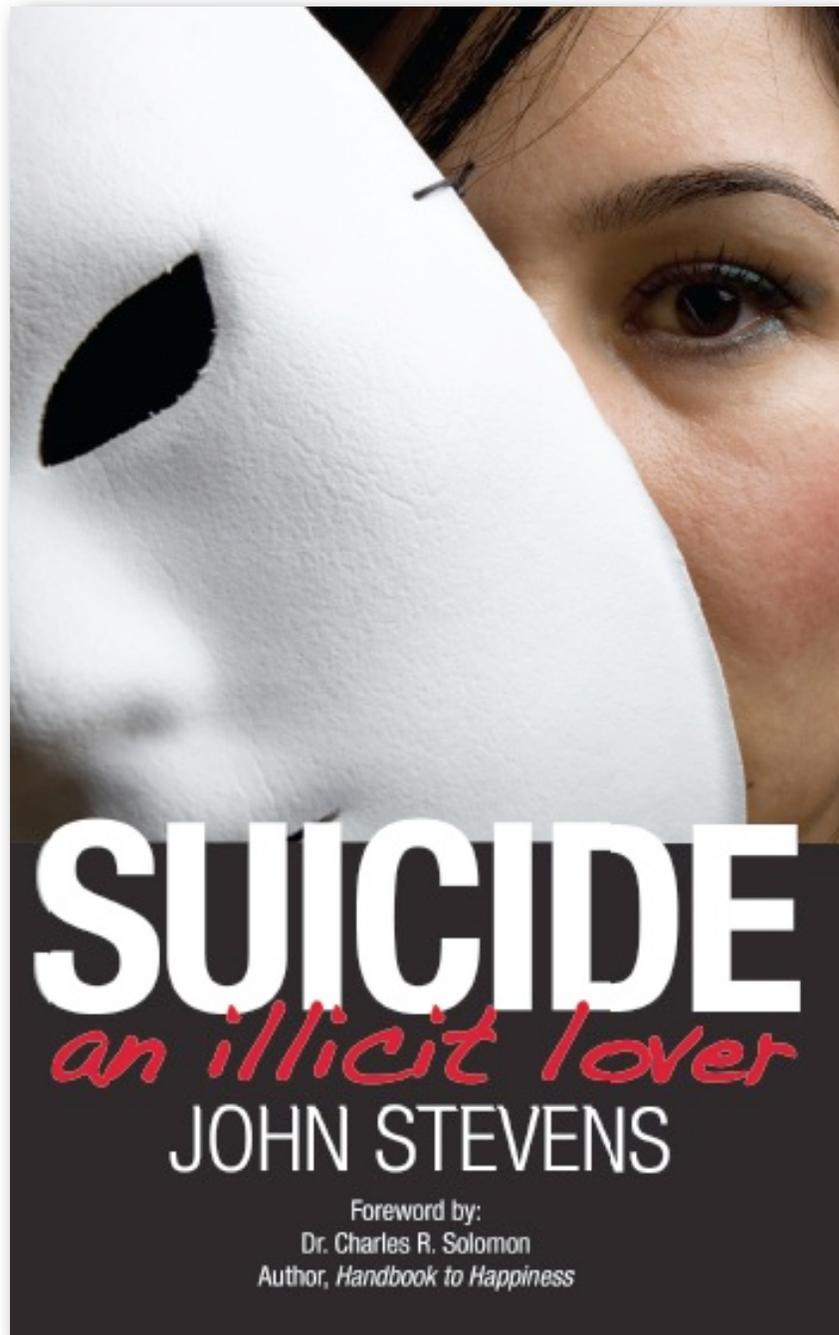


Excerpt Edition



SUICIDE

an illicit lover

JOHN STEVENS

Foreword by:

Dr. Charles R. Solomon

Author, *Handbook to Happiness*

Excerpt Edition

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Foreword by: Dr. Charles R. Solomon, President and Founder of Grace Fellowship International. Author of Handbook to Happiness and The Ins and Out of Rejection.

