

## TRANSCRIPTION: THE GOOD ENOUGH MUMS CLUB PODCAST - S1:E1

The Good Enough Mums Club is a toddle through the highs, lows & sleep deprivation of motherhood. Based on the musical of the same name the podcast is hosted by Founding Mothers creator/writer/producer Emily Beecher & co-producer/actress Jade Samuels. Every week Emily & Jade initiate a mum into the club to explore the complexities & realities of modern motherhood, where no days are the same & every mum does it differently. So whether you've finished the morning school run or it's just past bedtime, join us as we leave our judgy-pants behind & accept that sometimes being good enough is best.

S1: EPISODE 1 - with Laura Dockrill

Author, poet and fierce AF mum Laura Dockrill joins us for our first episode of The Good Enough Mums Club Podcast. We caught up with her in the midst of lockdown over zoom and had such a great chat including about her experience with post-natal psychosis - she is so honest and relatable she talks about it with such understanding.

We also talk about her memoir, What Have I Done; A Memoir About Surviving Postnatal Mental Illness - which was described by the one and only Adele as - 'A book to save a whole generation of women'.

Join the club by following us on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#) by searching "Good Enough Mums Club."

This episode has content warnings for postnatal psychosis, depression, intrusive thoughts and suicide.

**Jade Samuels:** Hi, and welcome to the first episode of the Good Enough Mums club podcast, where sometimes being good enough is best.

**Emily Beecher:** Just before we get started. This episode has content warnings for postnatal psychosis, depression, intrusive thoughts and suicide.

**Jade:** And there are a couple of swear words throughout this podcast. So if that's not for you or you have kids in the car with you, it might be worth waiting for bed time.

[MUSIC]

**Emily:** My name is Emily

**Jade:** And I'm Jade Samuels. We will be your host for this series of the Good Enough Mums club podcast.

**Emily:** Every week we'll initiate a mum into the club and explore the complexities and realities of modern motherhood.

**Jade:** You can join the club or find out more about the musical or future episodes of the podcast by following us on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram by searching Good Enough Mum's club. And don't forget to subscribe to the podcast rate and review wherever you listen.

**Emily:** We're so excited that our first guest is the amazing and incredibly stylish, Laura Dockrill, author, and mum to her son, Jet. Her memoir, 'What have I done' is about surviving postnatal mental illness and was described by none other than Adele as a 'book to save a whole generation of women'. We caught up with her in the midst of lockdown on zoom and had such a great chat, about lots of things as you'll see, but especially about her experience with postnatal psychosis, which as someone who's experienced it, myself was so honest and so relatable. And she talks about it with such understanding.

**Jade:** Also, um, that morning jet had done his first pee in the potty and she was so proud and excited in the celebration that she actually kicked said potty over!

**Emily:** Which is basically the perfect representation of motherhood, the highs and the lows!

**Jade:** Lets jump in in, we kick off as we will with all of our guests with a round of, would you rather?

[MUSIC]

**Emily:** Would you rather step on Lego or step in pee?

**Laura:** Uh, step in pee definitely, I just did it about five minutes ago. No guess what actually happened? He's done his first triumphant wee in the potty celebration all round a full morning piss pot steaming full. I picked it up in triumph and tripped up and spilt the whole potty on the carpet. So I've just defeated the object of him weeing in the potty. So that's where I'm at. Oh God.

**Emily:** I remember Maisie picked it up once and she brought it to me in that shaky toddler way.

**Laura:** Yeah.

**Emily:** Yeah.

**Jade:** Okay, which is cuter. Baby shoes or baby hats.

**Laura:** Um, shoes are cuter.

**Emily:** Would you rather sleep in or have a nap?

**Laura:** Sleep in

**Emily:** Amen.

**Jade:** Clean up poo or clean up puke?

**Laura:** Clean up poo. Definitely.

**Emily:** Uh, would you rather be stuck in a room with a teething baby or a hormonal teenager for a week?

**Laura:** Teenagers I can deal with, not the teething baby.

**Jade:** If you had to watch one Disney film, on repeat five times a day, every day forever more. Which movie are you watching?

**Laura:** I feel like this is what I'm doing, all this stuff at the moment in my life I'm doing like, these are like, you know, what would you rather? And I'm like, yeah, But these are, this is actually, my life is quite sad. Well, at the moment it's Coco on repeat. So Coco I suppose – I'm having it right now, I know it off by heart now.

**Emily:** First word that you think of when you think of the word, mum?

**Laura:** Uh, survival.

**Emily:** You only get one of these for the rest of your life. Red lipstick or pink lipstick?

**Laura:** Gotta be pink lipstick. I've got red on today, but that's because, I just though I'm pinking out too hard. I can't give up my pink.

**Emily:** Yeah, you have the most amazing pink lipstick. I remember when I met you at the Guardian and at the time and I was like, Oh, the most amazing shade I have ever seen on anyone one.

**Laura:** Candy Yum Yum it's called

**Emily:** Oh is that what it's called? For those of you who don't know, Laura has written an incredible book, I'm holding it up like you can all see it, um, called what have I done about her experience of, I guess basically surviving early days of motherhood and postpartum psychosis, which we'll get to, but how was it in the beginning for you getting pregnant? Like, what was your journey to being a mom like.

**Laura:** Uh, well, um, my partner Hugo, I sort of say in the book, but we've actually been best friends since we were 13 years old. So yeah. I've known him for a really long time, but in terms of, us being together, we had only been a couple for under a year, so for about six, seven months. So it. I mean, maybe to the outside world, it seems really premature that we got pregnant so quickly, but for us it didn't feel like that it felt like, um, instinctively like the right thing to do and adjust kind of new. It didn't feel scary or weird.

And my pregnancy actually was really enjoyable. It felt like for the first time in my life. I wasn't kind of being a fraud or doing anything like, um, I didn't know how to do my, it was, I felt safe and secure. I kind of felt immune. Like people couldn't fall out with me and like, I couldn't get a cold cause I was doing like the big life thing. And uh, for the first time ever, like if I'd wake up in the middle of the night, as you do quite a lot, when you're pregnant, I didn't mind it.

