

Episode 8 – Understanding Suicide

Richard Lloyd Jones: This is Episode 8 of our Healing Through Consciousness podcast series here on Thinking with Somebody Else's Head. Today, we cast a therapeutic eye on suicide. I'm Richard Lloyd Jones.

Well, this is a relevant – and disturbing – topic for any who've experienced its devastating effects. The thought of someone taking his or her own life can leave us bewildered and even horrified. How could someone do that?, we wonder. And why? And when we see it happening in teenagers and young adults, we're even more mystified. They've got their whole lives ahead of them, we reason. And while that's true, it seems that opting out is becoming an increasingly common choice in many countries around the world – particularly in the so-called developed world. Lucky you are if you haven't been touched by this one. The guilt and anger that resides in the ones left behind is a real thing.

Freud put forward that suicide was a result of aggression turned inwards, while Jung offered complex thoughts and ideas about the psyche's journey needing to go through the totality of experience, and while all of that may play a part, it doesn't really help us in understanding and dealing with suicide.

Norberto Keppe's science of Integral Psychoanalysis is, in my view, uniquely equipped to deal with all psychological, emotional and spiritual crises, and in today's program, a real-life case study with a frequent listener to our programs, Jane, who brings her particular challenge in dealing with suicide.

Jane: I appreciate the opportunity to discuss this. I feel like I'm very prodded by some inner voice to write. And in particular writing about some of the things that I've gone through in my life. And I just seem to really resist that inner prompting and, you know, it's a writer's block, but you know, I realize all of the, you know, just from listening and reading Dr. Keppe's work that identifying those things that are in my way is the only way I'm really going to move past it.

Claudia Bernhardt Pacheco: Jane, what in your life you would like to write about? What intentions do you have with this writing? What is the purpose of this writing?

Jane: I had a lot of traumatic things that happened in my childhood. In particular, my mother took her own life and I was seven when she died and the journey to staying connected to God and not allowing, you know, anger and rejection of God to take over my perspective and to really move into healing and move into the path of forgiveness has been a real journey for me and something that I feel very good about. And I think that I have something to share about that. The story of creating your own life no matter what the conditions and moving into healing and forgiveness, I think there's something there to share. And I just haven't really been able to move myself to do it.

Pacheco: When you say that you had the opportunity to go through the journey of forgiveness. What do you have in mind? Who would you forgive?

Jane: Well, first myself for feelings that are associated with her death. And also my mother for, you know, a sense early on in my life of abandonment. Forgiving my father for anything that he, you know, might have not done as best as he wanted to do in his heart given the conditions he was living in. My brothers for their, you know, relating to me through their pain.

Pacheco: You mentioned something about anger. Why did you feel angry, or to whom and for what reason?

Jane: I guess, well, leaving me in a family of all men. So I really didn't have a mother and I really had to fend for myself in a way. There was kind of a lot of feeling of being unsupported. And also, I found my mother.

Pacheco: How did she commit suicide?

Jane: Hanging.

Pacheco: Mm-hmm. And what did she say or what was happening in her life, in the life of the family? Why did this happen? Was she under medical care, psychiatric care?

Jane: Yes. Yeah. She had experienced abuse in her childhood and she had had her entire thyroid gland removed and half of the parathyroid. And in 1963, there just was not good medicine for balancing out the thyroid. And so she was diagnosed as schizophrenic.

Pacheco: So Jane, can you see this, in what an inner strain this person must be in order to do this violent act. And spiritual distress and total confusion a person must be in order to do something like this?

Jane: Definitely.

Pacheco: Yeah. Is it okay for you if we go through this subject?

Jane: Yes.

Pacheco: A little bit? Okay. So, I would ask you, what do you associate your mother's suicide, committing suicide with?

Jane: Rejection of life.

Pacheco: Okay. Rejection of life. So now you are able to be aware that your mother is a kind of mirror to your own attitudes of rejection of life that you yourself, even though, thanks God, you don't have the same disease, but you also have in your life, in your

inner self, in your social life, in your psychological life, whatever, you have had, and you still have, the tendency and the attitudes many times against yourself. Like a form of suicidal attitude. Can you see this?

Jane: Yes.

Pacheco: Fine. So it's very important to acknowledge as much as possible the ways you can be suicidal. As we all are. Now, when you think about writing the book, this book, what ideas come to your mind about this book?

Jane: The purpose, I think, is to share with people maybe concrete ideas of how to live through difficult times.

Pacheco: So it would be to help other people?

Jane: Mm-hmm.

Pacheco: So, as a logical consequence, if you put obstacles in writing the book, what are you denying to do in your life?

Jane: Helping others.

