

Why I am climbing Mount Everest for Save the Family

Laura Lindores

You probably all already know a bit about me and what I'm doing. Raising money for Save the Family homeless charity ahead of my climb up Mount Everest in November 2016.

I've been involved with homeless charities for around 4 years since I was 25. I think my passion to help them stems from personal experiences. Although I have never been homeless myself, I have known what it's like to be lonely. And afraid. And having the feeling of not knowing who to turn to or who you can even trust to talk to.

When I was 19 I entered into a relationship with a man I met at work. A rather shy but sweet man, a year into the relationship, he became quite emotionally abusive. Over the following 5 years he wore me down bit by bit until I truly believed that if I ever left, I would never be good enough for anyone else. I didn't see my friends for those few years as he convinced me I had him! Why did I need friends?. He wanted to know my every move when I wasn't with him. Who was I with? Where was I?

The problem was, my family loved him. He was so wonderfully polite in front of them. I spoke of leaving him hoping they would see something was wrong. I hadn't seen my friends in a long time. I was completely alone.

Until, when I turned 25 he was searching the net for our summer holiday that year. Of course, naturally he decided where we went, where we stayed etc. All decisions were down to him. Ever since I was a little girl, I had big dreams of visiting New York. I asked him if he would consider a pre Christmas trip. To see the Thanksgiving

Parade and the big tree at the Rockefeller Centre. This was a trip I dreamt about for years! He said 'We'll see' 'I'll consider it' 'Depends how you behave'

I think it was then, that my brain switched back into fighting gear. Of course he said No he didn't want to go to New York and he would book a summer holiday as planned. But by then all my fight came rushing back, I wasn't letting this happen anymore. I realised I had just wasted 6 years of my life with him feeling like a nobody, when I should have been feeling like an A-lister! Next day I went to my parents, found a good deal for New York online for Thanksgiving and booked it. And went alone. And had the most amazing time! When I came home, I told him it was over and I would rather be alone forever than live like that ever again.

Being in an emotionally abusive relationship was one of the most traumatic experiences I've ever put myself through. I felt like a prisoner for 6 years. I still believe it was my fault for not being strong enough. Had it not been for the way it ended, I would never have had the strength to leave. Its been 4 years and I can honestly say I'm pretty happy again.

That's when I got involved with the homeless. Because I was so determined that no one should ever have to feel that lonely or scared without having someone they could trust to turn to. I wish I had someone I could have talked to back then.

My family see people in those situations as plain weak. Their opinion is, if your treated like that just leave. If you stay it's your fault. There's no shame in asking for help. I realise that now. It wasn't my fault I could have easily decided to spend the rest of my years bitter

and self pitying about that relationship but I decided that instead I would draw on the life lessons it had taught me and use them to give back to others who have yet to find their inner tiger.

The whole climb will take a total of 18 days. Before I leave, my aim is to raise a minimum of £3000 for them. One of the family units on site can be fully equipped for a week for as little as £36. This money can go a long way to helping a large amount of families in need. To do that I need everyone's help.

Most people say I'm mad to try this climb. But if it means I gain enough support and sponsorship for those families out there, then it will all be so worth it. I managed to find my inner tiger that day. Now I want to help them find theirs.

Thank you so much.