I kind of enjoyed sitting there and having a bagel and watching TV at two in the morning. Got the normal things towards the end, like backache. And, um, it was a really enjoyable experience and I didn't overdo it on the research, but I didn't also be naive and I was kind of open for it. I didn't overly plan the birth or anything.

So that's why it was a kind of so shocking what happened.

**Emily:** Yeah. So do you want to talk us through sort of what happened? I guess, I guess the story really starts with the birth, doesn't it?

**Laura:** Yeah, it does. So I was two weeks overdue and, um, again, I mean, I know everybody is different and, um, so I, I'm kind of an, it's not fair to compare, but as far as somebody who's 40 weeks pregnant looks, I did not look anything like the stereotype. I was showing really small.

Um, and I was very active. Like I didn't kind of have that full teapot look that, you know, you see story book mum's look like I actually went for a run on the day of him being born, two weeks overdue. I felt not overly energized, like to the point of mania, but I felt like I could, you know, do stuff.

I was active and busy and, um, yeah, we kind of just thought. Well, he needs to kind of come out now we kept ringing the hospital, because it was Valentine's day. Apparently everybody wants a baby on Valentine's day. They kept trying it. And I was thinking, this is not booking a hotel in Paris guys. Like this baby needs to come out.

So they gave us an induction. We went down there. So we had a pessary induction, which for those that don't know, it's basically like a tampon that is covered in hormones. So when it goes up, it's meant to encourage the first signs of labor. By now I'd had five different five stretches. It's basically been fingered, not in a good way.

And, um, that went up there and by now, now was kind of like, I mean, they are painful and uncomfortable kind of there you feel very exposed as well. They're not very nice. And then. Yeah, nothing kind of happened. And the idea is that they kind of, I thought they were going to send me back home. That was the plan.

They're going to put the tampon in me and then send me off on. I kind of thought, Oh, great. Then in the night, everything's going to happen. You kind of got this vision in your mind from when you see the films like. You know, Look Who's Talking and whatever that this theater of your waters is going to splatter on the ground.

And, you know, it's like all stations go and it, it couldn't have been further from the truth. And so when they showed me where my room was, my room, I was going to have this baby. It was like somebody saying, okay, can you cough a lung out please? Cause I was like, I'm not this isn't going to be possible.

Like I started thinking, this is like, I don't know, like I've been not, I was on punked or something. I was like, I'm not. This is a joke. Um, and then blood pressure was just increasing. My heart rate was just jumping out my skin and I had my first panic attack, um, which I've never experienced before in my life.

It wasn't too bad. Now that I speak to friends who have them, who suffer from them, it was. Fine. I could manage it, but it definitely felt scary because it was all to do with my heart at the time. I did think all my having a heart attack. And then from there onwards, it was just one bit of bad news to the next really we'd found out that I'd had undetected preeclampsia,

which is a complication that happens during pregnancy, which basically meant that my placenta had failed.

So my baby wasn't getting any nutrients. What happened to Jet is that he had got fat in the womb and then he had sort of starved. So when he came out, he had all this extra baggy skin from where he once was plump. In my brain I kind of just, even though I was showing small, I just kind of thought that he was this big, chunky thing, like hiding in my ribs or something, but he was like a big, chunky thing that would come out, when he did the umbilical cord wrapped around his neck twice.

Um, we tried to do to an epidural which also failed, um, Another form of induction, which also failed. I had injection in my back, my back of my spine, my bum, a massive crochet kind of hook to manually break the waters, which was like something from the Victorian days.

**Emily:** That thing is so long, isn't it? It's like coming. Yeah. It's like captain hook is coming towards your fanny and you're like, what are you doing?

**Laura:** Totally In fact, it reminds me of at school, we were learning about how they get the brains out of dead bodies in the Egyptian times, the brain out through the nostril and like horrible histories or something. And I was like, that's what that is.

**Emily:** That's exactly what it looks like

**Laura:** But all these things when your failure as a, as a, not just as a mom, but as a woman, as a person, like start kicking into gear because midwives would say things like it's not their fault, but they would go, Oh, that's the first time was a failure. And you're like, Oh, okay.

Is that something wrong with me? And, and actually, again, not her fault, but the, um, breaking of the waters scratched all Jets head. So it was his head, it was bleeding. And when he came out and, um, Like that really distressed him. And that's when meconium came. So he pooped inside me. So that's when everything, and they have to get the baby out by certain amount of time.

And that's really when the pressure goes on. So in the end I just called an emergency caesarian. Um, and then, because, I mean, if you have a caesarian any way, sometimes it can take a little bit longer for the milk to come, um, especially in an emergency caesarian. So. Then I had the most stave...it was like a sick joke, like the most hungry baby in the world who then wouldn't take, cause there was no milk.

So it was just this like wrestle where it was literally the literal hunger games. Um, and that's when things just started getting out of control

**Emily:** Because you, I think at one point. I wasn't sure of the timeline. Exactly. But at one point you, you literally feed him for he's on your boob for 24 hours.?

**Laura:** Well, that, that was for about eight days. There was one point I caught a sights of my feeding notes cause the midwives keep a log. And then yeah, it was like 18 hours with a 10 hour break. Then for another five hours, maybe a five minute break and he just wouldn't

sleep. He was so, and looking back. Now I'm like, of course he did. He was absolutely starving.

If I would've been starved, you know what, on a rock, if I believed that eventually it was going to give me milk, you know, he's surviving so great. I'm so glad he did that. He saved his own life. But looking back, I am a little bit like, could someone not just told me to give him some formula? Like, why didn't anyone say, give the kid some formula he's been starving inside me for two weeks.

And there was such a fear that he was going to die of. Um, his blood sugar levels were so low, this incredible midwife who literally in my mind, is an angel, you know, dressed him in every single layer of baby clothes that we had with us and warmed him physically like, like a baby chick, like literally rubbed her hands together. If you've ever tried to breastfeed somebody... You know, the only thing I can describe it like is like, When you see it man like a cave man, trying to start a fire. That's what it's like. It's like getting two sticks and really patient... it's not like the movies where your milk just effortlessly flows from your bosom and there I am. Eventually it can get to that, but.

It's really difficult. And also because we weren't expecting to be so small and fragile, you know, I didn't even feel he was under five pounds. So holding him and then this ward is if anyone's been in a ward before, it's a bloody carousel of hell it's just like taking turns to cry and yeah. Keep alive basically.

