

ZEN PROJECT

BY ALBERT WRIGHT

Albert Wright discusses his mental health struggles, including suicidal ideation. There is a wealth of information available online. Immediate help is available call/text 988 to reach the suicide and crisis lifeline.

I want to ask you a few questions. These may be too personal, but I ask you to bear with me; maybe both of us will come out for the better.

Have you thought about your funeral? How many others would come? Have you day-dreamed or laid awake at night and pondered the meaning of life? How are you meant for something else but have come up short of your own expectations? Have you thought of suicide? How those who know you — family, friends, others — would be better served without you around? I have. I have many times. And, the truth be told, the answers were hidden deep within the abyss, a secret kept from all.

The first I recall such thoughts was when I was young 10...11...12... somewhere around those ages. I recall similar thoughts when I was 15 and my hero, my grandfather, was killed; and again, at that age of 20...21...28...31...35...38...39...40. A long list that probably doesn't cover the extent of my disillusion. These thoughts were about self-absorption, self-centeredness, even a little about power and control.

Throughout this time my morals and ethics degraded, discarded, tossed to the side. A darkness descended upon me and altered the universe I lived in — a void temporarily filled with sins too great to mention. And each time a sin was committed, the rush of shame and guilt filled this void. But this too only lasted until the next sin came along. Minimizing, marginalizing, justifying allowed me to carry on, to stay functional.

The suicide thoughts came next.

These suicidal thoughts slowly crept in at first — but they exploded one Monday morning. Anger, then numbness set in, embarrassment, shame, guilt. They sometimes come back. I somehow manage. I believe I had some angels help along the way. They said the right words at the right time to bring me out of the numbness, the void, the abyss. Each time my mind wandered down this long path, a light was shined guiding me back. A kind act done...belief in some goodness underneath — small things to them; huge things to me.

I've had these thoughts. I can't sit here and say, I won't have them again. The future is unknown. What I can say is I know where to go for help. I can say that.

Oh, I did find out how many others would come to my funeral. Two. Two others. | AW