**Suicide**

**More active-duty U.S. troops have committed suicide this year than have been killed in battle. There have been 154 suicides among troops through last week – an average of one a day – compared with 124 U.S. military fatalities in Afghanistan. (Associated Press, as it appeared in The Week magazine, June 22, 2012)**

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**More Americans now take their own lives each year – about 37,000 – than die in car crashes, a new study has found. While safety improvements have cut the death toll of car crashes by 25 percent, suicides have kept rising, at least partly because of the country’s economic problems, foreclosures, and joblessness. (HuffingtonPost.com, as it appeared in The Week magazine, October 5, 2012)**

White Americans are five times more likely to commit suicide with a gun than to be shot by someone else. But for each African-American who uses a gun to take his or her own life, five others are shot to death by other people. *(The Washington Posts, as it appeared in The Week magazine, April 5, 2013)*

**One out of four Americans between 18 and 24 said they'd considered suicide during the pandemic, according to a survey by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Among respondents of all ages, 40 percent reported suffering from mental or behavioral health issues related to the pandemic, including anxiety, depression, and stress disorders. (Politico.com, as it appeared in The Week magazine, August 28, 2020)**

**More than 150,000 Americans died from alcohol- and drug-induced fatalities and suicide in 2017 – the highest number since the Centers for Disease Control began collecting the figures in 1999. Nearly a third of the total dead – 47,173 were suicides. (The New York Times, as it appeared in The Week magazine, March 22, 2019)**

**The number of Americans killed in all the wars since 1775 is 1.17 million, according to government statistics. The number of Americans killed by firearms, including suicides, since 1968 is 1.38 million. *(The Guardian.com, as it appeared in The Week magazine, October 4, 2013)***

***\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\**A Texas A&M professor says an answer to suicide is “egocide.” “Egocide is psychological death and rebirth, a process that promotes the destruction of negative and suicidal aspects of a patient’s psyche,” says professor David Rosen. “Partial deaths” such as loss, failure, rejection or depression lead to the opportunity for a life-saving “rebirth,” says Rosen, who came to his conclusions after interviewing survivors of suicide attempts. After destroying the negative aspects of the ego – symbolically in therapy – patients become more hopeful, form new relationships and begin channeling destructive energy into creativity, says Rosen. (Matt Soergel, in Rocky Mountain News, October 2, 1989)**

**Army suicides have hit a record high, with 166 active-duty soldiers suspected of taking their own lives so far this year. The problem has grown so severe that the Army ordered a service-wide “stand-down” in September, requiring soldiers to put aside their usual duties and discuss suicide prevention. (Associated Press, as it appeared in The Week magazine, November 30, 2012)**

**The rate of suicides carried out with guns is as much as 43 percent higher in states with loose gun laws then in states with strict gun laws, a new study has found. Researchers said their findings indicate that troubled people without guns will not necessarily find another way to kill themselves. In 2016, 61 percent of the 38,511 deaths caused by firearms were suicides. *(Los Angeles Times, as it appeared in The Week magazine, March 16, 2018)***

**Civilizations die from suicide, not murder. *(Arnold Toynbee)***

**New research has found that state-level increases of $1 in minimum wage were tied to a 3.4 to 5.9 percent decrease in suicide rates among adults between the ages of 18 and 64 with a high-school diploma or less. *(The Washington Post, as it appeared in The Week magazine, January 24, 2020)***

**Democracy has never been and never can be so durable as aristocracy or monarchy. There never was a democracy yet that did not commit suicide. (John Adams, U.S. president)**

**The suicide rate among divorced women is three times that of married women. Among divorced men, it is four times that of married men. *(L. M. Boyd)***

**To do nothing except kill time is not murder, but suicide. *(Dr. Joseph Peck)***

**If you don't think machines are becoming smarter, consider the case of a Florida robot designed for missions inside nuclear-power plants. Apparently after pondering this perilous future, it "worked its arm into an unnatural posture," a lab worker reported, and then began beating itself to pieces -- the world's first attempted electronic suicide. *(Omni, as it appeared in Reader's Digest, in the October, 1982 issue)***

**Old English law required a suicide to be buried near a crossroads at midnight without religious rites. *(L. M. Boyd)***

**What we do know about gun violence in the U.S., from a purely statistical perspective, may surprise you. Mass shootings make headlines and dominate public discourse, but roughly 60 percent of firearm deaths in 2017 were suicides -- that's 23,854 people who took their own lives with a gun. *(Russ Juskalian, in Discover magazine)***