And you can't, you can't sleep. They don't allow you to sleep like with the baby on your chest. You have to physically put the baby down before you can let him sleep. Not that he ever did. So sleep just slipped through my fingers. I didn't sleep again. I don't think I, I think I've got an hour over the next three and a half weeks.

**Emily:** I mean, that's, I can't believe they didn't. It. So in Canada, when I had Maisie, they encourage them sleeping on you. As long as there's another adult around, I can't believe they just sort of kept you going. At what point do they not step in like breast is best, but you're killing the mother slowly?

**Laura:** Absolutely. That, and actually I think. There was no human or that's what I look looking back. There was no human for me to really latch on to. And I had so many midwives had so many doctors, it was panic stations. What was meant to be a normal, and I'm doing speech marks, but like from what was meant to be a normal labor, there wasn't really a single person that said, this is the situation.

There's no, you know, it was kind of just. Grabbing on to any kind of rope that I possibly could in the same in the ward, which I was there for a week. I just felt like it was, and in one way it was good. It was a crash course in motherhood, you know, you've got mothers from every walk of life, flashing the curtain open and saying, do that, do this, do that.

But actually then it was also overwhelming and I really do think my brain just popped.

[MUSIC]

**Emily:** So what happened? Talk us through the timeline of what happens. You were in the hospital for eight days.

**Laura:** Yeah. And then we eventually got let out. In fact, they didn't even want us to leave. When we did because Jet and I were patients in our own right. Because I'd obviously had the caesarean and I also got this rare side effect of the caesarean where I had like awful scratching all over my whole. I mean, I, when, I mean, I was scratching till I was bleeding. It was just the most uncomfortable. So anyway, I was there, then he was also a patient because he, um, was so underweight and his blood sugar levels were so low. So we had to wait and then my midwife came in the middle of, from seeing for my pregnancy came and managed to discharge us.

And then I kind of had this idea that when we got home, everything would be okay. I sort of had like a Disney version, like, okay, when we get home its going to be alright, and when we go in it kind of, my house just didn't feel like my house it's a sort of like a holiday house, like an Airbnb, when you walk into someone else's house and you're like, okay, I've got to make this my home.

And you know, in a week or whatever. It felt really cold and just distant from me. And we all got into the bed and Hugo just fell asleep. I don't know how men can do it. He was like knocked out snoring..

**Jade:** They do don't they I'll never forget when with Rae's dad. We're not together, but Rae's dad, he could just sleep through her cry. One time I was really upset actually. We would get her in bed and he was asleep. And Rae was crying and he went, WILL YOU SHUT UP in his sleep like that. And I was like really upset. And he woke up the next day and I was, I really cold and really upset with him. And he was like, what's wrong with, you and I said you told Rae to shut up in his sleep. He said, I'm really, really sorry. I swear to God I didn't now.

**Laura:** Yeah. Oh, unbelievable. Well, this is what this guy was doing and Jet was sleeping and then that's kind of when I knew something was wrong with me because they were both asleep and I hadn't slept by now for, as I said for about eight, nine days, which you don't really see leading up to it? Um, everyone's giving you these. Oh, you know, make sure you get it your sleep in, before the baby comes, it's like, that's impossible. I still have shit to do. And that's sounds like a coma. To be honest, I'll be worried if I was getting all my sleep in one go, that means you're dead. So that doesn't help.

Anyway when they were asleep and I wasn't, that's when I started thinking I had these feelings, like, you know, when you're little, when you've got that Monday before school, that Sunday night before school on a Monday morning feeling that doom and that dread like times a million, I was like, something's not right. But I can't put my finger on it.

The next week, uh, I was feeling, experiencing extreme insomnia, which I've never experienced before. So every time Jet was sleeping, I wasn't, I wasn't going it will be okay. I was going to the doctors and I was saying, I don't know, I can't sleep. I, and then I was eventually at one point going every single day to the GP, I'm seeing a different GP time, but saying how I was feeling and yeah.

Literally from one day to the next, I would have more additions to my symptoms. So it wouldn't just be, I couldn't sleep. I was saying, I feel like something really bad is going to happen and I can't put my finger on it. And they would say like, what? And I would say like, uh, I don't know, like. A psychiatric ambulance, like an ambulance is coming to get me, or like, I've done something wrong, like a Van's coming to get me.

Or, and they were kind of like, okay, okay. But never, no one said this was a delusion or they would go, this is baby blues. It's normal to not feel normal after this. But, and then I was can't invade my mind. Because the ward, it seemed like I had only just given birth because I was there for so long, but actually looking back right now, I'm like 12 days into it.

And this is past that 10 day period. But again, you know, I don't blame anybody. Cause the illness makes you lie. The illness wants you to hide it. Society wants you to hide it, you feel embarrassed, you don't feel comfortable to say that you're scared in case somebody takes your baby away from you.

So I was, I didn't want Hugo to think I was a failure and I didn't know what I was doing. I wanted him to feel safe. I mean, this is a guy that asked me a week before the baby was going to be born if he was going to have teeth. So I'm Thinking I've got to hold it together here.

Also for my job. It's like, I write children's books, you know, I feel like I'm a big sister, I've always Nannied and cared for children for my job. It's like, I've kind of felt, this was my time when I'd know what to do, you know, all those years of not knowing how to do wires and the dishwasher and all that lifestyle. I was like, this is my chance. And, and, um, yeah, so then, then again, it just was escalating so rapidly, so no appetite, other things as well.

So I had an emergency cesarean, but I was bleeding uncontrollably and the bloods was really frightening. Cause I didn't expect that amount of blood to be pouring out of me as well. So I started thinking maybe I was. I dunno, losing all my blood at one point. Um, uh, yeah, then so not sleeping, not eating.

Then I started avoiding people. I just couldn't concentrate on anything. So like given a sentence, I couldn't even, I'd go to literally make a cup of tea and I'd forget in that one second, what I was doing, which I know seems normal, but it, all these things were out of my control. Like literally typing on my phone or an email I'd seen my, it sounds silly, but all these things mount up, you just know yourself, but in my like, my Keyboard on my phone all my emojis, were not like emojis I would normally use.

