small step?
- What can I do in the next ten minutes?
- What feels slightly less heavy right now?

Small steps might include:

- Sitting up in bed
- Drinking a glass of water
- Opening a window
- Taking a shower
- Stepping outside for air

These actions may seem insignificant, but they are acts of hope. They say: “I am still here.”

Staying Alive Is Already an Achievement

Many people minimize their survival. They say:

- “I didn’t do anything.”
- “I just got through the day.”

But getting through the day when you want to disappear is not nothing. It is courage in its rawest form. Survival is not passive. It is effort made invisible by pain.

The Myth of Motivation

One of the greatest misunderstandings about healing is the belief that motivation comes first.

In reality:

- Action creates motivation
- Routine creates stability
- Stability creates hope

You do not wait to feel ready. You begin to be tired, unsure, and afraid. And that is enough.

Creating Gentle Structure

Structure provides safety to a nervous system overwhelmed by chaos. This does not mean rigid schedules. It means soft anchors:

- Waking up at a similar time
- Eating regular meals
- Taking medication consistently
- Going to bed with intention
- Structure says:

“There is a rhythm holding me.”

Celebrating Small Wins

Healing is sustained by acknowledgement. When small victories go unnoticed, despair grows. Small wins include:

- Making a phone call
- Attending therapy
- Saying no
- Asking for help
- Completing a task
- Resting when needed

Celebrate these moments. They are evidence of life rebuilding itself.

When Progress Feels Invisible

Healing does not move in straight lines. There will be:

- Setbacks
- Plateaus
- Days that feel worse than before

This does not mean failure. It means your nervous system is learning. Progress is often only visible in hindsight.

Learning Patience With the Process

Despair often demands immediate relief. But healing is gradual. Like learning to walk again after injury, emotional healing requires patience, repetition, and compassion. You are not behind. You are moving at the pace your healing requires.

The Role of Meaning in Hope

Hope deepens when life feels meaningful, even in small ways. Meaning can come from:

- Caring for someone
- Creating something
- Learning
- Helping others
- Connecting
- Being present

Meaning does not have to be grand. Even tending to a plant can be meaningful.

Rediscovering Joy Without Pressure

Joy after pain often returns cautiously. It may appear as:

- A moment of laughter
- A song that soothes you
- A sense of calm
- A quiet morning
- A peaceful walk

Joy does not mean pain is gone. It means life is making room for more. You are allowed to feel joy without guilt.

Hope Is Not the Absence of Pain

Hope does not mean everything stops hurting. Hope means:

- Pain is not the only thing anymore
- There are moments of relief
- There is space for possibility

Hope says:

“This is not the end of my story.”

Building a Life, Not Escaping One

Many suicidal individuals want escape, not death. They want:

- Relief
- Rest
- Peace
- Safety

Healing shifts the goal from escaping life to building a life that feels survivable. This happens gradually, through choices that honor your limits.

Learning to Dream Again, Carefully

Dreaming again can feel dangerous. What if it hurts to hope? Start small. Dream of:

- Feeling calmer
- Feeling safe
- Feeling connected
- Feeling rested

Dreams do not need to be ambitious. They need to be kind.

One Step at a Time

*I did not rise suddenly,
I stood slowly.
I did not run toward the future,
I stayed with the moment.
And in staying,
I learned,
Hope walks beside me,
One step at a time.
—Anjum F Parveen*

When Hope Feels Fragile

Some days, hope will feel like it might break. That's okay. Hope does not need strength.

It needs care. Protect it by:

- Avoiding harsh self-judgment

- Choosing gentleness
- Seeking support
- Resting

Fragile hope is still hope.

Choosing Life Again and Again

Healing is not a single decision. It is a series of choices. Every time you choose to stay, despite discomfort, you are choosing life. You do not need certainty. You need willingness.

Activity: Mapping Gentle Progress

1. Write down three small things you did this week
2. Note one moment of relief or calm
3. Identify one small step for tomorrow

This is how hope grows.

