

BOUNCING BACK FROM HEARTBREAK

‘YOUR PAST SHOULD MAKE YOU BETTER, NOT BITTER’

IN THE WEEK THAT SAW HER 15-YEAR MARRIAGE END, TV PRESENTER ANTHEA TURNER IS FINALLY FEELING LIKE HERSELF AGAIN, TELLING OK!’S ANNABEL ZAMMIT ALL ABOUT HER LONG JOURNEY BACK FROM HER DARKEST TIMES

Despite their painful divorce, Anthea still speaks to ex-husband Grant and often sees his daughters, saying: ‘I will not put the girls through another divided position’



Above: ‘I feel settled here,’ says Anthea of her Richmond flat. Right: The star is still close to her ex-husband Grant Bovey and his daughters Lily, Amelia and Claudia

Sitting on the balcony of her spacious Richmond apartment, Anthea Turner smiles, and says of her beautifully renovated three-bedroom home: ‘I feel settled here. I wake up now and just think, wow – I’m all right. I feel safe and happy.’

That feeling has understandably eluded the TV presenter while she’s been coming to terms with the breakdown of her marriage to Grant Bovey, whom she married in 2000 and split from in 2013. The pair’s decree nisi was approved last week, meaning that their 15-year marriage will be over in a matter of weeks – and 55-year-old Anthea, who recently presented *The Health Lottery*, tells OK! she’s finally feeling back to her old self. ‘A friend told me it would take two years to get over the break-up – it’s true. A few months ago, almost two years to the day, I felt awake again. Life changes,’ says the star, while looking out at the beautiful view across London.

During their marriage, Anthea and Grant, 54, lived in a Surrey mansion and his daughters with his first wife Della – Lily, 23, Amelia, 22, and Claudia, 19 – often stayed there. After breaking up and reuniting in August 2012, following his affair with socialite Zoe de Mallet Morgan, who was 27 years his junior, Anthea and Grant separated for good in June 2013 and the businessman – who was declared bankrupt in 2010 – dated Zoe, though they have since parted.

Of the break-up of their marriage, Anthea tells OK!: ‘It’s been very emotional and has been the worst time of my life – what happened to me felt

like a nuclear explosion,’ but adds: ‘You can’t carry around bitterness – your past should make you better, not bitter.’

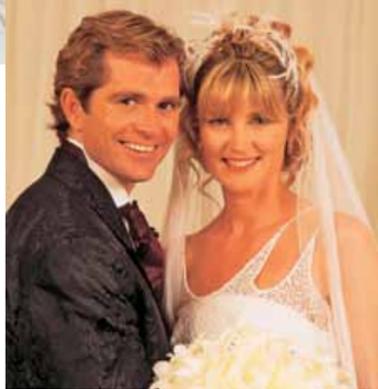
A testament to her desire to avoid bitterness and the strong bond she has with Grant’s daughters is the fact that his youngest, Claudia, is staying with Anthea on the day of our shoot, and the others are coming over that evening for dinner. Anthea explains: ‘I have a good relationship with Grant for the simple reason that I will not put the girls through another divided position. I’m a lioness when it comes to keeping everybody together. There will never be a time when they can’t have their mum, dad or stepmum in the same room together.’

Here Anthea, who was previously married to DJ Peter Powell – with whom she’s also very close – opens up about overcoming divorce, getting along with her wonderful stepdaughters and feeling ready for love again...

Hi, Anthea, you’ve got a lovely place. How long have you lived here? >



‘IT HAS BEEN THE WORST TIME OF MY LIFE – SPLITTING WITH GRANT FELT LIKE A NUCLEAR EXPLOSION’



I've owned this flat for years, but I moved back in earlier this year. I completely ripped it apart and redecorated. I've never lived in a flat before, but I really like it. It's a moment in my life. I feel very secure here, very safe.

Did you get your hands dirty and do the place up yourself?

Oh God, yes, and I also had a nice team of people to help. I was renting a house in Kew prior to moving back in while I sorted my head out and got my life together. I was like a rabbit in headlights and I didn't know where to live. My whole world went bang when we split up. I honestly didn't know what to do, but I knew this was the area I wanted to live in. I've had five homes in six years, it's been exhausting but I feel settled here. I wake up and just think, wow, I'm all right. I'm safe, I'm happy.

Do you see yourself staying here?

A lot has happened to me in the last seven years. I don't expect things to stay the same, but I feel happy and grounded here.

Are you comfortable living on your own?

The girls are around so I'm never really on my own. I'm working, and I'm now living where my nucleus of mates are so I do go out a lot. You have to fill your diary!

You've had a tough couple of years. How are you now?

It's been very emotional and has been the worst time of my life. I still have the occasional 'duvet day' where I want the world to go away. It sometimes hits me that this wasn't the way it was all meant to be, but I am from tough Midlands stock and I have, with assistance, been able to dust myself down and move forward. I am very grateful to those who have given me a helping hand.

How did you get through the dark times?

I had to get professional help, but happiness is a choice. You can't carry around bitterness – your past should make you better, not bitter. Although you can learn by mistakes, you can't let something that has happened to you affect your future. I wouldn't be me if I didn't have some dark days, but perspective is vital. I've recently been working for Cancer Research doing Stand Up To Cancer for Channel 4, and you can't help but think, while I've had a tough time, I'm not terminally ill.



Are you open to love again?

I'd be fibbing if I said there wasn't part of me that was open to someone coming into my life, but it would be wrong to say that I'm not massively protective of my heart.



