

I'm Done With the Lies by Andrea Guillory

One mother's struggle with bullying

As I sit here writing this, I'm just barely coming off of what I can only describe as a depression binge. Why am I depressed? It's the day before Mother's Day 2017. I'm a CHRISTIAN who loves serving in ministries at her church, I've got a wonderful husband, four healthy and happy kids, a new job, loving family and friends, and, on most days, I'm pretty well adjusted. Why in the world am I depressed?

I'm depressed because one of my children tried to kill himself. One of my twin sons, NINE YEARS OLD, tried to kill himself last month. My baby, the kid with a million questions, beautiful eyes and smile, an adventurous and funny kid, tried to kill himself. I am depressed because my son tried to commit suicide in our home. And I didn't even know he was being subjected to something that would drive him to want to kill himself. On this Mother's Day, as we're all getting sappy cards and gifts, I want to tell whoever will want to read my words that I am depressed because my son almost killed himself. And that I'm ashamed of being depressed. Not because I have an issue with mental illness –far from it. I'm ashamed because, as I type this, there are moms out there who are celebrating their first Mother's Day without their son or daughter who did succeed in killing themselves. My son did not succeed in killing himself. He is being surrounded by love and encouragement from our family and friends. He's in therapy. His school is working with us to ensure the bullying stops. And yet I'm depressed. I spent over a week in a state that scared my husband and prompted my friends to converge on my home to make sure I was ok. And yet there are parents out there who are trying to find a way to live after burying their child, a victim of suicide as a result of school BULLYING. This Mother's Day I will forgive myself for my depression binge, or what will forever be known in my house as "The Sunken Place" (thanks for our new favorite term, Jordan Peele).

I will tell our story in the hopes that more teachers and administrators recognize bullying before more of our kids turn to suicide as the solution. I will tell our story, despite my aversion to telling our business to people I don't know, so that more moms know that while we have a tendency to blame ourselves for our kids' suicide attempt, it's NOT OUR FAULT. Even as I type these words I am struggling with this concept – it was NOT MY FAULT that Alex attempted suicide. I am a good mother. I couldn't love

that boy more if I tried. And I'm working harder than ever to ensure he knows how loved and NECESSARY he is to our very survival. I AM a good mother. I am a GOOD MOTHER. YOU are a GOOD MOTHER.

Most importantly, though, I will continue to testify that you can come out of depression, no matter the cause, with the help of God. As amazing as my husband is, and as awesome as my friends are, I didn't start to come out of "The Sunken Place" until my husband reminded me of all the ways God has saved us in the past. How He loves me, thinks me special enough to send His Son to die for my sins so that I can bypass hell and get to Heaven, and how He continues to love me, even when I stop talking to Him or turning to Him with my problems and concerns. As much as I love my son, God loves him so much more. I sunk into depression because I forgot a fundamental truth – Alex doesn't belong to me, nor are his problems my responsibility to "fix". I can't CONTROL what happens to my children, nor can I SAVE them from everything they encounter. God reminded me just two days ago that HE ALONE controls, fixes, saves, heals, delivers, provides. I have to trust God with my baby. I can do this. And I will.

This Mother's Day, the best gift I will receive is the reminder that God is able to do exceedingly, abundantly, more than we can ever ask, hope, or think (Eph 3:20-21). And for me, at this time, that means saving my baby, delivering me from depression, giving my family peace and hope and love, and giving me the strength to be who God has called me to be. My prayer for any mother reading this is that whatever lies the devil tries to tell you – you're a bad mother because of [whatever reasons] – that you don't believe the lie. Believe the TRUTH – God has equipped you so that you can provide for your children, love them, prepare them for the rest of their lives, be their soft place to fall, and show them every day that they MATTER. That they are worthy of love and belonging (thank you, Brené Brown).

Bullying is an evil tactic of the devil. Self-hate and depression happen when we believe the lie that we're not worthy of being loved and treated well. But God teaches the TRUTH– if we're children of God, we are more than conquerors through Christ Jesus (Rom 8:37). We are overcomers through Christ. No weapon formed against us – NO WEAPON – shall prosper (Isaiah 54:17). Not one. Not suicide, not depression, nor anything else that is formed against us.

I'm done with blaming myself for Alex's attempt. I know the lie will try to slip back in from time to time, but I will turn to God (like I should have done in the first place). I'm

going to enjoy the family God has blessed me with as an act of praise and worship to Him, and as a way to honor all the parents who have lost their babies to suicide. I will honor them with the truth. This Mother's Day, my gift to myself and to others will be the truth. God Bless,

Andrea



Alex