

*By Maddie Henson*

## **I Matter, You Matter, We Matter**

Has something ever been taken from you that you expected to have for years to come? Something that should have shown up to your birthday parties, holidays, graduation, or wedding. Suicide has stolen so many cherished moments that should've happened, and at the age of five, it robbed me of my grandpa. Every celebration and big life event is a reminder that he should be there to celebrate with me but instead it has left me with questions such as, "How did no one notice?", "What could I have done?", and "How much pain were you in to choose to end it all instead of watching me grow up?"

The biggest weapon that suicide uses is the lie that their family, friends, and the world would be better off without them. As one of those family members and friends, I can personally say that's not true. We Matter says that everyone was created on a purpose and for a purpose. The concept of We Matter is not only a saying, it has to be an action. Leaving no one behind to think that any pain is worth ending at the cost of losing a loved one.

"I Matter", to me, means that my voice deserves to be heard. I'm meant to be here, and I have a purpose. "You matter" to me is an action. We have the opportunity and choice to show others everyday that we appreciate them. "We matter" means to me that together we can recognize that there is an ongoing problem, and we need each other to fix it. Hal David said it best when he wrote in the famous song, "What the World Needs Now Is Love". He states, "What the world needs now is love sweet love. It's the only thing that there's just too little of" (David). This song may be lighthearted and fun, but its theme is what cuts to the heart. It's the realization

that the most inexpensive thing to give is often disregarded when it's the solution to mending this solution. There are a million definitions of love, but this love must be a verb, an action, to love others and ourselves. To me "I Matter, You Matter, We Matter" means that we must recognize that we personally matter, were put on this earth for a purpose, and deserve to love and be loved, while you matter means that we must go out into our everyday situations and choose to look for ways to help people to feel loved, heard, and essential, and "We Matter" shows that together we can recognize that everyone is needed and essential.

The concept of I Matter, You Matter, We Matter doesn't work if we do not live it out. Rashida Costa once said, "Words are from the lips, actions are from the heart." (Costa). So many times with suicide, words aren't enough. Too many times did I contemplate how many "I love you's" from his granddaughter would be enough for my grandpa to choose to stay, when in actuality, there probably wasn't a number out there that could change his mind. I didn't know. No one did. This makes me wonder how many people we pass in our everyday lives that we don't see the internal battle they face. There are countless stories of simple things people have done for random people that changed that person's mind and helped them to decide that they matter. In applying this concept in my life, I have to choose to look up and focus on those around me, checking in on friends and family, smiling and helping everyday strangers, and staying quiet when there are signs presented.

We Matter brings awareness to another huge lie that suicide tries to convince us with, that "You are alone in this." Creating a culture where mental health is not looked at like a forbidden subject or something that people have to tip-toe around. According to YouGovAmerica.com, statistics say that 33% of Americans know someone who committed suicide, 9% have attempted suicide, and about One-third of Americans have dealt with depression on the regular but only 1

in 5 have talked to a professional. It's all around us, but yet we walk through it alone. Maybe if we were more open about the effects and consequences it has on people, more people could see their value in being here. If we presented those options of dealing with depression more openly and available, perhaps we would have more people getting the help they need. "We Matter" means creating a community that believes in "We", and the value of supporting one another through the good and the bad. My greatest wish is that no one would go through the lie that their depression was too much of a burden to share with someone else, just like how I wish my grandpa felt he could've shared his burden and allowed us to help him.

## References

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