**Standing on the windswept shores of Lake Michigan one wintry night, ready to throw himself into the freezing waters, a 32-year-old bankrupt dropout happened to gaze up at the starry heavens. Suddenly, he felt a rush of awe, and a thought flashed through his mind: You have no right to eliminate yourself. You do not belong to you. You belong to the universe. R. Buckminster Fuller turned his back to the lake and began a remarkable career. Best-known as the inventor of the geodesic dome, by the time of his death he held more than 170 patents and was world-famous as an engineer, mathematician, architect, and poet. *(Alan Loy McGinnis, in Confidence – How to Succeed at Being Yourself) 4239819***

**Can gays and lesbians willfully change their sexual orientation? A few organizations, often funded by religious conservatives, contend that so-called reparative therapy can indeed help gays go straight. But after examining more than 80 studies on sexual orientation change, the American Psychological Association concluded that the treatments didn’t work and urged psychologists to steer gay clients away from them. At best, “certain studies suggested that some individuals learned how to ignore or not act on their homosexual attractions,” Judith Glassgold, who led the group’s investigatory panel tells CNN.com. At worse, the treatments backfire, leaving patients depressed, filled with self-loathing, and even considering suicide. But at the same time, the APA said, therapists cannot just disregard patients’ religious faith. To reduce the conflict between their sexual orientation and spiritual outlook, therapists can suggest alternatives to gay patients, such as embracing celibacy or finding a church that welcomes homosexuals. “Secular therapists have to recognize that some people will choose their faith over their sexuality,” Glassgold says. *(The Week magazine, August 28-September 4, 2009)***

**The global suicide rate has dropped 29 percent since 2000, apparently because of improvements in the quality of life. The U.S. suicide rate has risen 18 percent since 2000, mostly because of the decline in quality of life for white, middle-aged men without college degrees. *(The Economist, as it appeared in The Week magazine, December 7, 2018)***

**After years of debate, San Francisco officials have started work on a suicide-prevention net that will extend 20 feet out from under the city's Golden Gate Bridge. More than 1,600 people have jumped to their death from the bridge since the iconic landmark was opened 80 years ago, including 40 last year. *(San Francisco Chronicle, as it appeared in The Week magazine, April 28, 2017)***

**The good news is that suicide is highly preventable. Most suicide attempts are impulsive, an act of depression or panic. If a person survives an attempt, he or she will almost certainly survive the suicidal impulse altogether. A gun in the house massively raises the likelihood that a suicide attempt will end in death. *(David Frum, in The Atlantic)***

The Great Depression was the longest and most widespread global economic depression of the twentieth century. It lasted from about 1929 until the late 1930s -- and in some cases into the 1940s. The initial Wall Street crash that caused the Great Depression was so bad that a wave of suicides hit New York's financial district. Clerks of one hotel even started asking new guests if they needed a room for sleeping or jumping. *(Charlotte Lowe, in Useless History Fact-O-Pedia, p. 120)*

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**Half of the almost 48,000 suicides committed in 2019 were carried out by gun. All of this slaughter is enabled by the most permissive gun laws in the developed world.Above all else, guns are used for suicide. In any given year, twice as many Americans die by suicide as by homicide. Suicide is the second-leading cause of death among teenagers and young adults, behind only accidents. *(David Frum, in The Atlantic)***

**The rate of gun suicides in the U.S. has risen 22 percent since 2008. Households in which a gun is owned have triple the suicide rate of those that do not. *(Bloomberg.com, as it appeared in The Week magazine, January 11, 2019)***

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**It is impossible to commit suicide by holding one’s breath. At worst, the person who tries this will eventually lose consciousness. The lungs will then start to breathe again automatically. (David Louis, in Fascinating Facts)**

**Public health researchers agree that suicide is typically an impulsive act, often aborted before completion -- and that the majority of people who survive an initial suicide attempt never make a second try. In the U.S., the limited data available suggests that only about 13 percent of all suicide attempts succeed. However, up to nearly 90 percent of attempts using firearms result in death.**

***(Russ Juskalian, in Discover magazine)***

**It is commonly thought that suicides increase around Christmas. However, this is not the case, according to Paul Quinlan, professor of psychology at American International College in Springfield, Mass. “Data collected over many years by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention suggest that some holidays may be associated with increases in suicide, but Christmas is not one of them,” he said. Quinlan said the daily suicide rate is lowest in December and second lowest in November. *(Rocky Mountain News, December 10, 2002)***

