WTF Do I Do Now?

Real Help for When Everything Goes Wrong

Michael E Davies

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This book reflects my own personal experiences and opinions and is not a substitute for professional medical, psychological, legal or financial advice. If you need help, please reach out to a qualified professional or one of the support services listed in this book.

Introduction

My story nearly ended before my new life had a chance to begin.

Let me be upfront with you. I almost didn't write this book.

Not because I didn't have anything to say. After 25 years as a holistic life coach, I have more than enough material. The reason I nearly didn't write it is because three years ago I wasn't sure I was going to be here at all.

In the last three years, I have been suicidal. I had anxiety so bad I could barely leave the house. I went through bankruptcy. I developed cancer and had half my bowel removed. I lost my dad. I was almost 12 stone overweight and needed two sticks to walk. I left a beautiful flat overlooking woodland and moved into a spare room in my ex-wife's house.

As you can see, I am not living the Instagram version of happiness and success.

As I write this today, I am cancer-free, debt-free and six stone lighter. I am in my sixties, starting again, and I have recently discovered I am neurodivergent. And despite that, or because of that, I am more motivated than ever to help people.

What makes this book different? This isn't a book written from a comfortable office, watching other people's struggles. It's written from the other side of surviving them. I know what it feels like to sit in the dark. I know what it feels like to have no idea what comes next. I know what it feels like when the light finally comes back.

This book is not rah-rah. It is not a list of affirmations to stick on your fridge. It is not written by someone who has only ever read about hard times. It is written by someone who has lived them, helped hundreds of others through them and come out

the other side with clarity about what actually works and what is crap.

If you are living your best life right now, brilliant. This book is probably not for you. But if your life feels lost, out of control or like everything is changing faster than you can keep up with, stay with me. You are in exactly the right place.

I am not going to fix you. You do not need fixing. What I am going to do is walk alongside you, share what I know and remind you of something important.

It will be alright in the end. If it's not alright, it's not the end.

Much love,
Michael E Davies
Author, guide and work in progress

A note before you read

This book deals with some of life's hardest experiences, including mental health, loss and moments of complete darkness. I write about these from my own experience and from over 25 years of helping others through them.

If any of the content feels too much right now, please feel free to skip ahead and come back when you are ready. There is no right order and there are no rules.

If you are struggling right now and need to talk to someone, please reach out. In the UK and Ireland, you can contact Samaritans free, any time, day or night, on 116 123 or visit samaritans.org. If you are elsewhere in the world, you can find local emotional support services at befrienders.org.

You are not alone, and the world needs you in it.

Section one: This is what it was like

Let me guide you through

These mini chapters cover what it was like going through each of these experiences, what I did that helped me, what may help you and how it turned out, but like life, how things turned out is a work in progress.

Some mini chapters contain emotionally sensitive material. As with life, these experiences blended into each other. It was not a case of, 'Today we deal with this one.' Some of these experiences are now, thankfully, a blur, in my memory, and I will recall the best I can from the memories I wish I could forget. Bear with me.

If you are going through any of these things right now, there is light at the end. Once through it, your new perspective on life will be so much clearer when the dust settles.

This book is intentionally small. My aim was to get to the point without any padding. When I was in the dark place you will soon read about, if a friend had given me a big, thick self-help book, I would have been overwhelmed and unable to read it.

Please remember: it will be alright in the end. If it's not alright, it's not the end.

Chapter 1:
The darkness and depression

It will be alright in the end. If it's not alright, it's not the end.

The death of my vision of myself. I felt so low. The hardest part was that I no longer felt I could help people. If I was not helping people, what was the point? I did not have the energy to start again. I felt the world would be better off without me, and I came very close to ending my life. Obviously I did not, unless this is the ultimate ghostwriting experience. Humour is often needed.

What followed was anxiety, depression, agoraphobia and bankruptcy, along with losing relationships, developing cancer, undergoing surgery, losing a significant amount of weight, moving out of my home and grieving the death of my dad, all within three years.

I do not know what else to call it, but the word darkness seems to fit like a heavy coat.

When I was on my way to ending my life, everything was calm. Emotionless. Just practicalities. No drama. A decision. Obviously that did not happen. Up until that point, I could not understand how anyone could get there. Now I do.

Back to where I was. I sat quietly in my flat. It was dark and a little chilly. Money was tight, and the heating was for when it got cold. I was empty. My thoughts were almost mechanical. I had been devastated by people I trusted, people I thought loved and cared about me as much as I did them. I saw no hope for the life I had imagined, no future, and felt a total loss

of who I am and what I do. It was when I decided the world is better off without me. My whole being was about helping people, and if I could no longer do that, what was the point?

I remember looking out of the patio window and thinking through one possible way of ending my life. Then a little voice in my head found practical reasons to delay. It broke the spell. I silently agreed. It was as though there was something or someone trying to save me by buying me time, and that delay worked.