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mark@marksphillips.com

SUICIDE: An Illicit Lover

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INTRODUCTION

The death statistics of America's youth portrays suicide as a national tragedy and makes this book a must for concerned Christians. John Stevens displays a remarkable ability to graphically describe suicide's flirtation with death. I wept to read of the suicide victim's plight, and rejoiced as John found Christ and recommends Him to others. If you know someone who has threatened suicide, get this book into their hands. You'll be saving their old life and giving them New Life.

—BOB LARSON, Evangelist, Lecturer, and Author.
(Author of Hell an Earth, The Day Music Died, The Guru and others.)

Suicide, with its sinister allies, depression, despondency, and despair, along with their companions, loneliness and rejection, provide the psychiatrist with an array of human suffering that fill most of his treatment time. Hence, this subject is of vital importance. In this book, John Stevens has given the answer from God's Word. It will provide, not a relief of symptoms or an alternative life style, but a New Life in Christ—a living Lord, available to all.

—PAUL E. KASCHEL, M.D., Psychiatrist,
Grand Rapids, MI

NOTE: Paul Kaschel served on the board of directors of Grace Fellowship International for a number of years. During the 1980's, he conducted a number of seminars in Europe which were greatly used of our Lord in the lives of believers. He was capably translated by Dr. Walter Stuart, career missionary in France.

—DR. CHARLES R. SOLOMON

In Shakespeare's famous tragedy, Hamlet, the young prince grapples with the question of whether life is worth the living. In our time, persons of all ages struggle with this same question. In this book, John Stevens lays bare the deceitfulness of suicide as an answer to human problems, and he provides an answer to human needs that all who are lured by suicide should consider.

—DON MARTIN, JR., Editor,
Command Magazine

FOREWORD

When I met John Stevens in 1959, I was a troubled person looking for answers to life. I had been through a near nervous breakdown during which I was treated with Thorazine and had developed a duodenal ulcer. Although I had never actually planned suicide, I had looked covetously at those senior citizens who had somehow made it through life and would soon be graciously taken out of it by the natural process.

Feelings of inferiority, depression, and anxiety were a way of life. I was in my thirtieth year and had yet to find the reason for which I had made my entrance on this planet. For six years after I met John, I continued my search for an answer to the internal conflict which plagued me, all to no avail. I had looked outside the church and was now looking inside the church while being feverishly engaged in church work.

At the end of the six years, October 1965, I was at the utter end of my resources and had no one to guide me through the seemingly endless black tunnel of depression and despair. Although John had passed through this same tunnel and had come out victorious on the other end, he could not communicate the directions to me that I might successfully negotiate the tunnel and enjoy the peace and inner harmony that he obviously knew.

At the point where I could not go on another day, the answer in this book became a reality in my life that October night; and I was released from the 'tunnel experience' of psychological trauma so common in our day. Some time later, I was able to interpret to John the details of that which had taken place in both of our lives in a manner which enabled him, also, to communicate with others who are yet in the 'tunnel'.

He has effectively done that in this book for those persons who find themselves in such a state that death is more inviting than life.

John has successfully negotiated the course that you may now be walking (or crawling) along, and herein leaves significant markers beside the path that you may be assured that you are not the first, nor the last, to pass this

way. This book could be your first ray of light which signals the end of your tunnel.

I commend to you this treatise from the pen of my closest friend, counselor, confidante, and most importantly, brother—John Stevens.

—CHARLES R. SOLOMON, Ed. D.
Author of Handbook to Happiness

IN MEMORIAM

John A. Stevens

John was one of my first friends when we moved to Denver in 1959 and became my best friend, confidante, and a founding board member of GFI, along with Dr. Raymond Buker, ten years later. Though he was a more mature believer than I, he was to understand how to articulate what God had done in his life after my experience of the cross in 1965.

