



Anderson Cooper (left) with Shane Boylan and Audrey Gruss

//VICTORHUGO/PMC

**He asked the tough questions in a presidential debate and tangled with talking heads on CNN, but with the election behind him, Anchor Anderson Cooper says he is looking forward to the next chapter.**

Speaking at Tuesday's Hope for Depression Research Foundation's Tenth Annual Luncheon in Manhattan, where he was honored with the Hope Award for Depression Advocacy, the newsman called the election "extraordinary" and noted "how involved people have been. A lot of new people joined the process and that's exciting to see."

Cooper, whose brother Carter Cooper killed himself in 1988, was honored for speaking out about depression and suicide, most especially in his recent book, *The Rainbow Comes and Goes: A Mother and Son on Life, Love and Loss*, which he wrote with his mother, Gloria Vanderbilt, and their HBO documentary, *Nothing Left Unsaid*.

According to Audrey Gruss — who founded HDRF in 2006 in honor of her late mother, Hope, who suffered for decades from clinical depression — Cooper “has spent much of his professional career speaking openly about his struggle to grieve and to move on from this incomprehensible tragedy.

“The public discussion of such a private death shows a combination of both the strength and the compassion to help others facing similar kinds of grief.”

Addressing the packed audience at the Plaza Hotel, Cooper said, “As many of you know, my brother Carter, died when I was a senior in college. He jumped off a balcony in front of my mother while she was begging him not to.”

After his brother’s shocking death, Cooper says he spent his senior year at Yale University “struggling with grief trying to figure out how to move forward with my life and understand what happened.”

Suicide, he said, “is something we don’t speak much about” in our society.

As an aspiring reporter, he purposefully traveled to places like Somalia “where the language of loss was spoken,” he says, and “not something whispered about.”

“In a strange way, I knew I had discovered my bliss,” he says. “I knew that I couldn’t stop the starvation and I couldn’t save people’s lives, but I could bear witness to their struggles. I could tell their stories.”

Years later he says he realized that “I needed to do those stories for my own survival.”

In one of the luncheon’s most touching moments, when Cooper took the stage, he thanked 11-year-old Shane Boylan, who was lauded for raising \$4,000 from a 10-mile fundraising bike ride he organized in June for the HDRF after his father committed suicide earlier this year.

“Nobody told me I was going to be following an 11-year-old,” Cooper initially joked. “Not an easy task.”

Growing more serious, Cooper said, “My dad passed away when I was 10 years old and my brother when I was 21 and I know when I was 11 I could not have stood on this stage and talked about my father the way he did.”

Saying that even at 21, when his brother died, he could not have spoken to an audience about the deaths of his brother and father, he commended Boylan for his remarks about his dad and wanting to help battle depression, saying simply: “Thank you, Shane.”