I just felt like my messages didn't sound like me. And even people that sent me congratulations messages on having a baby, but I didn't even know that well said my reply was a bit odd. Um, and I knew that, and then I would throughout the day, just experience kind of never euphoria, but heightened mood, not happy, but just like kind of like kind of like everything was okay.

Like a kind of breeziness to then just. The pits of like terror, just pure terror. I started thinking that I was connected somehow to this plant, we had outside like an olive tree that it



was winter. So the tree has no leaves on it. I started thinking that it represented my womb and I was somehow. Uh, I guess in tandem with it.

And it was kind of warning me of what was to come that any text messages or messages from the people songs on the radio were all warning me. And then someone basically got us a giant Teddy bear as a present, like some six foot Teddy and I started thinking that the bear was filming me with like CCTV. Um, I wanted to cut it open and, um, see what was going on. Like if it was filming me..

**Emily:** I know a couple other people that had similar, that was their sort of like, the turning point in their delusions, going from being things that you could almost convince yourself were real, like, like that's something that I've done something bad, you can convince yourself that you've done something bad, but that something big.

And I know another person it, where it was at giant kangaroo, um, and they were convinced it was filming them and reporting back on them. And that was that sort of change in the delusion. Did that feel different to you or did it still just absolutely make sense in your delusion that... I guess I always had a part of my brain that I felt like there was a part of my brain that was still really sane for lack of a better word, that kind of knew that something was wrong.

And then there was another part of my brain that was so messed up. It had no idea what was going on. And I was always really worried about which one would have the bigger percentage.

**Laura:** Totally. That totally. And there's, I think there's three threads running here. There's like the undercurrent of you as a person who's lived on this planet for all these years and has a vague sense of, am I safe or am I not, or what my thoughts are. And then there's this other thread that's coping with the action and Terror at hand, which is you've just had a baby. So it's like all hands on deck physically. You've, it's a hands on deck scenario where you're using the front of your brain to just get shit done.

And then you've got. The psychosis, which is just then flipping everything. And it really is wrestling with yourself, coming up for air. As you say, there's those moments where you have clarity and rationality and you breathe and you go, what the hell like, but then you're just pulled under again and you lose everything.

And actually, I always say now with anyone who's unwell. Let yourself go to the wind. Just let it happen because if you try and hold on to those voices, like you'll get there. You'll find yourself. You'll remember yourself, you will. And your, your people around you love you and know you enough to get you through to the other side, but you hold onto that one shred of dignity and go, okay.

I'm okay. I'm okay. Like I'm fine is like, no, this is just bigger than you. And it's your body just. Just, just do what the doctors tell you to do, do what you, friends and family know what is best for you. And that's why I think why I recovered so quickly was because I I'm such a goody goody. I listened to everything everybody told me to do, and I got better very quick.

But those people that, you know, go, Oh, no, I know better than I can get this through this, on my own. I'm sure you can pull yourself out of psychosis on your own, but it's going to be a really painful, scary, long journey and unpredictable.

**Jade:** So, um, yeah. I was going to ask, what was that tipping point then? What was the point where you went like when someone really intervened? What was the huge.. The crux basically.

**Laura:** Well, um, I found that I was telling some truths to some people and not to others and, um, which was really scary as well. Cause then I couldn't remember what lies. I'd kind of laid down with some people not with, I'm not a very good liar. That was difficult. And then, um, And then I'd have these moments where I kind of thought I was like smarter than everybody else. And they're like, I could sort of see it all. And so that just fucking didn't help either. I mean, to be totally honest with you, and I'm so sorry if this is triggering for anybody, but the suicidal force was so huge that I.. and again with that same thing, your point you made earlier, Emily, I had two suicidal strings too.

So I had, uh, the suicidal thoughts and the psychosis, which was like, I must follow this through because so-and-so needs to happen. But then I had a really rational, suicidal urge too, which was like the same thing that I'm sure makes people jump out of really high burning buildings, because they think they're going to die really slowly and painfully in a fire or people jumping out of the Titanic.

You know, I was like, I'm going to maybe do something really, really bad, or to somebody else. I'm scared of what that looks like. So maybe I need to take some control, um, which actually I kind of get that. I kind of get the rationality behind that. So those two basically, and that's what made it so urgent.

**Emily:** Totally the same thing for me. I think I reading the book, it was like you were in my head, there were so many things that are, think are exactly the same in that experience. But I always had in my suicidal thoughts, not necessarily that I had to do it, but it was like a presentation, but there was always one element that was really bizarre. And I had this film that played in my head of me hanging from a tree and it was really specific except I was in like an American civil war costume. And it was like, was a really.., it was like a closeup of my head and it pulls out and there's a noose around my neck and then it pans wider and I am wearing this, I think it was like, my brain was like, okay, you can have this. But also, we're going to remind you that it's not real as, at the same time, like it's going to torture me and pull, pull me back.

**Laura:** Yes, I totally hear that because mine was all mixed up in the play that I'd seen called Yerma, which was incredible, which I kind of roughly loosely know the, the main, the heroine in it. So I guess then that was like paying into mine. So mine was very blown up, very cinematic, very theatrical. But again, this point always pisses me off. I mean, I've gone through all these things in my head, of course, over the last couple of years, but then people go, yeah. Oh you've got quite an overactive imagination, is that why you have psychosis?

And I'm like, Fuck you, like it doesn't matter what your imaginations, like.

**Jade:** I was literally just about to ask. Do you think they were so big and so cinematic both of your illusions because you're both writers. So you were even more creative with the ideas in your head?

**Laura:** I go through these things and I have had that, of course, and actually even some of my birth note, after my birth, my.. so my doctor's notes when I was going, you know, it says she's an author for a job storyteller, like quite an overactive imagination.

And that I find that really unfair because you feel like you're a little bit like that, that kid in school that like makes a big lie up that everyone believes or something for the drama for the sake of it. And let me tell you now, like, no, I will zip it. I want that quiet, peaceful life. Yeah, I enjoy it telling stories, but that's my job. Like I don't want that. I tell nice stories. Like, I don't want that to, I don't want to, I've never had a suicidal thought in my life. Like I don't have a bone in my body that wants to not be on this planet. Um, so that upsets me. And so did, uh, also, um, well, not upsets me anymore, but that's something that I feel always like, I want to defend for people that have experienced psychosis, but also the whole, Oh, is that your first baby sort of thing?

