

Silent suffering – a short story

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**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

In the beginning, the job of an obesity councillor had its perks, I must admit. I used to crave the enjoyment I received from helping someone who needed me, but I never thought that helping myself would be my downfall. My wife, she hates me, I can see it in her eyes every time she dares to look my way. And my children, what use am I to them now? Too fat to even kick a ball! A little support from her wouldn't go amiss I reckon, but of course she has a life of her own. I used to be happy, we used to be happy. Then everything changed.

My job was everything to me, but how can a fat pig of a man like me show any kind of encouragement for his patients? I think it happened when my father died, we were close me and him. I took four weeks off from work, the wife was away on business and the kids stopped with her parents. All I could do was eat, I thought it would go away, but even now, almost two years later food is all I think about. I suppose the fact I recognise what I'm doing is a starting point, but what have I got to live for now? I really can't see my marriage making it to the end of the year, they'll take the kids off me, I'm sure. What kind of a dad can I be? They'll say I'm mad, they're probably right too. Look at me! So desperate for someone to talk to that I have talk to the ugly thing staring back in the mirror! Councillor heal thyself comes to mind doesn't it?

It never works you know, bottling things up. It only leads to unhappiness. But when you're unhappy anyway there's not really a difference. Sometimes I just want to end it; it's like a physical pain, burning in my chest. I've planned it you know, I'm scared of course, that's why I keep putting it off. Fat coward!

Yesterday at work, suicide seemed inevitable once again. For 15 years I've sat at my desk listening to the depressed stories of people like me. Can you imagine what that does to a man? My whole working career has been spent in a cell of depression and my professional mind is telling me it's definitely taken its toll!

I remember my daughter's sports day a few months ago. She dragged me up for the parents' race, I tried to refuse but she wouldn't let me. The whistle blew and away we went. Other dads racing like ruddy hares and then there was me, huffing and puffing at the back. I didn't even cross the line before I collapsed in a heap, pains tearing through my chest. Teachers rushing around, determined to phone for an ambulance but I wouldn't have it. I looked up; my wife stood in the distance a scowl on her face as usual. She said later that it served me right, practically calling me a greedy pig in the process! She's right though, as always.

You see, what can a man like me give to the world? I'm just another statistic, another middle aged man with no life. Fat and ugly, that's all I am! All I need is some pills; I know we have plenty around the house. Just enough to do the job. I'll take them before I sleep, that way I'll never feel it, just go to sleep and never wake up. She'll be happy, I know it. Free to be with the fancy man I know she has!

My eyes are closed now, it won't be long. I left a note in the kitchen telling my kids that I love them. I didn't say anything about the wife mind you. I used to be a good man, with a purpose! How did I come to be this?