Affirmation

“I take life one step at a time. I do not need to rush my healing. Hope grows within me, gently and steadily.”

Chapter 13

Awakening Hope — Small Steps to Big Changes

Hope does not arrive with drums and declarations. It does not announce itself loudly, nor does it always feel powerful. For those who have lived in darkness, hope arrives quietly, sometimes so quietly that it is mistaken for nothing at all. It slips in through small acts like a breath taken instead of held, a tear allowed instead of swallowed, a morning survived rather than celebrated.

This chapter is not about sudden miracles. It is about awakening hope where life feels barely survivable, and learning that even the smallest steps, taken consistently, can lead to profound transformation.

The Broken Image of Hope

Many people believe hope means believing everything will get better. But for someone struggling with suicidal thoughts, that idea often feels impossible, even cruel. When pain has been relentless, hope can feel like:

- A lie people tell to avoid discomfort
- A privilege for those who haven't suffered deeply
- A fragile illusion that breaks easily

And so many stop hoping, not because they want to die, but because hoping hurts too much. This chapter begins by reframing

hope. Hope is not optimism. Hope is not certain. Hope is not denial. Hope is choosing to stay, even when you don't know why.

Hope Begins With Survival

Before growth comes survival. Before joy comes endurance. Before meaning comes breath.

If you are alive today, reading this, hope is already present in you, even if you don't recognize it. Survival itself is an act of hope. Every time you:

- Got out of bed
- Answered a message
- Ate something
- Showed up
- Stayed through another night

You were practicing hope. Even if you did it resentfully. Even if you did it numb. Even if you did it crying. Hope does not require enthusiasm. It only requires continuation.

The Myth of Sudden Healing

One of the most damaging beliefs is that healing happens suddenly, that one day you wake up “fixed.” But healing is not a switch. It is a process of gradual stabilization. Healing looks like:

- Feeling slightly less overwhelmed
- Recovering faster from emotional crashes
- Having moments of peace between waves
- Being able to pause instead of react

Healing often feels boring. And boring can feel disappointing when you expect transformation. But boring is safe. Boring is

stability. Boring is the nervous system learning that it does not need to stay on high alert.

Small Steps Are Not Small

When someone is suicidal, even basic tasks require immense energy. What seems “small” to others may feel monumental inside. Small steps include:

- Brushing your teeth
- Drinking water
- Changing clothes
- Opening a window
- Sitting in sunlight
- Taking medication
- Answering one message

Each of these steps sends a message to your mind and body: “I am still participating in life.” That message matters.

Why Motivation Comes After Action

Many people wait to feel motivated before acting. But depression and hopelessness destroy motivation first. Waiting for motivation often means waiting forever. Healing works differently:

- You act without motivation
- Action builds momentum
- Momentum slowly creates motivation

You do not need desire. You need movement. Even reluctant movement counts.

Building a Gentle Daily Rhythm

Structure creates safety. Not rigid schedules, but soft consistency. Your nervous system heals when it knows what to expect. A gentle rhythm might include:

- Waking up around the same time
- Eating regular meals
- Sleeping with intention
- Creating a short morning or evening ritual

This rhythm anchors you when emotions feel unpredictable. It whispers: “You are held by routine.”

When Progress Feels Invisible

One of the hardest parts of healing is when effort does not seem to pay off. You may think:

- “I’m doing everything and still hurting”
- “Nothing is changing”
- “What’s the point?”

But progress often happens beneath awareness. You may not notice:

- Increased tolerance for discomfort
- Quicker emotional recovery
- Less self-blame
- More self-awareness

Growth is happening quietly, like roots strengthening underground.

Learning to Be Patient With Yourself

Hopelessness creates urgency. It demands immediate relief. But healing is slow by nature. You are not failing because you are still hurting. You are healing because you are still trying. Patience is not passive. It is active gentleness.

Hope Does Not Mean Pain Ends

This is important. Hope does not promise a pain-free life. Hope promises:

- Pain will not define everything
- You will not always feel this way
- There will be moments of relief
- You will learn how to cope

Hope says:

“This is survivable.”

