I could feel my heart thudding in my throat, the blood pumping in my ear drums. Air rattled in my throat in painful gasps, and I felt like I couldn't breathe. Just a minute later, and he would have been gone… sixty seconds is all it takes, that fine line between life and death. These rambling thoughts were running through my mind as I thought about the conflict I faced, and what I learned from it.

When I was a sophomore in college, one of my best friends tried to commit suicide. He felt overwhelmed, and didn't know how to reach out for help. I came home late from studying in the library, and I was exhausted; I had been writing a paper that was due the next day for my Medieval Art class. I had texted Sam a few times, but he hadn't answered. I knew he had been feeling really down, especially because his girlfriend had broken up with him, and his mom was sick. Sam never had a dad, so he didn't really have any good male role models. On my long trek to my dorm, these thoughts kept circling in my head. A bad feeling started to grow inside me -- I decided to call him. I heard the call ringing like it was a death knell, echoing in empty silence...no answer. I went upstairs and banged on his door...no answer again. With fear gnawing at my stomach, I tried the door -- it was unlocked. I opened it, and saw him sprawled out on the ground.

"Help! Somebody, please, call 9-1-1!!!" I cried into the hallway, my voice breaking with terror and tears.

"Sam! Why didn't you call me?? Sam?!"

Showing resilience in the face of a crisis, I kept my cool and was able to get Sam the help he needed. All I could think about what how grateful I was to them, and how grateful I was for my own life. Sure, things got pretty dark sometimes, but I knew that the gratitude I felt toward my family and friends would never let me throw it all away. As a result of this experience, I learned that being grateful for what you have is the key to happiness. Also, that being a loyal and compassionate friend can literally save someone's life. Most of all, I learned that asking for help is so important -- if I had gotten there a minute later, Sam would have passed away. If he'd called me, he would never have risked his life in a moment of desperation, feeling alone when he was really surrounded by people who loved him.

In conclusion, I hope that all young people know that life does get better, and that even when things seem hopeless, there's always light at the end of the tunnel. This is the message I wanted to share with all the people who ever feel overwhelmed. Just ask for help, and wait it out -- don't give up.