

## THE VOICE

By the late fall of 1982, I had divorced Rhea, been promoted to full professor at Stony Brook University, and was planning to marry Marcia on Christmas Eve of the following year. My life focused around Marcia, our five children, scientific research, and Primal Therapy. I was heavy into my feelings, now that the therapy was so much a part of me. For the previous year, I had recorded all of my feelings, and by the fall of 1982, I had filled up seven research laboratory notebooks with my handwriting, each book consisting of three hundred pages. There was a lot of repetition and I seemed to have reached a plateau in terms of making further progress. In an unusual display of frustration, I brought the seven notebooks to the edge of my Poquott loft and proceeded to throw all of them in one thrust onto the floor below. I felt like Moses smashing the first set of Tablets on which the Ten Commandments were inscribed. Moses had become enraged when he came down Mount Sinai and discovered that the Israelites had built the Golden Calf. The sounds of the books crashing were subdued by a loud and strong male voice that was definitely external.

I heard the words very clearly, "And you shall be Mine." I remember being both startled and afraid, because I neither knew whose voice this was nor could I figure out how the voice got into my cottage. There was no bipolar disorder or manic depression back then, so I couldn't blame the voice on the illness. It was about two weeks later when I heard the voice again. This time the words were slightly different: "And you shall have." Could this be the true voice of God, I thought. However, I didn't dare tell anyone what had happened, not even Marcia, until ten years later. I simply ignored these mysterious events and went on with my life, but the words of the voice never left me. Why did this happen? I had no explanation. I kept the books, recording my Primal feelings, for many additional years before dumping them in the garbage along with my three Primal Therapy textbooks. I was to discover twenty years later that I would need these books again.

## SUICIDE

I don't know the exact date in March of 1995, but I knew this was my day to die. You would think that I would have recorded the date for posterity. I didn't. Nor did I even think about leaving a suicide note to Marcia and my kids. I still had my Canadian codeine and aspirin pills that I had used for my headaches since childhood. My mother brought them to me on her trips from

Toronto. At the time of my suicide plan, I had two bottles each of a hundred pills. Erin was home from spring break from Ohio State and had gone shopping with Marcia to Garden City, which was about forty-five minutes away by car. Some time had passed since they left, and I kept thinking about the pills and being free of the torment in my body and mind. Finally, I got the courage to get up and open the bottles and then I began swallowing.

At first, I took one or two at a time, but I was a pro at taking handfuls of pills simultaneously with a minimum amount of water. After a while, it became easier and easier to keep taking the pills, and in a short time I had downed both bottles, two hundred pills in all. I went to lie down in our bedroom and then it hit me: it was too late to reverse the process. I remember thinking that I would be dead and my pain would soon be over. I wasn't afraid. In fact, I felt a peace and a calmness that I hadn't felt in a very long time. They say that you know when you're going to die, and I think I sensed that feeling. However, I didn't see a tunnel with a light at the end, which people who have been close to death speak about. I was at peace and I drifted off to sleep, only to be awakened by Marcia and Erin.

As soon as my eyes opened, I blurted out to Marcia what I had done. She immediately called 911, and the Nesconset Fire Department was at the house within minutes. Our local volunteer fire department has been simply amazing, having come to our house twice before to put out laundry dryer fires. At first, I refused to go with them, and they were about to leave because they can't help anyone against his or her will. Marcia turned to them and begged them to stop, and then she turned to me and pleaded with me to let the firemen take me to the hospital. I recognized that look on her desperate face and gave my consent. She had a way of reaching me like no one else. Before I knew it, two firemen lifted me off the bed onto a stretcher. I remember thinking how strong they were. On the way over, I was desperately trying to understand where I was and where we were going. I seemed to be in a surreal state.

In no time at all, we were at the emergency room in the then St. John's Hospital off Route 25A in Smithtown. A caring general practitioner was on duty that night. More doctors and nurses rapidly moved about as they began to work on me. I had no clue what was in store for me. I had to urinate very badly, and I remember asking one of the nurses to help me go to the bathroom. However, there was no way that I was going anywhere and I was given a metal container to pee into. I started to urinate but I guess I didn't have my penis in the container, because the urine went all over me and the sheets. It felt so degrading and I felt so humiliated. One of the nurses on duty didn't make my embarrassment any easier. When I asked her if someone could help clean up the sheets, she made a nasty remark about

how to use the urinal. Then a doctor came over, probably at this nurse's request, and placed a catheter into my penis. I never had a catheter before and it felt awful.

At the same time, I was so uncomfortable, being six foot two trying to lie down flat on the hospital bed. My feet stuck out far beyond the length of the bed, and I felt my back beginning to ache. Soon I was to feel more discomfort. The nurses began to pump my stomach by inserting this awful tube through my nose. Now I finally understood what the young girl was trying to tell me about her emergency room suicide nightmare experience. I remember her horrified look. She had shook her head and told me, "You really don't want to go through this."

After several hours, I was given a bed and I fell asleep. Marcia and Erin stayed with me virtually the whole time. It was touch and go whether I would live or die during those first forty-eight to seventy-two hours, as I was later informed by Marcia. The doctor had told Marcia that had she not found me when she did, it would likely have been too late to save me. Marcia and Erin had been in a restaurant forty-five minutes away and had ordered their lunch when something came over Marcia. She told Erin, "We have to leave. Something is wrong with Dad." Marcia has always had these advanced warning signals in her life. Call them extrasensory or psychic if you wish. I believe these powers in Marcia's case come from God. They quickly left the restaurant without being served and came home to find me drifting off into death. Marcia saved my life that day.