

One tree, for me, blog number three!

Before anyone should get stuck in and start reading, I'd like to point out that some points within this blog may be triggering or cause upset to those who manage to read all seven pages! It's a long one I'm afraid, my longest blog to date! As mentioned within this blog, there is a whole lot more I could say about this period of my life. However, as originally mentioned in my first blog post, anything written comes straight from me, NMD! Just for clarity, or more so to do you as the reader a favour, it is by no means to be assumed that this blog will be delivered in a chronological fashion. As I "blog on" stories might be mentioned that refer back to previous blog posts. However for your own sanity, as the reader, I'll make every effort in making sure everything is as clear and as understanding as possibly able. Let's face it, you're reading a mental health blog written by someone who has more labels than your average Joe Bloggs, things are bound to sound a little baffling at times!

But firstly, let's roll back in time to Sunday the 18th of February 2024.... Mainly because prior to my coma there is very little I do remember. From what I do remember happens to be rather sporadic if I'm being honest. And as I mentioned in my first blog post as well as above, what should entail within my blog posts comes in no chronological order but more so from what I remember, or more so what I feel like writing about at that precise moment in time. Right now it's about that initial decision I made to end my life. This mainly being due to seeing a memory pop up on my Facebook from last year where I was in hospital, having just come round from a five week coma and deciding to share with all my friends not only videos but also some photos of me in my coma and to also give some insight as well as reassurance to all those that were questioning my whereabouts, having appeared to have completely dropped off the planet!

Sundays throughout winter, within my social circle have always been renowned for being a day of rest, a full on roast dinner with all the trimmings and an array of deserts to choose from for anyone physically able to digest anymore! Usually followed by everyone who is in attendance to take refuge in the living room, rubbing our full bellies and often watching something like David Attenborough or Countryfile while still catching up with each other, laughing, feeling grateful for what we do have and enjoying each other's company. For many years, this has been a Sunday tradition come the winter, a tradition that is enjoyed by all that attend and very much looked forward to week after week. What better way to not only end a weekend but to also prepare yourself for a new week soon to commence.

My reasoning for mentioning this Sunday tradition is to not only have the opportunity to give my thanks and appreciation to those who either done the food shop or possibly took a turn with the cleaning up duties but more so to the main man himself, the cook! I've lost count of how many times I've praised one of his roast dinners, often stating that this is "the best one yet" time and time again. Although this weekly tradition possibly reads to be rather dull at present, let me assure you that this particular Sunday the 18th of February 2024 plays a vital part in my story.

Prior to the 18th of February, I can vaguely remember the weeks that lead up to this particular Sunday. However, having been struck with anxiety like I've never felt before, I highly doubt I'll ever be able to forget it. So much so that even leaving the house become the most daunting task to ever have to experience. Keeping my doors locked to feel a sense of inner peace more so than for the risk of being broken into, that thought never once crossed my mind. Over time and for various reasons, I soon fell into the habit of having my phone constantly on airplane mode, if not turned off. This being due to the anxiety I would feel from receiving calls or messages, be that from friends or clients. Soon enough I decided for myself that all I wanted to do was to hide away from both friends and clients or more so, the outside world. So much so that I'd be ducking at the window to avoid having to see my next door neighbours. Emptying my bins at night, knowing no one would see me. Even at times food shopping late at night to avoid as many people as possible. Why? Well I can't tell you exactly why this was, I wasn't hiding from anyone in particular and I had no negativity towards anyone to be so adamant in having my phone turned off constantly, so why I started doing or acting the way I was, I still can't truly say for sure. However, what I can say with honesty and clearly is that on this particular day that anxiety decided to take a hold of me, I changed completely. Uncertain on what day of the week this was but as I was leaving my home to go to work I suddenly froze while walking down the stairs which lead to my front door. Stuck on the stairs, frozen and filled with anxiety for reasons I still don't really know. Feeling scared, alone, sad, doubting everything I had worked so hard to achieve while crying and frozen on the stairs. Questions flooded my mind within a blink of an eye, so many things! What do I do, what is this, what have I done, why now? Not meaning to blow smoke up my own arse, but I've lived a colourful life and I have stories to tell that will leave your jaw on the floor and make you question things you'd have never once thought about!! So why have I now suddenly been hit with the shit stick? What I can say with certainty and with my old friend, Mr Hindsight on my side is that from what I am able to remember I am able to share the possible reasons that potentially contributed to this sudden feeling that I was burdened with on that February morning while going to or at least attempting to go to work.