**More than 300 people commit suicide each year in American jails -- 25 percent within the first 24 hours of incarceration and half within two weeks. About a third of deaths inside jails are caused by suicide, partly because people are reacting to the shock of incarceration. People awaiting trial or serving short sentences are housed in jails, while convicts are held in prisons. *(Vox.com, as it appeared in The Week magazine, August 30, 2019)***

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**Japan is now creating suicide hotlines and sending mental-health counselors into the region affected by the tsunami and nuclear crisis, out of fear there will be a surge of self-inflicted deaths. The Japanese, whose culture romanticizes suicide, already have a suicide rate more than double that of the U.S.; it’s the leading cause of death there among men ages 20 to 44 and women ages 15 to 34. *(Los Angeles Times, as it appeared in The Week magazine, May 6, 2011)***

**Suicide epidemic: Japan’s suicide rate is skyrocketing as people struggle to cope with the stresses of the pandemic. In October alone, 2,153 Japanese committed suicide. That’s higher than the country’s total Covid-19 death toll so far, which stood at 2,087 this week. “We didn’t even have a lockdown,” said suicide expert Michiko Ueda of Waseda University, “but still we see this big increase in the number of suicides.” Because it has one of the world’s highest suicide rates even in ordinary times, Japan keeps better track of its suicide rate than most countries, and the new data suggest that other countries will also see a rise. Women, who are disproportionately struggling with child care and economic hardship amid the pandemic, are particularly at risk. Suicides among women in Japan increased 83 percent in October compared with the same month last year. *(The Week magazine, December 11, 2020)***

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**The Mongol army of Kublai Khan tried to invade Japan in 1281 but was foiled by a hurricane that wrecked their fleet. The invaders who had made it to Japan were massacred. The Japanese named that hurricane kamikaze, “the divine wind.” In World War II, the term was used for a Japanese suicide air force whose fliers crashed their bomb-laden planes into their targets. *(Isaac Asimov’s Book of Facts, p. 256)***

**The people who will kill themselves this year outnumber the people who will kill other people. *(L. M. Boyd)***

**The civil rights leader tried to commit suicide at age twelve and again at thirteen by jumping out of an upstairs window. The first time was after Martin Luther King thought his brother killed their grandmother; the second was after his grandmother died. *(Ed Lucaire, in Celebrity Setbacks, p. 208)***

**It is the loose ends with which men hang themselves. *(Zelda Fitzgerald)***

**We don’t say that all is evil; that would be mental suicide. Just say it is a “goat thought.” We do not kill it but transform it. *(Charles Fillmore)***

**Suicide in the military: The tremendous stress of combat in Iraq and Afghanistan isn’t the only reason for the marked upsurge in military suicides over the last decade. That’s the key finding of a massive study by the National Institute of Mental Health encompassing observations on 1.6 million military personnel. “The story is not so simple as ‘war is hell’ and you send people to war and bad things happen to those people,” epidemiologist Michael Schoenbaum tells The Wall Street Journal. People who enlist in the military, researchers found, are more likely to have a history of depression and impulsive anger, which makes them more likely to act on suicidal urges. Drawing on mental health data going back to 2004 – including drug test results and training records – as well as interviews with soldiers, researchers found that one third of soldiers who have attempted suicide had a mental disorder before enlisting and that a quarter of active-duty soldiers who have never deployed to combat have some sort of psychiatric disorder. *(The Week magazine, March 21, 2014)***

White Americans are five times more likely to commit suicide with a gun than to be shot by someone else. But for each African-American who uses a gun to take his or her own life, five others are shot to death by other people. *(The Washington Posts, as it appeared in The Week magazine, April 5, 2013)*

Almost 80 percent of people who commit a murder suicide experience a crisis within two weeks of the incident, according to data maintained by the Centers for Disease Control. More than 70 percent of cases involves problems with romantic partners. In 93 percent of cases, the perpetrators are men. *(WashingtonPost.com, as it appeared in The Week magazine, April 10, 2015)*

**The national suicide rate rose 31 percent from 1999 to 2010, driven by a spike in suicides among baby boomers in their 50s. Mental health experts pointed to hopelessness brought on by job loss, foreclosures, and the pressures of caring for aging parents and difficult teenagers. *(The Wall Street Journal, as it appeared in The Week magazine, May 17, 2013)***

