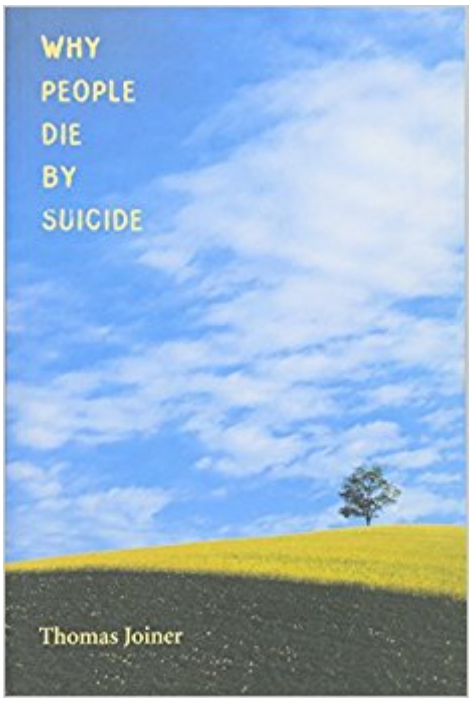
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Why People Die By Suicide



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Synopsis

In the wake of a suicide, the most troubling questions are invariably the most difficult to answer: How could we have known? What could we have done? And always, unremittingly: Why? Written by a clinical psychologist whose own life has been touched by suicide, this book offers the clearest account ever given of why some people choose to die.Drawing on extensive clinical and epidemiological evidence, as well as personal experience, Thomas Joiner brings a comprehensive understanding to seemingly incomprehensible behavior. Among the many people who have considered, attempted, or died by suicide, he finds three factors that mark those most at risk of death: the feeling of being a burden on loved ones; the sense of isolation; and, chillingly, the learned ability to hurt oneself. Joiner tests his theory against diverse facts taken from clinical anecdotes, history, literature, popular culture, anthropology, epidemiology, genetics, and neurobiology--facts about suicide rates among men and women; white and African-American men; anorexics, athletes, prostitutes, and physicians; members of cults, sports fans, and citizens of nations in crisis. The result is the most coherent and persuasive explanation ever given of why and how people overcome life’s strongest instinct, self-preservation. Joiner’s is a work that makes sense of the bewildering array of statistics and stories surrounding suicidal behavior; at the same time, it offers insight, guidance, and essential information to clinicians, scientists, and health practitioners, and to anyone whose life has been affected by suicide.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

In a book both personal and scientific, Thomas Joiner gives us the deepest understanding of suicide

that has yet been written. He reminds us that to go on living we need to feel that we belong to someone and that we are effective. But he adds a surprising third factor--we must not break down our fear of death. Joiner offers wise guidance not only to professionals, but to those who must live on after this kind of death in the family. (Pauline Boss, author of Ambiguous Loss)As a survivor, I find this book to be illuminating, informative, and, most of all, healing. Joiner searches for the "why" of suicide as both a scientist and a survivor himself, and his research and insights help us to make sense of the pain and confusion that led our loved ones to end their lives. (Carla Fine, author of No Time To Say Goodbye: Surviving The Suicide Of A Loved One)Joiner provides an elegant description of what leads people to commit suicide and what professionals, families, and friends can do to prevent the crisis that this tragedy creates for everyone involved. (Aaron T. Beck, M.D., University Professor of Psychiatry, University of Pennsylvania)Joiner provides a fascinating contribution to psychological literature that is certain to join the ranks of Ãƒâ mile Durkheim's Suicide and Karl Menninger's Man Against Himself. Not only has Joiner established professional prominence in suicidology, but he also has a profound personal relationship with the subject: his own father died by suicide. Drawing on the pain of this experience as well as on clinical and epidemiological evidence, Joiner has managed to conduct significant research into why some people die by suicide, while others survive their attempts at self-annihilation. His persuasive thesis is that practice, mental and physical, is what separates the completers from the attempters. In particular, those who have become desensitized to physical pain are most likely to orchestrate their own deaths successfully. Joiner also identifies perceived burdensomeness, little sense of belonging, genetics, neurobiology, and mental disorders as contributors to suicidality and completion. (Lynne F. Maxwell Library Journal 2005-12-01)Taking one's own life goes against one of our strongest urges--the instinct of self-preservation. The deterioration of this instinct, says Thomas Joiner, should be regarded as a symptom of disease...His theory, outlined in Why People Die by Suicide is that it happens when severely depressed people acquire fearlessness. How do people become fearless? Through practice and learning, he says. This explains the bouts of self-harm or failed suicide attempts that are not cries for help so much as rehearsals for a deadly finale. (Anjana Ahuja The Times 2006-01-30)[Joiner's] theory is the most comprehensive yet put forth to explain why some people end their lives. Joiner offers a dizzying array of studies to shore up his argument, and some of the evidence he offers is quite novel for the lay reader. (Philip Connors Newsday 2006-02-05)Mr. Joiner's book is a useful guide to suicidal behavior...Mr. Joiner draws on many scientific fields--genetics, neuroscience, psychiatry, evolutionary psychology--all of which, he thinks, have something to offer the study of suicide. The major lesson of his book is the necessity of keeping the

