



How to Save a Life

Today I want to start this video by reading a passage from a book called. Welcome to the Circle by Jake Orlowitz. Jake is a friend of mine and he has written quite a bit about mental health, and I just absolutely love this passage toward the end of his book. This is under the heading How to Save Someone's Life When the Only Life You Can Save is Your Own.

I love that so here we go.

“Someone's going to break down. Someone's going to come apart. Someone's going to forget what matters, someone's going to fall before you can catch them. And you can run to them. You can give advice, you can gather around friends and family. You can read them poems, but the only life, you can save, is your own.

“Someone's going to lose their mind, someone's going to throw it all away, someone's going to reject a cure. Someone's going to feel immense pain that you will not be able to heal, and you can call them up, you can visit them in their hospital gown. You can cry with them on your shoulder. You can even beg. But the only life you can save is your own.

“Someone's going to hurt themselves, someone's going to run from their problems, someone's going to punish the innocent someone's going to believe their demons, even though you're willing to listen. And you can throw them a rope. You can direct them to safety. You can order the right prescription, you can launch an intervention. But the only life you can save is your own.

“Someone's going to be vicious, someone's going to self destruct, someone's going to slip into despair, someone's going to spin into crisis, despite how much you love them. And you can care for them. You can offer them a warm meal. You can hold their hand, you can speak of hope. But the only life, you can save is your own today. That's enough. Tomorrow, you can see again about saving the world.”

I absolutely love that. And what I love about that is, is having been a therapist for so many years and now a coach, having gone through what I call a breakdown breakthrough, where I almost lost my life, and they were the darkest years of my life, but this makes so much sense to me what Jake is saying because the only life we can say is our own. And when we remember that, it helps us relax a little bit when we are with people we love knowing that it's not our job, nor is it even possible to save someone else. What we can do you show up and be present. That's kind of it, in my mind, you show up, and are present...



When I was going through my breakdown breakthrough 20+ years ago, there were people around me who wanted me to do things differently. They loved me they just wanted my best and they were scared. They were frightened by what they were witnessing but I knew that I had to go all the way to the depths to find my way out, and that's exactly what happened for me.

I can remember my family did an intervention with my mother who was an alcoholic. And, frankly, it just didn't really work because she was trying to do something for us, rather than for herself. What we really needed to do, is to come alongside her with love and acceptance and yes with boundaries. I'm not suggesting that we just let whatever happen around us, but I am suggesting that we show up, knowing that we can never understand another person's journey. We can never understand another person's journey, ever.

We can only walk our own journey and find our own way. And we do that by allowing people in. We do that by offering that to other people, but, what Jake is pointing to that I love so much and that I've been pointing to for years is that if you want to help someone save your own life first. Save your own life. When you do that deep transformative work in yourself, you show up differently in the world. And when you show up from that place of ground, from that place of center, from that place of healing, then you're able to sit with someone, fully present. And I promise, that's what people need. People need to have you show up, fully grounded, fully present, and from that place healing is very, very possible. And that relieves something for us knowing that it's not our responsibility, or even possible to say someone else.

That way we can show up without all this pressure and sense of obligation or the sense of responsibility, we can just be present with one another. And that is how change happens, I believe, from a place of presence.