Like as if I had a really Hollywood vision of what it's like having a child and Oh, Oh, were you jealous of other moms on social media? And it didn't quite go your way. So you lost the plot and that as well. It's like, I understand why these statements are thrown at you, but I know people that have had psychosis that don't want any attention to them at all.

They're not confident, you know, storytellers or people that you would call, um, you know, Exaggerated minds. So I just don't, I don't know, just things a bit sloppy to me to say that, but then how do you know what was the suicidal for? How was just, that's just an intrusive thought, you know, just because you are standing at a train and it says, stand back, train is not stopping.

And you think, God, what if I jumped, threw myself in front of it? That doesn't mean you're having a suicidal thought. If anything, maybe that means you want to grab onto life more. Cause you're scared of that.

**Jade:** Definitely

**Emily:** And I think there's so much confusion about what intrusive thoughts are, and I think they can be the simplest things, but they're things that you believe you just either have to do or that you're going to see. Or if you don't do something bad will happen.

**Laura:** Well people have them with their babies. And that doesn't mean, you know, you're, I hold some, if I held a new baby and I go, imagine if I dropped it down the stairs, that doesn't mean I'm a baby killer. That's just holding on to a baby and going this. This is really precious and important and I don't want to drop it, you know?

**Emily:** Absolutely.

[MUSIC]

**Emily:** So after this sort of the time with the suicidal thoughts, uh, how did that transition to you being hospitalized?

**Laura:** So I just got to the point where, um, I believe that my partners, um, Dad was hypnotizing me and they brought me back to the house. I'd we'd gone to give Jet some jabs. And, um, I just, at that point I was just completely gone.

Am I FaceTimed one of my friends who bizarrely I was still in constant communication with, even though I was so unwell at this point. And I said to her, I've been hypnotized and it's all become clear now, you know, I'm, I'm a master of the dark arts, so I'm going to do something really bad. And she was really calm and like collected about it.

I don't know how, and then, um, went away and Googled, um, psychosis and, uh, after birth and it came up straight away with all my symptoms on the NHS website and said, you know, this is a medical emergency. And she rang Hugo, it was like midnight at this point. And she went like, you're going to tell me, tell me to fuck off. If you want me to tell me I'm crazy. But, and then he was like that's it. That's what Laura has got. And that one on the morning I was taken across London to this hospital, completely hysterical. When I got there, it was in the psychiatric ward. Again, it's how media lies to you. You know, it's not this, this, I had this like insidious, stereotypical vision of what.

You know, tabloid sensationalized version of what a psychiatric ward looks like. Everyone in white jackets and padded cells, just looked like a kind of office space. And I was like, Oh, okay. Then, then though, that didn't help. I was like, am I a Guinea pig? Is this an experiment in my own black mirror? Am I in a police station?

And then they kind of wanted to interview my psychotic self. So I had to kind of do a full on on chat I was so tired, as I said, I hadn't slept for weeks now. And I just kept saying, I just want to sleep, but I told them everything. So I went as dark as I possibly could. So for example, like your, what you just said with your, um, vision of you hanging.

Every single dark thought I had. I kind of just wanted in your mind, you have this vision that you've been hijacked by a demon or a ghost just wanted to exercise it, you know, to say, this is what it is. This is what it's doing to me. This is, you know, calling it out like a bully basically. And they wrote everything down and they sedated me.

Um, I don't know what with, uh, suddenly something took me down. And, um, and then I woke up the next morning or mother's day, and that was just somebody in the room watching me sleep. And it was. Literally like waking up in a zombie apocalypse movie thinking, Oh my God, this is how my life has gone.

This is what has happened to me.

**Emily:** How long were you hospitalized for?

**Laura:** Only two weeks, because... I say only, but, um, which is actually not very long for my illness. Many women are there for a long, long time. Um, but. I was in general psych. They, I didn't go to and baby unit. So that was quite frightening.

Looking back. I mean, the whole thing was, it really was even crazier because I didn't exactly know what I had. So, but then, so that was the Sunday I woke up on the Monday from nine till five o'clock. I had to go to group therapy all day long every day, but my mind was. Spinning and racing. And I was in a room with people suffering from schizophrenia disorder, bipolar disorder, eating disorders, alcoholism.

Um, so I just felt like, what is this? You know, why am I here? Sort of thing. A whole lapses of time would stop. And. The spin and I was bleeding. So, um, physically I didn't have to take care of myself. My boobs were have milk coming out of them. I was separate from Jet. It was literally like being back in school again, where you're leaking on chairs and stuff Again, like when you first start your period and I'm thinking, how did, why is not what is going on basically was just trying to... and then halfway through that, the paranoids and suspicions ramped up another gear. And I started thinking that Hugo and his family were planning to, this is all a bigger plan conspiracy theory to get rid of me to keep Jet for himself.

My mum was in on it and she was doing that to try and get a chance to be with Jet whilst I was hospitalized. And in a way I'm grateful for that because yeah, made sure I got out of that hospital boy, cause I was like, I'm getting out of this place. I need to get my son back. And actually that drive that instinct.

That came from somewhere. And even though it was dangerous, those delusions, it made sure that I basically made a point of going, I'm not going to miss a single class. I'm going to eat every meal. I'm going to take every single medication. And this idea in my mind that I was going to be in front of a jury at some point.

And I needed to make sure that I looked like an A star student. Um, but you know what? I. I did it, you know, and, and, and, um, you know, just going back to what you said earlier, Jade about that, and I completely know why people will say those things, you know, the imagination thing, but, you know, there was ages where I thought, Oh God, did I do this to myself?

Did I make myself ill? But you know, even if I did. My own mind, like I got myself out and that's a fact, and that's what I Hold onto.

**Jade:** I mean, I've never experienced anything close to what you and Emily have. So this is, this is me, even a disclaimer saying, I can't even imagine what you guys went through, but giving birth, you lose your mind full stop Anyway, do you know what I mean? I do believe why it takes so long for postpartum psychosis and depression to be diagnosis because people just think, Oh, it's baby blues. They're just under the weather. They've not slept. They've been through a traumatic experience. Yeah, because when I was giving birth, when I was given birth, I saw pirates.