Finding Meaning in the Ordinary

Meaning does not need to be grand. It does not require purpose statements or life missions. Meaning can exist in:

- Making tea
- Petting an animal
- Helping someone
- Listening to music
- Creating something
- Resting intentionally

Meaning grows from presence. When you are present, life feels less empty.

Joy After Pain Is Quiet

Joy does not return with fireworks. It returns cautiously. It might appear as:

- A laugh that surprises you
- A moment of calm
- A sense of safety
- A peaceful breath
- Feeling okay for a few minutes

Joy does not cancel pain. It coexists with it. And that coexistence is healing.

Letting Go of the Old Version of You

Many people mourn who they were before the pain. They say:

- “I used to be stronger”
- “I used to be happier”
- “I lost myself”

But you did not lose yourself. You changed. And change does not mean loss. The version of you that survives this pain carries wisdom, empathy, and depth that the earlier version did not need to develop. You are not broken. You are becoming.

Learning to Dream Again — Carefully

Dreaming again can feel dangerous. What if hope leads to disappointment? So you start small. You dream of:

- Feeling safe
- Feeling calm
- Feeling connected

- Feeling rested

Small dreams protect the heart while still opening it. Hope Is a Practice Hope is not a feeling.

It is a practice. You practice hope when you:

- Choose kindness toward yourself
- Stay through discomfort
- Ask for help
- Rest without guilt
- Take another step

Hope is built, not found.

Little Lights

I searched for the sun

But found only stars,

Tiny and distant,

Yet steady enough

To guide me forward.

And I learned—

Even little lights

Can hold back the dark.

—Anjum F Parveen

When Hope Feels Fragile

Some days, hope will feel like it might break. That's okay. Hope does not need strength. It needs care. Protect your hope by:

- Reducing self-judgment
- Limiting toxic influences

- Seeking supportive voices
- Allowing rest

Fragile hope is still hope. Choosing Life Repeatedly Healing is not a one-time decision. It is a choice you make again and again. Some days it will feel intentional. Some days it will feel automatic. Some days it will feel forced. All of them count.

Activity: Growing Hope Gently

Write down:

- One thing you survived recently
- One moment that felt slightly lighter
- One small step you will take tomorrow

This is how big change begins.

Affirmation

“I do not need to rush my healing. I take life one step at a time. Hope grows within me, quietly and steadily.”

Closing Reflection

If you are still here, still reading, hope is already alive in you. It may be quiet. It may be tiring. But it is real. And step by step, breath by breath, it will guide you forward.

Chapter 14

Living in Contentment, Power, and Peace

There comes a moment in every healing journey when survival slowly transforms into something quieter and deeper, living. Not the kind of living that demands perfection or constant happiness, but the kind that allows you to exist without fighting yourself every single day.

Contentment, power, and peace are often misunderstood. Many believe they are destinations reached only after pain ends. But in truth, they are states of relationship, how you relate to yourself, your thoughts, your emotions, and your life as it is. This chapter is not about erasing darkness. It is about learning to coexist with it without being consumed.

Redefining Contentment

Contentment is not excitement. It is not an achievement. It is not having everything figured out. Contentment is the quiet acceptance of this moment without demanding that it be different. It is waking up and saying:

“This is where I am and that is okay for now.”

Contentment allows pain without panic. It allows imperfection without shame. For someone who has lived with suicidal thoughts, contentment can feel unfamiliar, even uncomfortable. When

chaos has been constant, calm can feel empty. But calm is not emptiness. It is safe.

Letting Go of the War Within

Many people who suffer deeply are exhausted not just by life, but by the constant war inside their own minds. Thoughts fight thoughts. Emotions fight reason. Hope fights despair. Peace begins when you stop trying to defeat parts of yourself. You do not need to silence your pain. You need to listen without judgment. Peace says:

“You are allowed to feel this and still live.”

