

Dear Tony, from morningglory1607@aim.com

I went on your retreat today, or yesterday I guess, when you came to my high school. You asked us some questions, and I was too afraid to answer them then, but I think I'll take a shot at them now.

You asked us about suicide in my generation. You wanted to know why the rates are going up, why and how kids my age and younger think it's ok. If you asked anyone in my school, they would say that I'm the least likely to commit suicide, and I'm trully not going to. But I get how they feel, because I am kinda tempted sometimes.

It's lonliness. Plain and simple. And it's isolation. No one reaches out to us anymore, it's sad. With all the technologies when it comes to communication its easy to hide your real emotions. People ask how you are – but they don't really wanna know. If you say you're fine than you're accep
ted, if you say "not good" then the conversation pulls to an abrupt and awkward pause and no one knows where to go from there.

When I was a little girl I was made fun of, alot. And it gave me the attitude that I don't really care what anyone thinks of me. But I'm one of the lonliest people you will ever find. Because I'm so afraid to tell anybody how I really feel, or else show how much I've really been hurt.

But the real problem is that I know I have a problem. I think I might have a chemical imbalance. Because all I do when I'm alone, is think and torture myself and bring up old memories I shouldn't even have anymore. I sit and convince myself that nobody loves me when logically I know that's not true. I convince myself that I'm not good enough, and compare all the casual teasing I get now with the cruel jokes made about me as a little kid. But that's only when I'm alone. Hours before I would have been with my frineds smiling or laughing hysterically over something.

So the real problem is that everyone sees me as a happy, bubbly, confident person; which I really legitimately am some of the time. But alot of the time too – I'm depressed for hours at a time. I tried cutting myself twice (on two separate occasions), and it didn't do anything for me. It didn't help and just gave me something else to hide.

Oh, and you asked about that today too. The deal with that is that it's supposed to convert your emotional pain into physical pain. Because people instinctively know how to deal with physical pain, whereas we don't understand emotional pain. I've also heard that it does something chemically which calms you down, but I'm not sure if that's true. But most importantly its a cry for help. I think cutting is for kids like me, who are just yearning for someone to get them help, because it is absolutely terrifying to think of admitting this aloud to someone; hence the anonymous email.

I never really understood why people would call cutting or any type of self-harm a cry for help, until a few days ago. Tony, I am so afraid that if I tell someone how I feel alot of the time, then they'll constantly be on the lookout for it, and I'll lose the happy moments I do have and they'll be replaced by paranoid observation. But it's getting worse and worse, and nobody is noticing. In this last month alone I've probably cried myself to sleep at least 14

nights, but literally everyone thinks I'm fine, because of that damn smile I wear the next morning. But regardless of that I am leaving signs.

I compulsively procrastinate. I cannot bring myself to clean my room. my grades are slipping a little bit. I either never sleep, or oversleep. I avoid social situations when I know that once I'm there I'll have a good time. And I'm aware that I'm doing these things, but on a subconscious level I can't stop. Because I'm hoping someone like you will come along and say to me, "Look at these signs, you're not alright, are you?" And I'll finally be relieved to tell someone "no I'm not." But you know what I get instead, for leaving these particular signs? I get people who are supposed to love me and look out for me tell me over and over again, "Stop being a failure! What's wrong with you? Get your act together!" And no one believes me when I say "I can't." Because they all think I'm happy.

I told my mom; twice. That I thought something was wrong with me. I was absolutely petrified to let her in on this. So I didn't tell her how I felt completely. I just told her that I was sad the first time. I said I was all the time. And she got uncomfortable on me. I didn't mean to tell her, but she caught me crying. The next morning neither one of us knew how to react, so I just told her it was my time of the month and probably nothing and she said "Oh, ok." And acted relieved, then told me I could tell her anything if I had to... But I don't think I can. Because when I told her even that little bit of information, she got awkward toward me, and that was immediately lifted when I gave her a way to write it off. She wants to be able to help me, and I know she loves me, but she's just so much happier with the thought of a mentally healthy daughter. And I don't want to make her feel bad, but I'm starting to get angry.

This weekend I told her I thought I might have ADD. Because I literally can not concentrate in school anymore. At all. All I do is daydream, and let my emotions run rampant while pretending to pay attention. Every time I get anything done it's an accomplishment because there was quite literally a battle inside my head in order to stay focused long enough to do it. And my grades are suffering. So I mentioned it in passing, while venting to her about the magnitude of a school project and the stress it was causing me. She literally looked at me and said, "You don't have ADD." Then walked away! I wanted to scream. Because I know my mom loves me, but she's seeing what she wants to see.

And that's what I mean about finally understanding what it meant to cut as a cry for help. Because I cried so hard yesterday, thinking about that instance last night. Because I don't want to hurt myself, I don't want to cut, or start taking pills or go drink a bottle of wine downstairs. Or attempt suicide. But I honestly considered which one of those options would be the least bad one to try last night. I didn't actually wind up doing any of them but how else am I supposed to get help when no one takes me seriously without some physical scars. Emotionally I'm dying here. But people ignore that because I don't have band-aids on my wrists. But I can't help but think that maybe if I did cut myself, then I could show my mom, and prove that something really is wrong. It's kind of sick. But I don't know what else to do.

It took all the courage I had to tell my mom, who I tell nearly (but not quite) everything to. And even then, I didn't stress it. I just mentioned it. But shouldn't that have been enough? I can't bare the thought of going to my counselor who I've never had a serious conversation

with other then, "how are you?" "I'm fine thanks." and telling her that I think I may be going insane or have ADD, or depression or something treatable.

So to sum up this long rant of a letter. Suicide and cutting. They're for lonely people. People don't make decisions logically. They make decisions based on emotion and then try to justify why they made that decision based on logic after the decision has been made. So they're probably like me. They logically know they have family and friends who love them. But emotionally, at that moment, they don't feel like they do. So that makes them angry at their life and how it turned out. My generation's big on hiding their emotions. At least I know I am. It's turned into a curse. I highly suggest listening to the song, "How do you get that lonely" by Blaine Larson. You can find it on youtube. It always makes me cry. The best line in it is the one that goes, "And nobody knows". Because if you think about it, the song would've ended ok, if only somebody knew, or guessed, or cared. If anyone cared, and the person the song is about knew, they could've stopped it. Not that it's anyone's blame except the person who chooses that path, but still. I hope you get it.

Thanks for reaching out to us though. Even knowing that I don't know you very well. I've talked to you a few times. You really seem to care, and in such a way that I'm not afraid to tell you. Maybe it's because I know you've seen worse. Or maybe it's because I know that you would still see me as a human being, not a disappointment for being sad. And you would hopefully think that I'm able to get better, I can just tell from the stories you've told. You actually care about me. Just like the St. John's and St. Steven's kids. You probably wouldn't have known them by name otherwise – but you were genuinely sad by what they did. And that showed today. And made me hope you care about me without me having to be next.

I love your retreats. This is what I spent my meditation thinking about, and in my mind Jesus held me while I finally got to cry into His shoulder. In real life my eyes didn't tear because I was wearing my mask. But I know Jesus is there – and I have to thank you for that experience. And out of politeness I want to apologize for stealing so much time to make you read this letter. But in a way, I'm hoping I'm right in thinking that you really don't mind, because you really do care. And I hope it's not painful to you for me to say, but I think your ex-wife was a foolish woman. How could she leave someone who has so much love for the world, especially those like me that you don't really know, never mind those you do.

Thanks for allowing me to rant, and sorry again for taking up such a chunk of your time – but I had a lot I wanted to say. Thanks for reading and thanks for caring. That helps – a lot.

– A friend.