

Finding hope and strength after trauma

Festival
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What happens after the worst happens? Is it possible to find fulfilment after trauma?

Midhurst author Mina Blair will share her own experiences as she talks about her book *Not For The Last Time* in a special event for the Festival of Chichester.

Mina will be speaking on Saturday, June 25 at 11am in St Martin's Coffee House, 3 St Martin's Street, PO19 1NP (free entry with minimum spend £6 food/drink per person). Mina will tell how an insurmountable challenge – the tragic death of her 12-year-old daughter Francesca – led to self-empowerment and joy. She will also explain why she believes that through suffering, there

is a gift.

Not For The Last Time was self-published last year through MatChat® Books, paperback £8.99 and ebook/Kindle £2.99.

“It all started with the birth of my second daughter in 1995. I had been concerned about the pregnancy because I contracted chickenpox in the first trimester and was not at all well. Seeking GP advice about the foetus – the danger to intrauterine babies from measles is well known, after all – I was assured it would be OK, the virus wouldn't cross the placenta and to proceed. Well, it did cross over and Francesca was born three weeks early by emergency caesarean with multiple complicated issues. Nobody had seen a baby like this before. She confounded all the paediatric experts.

“We had neither diagnosis

nor prognosis as we battled one problem after another. After two years the medics finally agreed with me that it had been the chickenpox, but her future remained uncertain. This condition now has a name: Congenital Varicella Syndrome and is listed as a rare disorder. In spite of it all, she grew into a funny, charming and loving little girl. As a mother, however, I knew instinctively her body wasn't viable. Sadly, I was right. Francesca died from respiratory failure a month after her 12th birthday in November 2007.”

Mina, who teaches personal and group Hatha Yoga online as well as a bespoke yoga offering MatChat Yoga, has gone on an immense spiritual journey since the tragedy – and now wants to share her message of hope: “For me it is about realising

that when there is loss, there is actually more, what I call the gift in suffering. When people suffer loss of whatever kind, it feels like a negative but what I discovered is that it can lead to the realisation of more resilience, more gratitude, more awareness or even awakesness. And I think for me the loss actually meant a fearlessness. There is almost no element of fear now in going forward. I feel that there is more joy and there is more love. There is a lot of fear around. We have had Covid and now we've got the war and I think people get drawn into dread and fear that if something terrible happened to them they wouldn't be able to manage. But I think everybody has the ability to come out and rise up in the face of challenges and just to come out the other side stronger.”



Mina Blair by Hamish Cameron