Being self-employed but yet scared to leave your home to go and earn a living I can assure you is no easy task. If I'm being blunt, it's impossible! Being a freelance horse trainer meant I couldn't bring my work home with me. Horses being horses means they can't just be turned off. I couldn't just send Bob the cob an email telling him what he needed to work on or send a voice note to Super Sid reminding him to clean his water bucket or refill his hay net. But besides being a freelance horse trainer, travelling all over Surrey and riding an array of horses for various reasons, which brought its own hurdles at times, I was also running a livery yard. It was usual for me to wake up to various messages, be that from friends or more so clients, be that a text, WhatsApp or via a social media platform. Panic would always greet me in the morning when it come to looking at my phone, mainly due to what messages would be waiting for me. Fretting if any staff have called in sick. Any clients requesting to change their allocated time of ride that day for whatever reason, to which I'd always aim to accommodate. Unexpected ad hoc clients asking if I was free to ride that day, something that I would again try to manage regardless of how busy I might have been or if I was needed at my livery yard to carry out the jobs required due to staff sickness. Messages from friends, be that a written message or something simply shared on social media that was often funny or possibly just unnecessary and on very few occasions really hurtful. On one occasion I remember waking up to a message from a friend inviting me to go to Alton Towers, knowing full well that I had a broken ankle due to falling through a glass door while playing a VR game called 'walk the plank' with who I refer to as my nephew. Followed up

with being blamed for constantly getting injured, yet said person was at one stage like a sister. Voice noting every day, all day. Not to derail from conversation, but as previously mentioned 2023 was the worst year I have ever experienced. From moving home almost single handedly with minimal notice to a tree falling on my car, to my much loved dog dying after ten precious years, taking on a new business, being diagnosed with exhaustion which escalated to chronic fatigue, having a drunk driver crash straight into my car while stationary at a junction and what with the broken ankle to name just a few of the obstacles 2023 presented I can assure you! You would expect or at least appreciate a little more understanding from someone you love, respect and value as a friend. But unfortunately, like many others she was no where to be seen in times of need, instead her love was shown in other ways which only hindered our friendship more so. Will save this story for another time my friends. There is no smoke without fire and hand on my heart I hold no resentment towards her or many others. As the saying goes, what doesn't kill you, only makes you stronger! And coming from a person who has died five times in total, I know this to be true. Questionable at times yes, but I'm still here.

So going back to the day where I was greeted with anxiety and deciding to keep my phone turned off, just like locking my front door with me inside, keeping my phone turned off filled me with a sense of peace and eliminated any fear. As the days rolled by, I would from time to time turn my phone on very briefly to see what messages I had received, replying to those that I felt needed to be replied to and even messaging those that I had to, be it to cancel a session or to simply let someone know that I was ok. But ok I was not. I remember on one occasion being woken up to someone knocking on my front door, calling out my name. I must point out that sleeping was something I could never get enough of, having been told already by my doctor that I had exhaustion sleeping just made sense. Having woken up I cautiously walked down my stairs to see it was my friend at the door, full of concern and loaded with lunch for us both. It was a day or two after, that I was picked up from my home and taken to see my GP to explain how I was currently feeling. An appointment made by my friend who joined me when speaking to my GP.

I've recently come to finding out while completing a self-harm and suicide awareness course that 90% of people that go and see their GP regarding their own mental health are often felt ashamed or even in denial of how they are actually feeling. Giving little to go on and in the presence of their doctor, very little support is initially offered. I can fully understand why. I personally felt defeated, tired and at an all-time low. I spoke very little and I cried while covering my face with my baseball hat. I personally felt like my doctor was being very patronising as she looked at me, asking various questions and with a big smile on her face. Thankfully for me, my friend who arranged the appointment stepped in and explained my situation and all the obstacles that I'd had to deal over with over the previous months if not year which in turn lead me to a place of darkness and with very little, if anything to be excited about. I was prescribed some antidepressant's, informed that they could take up to two weeks to kick in and told that it would be a two year wait for any type of therapy to be offered, meaning basically that the chance of receiving therapy was not going to be an option. With a smile on her face, my eyes puffy and red from crying and my friend holding my hand, we were sent on our way with a prescription.

I'd like to state now that there is so much more I could add to this specific blog, to which I will refer back to in time. But for now I'll try not to get too sidetracked, no easy task for me I can assure you. What happened leading up to my initial intentions of calling it a day on life itself, I'm not completely certain to be able to say with complete honesty, like I have been and will continue to be while sharing my story via this blog. But on Sunday the 18th of February 2024 I can remember with certainty that I was at my friends for our traditional Sunday feast. How I got there I can't say, I just remember being there as well as the fact that we had gammon for dinner. Although I was there in person, mentally I was somewhere completely different. I remember leaving, saying my goodbyes to all the usual faces and promising to message once I was home, something I've always done as well as ask others to do when leaving me. It was home and to bed for me, back where I felt not only safe but at peace, in the comfort of my own company along with my dog, Pickles and parrot, Feathers. Safe.