**The suicide rate in New York City is about half the national average. City officials say the low rate is primarily the result of the city’s strict gun laws. Only 12 percent of suicides in New York involve firearms, while the national figure is 51 percent, and in the most suicide-prone states, it’s 66 percent. *(The New York Times, as it appeared in The Week magazine, March 9, 2012)***

**The people who will kill themselves this year outnumber the people who will kill other people. *(L. M. Boyd)***

**A strange new breed of palm tree that flowers once every 100 years and then dies a few months later has been discovered in Madagascar. Named Tahina spectabilis, the tree, which can grow to 60 feet high, had previously been misidentified as another species because no one had ever seen it bloom. But last year, scientists saw that one specimen was literally dripping with nectar and had sprouted huge fronds, 15 feet across, which resembled a Christmas tree. So far, 92 of the “suicide palms” have been found. “For botanists,” said William Baker of London’s Kew Gardens, “it’s equivalent to finding a new kind of elephant.” *(The Week magazine, February 8, 2008)***

**Many people go throughout life committing partial suicide – destroying their talents, energies, creative qualities. Indeed, to learn how to be good to oneself is often more difficult than to learn how to be good to others. *(Joshua Liebman)***

**Physicians are more than twice as likely as non-physicians to kill themselves, perhaps because of long work hours, emotional exhaustion, and intense pressure, especially during residencies. Some 400 doctors commit suicide in the U.S. every year. *(The New York Times, as it appeared in The Week magazine, September 19, 2014)***

**Suicide rates among police officers are far higher than among the general population. About 450 police officers killed themselves nationwide last year, three times the number killed in the line of duty. *(USA Today, as it appeared in The Week magazine, February 23, 2007)***

**Suicide rate among psychologists nationwide is six times that of the general population. (*Boyd’\s Curiosity Shop, p. 184)***

**Suicides hit a record high in the U.S. last year. Nearly 50,000 people lost their lives to suicide in 2022, according to a provisional count by the National Center for Health Statistics, up 3 percent from a year earlier. Suicide rates dropped for children and young adults, but increased for women ages 25 and older and men 35 and older. *(The Wall Street Journal, as it appeared in The Week magazine, December 15, 2023)***

**Suicide as a response to privatization: A recent wave of suicides at France Telecom should make us all rethink our priorities, said Roussos Varnas. The French phone company has lost 23 employees to suicide in just the past 18 months, causing the managers to speak of a horrifying “epidemic.” The most recent victim, who killed herself last week, explained her decision in an e-mail sent to her father right before she jumped from the office window. “I can’t accept the new reorganization in my department. I’m getting a new boss and I’d rather die.” Of course, it would be facile to blame workers’ depression solely on the changes in their company. Suicide can be contagious, as many universities have found, to their sorrow. Yet, “it is impossible to deny” that France Telecom has become a tougher place to work as it has transformed over the years from a completely state-owned company to one that is partly privatized. Many other European enterprises are also privatizing – will their workers, too, become alienated and desperate? In this globalized world, the quest for a corporate culture “that is respectful of the human person” has proved unsuccessful. Capitalism is killing us. *(The Week magazine, October 2, 2009)***

**A seasonal suicide effect: People with birthdays in the spring and summer are more likely to commit suicide than people born in the fall or winter, says a new study. Data from as many as 27,000 suicide cases was compiled by British researchers, who found a 17 percent rise in suicides for people born in May, June, and July. Women are more affected by the phenomenon than men – they’re 30 percent more likely to take their own lives when they’ve got birthdays in the sunny months, as opposed to men, who only have a 14 percent increased risk. “Our results support the hypothesis that there is a seasonal effect in the monthly birth rates of people who kill themselves,” researcher Dr. Emad Salib tells the New York Post. Researchers aren’t sure why suicide rates differ based on birthday, but they say the study falls in line with others that report higher rates of mental health problems in spring and summer babies. They speculate that seasonal changes affect pregnant women, who pass changes in diet, hormones, and mood on to their babies. *(The Week magazine, May 19, 2006)***

**We tell ourselves stories in order to live. We look for the sermon in the suicide. *(Joan Didion, in The Guardian)***

**Since 9/11, four times as many U.S. service members have died by suicide as have died in combat. More than 30,000 veterans of Iraq, Afghanistan, and the war on terrorism have taken their own lives. *(Axios, as it appeared in The Week magazine, November 25, 2022)***