Understanding True Power

Power is often confused with control. But true power is not about controlling circumstances, people, or outcomes. True power is:

- Choosing how you respond
- Setting boundaries
- Saying no without guilt
- Asking for help without shame
- Resting without apology

Power is self-trust. It is knowing that even when life is uncertain, you can handle your inner world.

Reclaiming Inner Authority

When someone has lived with helplessness, they often feel disconnected from their own authority. They ask:

- “What’s wrong with me?”
- “Why can’t I cope like others?”
- “Why am I like this?”

Healing restores inner authority. It shifts the voice inside from accusation to understanding. Instead of:

“I am broken.”

You begin to say:

“I am responding to pain.”

This shift changes everything.

Peace Is Not the Absence of Pain

Peace is often mistaken for emotional numbness or constant calm. But peace is flexibility. It is the ability to move through emotions without being destroyed by them. Peace looks like:

- Crying without collapsing
- Feeling sadness without hopelessness
- Feeling joy without fear of losing it

Peace allows emotions to pass through, like weather, instead of defining the sky.

Learning to Rest Without Guilt

One of the hardest lessons for those who struggle is learning to rest without self-punishment. Many believe rest must be earned. But rest is not a reward. It is a requirement. Your body and mind heal in rest. Choosing rest is choosing life.

Living With Enoughness

Contentment grows when you stop measuring your worth against others. Enoughness says:

“I do not need to become someone else to deserve peace.”

You are enough:

- Even when you struggle
- Even when you rest
- Even when you don't achieve
- Even when you are quiet

Enoughness dissolves shame.

Letting Life Be Simple

Peace grows in simplicity. Not in isolation, but in removing unnecessary pressure. This may look like:

- Fewer expectations
- Slower mornings
- Honest conversations
- Less comparison
- More presence

Simple does not mean small. Simple means true.

Living Gently With Yourself

Gentleness is strength. Living gently means:

- Speaking kindly to yourself
- Allowing mistakes
- Choosing compassion over criticism
- Protecting your energy

You would never speak harshly to a wounded friend. You deserve the same care.

Quiet Strength

I no longer roar to prove my worth,

Nor bleed to show my pain.

I sit with myself in silence now,

And find my power there.

Not in force,

But in presence.

—Anjum F Parveen

Finding Peace in the Present

Peace lives in the present moment. Not in fixing the past. Not in fearing the future. Just here. Breathing. Being. Existing. The present moment is often safer than your thoughts make it seem.

Living Without Constant Self-Surveillance

Many people monitor themselves constantly:

- “Am I okay?”
- “Am I failing?”
- “Am I too much?”

Peace grows when you loosen this grip. You do not need to constantly evaluate your worth. You are allowed to just be. Choosing Meaning Over Perfection Perfectionism fuels despair. Meaning heals it. Meaning comes from:

- Showing up imperfectly
- Living honestly
- Being kind
- Staying alive

Your life does not need to be impressive to be meaningful.

Activity: Defining Your Inner Life

Write down what these words mean to you, not as ideals, but as lived experiences:

1. Contentment:
2. Power:
3. Peace:

Let your definitions be gentle and realistic.

Affirmation

“I do not need to fight myself to live. I am learning to rest, to trust, and to be. Contentment, power, and peace are growing within me.”

Reflection

Living is not about conquering pain. It is about learning to carry life with kindness. You are no longer just surviving. You are learning how to live, softly, honestly, and bravely.

Chapter 15

My Heart to Yours — A Letter of Life

My Dear You,

I know the nights feel long, and the days feel heavy. I know your heart feels worn, as if it carries the weight of invisible storms that no one else can see. I know the thoughts that visit you are dark, uninvited guests that whisper lies about your worth, your purpose, and even your right to be alive.

I know this because I have listened. I have sat with countless souls whose hearts echo your own. I have watched despair wrap itself around lives like a heavy fog, and I have seen what it feels like when someone reaches a point where even living feels unbearable.

And yet, here we are, at this moment. You are still here.