Monday approached. As for what happened on Monday, I can't say. Not because I don't want to but because I truly do not remember. But from what I do remember, **something** just clicked within me. Clicked, cracked, popped, switched however you look at it, a flame was ignited within me. I'm still uncertain as to what that "**something**" was but at around midnight, if not before, I set to work. I've always been a tidy person but now fuelled with this ball of energy I carried out some little household chores, ensured both Pickles and Feathers had a good supply of food and water available to them before saying my goodbyes to them both knowing what I was about to ensue. With my home clean and in order, I ditched the pyjama's and cracked on with making myself look presentable, like I was getting ready for a night out of the tiles! I had just one job left to do. To leave out my final wishes.

Deciding to try and take your own life is not like deciding what to have for dinner that evening. It takes an awful lot of thought as well as courage to do such a thing. I've heard many refer to those who have decided to end their own lives as selfish and although I don't agree or disagree with this statement, until you're at rock bottom, you can't really say what is right or wrong. I've suffered with bouts of depression from a very young age and have previously attempted to take my own life on numerous occasions for various reasons. But this time was different and intentional more so than ever before. I can remember having fleeting thoughts on how to carry out such an act. Googling the easiest and quickest way to "pop my clogs" as well as writing my final wishes over and over again. I was under no illusion that what I was wanting to do would upset those I held close (how mistaken was I having received love and well wishes from places never expected) but once again, until you've reached rock bottom yourself, there is no logical reasoning to anything. My final wishes included messages to certain individuals. I expressed not only my love but also my gratitude to so many that had played a role in my journey over the last year or so. I stated clearly who I would like my dog, Pickles to be homed with as well as my parrot, Feathers. I initiated my final wishes with an apology to whoever was the first to read them, stating that while I was writing I was listening to Cold Play, with Pickles snuggled closely beside me. I also clearly remember stating that not one individual was responsible for the actions that I decided to take. No blame was to be passed around and that I didn't have any hate or resentment towards anyone. It was more a concoction of one's own struggles through life that escalated over time. There was not just the one straw that broke the camel's back so to speak, but more so the weight of what I was carrying that finally took its toll. I've mentioned many a time before now that I intend to be as honest and as open as I possibly can be, it was not

that long ago that I lost everything and hit rock bottom. I'm still rebuilding myself up but for me to do that genuinely, honesty has to be the foundation for me to build myself up from. I wouldn't class myself as a liar, I've never had any real reason to lie, not to mention that my facial expressions would always say the opposite to what I'm trying to lie about, giving the game away! So by being honest I mean this as a reflection to myself more so than to anyone else. Honest with my opinion, regardless as to who might agree or even disagree. Honest to what I believe in and saying it loud and proud for all who want to hear or read my blog. For far too long I've been the happy one, the funny one, the positive one. I love seeing people happy, even more so when it's me making them happy. But if I'm genuinely not happy for whatever reason then why should I be infesting my time in making someone else happy, only to be disregarding my own needs and wellbeing to lift the spirits of someone else. Advice can be given, opinions can be shared, but we are all responsible for our own wellbeing. If anything, I've learned that relying on another person or even an animal to make you happy comes with heavy consequences should the time come that person or animal leaves us for whatever reason.

So with my house in order, Pickles and Feathers fed and watered in excess, along with my proposed final wishes ready to be viewed for whoever sees them first, I was ready. I was dressed appropriately to carry out this fleeting thought to end my own life with not an ounce of hesitation holding me back. Wearing my favourite blue Nike high tops, skinny jeans, a brand new jumper and jacket with clean underwear, ready to go and put an end to my life. Its only now that I've realised the thought that went into that outfit. Although I'm still alive, I never did see those clothes again.

Its been asked many a time if what I decided to do was planned. And in all honesty it wasn't. However, subconsciously I feel the idea was always something that lingered. Where I previously lived, just outside of Dorking in a very rural area, I use to pass a car park almost daily to a woodland area which happened to be just minutes from my home. This fleeting thought had obviously tapped into my subconscious as although I had not planned anything or even ever driven into this car park, I was set on driving to this car park, where id find a tree suitable and hang myself with a lunge line (a long rope used when dealing with horses) that was always kept in my car, along with other equestrian equipment often needed when riding a variety of horses one day to the next.

