

After Witnessing Mother-in-Law's Horrific Suicide, Former Miss America Has Shocking Realization

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Betty Maxwell, author and former Miss America (2016), became a strong advocate for mental wellness after witnessing her mother-in-law's death by suicide. In her book, *Miss Unlikely: From Farm Girl to Miss America*, she writes that she was inside the house when she heard a loud sound, only to run out the front door and find her mother-in-law lying on the ground, shot.

Unfortunately, though Maxwell and her husband saw signs that something was off with his mom, they didn't say anything to her because they thought, *She's such a godly woman; she's just going through a temporary rough patch*, she says on the *Charisma News* podcast on the Charisma Podcast Network. After the suicide, Maxwell discovered how crucial it is to say something if someone shows any unusual alteration in mood or actions.

"Even if it's the most godly person that you know, still talk to them, still ask them if everything's OK," Maxwell says. "Still make sure that you're doing everything that you can because God gave us each other. He gave us other people for a reason. We're supposed to rely on Him, but we're supposed to be able to rely on each other too; you have to be there for people. That's what God calls us to do."

This presented a wake-up call for Maxwell and her husband, not only when it comes to overall mental health awareness, but in

regard to working through strong emotions in marriage as well.

"When this happened to us, we realized, first of all, how little we were informed about all things related to mental health and suicide," Maxwell says. "... It's never talked about because people feel like it's such a sensitive issue. No one wants to bring it up. No one wants to hurt anyone's feelings and talk about this, but it needs to be talked about, especially for the survivors, because the survivors are the ones left to then pick up the pieces and deal with it and figure out this puzzle of why there's so many questions. There's anger, there's bitterness, there's sadness and it's just so much that we can't not talk about it.

"... And my husband as well, we actually just recently spoke at the Suicide Prevention conference in Georgia, and ... we knew that it was our responsibility as public figures to take this on and talk about it because of how deeply it affected us and how it affected our family, learning about the different ways that people grieve. Learning how to heal our marriage, that was the biggest thing. ... The suicide was definitely a big, big turning point for our relationship, and it does tear many people apart. But for us, it really did make us stronger."

To listen to the rest of Maxwell's story, [click here](#).