

# No Turning Back

Category: Suicide

written by Ronna L. Edelstein | February 1, 2023

When I was a freshman in high school, two of my classmates lost their mothers to suicide. Going to their funerals, my first ones, was traumatic. I remember struggling not to giggle—a blatantly inappropriate response—but for whatever reason, that is how my emotions chose to express themselves. I spent many sleepless nights after these tragedies, haunted by images of my parents hurting themselves.

Thoughts of suicide have stayed with me ever since those adolescent years. When despair threatens to suffocate me, I lie in bed and contemplate ways to end my pain. I always gravitate towards pills; they seem less messy than hanging myself or slitting my wrists in the bathtub. Then something positive happens, maybe as minor as a rainbow appearing outside my window, and I manage to climb out of my depression.

Ironically, a period of devouring books—both fictional and true—on the Holocaust helped curb my suicidal ideations. If those who endured the horrific conditions of a concentration camp could find the courage to rebuild their lives, then I certainly had no excuse to end mine over something as mundane as being excluded from a high school sorority or never being asked on a date in college.

Just as I thought that I had deleted the word “suicide” from my personal lexicon, I moved to Michigan and into the orbit of Jack Kevorkian, an advocate of voluntary euthanasia. The mother of a friend of my daughter’s took advantage of Dr. Kevorkian’s services to end her struggle with a painful and terminal form of cancer. Because I have a low threshold for pain, I wondered if I, too, could find the inner strength to make such a decision if I ever needed to. Fortunately, two things prevented me from mentally pursuing this train of thought: the permanence of suicide and my intense fear of death.

But then turning seventy-five reawakened my suicidal thoughts. I worry that I will end up like my mother and her two sisters—lying in a zombie state in a nursing home and staring at the ceiling. To prevent that from occurring, and to avoid squandering my savings on expensive health care, I ponder suicide as an escape route.

Then I remind myself that suicide is a permanent solution, with no turning back. Thus I continue to choose—at least for now—to march forward into the unknown future.

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**The National Suicide and Crisis Lifeline number is 988.**  
The Lifeline provides free and confidential emotional support  
to people in suicidal crisis or emotional distress  
24 hours a day, 7 days a week, across the United States.  
**Call or text 988 to connect with a trained crisis counselor.**