

From the book,
Help, My Child Doesn't Want to Live!
How to reach your depressed, suicidal teen

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The Do Not SCRIPT!

SCRIPT—Solutionize, Criticize, Religionize, Intellectualize, Personalize, and Trivialize.

As a 7-time attempted suicide survivor, I can tell you first-hand that when it comes to talking to a person who is suicidal, knowing what NOT TO SAY is more important than knowing what to say. You need to understand some basic principles to avoid saying the wrong things. I've put these principles in a formula I call "The Do Not SCRIPT!"

DO NOT Solutionize

The number one mistake people made with me when I was suicidal was trying to "fix" my problems, after a few minutes of talking. I hated that! Please put your arrogance aside. **Suicidal depression is intricate. It is a complex internal network of unresolved, painful issues that YOU DO NOT UNDERSTAND.** No matter how much you may think you understand the issue, you don't. But if you listen long enough, you can understand enough to say something that is truly helpful.

DO NOT Criticize

It is ESSENTIAL to create an environment of complete non-judgement when comforting someone who is suicidal. The last thing you want to do is make them feel worse! Anything you say that makes them feel criticized, will push them deeper into depression. Please watch your tone, facial expressions, and body language. Don't be argumentative, taunting, or belittling. Don't make accusations or come across like you are interrogating them. And please avoid saying things like:

- What's wrong with you?
- You should be grateful for your life.
- What's going through that head of yours?
- If you don't love yourself, why would anyone else!
- You brought this on yourself!
- You're being selfish.
- Stop being a drama queen!
- I can't understand why anyone would want to kill themselves.
- This is just ridiculous.

DO NOT Religionize

I can personally attest to the power of prayer, but please do not bombard a suicidal person with religious rhetoric, Bible verses, earth-shaking prayers, and spiritual clichés! Let's not call their depression a demon or tell them people who commit suicide go to hell. Please avoid telling them they need to *fix their energy* or reciting empty sayings like: *"God don't make no junk... Jesus died for you; you should live for him... God is in control... You need to clean your chakras... You just need to meditate..."* No, no, no!

I have been a victim of people religionizing my crisis. There are not enough words to explain how disheartening, frustrating, and discouraging it is. It was a crushing weight of belittlement when people threw "enlightened clichés" at me. I 100% believe suicidal depression has a spiritual root. *HOWEVER...* During a suicidal crisis IS NOT the time to discuss such things!

DO NOT Intellectualize

Suicide doesn't make sense to people who have never dealt with suicidal depression. If this is you, you may feel inclined to try and "talk sense" into a suicidal person. PLEASE DON'T! Please! It may be illogical to you, but suicide is a logical solution to an overwhelming life full of pain for the person who is suffering. A person who has gotten to the point of committing acts of lethal self-harm are not looking for your logic and reasoning. They are in a numb place, almost like a mental coma. Logic and reasoning won't bring them out. The focus should be on making them *feel* something worth grasping onto.

DO NOT Personalize

"Why would you do this to me?!" (Or your father, your siblings, your friends, etc.) This phrase is probably the most common mistake made in suicide intervention. And here's another one: *"I would never do this to you!"* Please resist the insane pressure you will feel to interject your personal trauma into a suicidal person's crisis. It is indeed traumatizing for a person you love to want to commit suicide. I get it, but while you are trying to convince someone to live is NOT the time to unpack your trauma! It makes them feel like awful, selfish, failures who don't deserve to be alive—*basically more of what they are already feeling*. THIS IS NOT ABOUT YOU, so don't make it!

DO NOT Trivialize

The last principle in my intervention formula is *Do Not Trivialize*. It is essentially a summary of the rest of the SCRIPT. Solutionizing, Criticizing, Religionizing, Intellectualizing, and Personalizing are all ways of Trivializing a person's pain. These are behaviors that make the person feel isolated, unheard, misunderstood, and insignificant. I understand that you are only trying to help, by making their problems seem small and trivial. In your mind, if you can

convince them that what they're dealing with is "no big deal", they will just move past it and happily go on living. But you are WRONG! Doing that is not helpful. It's quite the opposite. Trivializing a person's pain is extremely hurtful and reinforces feelings of wanting to die, so please don't do this!

This is not a complete list, but here are a few common phrases to avoid:

- *Nothing is worth killing yourself over.*
- *That's nothing to be upset about.*
- *He/she wasn't worth it anyway.*
- *It's not the end of the world.*
- *So many people have it worse off than you.*
- *You're making too big of a deal about this.*
- *You're over-reacting!*
- *Come on... Is it really that bad?*

Please understand that *The Do Not SCRIPT* is about what is helpful, versus what is harmful. It is not about what is right, what is true, what is logical, what you believe, what you feel, or what you think you know. It is moving yourself out of the way and prioritizing the immediate emotional needs of the person in crisis. It's about understanding what doesn't work, so you can focus on what does.

For the full Do Not Script and other helpful guides, purchase your copy of

Help, My Child Doesn't Want to Live!
How to reach your depressed, suicidal teen

Although the book is written in a language that targets parents and caretakers, the information is universal and will be a helpful resource for anyone who wants to properly equip themselves for suicide intervention.

Available in the [Inspired Legacy](#) store or [Amazon](#). Also, please consider [making a donation](#) to the **Don't Miss Out on Life!** Suicide prevention and awareness campaign.