

Woman's Suicide Stopped Mid-Attempt by Raw Power of Holy Spirit

In early 2017, Nancy Alcorn began hearing about a new Netflix series called *13 Reasons Why*, and a friend of hers who was familiar with the issues Alcorn and her team deal with at Mercy Multiplied encouraged her to watch the first season. Alcorn was deeply impacted by this series, as she quickly realized how many young women who walk through the doors of Mercy's residential homes have similar struggles as the girl featured in the series.

Alcorn was inspired to share 13 stories of young women who experienced a very different outcome than the girl featured in *13 Reasons Why* because they chose to reach out for help. This was the motivation behind Alcorn latest book, *Treatment or Transformation: 13 Real Stories Why You Can't Argue with a Changed Life*.

In *Treatment or Transformation*, you can read about young women like Matilda. When Matilda was young, her mom worked a lot and her father drank heavily.

When she was 5 years old, Matilda began to be sexually abused by her uncle, along with an older female friend and a friend of Matilda's brother. Sexual activity became a weekly part of her life over the next six years. As an early teen, Matilda started self-harming, drinking and smoking as a way to cope with the pain and trauma of the sexual abuse. To gain some sense of control, she started to restrict her food intake and took laxatives to make herself thinner.

Matilda ended up getting raped at a high school party, which led to night terrors and panic attacks that would often result in seizures. She eventually turned to marijuana, prescription

pills and cocaine. She started dealing drugs and living out of her car. Here is a portion of Matilda's story from *Treatment or Transformation*:

"You know what?" she thought one afternoon when the flashbacks of her past abuse were especially bad. "Pills didn't work. I'm going to jump off a bridge."

She found an overpass over a busy highway and sat on the edge, legs dangling in the air. The sun faded into the horizon. Cars, trucks and big rigs swooshed below at highway speeds.

"If I sneeze, I'm going over," she thought.

Across the overpass, people jogged by with little more than a glance, even though Matilda was openly cutting herself in a final defiance of the world. Then a familiar voice came.

"Hey, what are you doing? What's going on? Matilda?"

It was her high school music teacher. Rapidly, the woman pulled Matilda off the ledge, as Matilda struggled.

"You're not stopping me," Matilda said. "I have to get it over with."

"No!" said the woman, and grabbed her arm and wouldn't let go. "You're coming with me."

Matilda wasn't strong enough to resist, though she tried. Back at the teacher's car, the police soon arrived.

"She's coming to my house," the teacher said. "I'll take care of her tonight."

While waiting, Matilda had opened up about the haunting flashbacks. The teacher took Matilda's cigarettes, pocket knife and anything else vaguely harmful. At her house, they watched a Disney movie until Matilda fell asleep on the

couch.

The incident led to several weeks of outpatient rehabilitation, which didn't do anything to help. After a particularly discouraging counseling session, in which Matilda felt the counselor had violated trust by telling others about her problems, she stormed out to her Jeep. In the center console she kept multiple pill bottles, just in case one day proved too rough.

"This is it, she told herself. "It ends here. God won't be able to torture me anymore."

She poured the pills into her hands and prepared to swallow them. Suddenly, a presence filled the car. Matilda looked around her, in the back seat, and under the seats. She saw nothing, but the peace was so strong it seemed tangible.

"I'm freaking out," Matilda thought. "I know there's someone in here."

Then a voice came, not audibly, though it may as well have been: "Just give Me one month," it said.

The voice filled her with such hope. Somehow, she knew it was Jesus.

"Okay," she responded to Him. "I'll give You a month. But that's all. If You don't do anything for me, I'm done with life."

She put the pills back in the center console and drove home.

A local pastor recommended that Matilda apply to the Mercy Multiplied residential program, and with a newfound hope, she applied and entered the program. While at Mercy, Matilda felt saturated in unconditional love from the staff. She committed her life to Christ, received freedom from the anxiety attacks, chose to renew her mind to the truth of God's Word and chose to forgive those who had hurt her. God radically

transformed her life.

Matilda is now married, and she and her husband are on the leadership team of a church plant in their city. She has shared her testimony of healing and freedom with more than a thousand people, and each time it has prompted someone to apply to the Mercy Multiplied program. She continues to help walk young women through eating disorders, anger, pain from sexual abuse, anxiety and more.

It's heartbreaking to read about how the pain in Matilda's life led her to consider taking her own life. Suicide is a significant issue today. Countless people are affected by it every year, and many of the women who have entered the program at Mercy Multiplied have attempted to take their own life one, if not many, times. However, when they experience the love and life-transforming power of Jesus Christ, they have a renewed passion and purpose for their lives. They realize that God created them for life and not death.

But freedom and healing are not just available to those who are residents in one of the Mercy homes. It's available to you as well. God can, and will, move powerfully if you choose to allow Him to work in your heart and life. No matter who you are or what you have done, the same radical life-transformation that thousands of young women have experienced in the Mercy program is possible for you. Through the power of Christ, you can overcome whatever issues or hurts you may be struggling with.

If you are a young woman between the ages of 13-32 and are hurting or struggling, you can get information about Mercy's residential program and apply to the program at .

For more stories of radical life transformation, check out Nancy Alcorn's book, *Treatment or Transformation: 13 Real Stories Why You Can't Argue With a Changed Life*.