

Robin Williams Was Part of the Baby Boomer Suicide Epidemic

Robin Williams' suicide not only rocked the entertainment world—it rocked people in many parts of the world who loved his comic genius. In the wake of his untimely death, mental-health experts are pointing to statistics that reveal Williams' silent suffering was part of an epidemic.

Suicide is a top-10 cause of death—more people die from self-harm than from car accidents—yet we don't hear much about it until someone of notoriety ends their life. According to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), the suicide rate has jumped nearly 20 percent over the past 10 years even as heart disease, HIV and cancer death rates are declining.

The stats look worse when we come to Robin Williams' generation: the Baby Boomers. According to the CDC, the **suicide rate** among Americans aged 45 to 64 has climbed over 30 percent in the past 10 years. Cut another way, the category of upper-middle-aged white men has seen a 50 percent rise in suicides.

Why Are So Many Baby Boomers Committing Suicide?

Why are so many Baby Boomers committing suicide? What is the root issue? Where does it start? I've wondered this on a personal level as my uncle committed suicide a few years ago—and he was a Baby Boomer.

"Suicidal thoughts have numerous causes," according to Mayo Clinic. "Most often, suicidal thoughts are the result of feeling like you can't cope when you're faced with what seems to be an overwhelming life situation. If you don't have hope for the future, you may mistakenly think suicide is a

solution. You may experience a sort of tunnel vision, where in the middle of a crisis you believe suicide is the only way out.”

As it turns out, **suicidal thoughts** are not uncommon. Nearly 8.3 million adults age 18 and older in the United States—that’s 3.7 percent—had serious thoughts of suicide in the past year, according to a study called “Suicidal Thoughts and Behaviors Among Adults > 18 Years” released by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Although some suicides are impulsive, most are planned out. More than 2 million adult Americans made a suicide plan in the past year, and about half that many went through with the plan.

Suicide Starts With a Thought

As I’ve said before, suicide starts with a thought. Indeed, every action we take starts with a thought. As one who struggled with depression for years, I am not trying to oversimplify the solution, but rather merely point out one contributing factor. Many of the harmful actions we take originate from the seed of a thought Satan whispers to our souls. That seed grows as our minds reason out the benefits of acting on the thought. For those contemplating **suicide**, I believe the seed grows in their minds as they reason themselves out of living because life’s circumstances are too overwhelming.

When the enemy plants a vain imagination in our minds, we have two choices: cast it down or meditate on it. When we meditate on vain imaginations, we tend to connect demonic dots that create skewed pictures of reality. Believing what we see in our thought life is real, we talk ourselves into taking action based on a wrong perception. Although there are issues of chemical imbalances, I believe this is what happens with many **suicides**. The enemy plants a seed in the form of a thought that an already distraught soul doesn’t discern as a demonic attack on their life.

Winning the Battle Against a Silent Epidemic

If we want to win the battle against suicide among Baby Boomers—or any demographic—we need to, among many other things, take a hold of Scriptures that instruct us about the battle in our minds. Paul told us, “The weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ, and being ready to punish all disobedience when your obedience is fulfilled” (2 Cor. 10:4-6). No one can take your thoughts captive for you, but you can take your own thoughts captive, and it starts with girding up the loins of your mind (1 Pet. 1:13).

Paul also offered this advice: “Whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy—meditate on these things. The things which you learned and received and heard and saw in me, these do, and the God of peace will be with you” (Phil. 4:8-9). If we do what the Word says—if we meditate on what the Word tells us to meditate on—the enemy’s seeds won’t take root in our souls.

If you see someone struggling with depression or hear them speak disturbing thoughts that aren’t in line with the Word of God, pray and ask God what He would have you do. Then do it. Suicide is a leading cause of death in the United States, and the enemy is targeting our spiritual leaders in this hour. Let’s rise up and battle against this disturbing trend in the Name of Jesus.

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