This talks includes mention of:

- self-harm
- suicide attempts
Job turbulence

- chronic bullying, grievance panel
- restructure; job under threat
- profound change to job and ongoing readjustment
Personal turbulence

- elder son dropped out of school during A levels due to depression
- relationship ended unexpectedly
- one family crisis
- another family crisis
Crisis and Normality

- December 2014: talked son #1 out of suicide over four days

(What is interesting is that I almost left this out as it doesn’t seem that big a deal compared to what followed)
20 April 2015: son #1 hospitalised after accidental overdose of medication

22 April: son #2 13th birthday (paintballing)

25 April: first date with my now-fiancée

26 April: son #1 narrowly unsuccessful suicide attempt (self-asphyxiation) on train
  ▶ four days in intensive care; brain death strong possibility
  ▶ eventual physical clean bill of health – severe depression continues; not currently suicidal
Cumulative Effects

- shocks and grief multiply and compound one another
- ‘near-death’ of loved ones is a very hard thing
- as one support gives way, extra strain on others
- cascaded into a general near-collapse
What doesn’t help?

► near-systematic exclusion of single/‘absent’ fathers
► general failure of understanding of persistence of mental health issues
► ‘support category failure’ (not suicide, but . . . )
What helps?

- supportive people
- nature
- Zenlike acceptance
- Al Anon background
- flexible working
- YMCA
- playing Minecraft
- son #1’s music
Acknowledgements

Undying thanks (v. roughly in order of magnitude) to: Great Western Railway staff; St John’s Ambulance guy on that train; Bath NHS; Met Police, Somerset and Avon Police; Emily; Mum/stepdad; Dilly Fung; Werner; Paul Walker; Jenny Marie; Helen Brookman; Andy Graham; Sophie; Wendy; Dave; mad Dave; Anthony Smith; Norbert Pachler; Sam Smidt; Teresa McConlogue; everyone on public transport who noticed the state I was in but didn’t intrude; everyone who ever stops to help.