And I told the doctor, man. Yeah, I did a swear to God. You asked my mum, my mum said it was the scariest thing she'd ever seen in her life. I saw pirates. Yeah. I swear to God

**Laura:** Like, was it the scary or was that like a nice thing?

**Jade:** It was fine. I mean, as far as all the drugs, I didn't care. Do you know what I mean?

When you, when you're giving birth, you're in that space. It's um, Emily and I was saying as well, like, um, I laughed at the book because I got Rae's dad to shave my vagina before I have birth. Because I thought I can't, I can't have everyone looking at my hairy vagina..

**Laura:** Well you don't give a shit do you?

**Jade:** you know, but then we said, but then there were like 10 people down there at one stage while Rae was trying to get out of me. And I couldn't of cared less.. because you got time on your hands before though as well. Isn't it? I couldn't have cared less if my pubes were to my toes at that stage. I just wanted that baby out.

**Laura:** I think you're right. I think, I think also you're trying to give yourself the best possible chance aren't you? So you're thinking if I want to just do this the best I can, and I don't want my pubes to bother me, you know, I don't want something like that. I totally get that. I totally get that. I think, yeah, just giving yourself, it's like nature's way of, it's not, it's not even about vanity. It's just like, I don't want us, I don't want a single bit of insecurity or a niggle to be there when I'm trying to push and do my my thing, my woman's work. I don't want it to be a bit yeah. In the way I get that. And then, I mean, it's really interesting what you're just saying. Cause my little sister, she just did it, it had it. 10 months her baby is, and she was only now she's like, I didn't have what you had but only now do I feel normal.

Only now, I feel like I can have a beer and actually be present in a room of somebody and talk. And it's just not spoken about.

**Jade:** You do lose a bit of your mind a hundred percent everybody does at that stage when they have a baby

**Emily:** How long did it take before you felt like Laura?

**Laura:** To be honest with you Emily, even when I met you, I, and you told me you'd had what I had. I didn't, I didn't even take it in. And actually, I think, I think it felt too, um, unbelievable for me that somebody could be sitting opposite me and like writing beautiful work being capable and, um, A bad ass basically sitting in front of me going, I had what you had. I just thought, yeah, I'm, can't even engage with this because I'm never going to recover.

And I was, when I met you, I was still going through battling insomnia, battling new things that I never had until I got unwell. So, um, anxiety of it coming back, um, intrusive thoughts, superstitious thinking like all these kinds of behavioral traits. I had never knew. I. Did until, you know, fortune telling, you know, thinking I knew what was happening, you know, just anxiety basically.

And then, so I've only, I mean, I'm off the medication. Um, and I feel at the moment and have done since January the best I'd probably have ever felt in my life, but I owe that to my illness. I think I had to get there to understand how wonderful life is and how. And also they is hard and it's dark too, but.

That's all part of this ride, I guess. And you can't get one without the other. I kind of saw the world, I think a little bit through Rose tinted glasses before this. And I would have liked to

have been perceived as a strong woman because I was obsessed with Scary Spice. But in reality, a strong woman maybe is... it doesn't have to be loud and big and it, you just could overcome something in your life that.

You just gotta be there, you show up and you get through it and you get to the other side and you don't need the, um, accolade or the, the, no one at the end, when I came off my meds, went you did it you're off the meds, like no.

**Emily:** I was going to say that to you. I was just about to be like, Holy shit. I mean, I'm still on meds 10 years later.

**Laura:** Yeah. And I know they're there if I need them again. And I, it wasn't the first time I came off them, I, um, didn't relapse. I had anxiety going. I'm too scared to not do life without meds. Um, probably very around my wedding, which was in February and Jet was turning too, I thought I need to go back on them. I'm too scared.

Did it again before lockdown and then held out and. Seems to be okay for now, but I'm so grateful to exist. I feel like it's just, isn't it nice to know. We all have that like Spiderman web to like catch us if we fall off the top of a tree that they're there. I'm just So grateful to them. So I'm not on them today, but that doesn't, that doesn't mean a successful thing or a failure to me, it just means it's just life boys.

Like. But you know what? My back bloody hurts. So my leg hurts. So they're annoying things. So I need help with other things. So how I see it, the body's a body and it's all the same. There's no shame in taking, getting help.

[MUSIC]

**Jade:** So what made you want to write the book?

**Laura:** I kind of had to, you know, because I, I wrote that blog. I think you might have seen it, Emily. Um, with Clemmie Telford.. Clemmie and I were pregnant around the same time and her sister is my friend. So we were kind of updating each other. We would do around the same time.

She went ahead, had Gretta, had the whole Jaffa cake experience where you eat Jaffa cakes and you give birth. My jaffa cakes were in my suitcase crushed, like no. And, um, and then, um, Okay. So we have a sort of vision again, in our minds of what a postnatal depression person looks like, that you're kind of a mum going around in a nightie being crazy like that woman in Jane Eyre or something... that's again, what ITV dramas and stuff, the movies and stuff, or, you know, You alright Mum sort of thing? And actually it's interesting because a lot of the women I still spoke, I've spoken to, since I've gone, from my honest, working close to your actual postpartum psychos, I mean, there is a lot of humor, um, in psychosis, but also. It's not weak. It's the opposite of weak. You are like bionic.

Like I had hysterical strength. Like I felt like I could lift cars at points. You know, I did not feel weak and faded and washed out. At points I did, but certainly not in psychosis. Um, uh, uh, kind of, so that was that. And I felt like I wanted to take a sort of ownership of what

happened to me and not have this, , you know, people straight away think you've got posted nature, depression or postpartum psychosis of all, most people don't even know about postpartum psychosis or the difference between the two, but they have in their mind that you're a baby killer.

Um, and mine had nothing to do with Jet. I just wanted Jet to be somewhere safe away from me more because I didn't want him to see me hate myself as much as what I did. Um, and I, I thought that was toxic for him. I didn't think I deserved to know him and that he should, I didn't deserve him, not that I wanted to kill him for a single second.

**Emily:** The first thing someone said to me is, are they taking Maisie away from you? And it was like, no, they aren't, I'm not going to hurt her. But I was so convinced that I was contaminating her life. And if I stayed in her life that it was going to be ruined and me being her mum and me being around her. Was going to stop her from being a good person, like it was going to ruin her life, just being her mum.

