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Kia Stern

Living Inside the Box

Imagine being buried alive in a small inescapable box where even the darkness is your enemy. Air is the only comfort you have; yet it is slowly being extracted from your wooden prison, by your own body. In a panic your body then releases poison....Do you wait until the toxin slowly chokes you to death, or do you end your suffering with your own hands? I, feeling this inescapable prison, chose death at my own hands.

Growing up in an ever-changing world, that influenced me heavily to become a part of it, I was led into a depressed lifestyle. It started with the media assuring me that violence and danger were attractive, and good habits for a dark-skinned girl considering that her color lessened her beauty. This helped me transition into the media's perception of beauty by welcoming me into the world of underage drinking, not caring about life, and even thinking about suicide.

I surrounded myself with people I thought were my friends since they showed me the ropes of this new world. I was engulfed in a downward spiral as I learned how to obtain alcohol. Forced to share with my mentor, we would drink bottles of different concoctions. Soon, I began to drink on my own and put myself in unwanted and regrettable situations due to the drunkenness I never believed would seduce my mind. Thinking that being drunk and on drugs increased my beauty, I wondered why life was important.

I had lost my grandmother, I felt that my parents and sister did not love me, and I could not fill the hole that flew me into fetal positions of agony almost every night. The recurring thought of 'Why try?' filled my mind, more than it did when I was younger and led to thoughts of suicide.

I was feeling trapped in my first years of high school and tried to let the air suffocate me as I coasted by in school. Annoyed with constant pain and loneliness, and with the thought that my skin was the reason why I felt that way, (in a family whose darkest color was similar to that of a cardboard box) I began to take the idea of suicide seriously. The music said it was okay and made it look cool, so I went home every night in attempts to overdose on various types of pills. I was going to die anyway in my prison, so why not speed things up? was the thought behind my self-hatred and suicide attempts. I put my body through so much physical abuse, and it was not until I reached my last year in high school, after many counselor trips, that I realized I had a problem.

The realization of my problem helped me to better myself by taking the people who harmed me out of my life. Of course this was hard since their abuse was the only type of love I knew. Thankfully a man came into my life and helped me to release such foolish beliefs. He was a special friend who assured me that I was beautiful despite my physical color. With my life put back on a healthy track, I changed my goals to do positive things that increased my spirituality. At the time of this readjustment, even more obstacles arose. But instead of trying to end my suffering in that buried prison, I dug my way out of the coffin. The fresh air stung a bit, but was nevertheless better than being buried alive.

One of the first changes I made was my eating habits. Then I changed my hair, which got many disapproving comments. I suddenly looked much different. My parents absolutely hated my no-longer-curly, dread-locked hair. They were scared it wasn't the way corporate America wanted me to look. Being in a family with soft curly hair, it was almost taboo to dread my hair. Their constant pestering dampened my attitude, but I understood that I was beautiful no matter what and that my hair would not govern how people felt about me.

To their surprise, and many of the people who I thought were my friends, I became an assistant manager of my job, and I graduated with honors from high school, and even received academic scholarship offers.

Increasing my spirituality helped me realize that life is wonderful and fun and learn how to overcome the weariness I had felt. Now I can say without a doubt that I have great love for God and no longer think about suicide, or find myself unattractive. I have joined a church and helped others dig out of their holes to get a fresh taste of the crisp air. To my surprise, friends from years before years, despite my pushing them away, say that I have become a light in their life as they try to increase their spirituality and happiness. I am very proud to say that my journey has been rough, but it also helped me become a strong and intelligent woman who craves life. I'm not ashamed to spread my happiness and release my positivity on others, or become their light when things seem tough.

Many people who see me now could not fathom an idea of me being unhappy and depressed. Many wonder how I smile at every moment in life, even when I relay to them a bad day or relatively new downfall. The life I live now was hard to come to, yet richly rewarding, as it enables me to continuously grow.