

So there was this time that I responded to a call. It was a pedestrian walking on the freeway. I initially thought it was going to be a homeless guy just walking on the freeway and, so I responded. Traffic wasn't too heavy 'cause people were – it was early in the morning. It was about 6:00 in the morning or so, 5:00 in the morning, so we – traffic was moving about 60 miles per hour, but they started slowing down once they noticed that I got there, but they were moving by pretty quick, around 60 or so.

Right as I showed up, I seen him start walking right into the first lane, and so I quickly just – my initial instinct was to just run out there and just grab him. So I ran out there, grabbed him, pulled him off the freeway onto the shoulder.

And then I didn't notice it at first, but he had a cord wrapped around his neck, and then I noticed he was – it clicked: "Oh, he was trying to kill himself." So I took the cord off – and the cord was strangling him. He couldn't breathe, and that's partially why he was stumbling because he was lose – his oxygen was low. So I unwrapped the cord, and it was on there pretty tight, put him in handcuffs, and then I started talking to him. He started saying, "Oh, why didn't you just let me do it? Why'd you do that?" And then I put him in the back of my patrol car and then talked to him about his life. He said that he was just done with life; he couldn't handle it anymore, that he was tired of being homeless, can't find a job.

So I ended up committing him to the hospital for suicide watch. In that time, I had to sit with him for about four hours, five hours. It was long – it was quite a while. During that time, we just kept taking with each other about his life, his struggles and everything, got to know a lot about him, learned why he was killing himself or wanting to kill himself, and then, after we kept talking, he just thanked me and said, "Thank you for what you do. I appreciate you helping me. Thanks for talking with me," and just – he really greatly appreciated it. At first, he wanted to kill himself, and then, when he was talking with me, he kinda – he realized that it's worth living as we started talking – more people are – 'cause he didn't think anybody cared about him or anything like that.

He said he has attempted suicide multiple times. He said he tried jumping off a two-story building but it didn't work. He said he tried running in front of a bus, but it was 25 miles per hour and the bus slowed way down before it could hit him. He said that he's taken pills and – among other things. He says he's tried it all. He's had history of drugs and he just can't get out of the system of – and the addiction of doing drugs. He's like, "It makes me feel better. It's the only time I do feel good." So we just talked about his life, mainly, just how he's doing, his well being. He was homeless, so his shoes didn't fit and he doesn't have any socks, so his feet were all blistered up, and even just taking the slightest movements on his feet just hurt his feet. He just had swollen feet and they were all blistered up, so he – he was in quite the pain.

So it's something that they teach. "Service with humility" is our motto, so just looking at – it's like being compassionate, just looking at how they feel, looking at eyes through

their shoes or through their eyes or life through their eyes and things like that. I think I changed his outlook on life – or helped change his outlook on life.

It is a very – it's an enjoyable and awesome job, but they're trying to – they teach you service with humility, so you're – you kinda strayed from your first idea as, "Oh, I want to do all this fun stuff," to, "I want to help people. I want to serve the public. I want to do this for people. I want to make people's lives better, even if it's the smallest thing." 'Cause a small thing to you can be a big thing to someone else.

I'm Trooper Austin Lauer with the Washington State Patrol.