Pacheco: Yes. Yes, Jane. And by denying the help to others and being more worried with yourself, your image, your concerns, your sentiments, your feelings, if you don't put as a main purpose in writing the book, the help to other people, you will be probably not able to write the book because you will always find excuses not to do it. Either it'll be not good enough, it will show some flaws and some mistakes from your part. It will be not a perfect book

Jones: This paragraph's not quite right, that sentence is not quite phrased exactly as it should be, the title's wrong.

Pacheco: Many, many egotistic, narcissistic preoccupations.

Jane: Mm-hmm.

Pacheco: So I think that if you become more aware of this egoistic, narcissistic approach and this denial in helping others in first place, if you don't realize this, it will be difficult. But if you do, then you will do a beautiful work. It will be even a help to yourself. Because maybe there was a big component in your mother's suicide of egotism and narcissism of hers, that ended up by this top of the self-destructivity.

Jane: Mm-hmm.

Pacheco: Each narcissistic or each egoistic attitude is a form of suicidal attitude in ourselves. Of self destructivity.

Jones: And maybe I would like to just say something about that, Jane, if I could just slip in here that what we're talking about in terms of suicide in this case, Claudia is in effect a suicide, a killing of our being, right? Of who we are.

Pacheco: Right.

Jones: We don't allow that to come forward as much as we could. And I think we're all guilty of suicide in that sense, right, that you're talking about.

Pacheco: Isn't it true, Richard, that human beings using 5% maximum of their talents and capabilities, is a form of suicidal attitude?

Jones: Yeah, absolutely.

Pacheco: Isn't a form of suicidal attitude to be living under a sensorial only aspect and cutting off the majority of our beings, the major part of our beings, which is the spirit, our spirituality, our transcendental life? So it's all a suicidal attitude that we adopt without acknowledging. Jane is lucky she's realizing this now. She's able to speak about suicide in a very strong, personal, experimental way.

Jones: Which would help a lot of people.

Pacheco: Whoa, for sure. If she gives a trilogical approach to that, even more it would be of enormous help.

Jane: Thank you.

Pacheco: Your mother probably Jane, if you would remember ... How old were you?

Jane: Seven.

Pacheco: Seven. But you may have some memories about the concept she had about life, her philosophy of life. And it would be so good if you would go through these memories, you know, an opportunity of an analysis or something. Because she probably felt also very victimized. And people who feel victims, they have a tendency to vindicate their feelings of being a victim or being attacked or being ...

Jones: Unjustly treated ...

Pacheco: Unjustly treated.

Jones: Using that as an excuse not to go forward, right?

Pacheco: So committing suicide would be like a penalty, a vindication for all those who they believe were the guilty ones for their suffering.

Jane: Yeah. Makes sense. I appreciate what you're saying, too, about the, when you feel victimized, you kind of wanna punish the guilty. I can see that in myself.

Pacheco: Yes, Jane. And this is very unfair. Every time we blame another person for our unhappiness, when we accuse someone for our own bad feelings, depression, unsatisfaction, we are being unfair. We are being projective and we are feeding our pathology. We are feeding our unhappiness and unsatisfaction, because the way out is not this one. We need to understand that the inner source of happiness is the only one that can be satisfactory.

Extro: Richard Lloyd Jones: I really like watching Dr. Keppe's Integral Psychoanalysis in action, as was on display there in Dr. Claudia Pacheco's analysis of Jane's writer's block. Keppe has critiqued the fundamental error of modern psychotherapy in his books. He says the big problem of psychology today is how the therapists censor the acknowledgement of any pathology. It's like everyone's terrified of admitting problems, and psychology feeds into that by looking at our difficulties as something that need to be improved. This is a type of censorship, because it leads us to think that we shouldn't have problems. Which, of course, is impossible.

And there's another aspect to this: the focus on problems always needing improvement ignores the fact that behind the difficulty lies a great sanity. The point is not to improve the pathology then, but to see it as a coverup of our basic health. Problems don't exist by themselves, after all, but as impediments or denials of our natural goodness. If we don't start from this point of natural health being the basis of life, no one will have interest in delving into problems because that'll just lead to an endless struggle to improve rather than a more refreshing view that problems only exist as denials of some healthy attitude or action. Problems need to be conscientized, not skipped over with anxious attempts to improve.

A subtle point, but we could see in Jane's analysis that the path to her writing her book comes through understanding how she is against it. So it's not a matter of creating a book writing action plan, but of seeing that the only thing standing in her way is her resistance to doing the good thing of sharing her experience and knowledge with others.

Well, in our next program, another case study analysis of youth and drugs. Compelling. And coming up next time.