ability to commit suicide from coinciding with the desire for death...His book is a practical study, full of up-to-the-minute research. (Thomas Meaney Wall Street Journal 2006-04-20)It is the synergy and tension between Joiner's dual identity as suicide survivor and academic that imbues this book with both its power and a certain logical grandiosity...Joiner is to be commended for a powerful effort to integrate science and personal tragedy. In an easily digestible style, he reviews the breadth of modern suicide scholarship--biological, psychological, and social, and presents his integration clearly and forcefully. (J. Michael Bostwick Boston Globe 2006-07-12)The Florida State University psych professor, who grew up here and endured the suicide of his father not far from their Atlanta home, asserts that suicide is not simply an act but a process. Joiner describes how a person works up to suicide by overcoming the fear of death and the instinct for self-preservation. In accessible, somber prose, he also explains the conditions under which a person becomes suicidal. (Lawrence Wright Atlanta Journal-Constitution)Many researchers and clinicians have tried to explain why people commit suicide. The majority of studies that have been conducted to date have examined correlates and risk factors for suicidal behavior. However, many of these risk factors are found throughout the general population, and the vast majority of people do not engage in suicidal behavior. Dr. Joiner's theory is one of the first that integrates many of these risk factors into an explanatory model. His model makes sense both intuitively and empirically. What makes Dr. Joiner's theory particularly credible is the research that he and his students have done to support his model. Additionally, he is able to use his theory to explain such diverse behaviors as the suicide attacks on 9/11 and Kurt Cobain's suicide. What makes this book particularly interesting is that it begins with a prologue detailing Dr. Joiner's personal account of loss by suicide...This book is a must-read for clinicians and researchers who are involved with suicidal patients. Dr. Joiner's model highlights the acute risk factors for serious suicidal behavior thus providing tangible targets for assessment and treatment. Additionally this volume is an excellent resource for family members who have lost a loved one to suicide...Based upon the book's combination of sound scientific research with thoughtful personal reflections and examples it is given a strong recommendation. (Elizabeth L. Jeglic Cognitive Behavioral Therapy Book Reviews)The change in the way I now look at my dad's death comes because of [this] compelling book. (Steve Martin The Times 2007-06-08)

In a book both personal and scientific, Thomas Joiner gives us the deepest understanding of suicide that has yet been written. He reminds us that to go on living we need to feel that we belong to someone and that we are effective. But he adds a surprising third factor--we must not break down our fear of death. Joiner offers wise guidance not only to professionals, but to those who must live

on after this kind of death in the family. (Pauline Boss, author of Ambiguous Loss) --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

The reason for my rating is twofold. First, the author's theory -- three conditions for suicide (low belongingness, perceived burdensomeness, and fearlessness for lethal action) -- is persuasive. Second, everywhere in this book, we can feel the author's sympathy with suicide survivors. Ten years ago, my son killed himself when he was 25 years old. He was an energetic newspaper reporter. Not all, but many people were surprised by the sad news. When I read notebooks he had written, I found that he had felt that he was burden on his girlfriend. The author's second condition for suicide was particularly persuasive to me.

