

This would have to be my word for the week:

"Incomprehensible:

—adjective: impossible to understand or comprehend; unintelligible; impossible to know or fathom.

-synonyms: baffling, bewildering, obscure."

I guess it all started off with the slayings at Virginia Tech. An event like this is simply not within our comprehension. There aren't many people that can say that they truly understand the magnitude of the suffering, anguish, or horror. As I've heard said before - "not until you've walked a day in my mocassins".

But these things do happen in a free society. Our freedoms allow us to move about the country of our own accord, and through simple rights and responsibilities we, as a nation, function quite smoothly. Then something like this happens and we want to lock everything down - which is exactly what we don't want to do. How about paying attention to the signs and symptoms of our brethren on a day-to-day basis ... to gain clues of something that could perhaps be prevented with the appropriate intervention ... instead of just ignoring it because something like this "wouldn't ever happen on my street"? I think the phrase is "love thy neighbor" but ...

I digress. This isn't a rant. The lone gunman's actions are comprehensible. He was obviously a troubled young man that, in his eyes, felt there was only one option. The only option he had in life - was death. Sad, but true. The incomprehensible part is that this man's troubles would impact the youth and vitality of a university setting - or any setting for that matter. You can never really prepare yourself - for the death of your peers.

Which brings me to the next moment of incomprehensibility. It was a phone call I'd received late this week. It was startling, baffling, bewildering - and utterly incomprehensible. Amy had died this week - unexpectedly and without warning.

Amy was the woman that cut my hair. I've never really called her my "hairstylist" - the word

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just hasn't fit the bill for her. She was much more than that. Amy was perhaps one of the coolest, kindest, most caring people I've met. I guess I've known her for about 6 or 7 years (now that I look back on it) - how that time has flown by so quickly. I'd see her about every 7 or 8 weeks to get my hair cut - it was like clockwork. I've always known that my meeting with Amy was rock-solid in a crazy schedule of life. In the time I've known her, she shared all of the triumphs - and hurts - and was always a wonderful ally in the challenges of my day - even just for a few minutes. Her viewpoints, her perspective, was similar to mine. Her age - was close to mine.

The last time I saw Amy was Wednesday March 28. I remember it vividly. The new salon had just opened - that day in fact - and I hadn't received the message to go to the new location. I called her, and she graciously offered to fit me into the schedule even though I would be late. As she met me outside, she was glowing - they'd just opened the new location on South Congress and I would be her first client in the new place. She gave me the quick tour of the new place. She was so happy to have her work station next to the window, which looks out upon some trees and a courtyard. Amy was excited about the blank slate that was there in front of her. We joked that it was an honor to be her first client in the new location. We laughed - a lot - as we always did. We talked about work, life, people, life, and more about life.

Life.

And now, she's not here to share exactly that with the world.

Now THAT is incomprehensible.

Death - in a strange way - is required to define Life. The problem is - that it never seems like an appropriate time for it to happen. Never. And certainly not at that age - in either scenario I just presented.

There is a very high IF in all of this - "Incomprehensibility Factor". And the irony is that the word "if" is a conditional word - and death isn't. IF nothing else - it awakens us to the true fragility of our world. And it reminds us of our own lives, and how we must live them with courage, and hope, and a "joie de vivre". No ifs, ands, or buts.

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To the students of Virginia Tech ... and to my friend Amy ... we will miss you with all of our hearts and souls. But please remember - that your presence has made the world a better place for each and every one of us. And for Amy, I'd pass on a a special quote from Jimi Hendrix and say - "If I don't see you no more in this world, I'll see you in the next world - and don't be late".