

# Just writing

## Emma Langman

If you had asked me two years ago to write this, I would have put the pillow back over my head.

Just hiding.

I was asleep for more hours than I was awake. School run in my pyjamas. Kitchen in chaos.

Just surviving.

My LinkedIn page shows a successful woman. Smiling and professional, and sometimes called:

*"Just inspiring"*.

Now here I was scraping by on benefits and wondering how this had all happened. My career and health gone.

Just bewildering.

Referred to social services for 'Early Help', and on the waiting list for counselling.

Just waiting.

My church arranged person-centred counselling. It was enough to keep my head from the walls.

Just howling.

I told the counsellor I hadn't done my tax return. I thought 'they' would take my children.

Just terrifying.

One afternoon I walked through the churchyard and hid in the porch. Praying for it to stop.

Just quitting.

Hands clutching my phone. Trying to work out who might answer my distress call.

Just scrolling.

My friend picked up and their family wrapped around me. The children's father came to them for a week.

Just sleeping.

The dog bounded around, far too strong for me. A human sled across the snow, scratched and embarrassed.

Just hurting.

Sat in a room full of people 'like me' as we were taught the tools of CBT. I wanted to scream.

Just angry.

I tried everything I could think of; Job hunting, NLP, Coaching. I even counted out my blessings.

Just nothing.

Met a man who was born with his stomach outside - just like me. Now he's a professional comedian.

Just laughing.

Talked to the Archbishop's daughter. Promised her that we would both be OK.

Just praying.

Went to the doctor and they changed my medication. Side effects abated.

Just awakening.

A walk by the school. I could process sound, smell or sight. Only one at a time.

Just overwhelming.

Started off for home. My feet turned to lead. I could hardly walk.

Just stumbling.

Referred again. A high priority case. Waiting list of years. Nobody called.

Just disappearing.

Desperate now. Walked out of A&E because the people in there are REALLY ill.

Just despairing.

The nurse at the counter asked me what it was I wanted. I answered.

Just dying.

She broke the rules, made the doctor see me. He made me promise to live to see the next Star Wars movie.

Just watching.

Inquests are bad for the bowels, he said. Don't make me have to explain it to your children.

Just promising.

My GP reviewed my case. At last they helped me understand the root cause was life.

Just acknowledging.

People told me to let the trauma go. They didn't understand what it does to you.

Just invading.

An alien visitation. Pain, searing through every cell and sinew of my soul.

Just darkening.

Embarrassed friends stepped in. Concerned that they would overstep the line.

Just polite-ning.

Others shared the mess. The journey they had taken.

Just talking.

I called the therapist. Explained the situation. Went to visit.

Just exploring.

He told me that you can't let it go. It holds you. But he would walk with me. I wouldn't be alone.

Just escaping.

Back to the incubator. The door of my brother's room. The operating table. So much loss.

Just excruciating.

Working through the pain. Experiencing it. Acknowledging it. Climbing out of the pool.

Just feeling.

A coffee and some cake with my boyfriend after each session.

Just grounding.

People said that if I made it public it would limit my career. But I knew what that would be.

Just lying.

And now I am here. Mothering. Earning. Enjoying. Back to work with kind clients.

Just emerging.

And because it might help others. That's why I said yes. So here I am, writing this for you.

Just writing.

### A note about Emma's photo

Emma's photograph is a poignant illustration of how 'surviving' may have many faces. She writes:

"I was very ill at the time, and yet had managed to win some work in Malta, run to the shops when the plane had lost my case, and delivered something vaguely coherent. It's a moment to be proud of."

### About Emma

**Emma Langman** lives in North West England where she works at [BakerFish](#) as a Change Optician. She specialises in helping people to see, grow and do work differently. She lives with three fantastic children, a patient and kind boyfriend and a German Shepherd called Honey. Her remaining life goal is to create a post-hospice-holiday-house, which helps families to hurt, heal and hope after the loss of a child.

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