



# I Almost Lost My Sister

NAME WITHHELD

*Her desperate act led me to realize how much I cherished her.*

**C**ome on!" I said, impatiently swinging my keys around my index finger. "We're both going to be late if you don't hurry up!"

My 17-year-old sister slid off of the bed where she had been lying facedown. We were late for our summer jobs, and she was moving agonizingly slow. It seemed like she was always trying to annoy me. Born 11 months apart, my sister and I could be best friends or best enemies. I sighed and harassed her, trying to get her to move faster.

She limped slowly to the car, saying she didn't feel well. "She's so dramatic," I thought to myself as I pulled up to the fast food restaurant where she worked. "You're not that sick," I said as she staggered out of the car. Sometimes having a sister could be so aggravating.

That night when I got home, my mother opened the door. She had been waiting up for me. Her eyes were red and swollen. "Your sister tried to commit suicide. She took a bunch of pills . . ."

"No!" I remembered the last words I had said to her. She must have been thinking that I wouldn't even care.

The next months were a blur for our family—trying to prove how much we loved her, trying to give her a reason to live. We prayed

and fasted; we sought priesthood counsel and blessings. I watched my father's hair turn grey and my mother's face sag with worry.

My sister! Though at times we drove each other crazy, she was my best friend. I didn't know she was feeling so desperate. I thought of all the teasing remarks I had made in the last few months. Instead of supporting her as a family member should, I had been making the problem worse.

Although I knew what she had done was her choice, I couldn't help agonizing over how I could have helped her if I had known. Tears rolled down my cheeks as my mind flooded with memories of growing up together. The ache made my heart feel hollow.

I never realized until that moment how powerful words could be. Perhaps if I had used my words to support my sister instead of teasing her, she would have opened her heart. Then I would have realized she needed me to be her friend.

I determined I would be that friend. I began to follow Paul's admonition in the scriptures to "be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you" (Ephesians 4:32). As I did so, I noticed a change both in my sister and in myself. She was grateful for the little ways I showed my love for her. But I was also blessed. Being kind to her made me feel happier and more confident in myself.

Eventually my sister's medications were able to calm the turmoil that raged inside her. She had a chemical imbalance in her brain that affected her moods drastically. Her hormones became more balanced, and she achieved a sort of stability, although she would continue to struggle with the effects of that horrific time.

Because I almost lost her, I now cherish the time we have together and try to be more like the Savior when I interact with all my family members. I savor each new year with my sister as a gift. Sometimes when we visit each other we just laugh and laugh because it feels so good to be together. The time I can spend with my family brings me a deep sense of joy.

I have learned to hold on to family with all my might. I will fight to keep the relationships strong. Those relationships

are a gift from God to bring us joy and bless us in times of need. Family relationships are precious. Life is precious. I will savor these gifts while they are mine. **NE**

For information and help regarding depression and suicide, go to [www.ldsfamilyservices.org](http://www.ldsfamilyservices.org). For articles on depression, go to <http://providentliving.org/ses/media/articles/0,11275,2875-1---51,00.html>.