I cannot begin to share about how useful this book was as I completed my dissertation! Joiner's research has opened my eyes and given me a new perspective on research conducted on Suicide.

I saw the author Thomas, on Dr Phil I think? I immediately order the book. I wanted to hear his story about suicide coming from not only a man who lost his father to suicide.. But a man who is now a psychologist and understand what goes on inside the human brain.when you talk to therapist when dealing with grievance because you lost your father to suicide, they speak like textbook. I'm not cutting them down because some of them do a really good job and helping those of us who have gone through this. But this guy the author of this book has lived it.I wrote him an email after I read the book and he was very generous to write back and immediately. I don't even remember what it said it was so long ago. I bought the book because I had attempted over 5 times since the mid 90s. I had a bad car accident and my frontal lobe, the front of my head went through the glass window.I never showed signs of a mental illness until then. I was in a coma for a few hours. So I have Ben diagnosed with three mental disorders since 95. I bought it to help me. I really feel like God directed me to buy this book because he wanted to prepare me for the worst thing that ever happened in my life. I thought that car accident would be the worst thing but I was wrong. I had just finished the first chapter right is disgusted his father's suicide. The rest of the book is basically really technical about suicide and to be honest I didn't understand a lot of it because I think it's aimed at psychologist and psychiatrist to read. But 2 weeks after I was finished reading that chapter about his experience when his father committed suicide, my dad goes and kills himself. I am NOT a religious person but God prepared me.I say compleated because it is a new term that is being used in the suicide campaign. Committing suicide sounds like a crime so now we are using completed suicide because

that’s exactly what happened and what happens. God bless those of you who are thinking of suicide or who had a loved one complete suicide. Thomas, you are one heck of a guy and I really appreciate you for writing this. Even though I have a hard time comprehending the majority of the book, I have bad comprehension and I think it was too smart for me to be honest. But I really needed that first chapter

Book had some important information in it. Would like to have seen more statistics within it. If you are a slow reader or want a video version he does have a lecture online that you can watch which is about an hour and covers a lot of the stuff in this book.Look on youtube for "Why Do People Die By Suicide" - Lecture by Thomas E. Joiner, Ph.D" it is a 51 minute watch well worth watching it even after reading the book or other way round too.

...maybe too scientific and systematic, something that I never thought I’d say. I appreciate the rigorous approach to the subject (this is totally not another suicide memoir) but I didn’t always find myself agreeing with his theory. It seemed like the author tried to explain too many different aspects of suicide by shoehorning them into his basic rules instead of making his approach more complex/less systematic in order to account for them. That said, I for the most part agree with him and this is an enlightening resource for those seeking an understanding of why people intentionally take their own lives or attempt to do so.

Dr. Joiner has tackled a heartbreaking societal issue with research, thought, and personal experience. The book helped me consider the numberous reasons people choose suicide and helped me develop a better understanding of suicide’s complexity.

I read this book 3 years ago and feel it is an important book to read about the issue of suicide. For me, t made so much sense and was comforting because it provided those "answers" as to why suicide happens when it happens. The book provides families more understanding and compassion about the issue and leaves one reading the book with a much better understanding of the extreme turmoil a person contemplating suicide experiences when at the crossroads of making the decision to end their life. The book also offers the recommendation: when one is at a loss for words to provide those families losing a loved one to suicide, it’s important to say, "I"m sorry that you lost your ..... and for what happened," Acknowledging the grief is ok and so important.Dr. Joiner’s second book that follows this one challenges the urban legends around suicide and provides an

important message to society. We all have a responsibility to listen and pay close attention because we can offer help to those individuals contemplating suicide. Thank you, Dr. Joiner, for writing your books and for sharing your own personal story. Society has a long way to go to understand suicide; your books are helping us move forward in that regard.

Have felt the desire for suicide and wanted to understand more about it. Found that others have some of the same thoughts and feelings. It may end your problems, but creates problems for those left behind, even the ones you didn't know cared one way or the other. Informative.Gained insight into emotional behavior of self. Perhaps a different look at future options.

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