

TITLE: Suicide, My Greatest Influence

My greatest influence is suicide!!!

Yes, you read that accurately!!!

Some people may choose their favorite celebrity, a teacher, a coach, a friend, or Him as their GREATEST influence.

When asked, I say, hands down, Suicide.

An influence is neither good nor bad. It's an influence, as the definition states "the capacity to have an effect on the character, development, or behavior of someone or something, or the effect itself" (Webster's online).

So, yes, suicide is my greatest influence!!! Without suicide, I sure as hell would not know what it's like to lose a parent.

I lost my Pappy, my Daddy, on July 23rd, 2012 in my studio apartment. It was supposed to be an amazing day. He was going to meet my rehab doctors – I had suffered a herniated disc (T7/8) and was hospitalized for paralysis for four days – this time around. My Daddy, my hero was coming to see where his daughter and soon-to-be son-in-law were spending most days; Rehab Institute of Chicago. I was learning how to walk again. I was learning how to do all the things that we take for granted again. He was supposed to show up with my mom, talk to them, and learn about my road to recovery ahead. He didn't answer my twelve-year morning routine call at 7am. He didn't answer my follow up call at 9am. He didn't answer any phone call. He was MIA. We had our meeting; mom was on the phone and my partner in life and I were in the conference room with the docs. 'Fred' and I left and heading home...

It was 12:13pm CST and I know exactly where we were - driving North on I294 heading back to our lake house when THE call came through. I know the smells in the air. I know the clothes we were wearing when the phone rang. When tragedy strikes, you remember every detail. My mom was yelling, you must get home now!!! I knew. I knew it was my Dad. I knew he was gone. I NEVER thought it was going to be from a single gunshot through his mouth with a 12-gauge shotgun. NEVER.

You see, I already knew. The night before my Dad sent me a text that at 6:24pm, "I love you." I immediately turned to Fred and said, "something is wrong." I just had a feeling. Fast forward to Monday, and I knew when I talked to my Mom at 10am that something was wrong with my dad. I knew when he didn't answer his office line (he worked from home). I knew when he didn't answer his cell phone. I knew when he didn't answer the home phone that something was wrong.

I can say that my dad's suicide taught me so many things that no person should have to go through in the ways that I did. His suicide showed me so many ways in which I wanted to live and did not want to live. His suicide became my greatest influence. My before and after death life. Until you are faced with such a rock to your boat where you are taking on so much water, you either live or die, you choose. You continue to choose. Every moment with every breath, you choose. His death influenced me in a way that every day, I choose.

Without suicide, I wouldn't know what deep seeded anger is.

Without suicide, I wouldn't know how to appreciate each day as it's the last.

Without suicide, I wouldn't know the greatest love, my greatest love, my twin flame.

Without suicide, I wouldn't know truly how to deal with abandonment.

Without suicide, I wouldn't know what being in the darkest moments, my suicide attempt, and proudly coming out the other side a new version, Rachel 2.0.

Without suicide, I wouldn't know what my Divine purpose is.

Without suicide, I wouldn't have the compassion, the empathy, love, trust, and support I have now.

So, you see, my GREATEST INFLUENCE isn't a celebrity. My greatest influence is not my favorite fifth grade teacher, Mrs. Parsons. My greatest influence is not my dad alive. My greatest influence is not my mom before suicide. My greatest influence is not playing sports at collegiate level or beyond. My greatest influence IS suicide.

Suicide has influenced me in a ways greater than I will ever know. Suicide has paved the path for me to live with purpose and on a mission!

I continue to work on myself. I still speak at local schools. I am working on publishing a book. I started my own company, Rachel Lee, INC. where I am helping women heal their Mind.Body.Soul™ and I am an advocate for mental health, awareness, and prevention. I am back on anti-depressants and faithfully working on healing myself from the inside out so that I can truly love myself like I used to before July 23, 2012. If you would like to follow my journey, please join me at www.instagram.com/therachellee or if you are looking for 1:1 coaching or any of my services, please connect with me at www.therachellee.com or at [Nurtured Soul Studios](#) for all your yoga and barre needs.

Now, when someone asks you what your greatest influence is, know that it's not good or bad, it's just an influence.

So, what's your greatest influence?

If you or someone you know needs help, call 1-800-273-8255 for the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline. You can also text HOME to 741-741 for free, 24-hour support from the Crisis Text Line. Outside of the U.S., please visit the International Association for Suicide Prevention for a database of resources.