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**An estimated 30,100 soldiers and veterans died by suicide while or after serving in Afghanistan, Iraq, and other fronts of the War on Terror since 2001, according to Brown University’s Costs of War Project. That’s more than four times the number who died in combat. *(USA Today, as it appeared in The Week magazine, September 3, 2021)***

**In April, 25 U.S. active-duty soldiers committed suicide, almost half the number (51) that were killed in Afghanistan. *(Time.com, as it appeared in The Week magazine, May 27, 2011)***

***\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\**Spade's quiet grief: David Spade knows what it's like to lose people, said Dave Itzkoff in The New York Times. The comedian is still grieving the recent deaths of his sister-in-law, the fashion designer Kate Spade, and fellow comedian Steven Brody, who often served as his opening act. Both of them died by suicide within the past 14 months. "I feel like Katy wouldn't have done it, five minutes later," Spade says. "But these things happen and there's no going back." He is all too familiar with suicide. When he was 15, his stepfather took his own life. He also lost friends in high school and college. "People just started going right and left, and I would sit and stare at a wall," says Spade, now 55. "I just said, 'OK, I guess I'll cross my fingers that it doesn't happen to everyone.'" In 1997, his Saturday Night Live co-star and frequent film partner Chris Farley died of an overdose. Online trolls still use the tragedy to taunt Spade, with comments such as "I wish you died instead of Chris Farley." The first few times he heard this, he admits, "it was rough. But now it's the standard burn." His private pain over the people he's lost stands in sharp contrast to his cynical, above-it-all onstage persona, which serves as an escape. "You just have to learn to shut off the tear valve. It's just too brutal." (The Week magazine, August 9, 2019)**

**Chinese officials have smeared butter along a 1,000-foot-long steel bridge in Guangzhou to stop people from jumping off it. Officials had tried everything else, said a government spokesman, including “special fences and notices asking people not to commit suicide here.” Despite that plea, eight people jumped to their deaths in a single month. But since the butter made the bridge’s girders and railings so slippery that no one can climb on them, there have been no jumpers. *(The Week magazine, September 11, 2009)***

**To do nothing except kill time is not murder, but suicide. *(Dr. Joseph Peck)***

**One out of every five suicides in the world can be linked to unemployment, according to a new study in The Lancet Psychiatry. Joblessness was responsible for about 45,000 suicides each year from 2000 to 2111, with a noticeable uptick following the 2008 global financial crisis. (BusinessInsider.com, as it appeared in The Week magazine, February 27, 2015)**

**U.S. suicide rate soaring: Suicide rates in the U.S. have hit a 30-year high, surging 24 percent in just 15 years, according to a new report from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's National Center for Health Statistics. Since 1999, the suicide rate increased by about 1 percent each year before accelerating to 2 percent annually from 2006 to 2014. Suicides increased among men and women in virtually all age groups, The New York Times reports, with sociologists speculating that the economic troubles of the working class and increased "social isolation" due to family breakdown and divorce were playing a role. But the sharpest rise in suicide rates was among young girls. The federal report reveals that 150 girls between 10 and 14 years old committed suicide in 2014 alone -- a 200 percent surge in that age group since 1999. "I think it may be a reflection of access to social media, internet, and cyber-bullying," says adolescent psychiatrist Victor Fornari. Teens suffering from anxiety and depression can be powerfully influenced by websites and blogs dedicated to dark topics and self-destructive coping mechanisms, such as suicidal fantasies and self-harm. (The Week magazine, May 13, 2016)**

**In the 15 months before he committed suicide, Vincent van Gogh painted 300 canvasses -- almost all of his life's work. (L. M. Boyd)**

**For every U.S. soldier killed on the battlefield this year, about 25 veterans will commit suicide. About 6,500 veteran suicides are reported every year – more than the total number of soldiers killed in Iraq and Afghanistan. *(The New York Times, as it appeared in The Week magazine, April 27, 2012)***

**Philadelphia police reported a drunken husband paused while savagely beating his wife, handed her a butcher knife and dared her to stab him. She said she’d have to, if he hit her again. He hit her. She stabbed. He died. Was it homicide or, as some insisted, suicide? *(L. M. Boyd)***

**We tell ourselves stories in order to live. We look for the sermon in the suicide. *(Joan Didion)***

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