Regarding Suicide Notes

A note? A few scribbled words. Piss off! A suicide deserves an essay at least, maybe a whole book. We are choosing to leave the people who surround us. We need to leave something more than a cryptic, shitty, little note. Let’s go into detail. Let’s have some theories. Let’s give them some meat to sink their grief into. Once we make use of a bullet, rope, poison, or gravity, they can decide whether to understand us or damn us. We should be able to prove that we snuffed out a consciousness for good reasons.

Isn’t that really what it is about, consciousness? Few would begrudge us ending the physical/psychological pain, stopping the senses from torturing us. They will miss the conscious, the thinking, expressing self. The sound of a voice, the touch of a hand, the way the eyes smiled, these are small physical pleasures that will be missed by lovers or offspring; but all the people who miss us should miss the thinking person. The person that we created for the world. They will miss the façade they had grown accustomed to.

If we will be missed, then we owe a detailed explanation. If we will leave a burden for someone, then we owe a detailed explanation. Will it be an emotional burden or also an economic burden? Is there a burden on the abdicator of consciousness to make some effort to try and remedy these situations; to do so before they depart? This all depends on how we want to be remembered. If we don’t mind being remembered as troubled, then there is no need to try and remedy any situation before departure. If we want to end life to end torment for the abdicator alone, then we have no obligation to the living. But if we will be missed, and we probably realize this by the perverse pleasure it gives us, then I believe we have some obligations. We have obligations to those who will miss us because we have used our façade to make them care for us. Though we are leaving this world to end our own torment, we must deal with the fact that our disappearance increases the torment of those we have cultivated to care about us. When we are sure that those who care for us will not be unduly pained by our abdication, then we can proceed. Unduly pained, for me, means that although they will miss us, they understand our action. They understand that we were trying to avoid intense physical or psychological pain. The more I write of this, however, I realize it is more than just individuals missing us. If we believe that we have the permission of those we care about to leave this world, or that no one cares if we are gone, we still need to explain ourselves. We need to explain why we are giving up this sometimes-called gift, this invitation from the cosmos. Consciousness is too rare a commodity to snuff out without a good reason.

The suicide essay needs to lay out the argument for giving up sentient life. This seemingly unique occurrence in the universe is forfeited because of…? An unstoppable disease, some psychological torment, an impending circumstance that will make life unbearable. The unstoppable disease seems the easiest to explain. Our physical self is being wracked with, or will be wracked with, pain and degradation that we wish to avoid. This type of suicide gets the most sympathy and we probably do not need to spend much time here. Even if we are leaving people who need us emotionally, or financially, let us assume that they understand our decision. Therefore, we only need to make our peace with the fact that we are ending a consciousness. The essay should lay out the details of the diagnosis/prognosis and then some reasoning on why we feel this is the best option. If there is religion involved, then we need to explain why we think that this is acceptable. In the rare occurrence that we belong to a religion that does not frown on disposing of our god given gift of life/gruesome death, then it can be a short essay. In the more likely circumstance that we belong to a religion in which we are forbidden to give up our god given gift of life/gruesome death, then we have some explaining to do. We should explain to the rest of the conscious world why ours was a special circumstance. We should explain why we can be allowed to return our gift but not damage the relationship with the gift giver. Maybe something akin to, “thank you so much for the gift of life that ends with inoperable stomach cancer, but I am averse to extended bouts of excruciating pain, which I thought you knew; no hard feelings, it is the thought that counts. I hope you will not hold this against me as regards the other gift you promised, eternal life. Hoping to see you soon”. When we feel satisfied with our explanation, we can leave it to other consciousnesses to evaluate it. We can depart.

Psychological torment does not get the same sympathy as physical illness when it comes to terminating our consciousness. Many do not believe that psychological torment is real pain. If you can think it then you can unthink it, so to speak. But our consciousness is telling us that we are in pain. We are depressed so deeply that it manifests itself in physical pain and an inability to function. Or perhaps we are beginning to suffer from a distortion of mental faculties like schizophrenia or obsessive thoughts so intense that we feel we are a burden to others. Again, many will believe that these thoughts could be unthought with therapy and medication; but we have convinced ourselves that termination is the best option. This needs to be expressed in our essay with all the clarity that we can muster. Those left behind need to know why it is better to not exist than to exist. An accounting of the torment that comes along with psychological problems must be given to make our case for abdication. We must convince the reader that treatment was too daunting and the chances for success too slim. Perhaps something like, “my mind, my thoughts, can only be depressed. To the point where I no longer care that I am as close to a miracle as science will allow. That I am a culmination of chemicals and energy from the cosmic primordial soup that has somehow realized I am a part of the soup. I am in it and of it, all because proteins, nucleic acids and lipids found each other in the chaos of space. They combined to give me the sentience to be writing a note on why I no longer want to be here, no longer want to be conscious.” This better be a great fucking essay. Leaving a Post-it Note goodbye to about 14 billion years of matter and energy is a dick move infinity.

Do not misunderstand, this is not a backhanded attempt at dissuading us from any suicides. This is a plea for having respect for a being that knows it is being. The universe does not care why we choose to leave; but the part of the universe that we are, is worthy of a proper accounting. We did not choose to be, or to know that we are being, but we are choosing not to be. We should be clear why we do so. Let’s put some effort into the last reasoning that we will do.

 Believing that things are getting worse each day, and that we have the power to avoid this regression, may be the only decision about being that we ultimately get to make. For anyone to deny a person this action is as bad as taking their life. We can live or die. It is a waste of societies time to legislate against something so obvious. As a society we can put in a speed bump to slow down the decision-making process. Society would do this in case the person is not making a sound decision. But ultimately society must allow that some of us do not want to be.

I think it is painful for most individuals to deal with this idea of choosing to no longer be. It is frightening and perhaps too thought provoking for most individuals to handle. This makes society contemplate the power that we each have, provoking a feeling that some things should not be an option. This should not be a primary concern of the individual in pain. Each individual should be concerned with managing their own being. Society/government should be concerned with managing the interactions between individuals.

If I no longer wish to be, then let me be. Let me do what I want with my consciousness. I will do my best to explain my actions because then I can prove that I made a sound decision. I can explain that this was not one bad moment turned into my last moment. I don’t believe we can make strict rules for suicide but let’s have an etiquette; an understanding among those who want to leave the party early. By having the courtesy to explain ourselves, we can prove that we made a sound decision. Showing that we did not waste this accidental gift-burden of the universe, consciousness. That we were not capricious with one of the universes rarest of invites. And I return to the idea that I am a part of the universe, and I am conscious. Those who care for me are part of the universe and seem to be conscious. In some small way the universe does give a shit that I am going. So, I am going to make the effort to explain myself to the universe. I made an appearance, I mingled, now accept my reasons for making an early exit. They will be in my heavily edited writing which may need one more draft. There may even be time for another cocktail and a quick check to see if the shrimp bowl has been refilled.