

My cousin Arvind declared that he wanted to be a 'neurosurgeon' even before he started pronouncing his 'r's' right. But two days after his board examinations, he announced that he wanted to become an engineer.

The mayhem that simple declaration caused in my family is unsurpassed to this day. Attempting to justify his decision, he had said, "In medical school, everytime you get the opportunity to save someone's life, there is always the risk that you might take his life instead. In engineering colleges people only take their own lives."

At the age of fifteen, I had laughed and appreciated his wit.

If someone had told the fifteen year old version of me, that five years down the line, she would be the engineering student contemplating suicide, she would have only laughed louder.

The reasons I had for deciding to end my own life had been used innumerable times already. Among them, were a failed love affair with a boy who probably didn't even deserve my time and plummeting grades that had definitely deserved more of my time.

After spending 36 hours, locked up in my room, venturing out only to answer nature's call, I had decided that I didn't want to continue living this way anymore.

Lying beside the glass of water I had just poured out for myself was a bottle of sleeping pills, I had purchased this morning. Only one thing was holding me back. I hadn't written my suicide note yet. How do you say goodbye to a lifetime's worth of memories and relationships in one tiny piece of paper?

The first thing we learn when we enter an engineering college is - "If you have a problem, Google has the solution." I turned to the World Wide Web for help. The first search result, 'www.howtowriteasuicidenote.com' seemed good enough.

I wasn't so sure of that twenty seconds later when the website came up. It was full of bad grammar and flash animations. Yet, I read on.

'BEGINNERS GUIDE TO THE PERFECT SUICIDE NOTE!'

STEP 1:- LOCK YOURSELF IN A CONFINED AREA OR ROOM.

I looked around at the kn feet by ten feet matchbox that had passed for my bedroom for the past two years. It fit the description perfectly.

STEP 2: - WRITE DOWN FIVE RANDOM OBJECTS YOU SEE IN YOUR ROOM ON A PEECE OF PAPER.

I spotted a paperweight shaped like the Big Ben, a bag containing a few water colours, a pair of silver earrings and my book collection. Just then, a cockroach crawled out of a hole in my mattress. It seemed to symbolize the state of my life. So the cockroach went on the list too.

STEP 3: - WRITE DOWN THE FIRST THING YOU THINK OF WHEN YOU SEE THESE OBJECTS. ^{PUT} THESE MEMORIES IN YOUR SUICIDE NOTE.

The Big Ben replica made me think of my childhood friend Priya, who ~~had~~ moved to London a few years ago. We had kept in touch through emails. The last time she was here, we had promised each other that we would visit ~~to~~ places that neither of us had been to before, when she returned. I was sorry I wouldn't live long enough to live up to that promise.

The silver earrings belonged to my younger sister. I had taken them from her promising that I would teach her how to drive a car in exchange. She was going to turn eighteen in a few months.

The cockroach had crawled out of my sight. The memory that came to my mind made me smile. At every New Year's eve party our neighbours had hosted over the last twelve years, my father had climbed up to the dais, after a few too many drinks to tell the crowd a joke about a deaf cockroach and a scientist. I had always found that experience excruciating. Today, it was making me smile.

The water colours hadn't been used since I had been to Kerala when I was thirteen. Convinced that a mere photograph wouldn't do justice to the view outside our hotel, my mother had insisted that we paint the scene we were witnessing. Both our paintings still hung proudly in our living room.

My book collection was my most prized possession. Having been an avid reader all my life, I had more books than I could account for. I first got hooked to reading at the age of eight, when I picked up my first 'Harry Potter' novel. 'J.K. Rowling's' magical world had left me spell bound throughout my childhood. Though the obsession had ebbed as I grew older, I had seen every 'Harry Potter' movie the day it released. The next one was coming out in a few months. I wouldn't be seeing it.

The words I had just written seemed to swirl before my eyes.

All those memories seemed like a half remembered dream, as though I had seen them in a movie I couldn't place.

I wanted to see Priya again. I wanted to teach my sister how to drive a car. I wanted to hear my father crack a bad joke in public one more time. I wanted to paint with my mother again. I wanted to see the last Harry Potter movie and close that chapter of my life.

The website had accomplished what it had meant to all along.

I took my 'SUICIDE NOTE' and pinned it up on the board in front of me. It would be read next when the time was right.

I felt numb, as I reached for the glass of water.

The flash animation on the website was eye catching. It showed a hand holding a pen. Once in a while, the bodyless hand moved over the paper. Random words like 'sorry' and 'mistake' appeared occasionally on the paper. I guess it was meant to impress the viewer. It did nothing of that sort. I scrolled down quickly. A simple quote followed the ghostly animation.

'LIFE IS SACRED. REVERE IT!'

That sentence made up for the bad animation on the website. It made up for all the bad animations in the whole wide and crazy world.

Arvind would have loved it.

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