**Laura:** I'm so sorry.

**Jade:** That must be awful as well though, because your fear as a parent is constantly, will someone take my child away anyway. So for the first thing someone says, when you have these intrusive thoughts and you're honest about it is, Oh, so are you going to lose the baby? It's just so thoughtless.

**Laura:** Totally. So basically I, um, It felt like I kind of had to take some time sort of ownership back to say that this is, it's not a baby. I wasn't a baby killer button. Or to defend myself to say, this is how complex illness is. And I was a perfectly normal person, walking around, like everybody else. I'd never experienced anything of note happen to me in the past, any hidden trauma, I haven't had any mental health issues prior to this. And maybe I was walking around with a bit of a...It's not my fault, but like a naivety thinking that I just couldn't get mentally unwell, cause I'm not that kind of person that you sort of think, Oh, there's people that get mentally unwell and people who don't, but not when actually that's like thinking, walking around thinking you couldn't get hit by a car or that you're immune from cancer or being attacked.

It's like, no, that's not how this world works. It's very, it's kaleidoscopic and we're all on the spectrum. That's also kind of why I put it out, um, and talking saved my life basically. But then after that, because I write for children's books, we did get some interest from publishers saying, would Laura like to write this more?

I went to a few meetings and I just found the whole thing. I hadn't quite come to terms yet with what the voice of anxiety sounded like. So in my mind, my anxious voice, my voice self critique was somebody that I still thought was a psychotic voice. So as soon as I had that voice of doubt going, yeah. What do you think you're going to do make, make a life out of this?

Like make a career out of this. What do you think going to do? Your psychosis is gonna put you on strictly come dancing or something? Is that when I started thinking I can't do this, I'm not the person for the job. Backed out. And then I just started doing it, I guess, on my phone



bit by bit. I started thinking, and then I said to the editor, were you happy if I just send you chapters?

I'm not going to look back at them. I'm just going to write it and send it and send it. And she said, I'm happy to do that. I didn't sign anything until I felt that I. That was moving and going, and then got to, I guess I wrote it all in a couple of months. And then I went for a meeting and she said, are you ready to see it?

And she brought out, I mean, literally it was this much, but I mean, the version you've read is 85,000 words, but my final copy was 250,000 words. So it was over double that, and it just hit the tape. Like I was just like, I had not seen it. I've done it all on my phone. So I had not seen it printed out. And that was when I was like, wow.

Okay. Um, and I put everything in there and it saved my life. There was a form of therapy where you talk and talk about the same thing. What happened to your trauma over and over again? It begins to distance itself from you to detach from you. You can see it like a piece of fiction. And that's what I mean after editing this, talking about it, doing interviews, whatever, I'm a bit bored of it.

And it's lovely. I never thought it was going to scare me and harass me forever and actually. The best response to fear is just boredom, normalizing it. You know, if you've given.. it's all about fear, that is what drives it all. There is a difference, right? Between two people, one person has an intrusive thought and goes, Oh my God, I've got an intrusive thought one person goes, Oh, you, again, get on with it. Move on. It loses its sense of power. Turns the volume down on it. I think that's what's happening here.

**Emily:** Well, I think, I mean, it's really funny. I think Jade, you can, there's a line in the show. Isn't there about. Or there was at one point, I think maybe I've cut it in one of the edits, but that I wrote my way out of the darkness. That was the only thing that made sense to me was to..

**Jade:** well, no, I was literally listening, thinking, Emily wrote the show on the toilet with her phone. Cause she says, it's the only place with my phone I could breastfeed pee, hold a baby and do all those things. And pretty much the show has been written on her phone. There's so many parallels between your two stories. It's incredible.

**Laura:** Yeah, I think that's amazing. And actually, Emily, your name's come up so many times now to me of people - and turning trauma into what you've done has. I just think that's the way to save your, that is saving your own life. And, and it gives you a peace understanding, acceptance with it and might, and what medicine like and openness, and the difference between recovery of obviously not comparing anybody's recovery, but the difference between the women that I have met that are You know, active with it. And they have said the more active you are of your recovery, the less chance of relapse, you know, if you're talking about it, helping others, turning it into new work, that kind of thing, rather than being scared of it, which, I mean, it's so easy to give into fear. It's so powerful, but I do believe that's the only way.

What else do you do? What else do you do? We haven't really got another choice.

**Emily:** No, and think I have a friend who lost her son and she used to say she hated being called brave because, and all of our situations... being brave means you have two choices. You either push through. Or you kill yourself.

Those are your two choices

**Laura:** I totally agree.

**Emily:** You know, and we, we made the choice even though for us, you know, there was a, we had this suicide, suicidal ideation, so it was an option on the table. You know, we pushed it, we pushed through to the other side of that.

**Laura:** Emily, and this is controversial, but there's a lot of bravery in suicide. I mean, I, I, when people say it's cowardly, it's like, that's the most scared I've ever been. And to people to do that, I'm like, wow, because when people attach the words, weakness or selfishness or cowardliness to mental wellness or suicidal thought or any, any of these, um, Topics we've talked about. No, they're not even, no words are not even connected.

Its daily weight, lifting you're a psychological mental athlete. If you are just being, whilst these things are going on inside your mind and doing that. Yeah. I just can't leave it. Yeah,

**Jade:** No, I always say. To battle your own mind would be the scariest thing that I could ever imagine happening. So hats off to anybody who has to deal with that and whatever route they choose to take. I'm not here to judge you for that, literally because I couldn't, there's no way out. There's no escape. You're in your own head all the time.

**Laura:** Yeah totally that. And it only has to be a tiny glimmer of it. You know, I was watching Truman show on Netflix now, so good. Such a good film, but I can't watch something like Truman show the same way now, now where I've been. I go, I go. I'm like, Oh my fucking God. No, that is a whole new film now with a whole new meaning. I'm sure people, I don't know, but I'm sure the people that write that, write Black Mirror that write horror films that you write Inside Out that write anything, you know, you've gone somewhere like that to be able to see the world in this new way, because you have that intelligence that gives you that power, that it gives you to get through that.

It plugs you into the world. It's it is a gift. And when you can see it like that, I mean, I wouldn't ask for it again, but I can definitely see the pros.

