

A gratitude journal inspired by one woman's
quest for seeking light in the dark



catching snow

Sarah Coats Chandler

CATCHING SNOW

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A flyer on a noticeboard, a chance meeting, a missed flight, a major life decision. In life you never know what choices will lead you where. Or the repercussions.

In January 2001 I left Australia for the UK on a six-month university exchange programme. I was an adventurous uni student, looking for something...trying to put a line underneath six years of study and in some way, escape the breakup of my first big love. I never intended for that six months to turn into the best part of 20 years. Even now, saying that seems surreal.

Now, I am living in my fourth foreign country, married with two children. I've woven a complex professional and personal web which has bound me to the Northern Hemisphere in a way I don't entirely understand and can't unpick. The myriad of emotions that come with this experience, at times, threatens to swallow me up.

This book started life as a series of Facebook posts. In part inspired by a passing interest in the history of Advent, but mostly about trying to seek out the good in my life and be thankful during a difficult personal time. As a new mother, in a new country, navigating a foreign language and culture and questioning pretty much all my life choices, these posts

gave me some grounding, a focus each day to be grateful for all that I have.

You don't have to move to a new country to feel out of place. For many people, death, divorce, career failures or age can trigger the same feelings. It could also be, just life.

This book aims to help you find a way to examine your own experiences, to hold a mirror up to life and examine the beauty in the seemingly banal and everyday. December, or indeed any month, can be used as the starting point for your own gratitude journey. It is often hard to start, so you will find a collated idea list to inspire you, followed by blank pages for you to fill in with your own daily thanks.

I hope this book gives you the courage to see the light where there is darkness, to look beyond the bleakness or the seemingly impossible. To try to catch snow.

I'm not religious. However, in light of recent events I thought I might use the period before Christmas (Advent) as a time to reflect and be thankful. Although Advent officially started on Sunday, I'm going with the number of days so starting today (December 1).

Feel free to join in!

Today I'm thankful world leaders are taking climate change seriously. This might mean a future for generations to come.

Struggling with bureaucracy today so finding it difficult to feel thankful. But, it does mean I'm experiencing a new country, new culture and way of living, so for that opportunity, I'm very thankful. Now back to being annoyed.

Today I'm thankful for space. Not outer space (although that is also something to be thankful for!), but physical space.

After so many years living in London, you slowly give in to having less and less personal space. 'Space invaders' on trains, at cash points, in shops still annoy the hell out of me but are definitely less frequent here. So perhaps when someone next asks me "why Sweden?", I may reply: "Because of the space!"

Today I'm thankful for the opportunity to learn another language.

As much as it drains my brain, challenges my motivation and exhausts me, it's a true blessing to have the opportunity and freedom to learn.

Being able to understand a whole lot more than I did two years ago still surprises me.