The very fact that you are still breathing, still reading, still seeking, this is already extraordinary. Surviving each day, one breath at a time, is courage in its rawest form. Even if you feel weak, even if you feel unworthy, even if you feel that hope is beyond reach, survival itself is a testament to your strength.

I See You! 

You are not invisible.

I see your tears that fall when no one is watching.

I see your quiet battles, fought in the silence of your mind.

I see your longing for relief, your wish to be understood, your secret hope that someone will notice the ache in your soul.

I see every part of you, even the parts you try to hide.

Your pain does not make you less. Your scars do not make you unworthy. Your darkest thoughts do not erase your light.

You are here. And that matters.

Your Life Has Value, Even When You Cannot Feel It!

Sometimes it feels as though your existence is a burden. The mind whispers:

“You’re worthless.”

“Others would be better off without you.”

“Why bother?”

These thoughts are lies. They are not facts. They are echoes of fear, despair, and exhaustion. Even if you cannot see it now, your presence is needed in ways both obvious and subtle:

- The warmth you bring to a friend with a simple smile
- The kindness you extend to strangers
- The small, quiet ways you impact the world every day

Life is not measured only by achievements, success, or applause. It is measured by the subtle ripples your existence creates, the ways you touch hearts without even knowing it.

Your life is valuable simply because you are alive.

I Know You Are Tired!

You are tired of feeling pain. Tired of trying and failing. Tired of fighting thoughts that never seem to rest. And that exhaustion is real.

It is okay to rest. It is okay to slow down. It is okay to cry and to let the world pause for you.

Rest does not mean giving up. It means caring for yourself in the way you deserve. It means telling yourself, softly, “I am allowed to breathe. I am allowed to pause. I am allowed to exist exactly as I am.”

Your gentleness is not weakness. Gentleness is strength born from understanding your limits and embracing your humanity.

You Are Not Alone!

Even when it feels as if no one understands, even when isolation wraps itself around you like a heavy cloak, know this: You are not alone. Somewhere, someone has lived your pain. Somewhere, someone has wanted to give up and then chose to stay. Somewhere, someone has found tiny lights in the darkness, lights that now guide them forward.

And you can find them too.

Connection is not always obvious. It is not always physical. Sometimes it is a word, a book, a message, a song, a stranger’s kindness. Sometimes it is simply allowing yourself to accept help when it is offered. Even a single thread of human connection can be enough to pull you back from despair.

You Are Stronger Than You Know!

You may feel weak. You may feel broken. You may feel as if your body and mind are betraying you. But consider this: You are still here. Despite the pain, despite the hopelessness, despite the nights that felt endless, you are still breathing.

That is strength. That is resilience. That is courage.

Even if you do not feel it, it exists within you. Every act of survival, every moment you choose to keep going, every breath you take, is proof that you possess an unspoken, unshakable strength.

It Is Okay to Ask for Help!

Asking for help is not a weakness. It is not a failure. It is a powerful act of courage.

You do not have to navigate this world alone. You do not have to fight every battle silently. You deserve support, understanding, and compassion. There are people and professionals ready to listen, to hold space, and to guide you through your darkest moments. Reaching out is an act of love, love for yourself, and love for the life you are choosing to protect.

Self-Compassion Is Essential!

You have been through so much. You have carried burdens that others cannot imagine. You have felt pain that feels too heavy to bear. Treat yourself with the kindness you would give someone else in your shoes. Speak to yourself gently. Forgive yourself for mistakes. Accept that suffering does not define your worth. Allow yourself to feel, rest, and heal. Self-compassion is not indulgent. It is essential. It is a lifeline. It is the first step toward reclaiming your own heart.

Tiny Steps Matter!

You do not need to solve everything today. You do not need to “fix” your life immediately.

Tiny steps are enough. They are more than enough.

- Taking one deep breath
- Drinking water
- Stepping outside

- Sending a message
- Saying a soft word to yourself

These are acts of life-affirming courage. They accumulate into momentum. And momentum slowly rebuilds hope. Even if you only do one tiny thing today, it matters. More than you know.