His study of the truth, and sharing it with others, led to his ministering to the aftermath of suicide and/or its sinister appeal to hurting people. This stemmed from the personal experience of his first wife's suicide, and his fantasizing of it as an answer for his own life. This resulted in his salvation, and simultaneous co-death and co-resurrection with Christ, which he was to identify incrementally in the years to come. God's sovereign dealing with his life is a testimonial to God's grace, which resulted in his intimate fellowship with his Savior, Lord, and Life, and an overflow of ministry to others.

John was a stalwart in business, as well as ministry; and I am blessed to have known him and to be challenged by his walk with our Lord and trust that many will be, likewise, as he, being dead yet speaketh (Heb. 11:4).

His book is re-published as a memorial to his life of service to our Lord and as a testimonial of hope to those to whom Suicide, the Illicit Lover, might currently be appealing to thwart the Spirit's deeper work in their lives that God might receive the glory.

– Charles R. Solomon
Founder, Grace Fellowship International

Suicide: An Illicit Lover

CHAPTER 1

YOU KILLED YOURSELF! WHY?

The phone rang. Its shrill sound finally pierced through my senses and penetrated my busy preoccupation. Little did I suspect that this one phone call would change the entire pattern of the days and months that lay ahead.

With a reflex motion, I reached out, picked up the receiver and identified myself, without totally disengaging my thoughts from their previous course.

Then my mind snapped quickly to attention as I recognized the voice of a very dear friend. The intense fear of impending tragedy had constricted her vocal chords, for she shrieked as she blurted out a plea for help. “My sister Karen is going to commit suicide; can you come right over?”

Charlotte was not easily given to hysterics, yet she was obviously in a state of near panic. I knew that she would not have called unless the situation were serious. There was no question about it. Charlotte’s sister, Karen, was going to take her life!

I already knew what Karen had been through, and I also knew that she had threatened suicide before; this time she was determined to make her threat a reality!

This call couldn’t have come at a more inopportune time. All week my schedule had been crammed with last minute details and appointments as I prepared to go to the hospital for major surgery and its subsequent five weeks of convalescence. Admittance to the hospital was scheduled at three o’clock, and it was already past noon.

Karen’s life swayed in the balance for the next hour. It is always that way when Suicide comes to take someone with him into the arms of death. The

thread of her life was being stretched by the hands of Time, with Death pulling on the other end.

To those who are not confronted by the circumstances the victim is facing, suicide appears to be a final solution to what is only a temporary problem; but to the victims of this illicit lover, Suicide offers an inviting bed of comfort and release.

Karen's romance with Suicide was broken in the hour that followed; but as I went directly off to the loneliness of my hospital room, I was haunted by the memory of her struggle. There was no assurance that she would not submit again to the attractions of Suicide.

Later that night, as I lay thinking of Karen, past memories of others who had suffered illicit affairs with Suicide began to inundate my reflections. These old memories became so vivid that they merged into the hustle and confusion of that same afternoon. It was as though the years had been shrunk to reveal the forms of forgotten history.

Fortunately, our minds tend to suppress conscious thoughts of the past, especially those times when tragedy strikes; but such memories are never lost—just forgotten. Charlotte's call, my time with Karen, the subsequent trauma of surgery, all combined to recall the former days into the reality of the present.

Five weeks had passed since that afternoon when Charlotte's phone call had rung its intrusion into what had started out to be something close to a routine day. But now my days were no longer routine; for I was constantly being stirred from within to expose Suicide for what I knew him to be—an illicit lover.

Karen had not been the first to seek someone to protect her from Suicide; nor was she to be the last of many who had and would come my way for help. Suicide was gaining power by leaps and bounds. Someone had to go into battle against him, to meet him head on and strip away his mask of attractiveness. It would be a distasteful task. I had avoided it far too long—I was now ready for the confrontation!

