

Just as **everyone is different**, everyone's mind is different, therefore everyone's illness and health is different, and each person experiences crisis in their own unique way, so it is hard to write tips general enough to be useful to anyone, but specific enough to actually mean something and be practically workable, especially if we are not thinking straight at the time and therefore need clear, concise instructions, not vague 'pep-ups'.

I also notice that every time I have a crisis it is slightly different from the last, so the way in which I would apply any such tips will be different, as I learn and progress through the necessary number of crisis cycles towards wellness. For instance, in the early stages of my illness, (the first year or so) when I found myself in a crisis, **I assumed I was going to die**. I therefore went off without my phone, keys etc. I made no effort to contact my husband, as I assumed there was no point in putting hard work (as it is at such times) into maintaining a good relationship with him, since I wasn't going to be needing it any more. After 17 or so crises in which I didn't die, I am now assuming, on the balance of probability, that **I am going to survive**, so it is worth maintaining contact, in order that the relationship is less damaged and easier to repair when the crisis is over.

Tips from Faith for Faith, to survive a suicidal crisis (with or without psychosis to contend with), Spring 2017.

1. Think you are going to survive it (even though you have urges not to). Plan accordingly. Take your phone, crisis card, possibly house keys, and be alert. **Keep in touch with your loved ones who care** where you are. Do not leave your possessions where they might get stolen or wet. Do not ditch your core values of courtesy and consideration for others. **You are a warrior**. You are capable in the face of appalling trials most people have no concept of. You've done this before. You are coming back!
2. **You are not to blame** for this. Be aware that self-stigma can exist, and you don't have to do it.
3. This is a test, to the limit of what you can bear, not to destruction.
4. Look for the meaning in this test. If you can figure it out, you can walk free (if limping slightly, like a hero). It is probably a new key each time, to add to your collection of hard won lived experience and wisdom. **Talking to the right people will help** find the key. If you end up in hospital, try asking a nurse. The mental health nurses in Fulbourn can sometimes be helpful, giving information and experience which may provide meaning and context for you. In or out of hospital, **The Samaritans are often good at this and always available on 116 123** (another reason for taking your phone). If you don't find it with the first person you try, ring again and get another Samaritan - they are all unique people with their own insights and listening styles, so keep going till you hit lucky. They needn't know how many times you've called, or even your name, and there are no limits on how many times you can try, other than your own exhaustion - feel free to rest as needed - just because you have an 'urge' to end your pain as quickly and radically as possible doesn't mean its 'urgent' - there is actually more time than you think, and this is important so it's worth doing it properly, soldier. **You are valuable. Your life has meaning**. Organise things (you can plan your suicide, so plan this) in order that you can have all the time and help you need, and if you're not getting the help you need from one place or person, move courteously on to the next.

Good luck!

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