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# Lee Thompson Young Commits Suicide at 29: Experts Weigh In



With the amount of recent celebrity suicides, many are left wondering why. The most recent suicide, Lee Thompson Young, is especially troubling, as he was only 29 when he killed himself. We spoke to several experts about this recent event and wanted to share these thoughts with you.

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Lee Thompson Young – a well-liked and well-respected rising star – committed suicide and left everyone wondering why.

Not just those who knew him, but fans and strangers alike, can't fathom why someone who seemed to have such a bright future would do himself in.

Obviously, Lee hid his demons and secret pain well enough so that no one realized how hopeless he had become.

For one bleak moment, he felt that life was unbearable and could only see death as a solution. All across America, people like Lee, who see no way out, are choosing suicide instead of getting psychiatric help. We need to reach out to them and get them into treatment ASAP, so that they can see that there are many moments of happiness awaiting them in the future, if only they get help to get beyond this one bleak moment.

Carole Lieberman, M.D.  
Beverly Hills Forensic Psychiatrist/ Expert Witness

All suicide is tragic. But when a celebrity like Lee Thompson Young commits suicide, the publicity surrounding his death sheds light on the issue that affects so many others who are not celebrities. And while the victim of suicide is gone, the road to recovery and healing for the survivors is different from that of those who have lost loved ones to more understandable and "natural" causes.

\* Shame. Many times suicide carries an aura of shame for the surviving family who feels that their loved one was weak – an attribute that in America, has a negative connotation.

The inference is that the family created this weak person — someone so weak he or she took their own life rather than deal with life's difficulties. The family feels associated with this weakness, and often tries not to talk about the suicide because it brings up these difficult to reconcile feelings. This creates a very difficult grieving process where shame rules.

\* Guilt. In addition, many survivors feel guilty because they think that they could have saved the suicide victim. They think about missed opportunities that might have saved his or her life — things they might have said or done that would have made a difference. They feel responsible in different ways than families of cancer victims do. This guilt makes it hard to grieve and heal from the death of a suicide victim who is a loved one.

As a relationship expert and author who answers relationship questions for free on the Relationship Forum of my site, [www.AskApril.com](http://www.AskApril.com), where anonymity is guaranteed, and folks who can't afford paid therapy or feel it has not served them in the past, occasionally write me for advice about relationships where someone is either considering suicide or has attempted it or, more often, is threatening to commit suicide. My advice is to keep the channel of communication open, and balance that communication with honesty and hope, in addition to getting immediate support from free suicide hotlines. Professionals who deal with suicide have tools to help not just the potential victims of suicide, but the family, friends, neighbors and communities of these loved ones. Suicide creates a ripple effect and eventually, we all know someone who who has committed suicide or has considered it.

Nicknamed “the new millennium's Dear Abby” by the media, April Masini writes the critically acclaimed ‘Ask April’ advice column and answers reader's questions on the free Ask April advice forum. Author of four books, including *Date Out Of Your League* (TurnKey Press, 0-9746763-0-6) and *Think & Date Like A Man* (iUniverse, 0-595-37466-2), April has been interviewed for over 2,700 articles and opinion pieces, radio and television shows, including those on FOX, ABC, CBS, MSN, Telemundo and Univision — New York Times, New York Daily News, Los Angeles Times, Chicago Tribune, Cosmopolitan, Maxim and USA Today.

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People often ask me about getting their kids in Hollywood. I tell them it's much more important for them to have a childhood and not grow up/develop in this type of environment. If you can come to Los Angeles in your late 20's and give it a go, do that first. Finish school, learn who you are as a person. Hollywood and the challenges to your ego can take its toll.

Sam Russell travels the US after 13 years in the Hollywood scene, celebrity and TV wardrobe stylist, finding unique stories of women in need and surprises them with a wardrobe upgrade valued at \$10,000. A survivor of two attempted suicide attempts when he was a teenager, Sam knows the painful struggles of what Lee Thompson Young was going through. Frustrated with the greed and ego of entertainment, Sam re-routes PR clothing gifted to celebrities and uses it to help women in need. He finds unique stories of survivors through non-profits and social workers.

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Suicides occur most often as a result of hopelessness: the belief that things will never get better the way they are on earth. Sometimes it is coupled with depression and or substance abuse. In the case of Lee Thompson Young, there was no known drug or alcohol abuse, and no overt signs of depression outside of his death.

Hopelessness is, in fact, the number one indicator of suicide. When people experience hopelessness, it is almost like they develop blinders that close off other options. As a result, the only solution they see is to kill themselves.

As a psychologist, physical therapist and author of the bestselling book “A Happy You: Your Ultimate Prescription for Happiness,” my national platform includes interviews by various national media outlets including The Today Show, CNN, MSNBC, NPR, WSJ, Forbes, Woman's Day, Glamour, Self, Woman's World, Health and Cosmopolitan.

Dr. Elizabeth R. Lombardo, Ph.D., M.S., P.T