Some invisible force goaded me on, to search the sterile shores of my memory, of other friends and acquaintances who had been violated and brutally slain by ‘that fiendish lover’ Suicide. It was not a pleasant experience, searching through the old relics of the Iron Maidens that had been their masochistic bed of torture in life. I hesitated, as I saw again, through the eyes of recollection, their thrashings against the agony that Suicide had irrevocably thrust upon them.

I was repelled many times along the way by the repugnance of the memories that were strewn in my path; yet an unseen power urged me on down into the Valley of Recollections. It was as though I had been mysteriously selected, through some strange form of election, held by the very souls of those poor harried creatures who had committed themselves to Suicide. Instinctively, I knew that I was to become a special messenger for them. What would be the message that they would send back with me to the living?

By time and circumstance, their lives and mine had mysteriously been brought into more than just a casual union through the maze of experiences that made up our years. Because of my close relationship with them during the years before they embraced Suicide, many people had asked me— why? I didn’t know. *I finally mustered the courage to address the memories of those whom I had known so well with the inevitable question—“You killed yourself—why?” These are their answers.*

The first response echoed across my mind as though she had spoken from the hollowness of the gloom that had filled the suffocating air of her last days. I heard her speak, as my memory relived those moments before she had taken that final step with Suicide, into the valley of death from which she could never return.

Tell them that Christmas and New Year’s had come and gone into the irreclaimable, lonely past. Foolishly, I had forced the hope upon myself that this holiday season could once again be like the happier days of Christmas past. But the spirit of Christmas never came to me! My hopes were as empty as the mockery of the tinsel joy that filled the cavernous department stores with jostling bodies of ill-tempered

shoppers. One thought forcibly struck me—the holidays were never going to be the same again. Christmas does that to people, sometimes. New Year's confirms it. The past has faded beyond recall. Never again can life reclaim the wasted joys of yesterday.

A blanket of sadness slowly descended over me, suffocating me in the darkness of the hypocrisy of life. My life began to lose its radiance long ago. Through the years, the vitality and glow had been sapped away and had faded completely during this final Christmas season. I didn't realize that a life which is only allowed the light of introspection would never blossom again into the former joyful, carefree beauty that it once knew. The roots of my life had withered from the fungus of despair that had slipped in and formed an embryo of reflected self-pity. The stem of my life was hollow. There were no buds of joy left to burst forth with new blossoms.

After a thoughtful pause of deliberate silence, the first voice of memory finally spoke again. She began to describe her last day upon earth:

There is a kind of melancholy, internal gloom, that holds an almost addictive lure within it. It is like drifting away into a narrow, dimly lit street, suspended in a sea of chilling fog. Alone, drifting nowhere—yet, what is that exquisite warmth that surges up from within a person's soul? Why does cold, lonely rain soothe a harried face? Why does self-pity feel so good? So strange! I feel so totally dejected as I drift in my haze of gloom, filled to the very brim of overflowing passion with a consuming remorse that brings only more dejection.

Oh! My God! How satisfying it is to feel sorry for myself! How that craving chews and cuts its way through me! No one else can satisfy this ravaging addiction. Addiction? Am I hooked on my melancholia? Is my dependence upon self-pity? Why can't someone else feel this sorry for me? They don't care! I hate them! They don't care. But I do! Only I can inject the morphia of self-pity! It alone gives me what I want! Pity! Someone to feel sorry for what life has dealt uniquely to me. To those who ask 'Why?' tell them that's how I felt!

Then the first voice of memory reached a peak of frenzy,

Why has life been so cruel, so berserk? Did it selectively spit out a fierce torrent of devastation straight into my path? Why me? Look at my life . . . a total shambles! What have I done to deserve this? I don't deserve it! And nobody cares! That's why! That's why I don't recognize the rage that fuels a destructive anger within my tortured soul. Self-pity has hidden the murderous impulse that beats upon my heart.