The following morning, when I was not just thinking about suicide but on my way to act on those thoughts, I was interrupted by a phone call that led to a cup of tea and a chat. I was on autopilot and not good company, but that conversation broke my thought process. The following day, I sat in a chair at my friend's house and said, 'I cannot talk, but I need to be somewhere safe.' She was lovely. She covered me with a blanket when I shivered, made me a drink and, most importantly, let me be and loved me. I was numb. No feelings, no thoughts. I just sat there and did not move. My body was cold and rigid, my mind was blank. I had shut down. I stayed in her spare room for a few days.

Around day three, I could talk and explain what I had been going to do and why.

It physically felt like wearing a weighted body. Doing anything took enormous effort. Some days, the only reason I got out of bed was to feed my cat.

My thoughts did not work properly. I had no enjoyment, no motivation. Just a quiet shock at how close I had come to no longer being here.

My friend arranged for me to see a counsellor who specialised in working with people who had been where I had been. It was through a charity. In the first session, I sat completely rigid. I recall having a clear line of sight to the door and feeling

as though my seat was the starting block in a race.

This is what surviving in the darkness feels like.

I understand. Life is sometimes so messed up that your brain cannot work properly. You shut down. You cannot move. You cannot sleep. You have no appetite. Life can feel as though it has no meaning or purpose. And this is a dangerous place.

It is a place where you need someone around you trust. Not to talk, it's too early for that. I get it. Someone who will just be there. Maybe put a blanket on you, bring you a bite to eat or something to drink.

Here's what actually helped, in the order it happened:

At first, I did nothing. I could not function.

What may help you? Be with someone you trust. Let them look after you without asking you lots of questions. If you are helping someone in this position, there are four things that helped me:

- One, love them.
- Two, let them be.
- Three, do not ask them to do anything or explain themselves. This is not the time to expect them to reason their way out of how they feel.
- Four, do not leave them alone if you believe they may be in danger. Get additional help if you need it.

I allowed someone to help me. I sat in counselling. I counted the wins.

Getting out of bed was a win. Feeding the cat was a win. Brushing my teeth was a win. Having a shower was a win. Remembering to eat was a win. Counting the wins kept me going.

Start by washing your face. That is enough for today. Allow someone you trust to help you. Go with them to appointments. You do not have to talk if you do not want to. You decide, and you are allowed to change your mind. Allow

yourself to cry when you need to.

What I have come to understand, looking back, is this:

Brother, sister, friend, it gets easier. Trust me. I may be someone you never meet, but I am someone who knows.

Use this mantra. I hope it helps:

It will be alright in the end. If it's not alright, it's not the end.

Trust me when I say the world needs you. The future you may be stronger, wiser and more resilient. You do not have to make sense of what you are going through right now. In time, you may find meaning in it. You may even realise that what you have learned allows you to become a light in someone else's darkness. When you are through this, no matter how long it takes, this episode in your life will make sense. The clarity of why will come.

The story of the caterpillar turning into a butterfly is overused, but we rarely talk about the time inside the chrysalis, when its old form breaks down before something new emerges. That dark, confusing period can feel overwhelming. Nothing seems to make sense. But change is taking place even when you cannot yet see it. Eventually, something new can emerge.

The world needs me, and it needs you.

So where am I now, after all of that?

Life is good. It is a lot easier. I have a positive view of my life, the people in it and where I am headed. Join me on this journey and hopefully you will begin to feel the same, even if the idea that life can be good feels alien to you at the moment.

As I write this, I have recently sat with someone who, like me, was in that place. I helped change their mind by listening and telling them the world needs them, all this shit they've gone through can help them to help others. I suggested he could find someone and help them. After a long quietness, he hugged me and said he did not have a reason to be here but would find a way to help. The following morning, he said he

would see me again. I took this as a quiet statement of, 'I'll be here.' There is a big problem with us blokes: we do not talk enough. But what he said spoke volumes.

In the early days, I joined some Facebook groups of blokes helping blokes, but left after just a day or two because I did not have the strength to hear anyone else's pain. I was spent and barely hanging on.

As I write this, I am balanced. I wake up and enjoy the sunshine. I no longer feel heavy. I still get days when I have no mojo, but the gap between those days is ever expanding, and the times when the blankets feel heavy get shorter: from months to weeks to days and now the occasional hour.

Life will never be perfect. I have learned to change my perspective on simple things. Instead of getting annoyed because my cat woke me, I enjoy listening to his soft purring and, when I open my eyes, seeing his face looking back at me.

My best advice: be gentle with yourself. Do not beat yourself up with thoughts like 'I should be doing this' or 'I haven't done anything today'. Every day is a new start. It sounds like pseudo-talk, but it works. Just be you. You are enough and you are loved, even if you are unaware by whom or do not feel it. Allow yourself to just be. Stop pressurising yourself to get up and get going. You will when you are ready.

Friend, until you find someone to believe in you, I believe in you. You are strong enough. Rest when you need to, because your new life awaits.

It will be alright in the end. If it's not alright, it's not the end.

Thank you for reading.

This is a free sample of
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Advance sample. Small changes may be made before publication.