Having driven my brand new car which I had only had for a few days, due to my previous car being written off when a driver crashed into me, I pulled into the empty car park, reversed into a space and took my lunge line out before wondering off through this woodland in search for somewhere appropriate to carry out my intentions. Considering it was the early hours of the morning in February, it was not cold nor was it warm. I could hear the owls cooing and the odd rustle in the bushes. I remember for whatever reason that what I was about to attempt was not going to work. And this is something that was repeated in my head continuously, even though I proceeded with what I set out to do. I found an appropriate tree, climbed up (I've always been a good tree climber, another fleeting thought that crossed my mind while climbing this tree) and wrapped my lunge line around the trunk of the tree before measuring out the amount of rope left that I secured around a branch of the tree that was bigger than my waist, my waist at that time

being just 28". As already mentioned, my head was spinning with the same one line "this isn't going to work" repeating in my head, getting louder and louder. Regardless of this and while jumping on this branch to check it would take my weight and that I was attached to, I suddenly just jumped off that branch, regardless of the voices telling me that it would not work.

I very vaguely remember hanging before falling to the ground with the lunge line still around my neck and feeling a huge bump to the head where the thick branch had snapped and hit me as it snapped away from the tree. For whatever reason I knew my efforts to ensure I put an end to my life would not work. I still proceeded, not being detoured in any way as to what was planned. As I laid there on the floor in the early hours of that February morning, I still didn't feel cold. I didn't feel any pain. I was disappointed if anything that my efforts were all for nothing. I was in no rush to move so I just laid there, feeling at peace with a sense of tranquillity as bizarre as that may sound. I stayed there and didn't even flinch. Then from the corner of my right eye I see someone walking towards me. As I tilted my head the person that was approaching me was in fact a friend that I use to not only live with but also work with. Besides living and working with each other, he also took his own life by hanging himself just a few years before my attempt of doing the very same thing. He was wearing clothes that I had seen him in many a time before, his hood on his Canada Goose jacket was up and both his hands were in his pockets. I can remember seeing him as clear as day. He nudged me in the side with his foot, wearing his Gucci trainers before telling me "Nar mate, its not your time yet" with a cheesy grin on his face, chewing on gum like you would usually see him before he passed. I remember being speechless, not from shock or for any particular reason. I couldn't even tell you what emotion I was feeling at the time of seeing him. He then went on to tell me "You're not finished here yet, come on mate get up, sort yourself out" and with just a blink of the eye he was gone.

If anything it felt like a dream. I was in no pain what so ever and as told, I tried to get up but I physically couldn't. My intentions on just getting up and driving home to forget about my suicidal attempt were not realistic. Still in no pain and unsure of what damage I might have caused I managed to call 999 for an ambulance. All I could move on my body was from my elbows down, meaning I could pull my phone out of my pocket. I called 999 and from what I remember was asking for an ambulance but although my mouth was moving, I was completely mute. With the operator unsure on the situation at hand, she advised that I find out the what three words code was for the location I was in, to which I managed with no issues. It wasn't until I took a photo of myself that I realised my attempt of hanging myself had actually caused more damage than initially expected. I had blood pouring from my mouth and my neck swelled from its usual size. - Below I've attached this photo, dated the 20th of February 2024 at 4:49am. Please view at your own discretion.

Upon making contact with the emergency services it was reported that I also contacted another individual who I had just recently separated with. To my knowledge I can't remember if this was true, what I said if we did message or what he done. I couldn't even tell you why or when we initially separated although I can confirm that the relationship was doomed from the day it actually started, which was 8 months after initially meeting. I can confirm that we did speak briefly once I woke up from my coma however due to still being fragile with my memory and

unsure on not only what happened but where I even was, I stopped all contact with him and asked my friends to do the same for my own sanity. Regardless of what happened prior to having a relationship, being in a relationship with him and even after our relationship ended, I hold no negativity towards him. Yes, some of what I do remember while together was questionable, but as said previously, I don't hold anyone accountable for the actions I decided to take. If anything I simply wish him well with whatever he is doing now.

With me laying on the floor within this National Trust woodland, tasting the blood that was in my mouth, listening to the birds and feeling rather content and at peace, with not the slightest bit off pain, I listened to the operator on the phone. Unable to move I would hear vehicles pass the lane I was next to but no alarms. Being in that position and feeling at peace regardless of what actions I had taken, was very surreal. I didn't care. I was not scared nor was I cold. I was for the first time in a very long time at peace. Laying on the ground, watching the night sky, listening to the birds. Soon enough I could see a bright torch coming from my left hand side, with the paramedics ducking and swerving the branches and brambles that stood in their way to reach me. Before the paramedics even got close to me, I closed my eyes and that was me out for the count for the next five weeks.

Thank you for reading.

Written by yours truly, as honest and as open as one can possibly be.

NMD

7th April 2025