The voice of her memory slowly faded in the confusion that marked her last moments. I called to the fading of her memory. "What shall I tell them? That rage did it? That Suicide took you away in a fit of uncontrollable anger? Why won't you answer—they are still going to ask—why? What shall I tell them?" But there was no answer.

Then I heard a second voice. Hers was different from the first:

Tell them that I suffered more heartbreak than any other person who has ever loved. Tell them I was lonely! I felt rejected when my first marriage went sour. It wasn't my fault! There were dozens of things that he could have done to change. If only he had changed! If only he had done the little things I wanted him to. I had loved him so much—once. But he never changed, and we got a divorce. He rejected me! True; I didn't love him any more, either. But it wasn't my fault! If only he hadn't been so stubborn. If only—if only he would have changed!

Yes, I was lonely when my new lover came along. A little bitter, perhaps. But why shouldn't I have been? Wasn't one rejection enough to make a person 'careful'? One crummy marriage is enough to make anyone careful. No, I didn't completely trust my new boy friend. How could I? Once you're burned, you have to be suspicious. But I fell madly in love with him, anyway. No, I wasn't about to stick my neck out again and give him my love. I deserved more than that! I gave my first husband my love, and look what it got me—rejection! I loved him because I wanted to be loved more than anything else. But then he went away. He just broke it off! He used me and left! Cast me off like some old worn out pair of pants. I loved him so much! I loved him because I wanted his love, and he rejected me.

How dejected I am! No one has ever suffered the tortures of a broken heart like mine. I am shattered by the cruel hammer of rejection. I hurt all over! Every member of my tortured body reeks with pain. The normal dose of barbituates won't ease the screeching torment that racks my mutilated soul . . . I am frantic for relief. Can't you see that I am fighting an invisible monster? My hatred of this monster wells up in great clouds of excruciating anger. My hatred screams for destruction. I must destroy myself! Murder is the only just retribution for what his rejection has done! I must kill myself, in retaliation for his heinous crime against me!

As mysteriously as her memory had appeared, it left.

I ran after her, dissatisfied with what the voice of her memory had said. I called after her, "Is that what you want me to tell them? Shall I tell them that he deserved a just punishment for what he did to you? Shall I tell them that you directed that punishment upon yourself? Yes, I'll simply tell them that you were the victim of a lousy deal; and, therefore, you killed yourself to take the punishment that some stupid guy deserved. But they are still going to ask—why? What shall I tell them?" The second voice of memory, like the first, was silent.

...

[pages 19-26]

...

I called to her one more time, "You killed yourself—they still ask—why? What shall I tell them?" Faintly, I thought I heard a pleading voice reply say, "Show them Jesus and the Cross of Christ. Only He could have freed me . . ."

As I was about to leave the Valley of Recollections, a chorus of voices were raised in unison, as if reaching out, grasping for their last hope of communication. They called:

Messenger! Messenger! Tell them this! Please! Tell them it is too late for us. Tell them they should know what Suicide is really like. The horrible thoughts! The panic! That last moment of agony when no one came. It was an eternity of hours. They should know about the slowness of deliberate death. How we struggled to withdraw our submission to the clutching, outstretched arms of Suicide. How he laughs a shriek of leering triumph over his foolish victims.

Tell them! Please! We beg you, tell them what torturous romance we have suffered in the tenacious grip of our fiendish lover, Suicide. Tell them about us—yes, as ashamed and humiliated as we are. Tell them. In the name of God, tell them how it happened! About the Dangerous Romance. Tell them what we got ourselves into. Please! We beg you! Show them the Beautiful Romance with Christ, the Son of the God of Love. Show them Jesus and His Cross of Calvary!

They shrieked, in a desperation of anguish that almost deafened my recollection of all else.

Don't let them do it! Tell them! Tell them—why!

Slowly, I turned to climb up the hill from the Valley of Recollections, to carry my ponderous burden of their message to the living. Was I equal to the task set before me? Only God will ever know.

Order *Suicide: An Illicit Lover*, by John Stevens
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