

Sarah slapped me on the head and said, "How could you?!?"

I had just finished showing a video on suicide and leading a discussion on the topic with the youth at Station X. This girl was upset that I didn't warn her because this is such a sore spot for her. She had been struggling with suicide lately. At Historymaker she had received prayer for it. The video used in the discussion was a song by the band Good Charlotte called "Hold On." She told me how she knows this song so well because this is the one that she listens to before she cuts herself. It is a very sad song for her. She said I should've known and I should've given her notice and warned her. But after all that she talked to me about how she thinks she is bi-polar. She has the symptoms. As a group we also talked about some warning signs of suicide and she told me how she exhibits almost all of those. I told her that she should get diagnosed by a doctor but she doesn't want to because then it will be proving one of her fears.

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Jamie was left to walk alone home. She called me while walking home, crying and sad because she was alone to deal with this. The minutes on her phone were about to run out. She was going to go cry at her crying tree rather than go home because if she were to go home, she'd just have to listen to her mom yell at her and complain that she is a bad mother and feels like committing suicide. She said she can't cry at home, the only place she can cry is at her crying tree... but this time she'll be alone and she doesn't like that. She said not to worry because she won't commit suicide because she's promised "Spidey", Art, my mom and I that she won't commit suicide. I told her to look up the scripture verses that I've text messaged to her previously while she's crying under the crying tree and that Jesus will be with her... she won't be alone. She replied, "Hmph. What good that will do. How will it help if I can't feel him and he never seems to help." She has a point... sometimes faith is hard to feel when we're in a crisis. But, I didn't believe her. She knows that she can feel God's presence. All I could reply though was, "be safe tonight. You should go home." She texted me about 20 mins later that she had decided to go home.

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"I don't suffer from insanity... I enjoy every minute of it."
"Cut myself into pieces. This is my last resort."
"I don't want to do this anymore. I Hope you forgive me as I leave."
"Someday I will get out."

His Instant Messenger names are always very dramatic and disturbing.

LISTEN

*I sit and cry
All alone
You care only after I cut, or
attempt suicide
You don't listen until it's too late.*

*I ask for help, for a hug, for you to
sit with me while I cry.
Instead, you are "too busy."
I am not that important anyway,
right?
What do I do that's good?*

*I care
Maybe too much and to the wrong
people.
I sit with you, I cry with you, I
listened, I stopped you.
Then I ask for help and "not right
now" is your response.*

*So I say fine,
I'll hurt myself, 'cause everyone else
can,
And when in Rome, right?*

I can listen, why can't you?

One of my youth gave me this poem the other day. She wrote on a night that she had self-mutilated or "cut" herself.

Self-mutilation is harming oneself by injuring the body. Cutting, the most well known form of self-mutilation, falls under this definition. It is most common on the wrist or forearm, but teens may also cut their legs, feet, abdomen, breasts, or other places.

"Since cutting is generally done in

"I want to become a YFC worker just like you."

This comment kinda shocked me, coming from a youth who recently had been explaining to me his reasons why he doesn't believe in God.

"It's rewarding. There's nothing more I like to do than help people."

This conversation made many months of hard work pay off. Last winter, he and I had a long conversation about his perspective that God is a crutch for weak people. He said that the "evidence" that people feel of the reality of God is just their brain going into realms that it isn't used to. (Our brains only use about 10% of their capacity.) He claimed to not believe in God, but he still attended Station X and the LifeChanger's course because he liked the people.

A few months later, he told me he wants to be a YFC worker. I then asked him about his beliefs because he had previously told me how he doesn't believe in God. His beliefs had changed over the last few months because of what he had been learning at LifeChangers and the times we'd been hanging out. He believes in God now and has a faith. He has really been grasping the concepts and I can tell that his mind has been changing on his views. I can see subtle but meaningful changes in his life now.

Later, he said, "I have to say... you've changed my life. I was talking to my girlfriend today about it. You are like, my hero."

Enough said....

These are snippets of conversations I've had with different youth in the last few months. Thank you all so very much for the many ways you support my work with the youth. You truly are my partners. I feel very privileged and blessed. May the Lord continue to use me to help change the youth, one life at a time.

-Calvin

private, no one really knows how widespread it is, however experts say upward of three million Americans hurt themselves on a regular basis." ("Cutting to Cope" by Ken Mueller, CPYU.) The Journal of Abnormal Psychology estimates that anywhere from 14 to 39 percent of adolescents have engaged in self-mutilating behaviors.

I am running into this problem more frequently. Among the youth that I am regularly in contact with, I am aware of at least 6 that are active cutters. It is a challenging situation to deal with.

The act of cutting is a symptom of a greater problem—abuse, mental illness, loneliness, family problems, etc. All of these issues generally generate deep pain in the individual, and cutting becomes a coping mechanism. The physical pain is easier to deal with than emotional pain and cutting allows some teens to feel again.

Steven Levenkron's book Cutting: Understanding and Overcoming Self-Mutilation, lists six personality traits that are necessary in order to help a teen in crisis: confidence, empathy, knowledge, understanding, nurturing, and optimism.

While I can't provide an instant solution to such deep pain, I do know the tools necessary to help. To equip youth with these tools and to lead them to Christ's love is my passion in life.

***Can you feel my excitement?
Want to get in on it?***

Call or email me. Coffee is on me.

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