**Jade:** So when we will have babies, we obviously don't know what the hell we're doing the first time we do it, regardless of how much kids we've got around us.

What was the biggest expectation you had on you as a mother? That was a surprise almost. Aside from the mental health issues like, Oh, I don't know. I don't know if you can take them away from each other. I dunno.

**Laura:** Yeah. I, I think, um, I kind of just was jealous of anybody that had the mundane normality of it, you know, that was all the mums that were at play group going, um, Oh God, I'm so tired.

You know, and I wasn't having that. I was getting full 10 hours sleep, but that's because I was on so much medication, um, sleeping tablets and I had to, if my brain had to repair. And then I started introducing the feeds bottle feeds back into, for example. So then I was dragging myself up in the night. I mean, I still have to feed him in the night anyway with the bottles.

So even throwing him a bottle of milk across the room, it's still interrupted sleep. But so doing that on such a high dose of medication. Was like really difficult, but that's the sort of thing I would be jealous of. You know, I wanted to just to think to myself, Oh, I just want to be covered in baby sick and be, and moaning about winding and teething.

So it seems so far down my list of things. So those kinds of things, but now again, thanking the illness for it. I do believe I'm a very chilled out Mum, because I'm just like, God, the worst thing that could have nearly the worst thing that could have happened to us kind of did. And I don't care now, you great.

You eat that whole bag of chocolate buttons at 10 o'clock at night. And we have, I literally don't care. And because of that... It's just, it's things are very. It's okay. Like, because I'm not, I've got, I've had it now. I know what bad looks like.

**Emily:** I love that I'm but I think I'm a relaxed parent for that very specific reason.

**Laura:** and selfishly getting yourself back, right. Like you're trying to spend the last couple of years, just trying to like muster up the courage to like go to the pub with a friend, for example. Do something, you know, buy a dress in a shop that he's kind of just there. The kids are always fine. The kids are fine.

Everyone spoils him, loves him. He's harassed by love. Like, I feel like it's important for us to use. They call it oxygen masking. Right. So you've got, that's why they give it to you on an airplane first and you can't help your child until you're breathing yourself.

**Emily:** Um, just before we wrap up, I guess, um, what I'd really like to know is if you could give.. If you now, could give you before having Jet a message, what would you say? What would you want her to know?

**Laura:** Um, Oh, um, I guess there's a bigger message just about, um, empathy, you know, and kindness in general. And I kind of thought I was, I thought I was those things until what's happened, has happened and, um, You can never be too empathetic or understanding what somebody else is going through.

And I think that what I've learned from this, you know, it's like, just hang back, you know, hang back and try and get everybody to understand, treat everybody that they might be going through something tough. You know, all everyone is doing is doing their best. I'm sure. I'm sure of it is one of the things.

**Jade:** There's one other thing I want to ask everywhere you go. You're known as, so I'm known as Rae's mom. That's my daughter. Emily's known as Maisie's mom. And imagine

when you go somewhere your Jet's mum. what is the thing you would like to be known as what identity would you like to give yourself?

**Laura:** Uh, well, I don't think I have a choice, but I think at the moment, I'm, I, we joke at the moment that I'm like, instead of mother goose, I'm mother noose. Very much the mum that that rocks up to pay a group and is like Okay guys, have you heard of this or? Yeah, yeah. Yeah. Do you have these kinds of thoughts? I'm like the real talk. They can see me coming a mile off off. I'm like town mayor, like Bing, Bing, Bing, Bing, Bing mental health!

So. Haven't really got a choice. That's kind of what I'm doing at the moment. That's my place on this planet for the next couple of years. Sorry about that.

**Jade:** So you are Mother Noose

**Emily:** I don't think you need to apologise for that. Because I think the book especially will help, you know, will help people, but there's so much to be afraid of. There's so much for them. And so many things that people don't understand.

**Laura:** Well, I think knowledge is power and the thing also it's so scary. What happened to me. What happened to you, Emily. What happens to everybody. Even it says, you say you saw pirates Jade!

**Jade:** I swear to God, I was in labor for nearly 60 hours as well. So my mind just said, this is it. My mind just went. What, what, where are we? I was on a treasure island clearly for a little bit.

**Laura:** Madness. And they just expect us to just be fine. It's like, um, so, and that's all scary, but it's scarier not to know. Being in the dark about it that's the scariest thing. And actually it's speaking to the nurses that cared for me. Well, they said we all, no one had to ask if you had a history of mental health before, because you were, it was all across your face. You were so scared. It was clear. This was a terrain that was completely unknown to you.

You had never seen anything like this before. Um, and I think that's it, how they have shoved, They're still shoving protractors into kids' hands at school and they're not teaching them about this is just beyond me because everybody, it will, at some point experience, mental health issues up close and personal.

If not themselves, someone they love and know, I think we're on more. I think our whole country is, are more antidepressants than all of the other medication pushed together and They still keep it a secret from young people and it's insane. That is, that is insane.

**Emily:** Yeah. A hundred percent. And the more you talk about it, the less scary it is

**Laura:** Totally. And you see people surviving and successful people, you know, people that go to their job. And I don't mean successful. I mean, by famous, I mean, people that are successful people, you know, functioning, giving back to the world. On medication or surviving or have battled something big or not battle lift with something big in the past and they've got for, and that's inspiring.

**Emily:** That's brilliant. That's amazing. Thank you so much for coming on Laura.

**Emily:** And that was the amazing Laura Dockrill. You can follow her on socials @Lauraleedockrill on Instagram at @Lauradockrill Twitter. And don't forget her amazing memoir is called 'What have I done?' An honest memoir about surviving postnatal mental illness, and it's out now.

**Jade:** You can join the Good Enough Mum's club by following us on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram searching: Good enough mum's club. We'd love it. If you can hit that subscribe button for the podcast rate and review, wherever you listen. And if you know a mom who'd like this, please tell them about it

**Emily:** If the stories in this podcast resonated with you or made you think, or even just sure do you, that you are doing okay as a mum, you'll love the episodes we have coming up.

Next time. We've got an interview with the amazing blogger and influencer Tinuke Bernard.

**Jade:** Thank you so much for listening. Bye.

[MUSIC]