You Can Reclaim Joy!

Joy may feel impossible right now. But joy is not a contradiction of your pain. It is a companion to it. Joy can be found in:

- A sunrise or sunset
- The smell of rain
- Music that moves you
- The laughter of a friend
- The warmth of sunlight on your skin
- The small victories you achieve daily

Allow yourself to notice these moments, even if only briefly. Each one is a whisper from life saying:

“There is still beauty here. You are still part of it.”

Pain Does Not Define You!

Your pain is real. It is heavy. It is significant. But it does not define your entirety. You are more than your suffering. You are capable of love. You are capable of laughter. You are capable of connection. You are capable of kindness, both to yourself and others. Your story is still unfolding. Your life is still being written. Do not let pain be the only chapter.

You Are Not Your Thoughts!

Suicidal thoughts are not you. They are a signal of suffering, a mind in distress. You can observe these thoughts without acting on them. You can feel them without believing them. You can allow them to pass, like clouds moving across the sky. You are not weak for thinking about them. You are human. And human beings deserve to survive, even when their minds betray them.

You Deserve Love, Especially From Yourself!

You may feel unworthy of care, affection, and support. You may think that others deserve your love more than you do. But your own love is not selfish. Your care for yourself is not indulgent. It is essential. Start small:

- Speak to yourself kindly
- Hold yourself tenderly
- Give yourself permission to rest
- Celebrate your survival

You are worth nurturing. You are worth being cherished. You are worth life.

I Am Asking You to Stay, Not for Me, But for You!

1. I am not asking you to stay alive because the world needs me.
2. I am asking you to stay alive because you deserve your own story.
3. There are chapters ahead that you cannot yet imagine.
4. There are sunsets you have not witnessed.
5. There are smiles you have not received.
6. There are moments of peace, connection, and joy waiting for you, even if the road to them feels long.

Stay alive. Not for anyone else. For yourself.

When Despair Returns!

Some days, despair will feel overwhelming. You may feel tempted to give up. When this happens:

1. Breathe. Slowly. Ground yourself in your senses: notice the chair beneath you, the air on your skin, the sounds around you.
2. Remind yourself: this moment is temporary. You are stronger than it feels.
3. Reach out. Call a friend, a family member, or a professional.

Even in the depths of despair, life can be saved by connection, courage, and small, intentional steps.

A Promise to Yourself!

Promise yourself:

- To stay another day, another hour, another minute.
- To care for your body, mind, and spirit.
- To forgive yourself for surviving as best as you can.
- To seek help when needed.
- To honor the small victories, the quiet moments, and the courage it takes simply to exist.

Your Life Is Needed

You are a spark in the darkness,

A ripple in the river,

A whisper of hope in the storm.

Even when the night feels endless,

Even when you cannot see the light,

Your presence matters.

Stay alive. Stay with yourself.

Stay. You are needed.

—Anjum F Parveen

Activity: A Letter to Yourself

Write a letter to yourself, as if you were your own best friend. Include:

1. Why your life is worth living
2. One thing you survived recently
3. One small hope for tomorrow
4. Words of kindness and encouragement

Keep this letter and return to it on days when despair feels overwhelming.

Affirmation

“My story is not over yet. I choose life. I choose myself. I am worthy, loved, and needed. I am stronger than my pain, and I am allowed to stay.”

Final Thoughts

If you are still here, reading this, it means you are not done yet. You are alive, still breathing, still searching. That is extraordinary. That is proof that hope lives in you, even if it is quiet.

Life is not easy. It will not always be fair. But it is yours to experience. You have survived storms others cannot imagine. You have endured pain that could have broken you. And yet, you are still here.

Stay. Breathe. Rest. Cry. Laugh. Live.

The world is not better without you. Your absence would leave silent wounds on hearts that care, even if you have not realized it yet. And beyond all else, you deserve life, not because of what you do, but because you are you.

Love

Anjum 