Above: 'My whole world went bang – I didn't know what to do,' says Anthea of splitting with Grant. 'I had to get professional help.' Top left: With Grant at their wedding in 2000. Left: She was linked to *Dragons' Den* star Richard Farleigh, but insists they are just 'dear friends'

MAIN IMAGE: ANTHEA WEARS JUMPER BY NEW LOOK; AND TROUSERS BY RIVER ISLAND. BELOW INSET: ANTHEA WEARS TOP BY SWEATY BETTY; LEGGINGS BY UNDER ARMOUR; AND HER OWN TRAINERS

Someone can come into my life and leave my life, but they won't ever decimate my life. Splitting with Grant felt like a nuclear explosion. Every wheel came off my wagon – financially, professionally and personally, everything. There wasn't one thing that was consistent in my life. All of a sudden you're splitting your assets and fighting your corner. A friend told me it would take two years to get over the break-up. We argued, as I was saying it would be quicker, but it's true. A few months ago, almost two years to the day, I felt awake again. Life changes...

Are you dating anyone?

No, I'm single. I'm very lucky as I have lots of mates, but no man at the moment. I think the right person will come at the right time. I'm in a better place and I'm in a lucky position. I do not need a relationship for status, money or social life. I have, on *Celebrity First Dates* for Stand Up To Cancer – it was an interesting experience.

We watched it and you came across really well! That must have been tough, as dating is hard enough without cameras on you...

Bizarrely it felt easier for me because it's an environment I know.

What type of men are you attracted to?

I'm drawn to men who are self-made, someone who's gone out and had a go. It's not about classic good looks for me, but I do like someone who's confident, cheeky and who's a laugh.

You were linked to *Dragons' Den* star Richard Farleigh...

That's media mischief – we've never dated. Richard is a friend, nothing has changed in our relationship. I have a lot of male friends. He is a good person to have on your team. We are the best of friends and he's full of wise advice.

Would you like to marry again?

I don't think my default position is to be on my own – I like to share. I'm not a serial dater and I tend to do long relationships – I've only had three proper relationships. I do think the right person is out there, but I don't know about marriage. I'm a spiritual person so I will give that one over to the

universe. People walk into your life at the right time, so maybe. I'm in a better place than I've ever been, so we'll see...

How often do you see your stepdaughters?

We're all together tonight and they are in my life and my heart every day. They are beautiful and great fun. We have a normal relationship. We go shopping, we have supper – it's wonderful. They have been in my life for 16 years. As soon as kids are in their teens they are all off living their own life, but I see the children as much as any parent. I can't imagine life without them. I have a good relationship with Grant for the simple reason that I will not put the girls through another divided position. I can't imagine what it would be like if the girls could not have a birthday party or a family event without their dad or stepmum. I'm a lioness when it comes to keeping everybody together. There will never be a time when they can't have their mum, dad or stepmum in the same room together.

How's your relationship with the girls' mum, Della?

We get on. Della's very happy, she's got a gorgeous boyfriend after getting divorced again herself and we see each other at family occasions.

You strike us as a tough cookie...

You have to bury a few things. Those girls are massively important to me and I shall not miss out on a moment of their lives. Grant and I were marred for 15 years and I've known him for 24 years. Whatever went wrong, we had a lot of love and good times together. His family is my family. His sister, brother and nephew stayed with me last night. They have been massively supportive and have looked after me, so we'll always be in each other's lives.

Has being a stepmother brought comfort to you following your struggle with IVF?

Yes. In all I had five attempts at IVF with Grant.

'IF I HADN'T HAD GRANT'S GIRLS IN MY LIFE I DEFINITELY WOULD'VE ADOPTED'



Above: 'I don't go for classic good looks but I like someone cheeky,' reveals Anthea, who is happily single. Below inset: 'You've got to do the best with what you've got,' says the star, who hits the gym three times a week

I was 39 when I started, so time wasn't on my side. If I hadn't had the girls in my life I definitely would have adopted. As I have a good relationship with them, that void was not there for me. The best thing that came out of my marriage to Grant was the family unit. When we got together I thought, I love you, I love your daughters. I used to joke that I didn't just marry Grant, I married four people!

You've said that you want to take on a new adventure each year. What's next?

I haven't thought about next year but I recently absailed down a building in London for Stand Up To Cancer. Also, earlier this year I did a 200-mile husky trek in Sweden – it was freezing!



You're looking fabulous. How do you stay in shape?

I think your shape is 75 per cent genetic and 25 per cent what you can do about it. I've been a similar size all my life. You've got to do the best with what you've got. I work out in the mornings about three times a week, doing various classes at my local gym, so I'm an active person. I like running too. I use the towpath here and there's a pub nearby which I can run to and back from!

Do you eat well too?

I'm not silly about it and don't deny myself anything. I like food – I love to dunk a biscuit in a cup of tea. I love red wine, gin, chips and beer. I do keep away from the hidden calories in things, like sugary fizzy drinks. I love chocolate, but I have trained myself to love dark chocolate instead. However, I don't pile my plate up high.

Have you tried any fad diets?

I've never detoxed in my life – it's better to have a balanced diet. We all know eating less and exercising more is the way to lose weight. We all know that hummus and cucumber and a few nuts are better than a Twix. It's just the decisions we make. I'm a size 8 to 10 but there's nothing like the divorce diet. I lost a lot of weight, which doesn't look good on an older woman. I looked scraggy but I've put it back on now.

'All my favourite people have made mistakes, had their heart broken, dusted themselves off and got on with things,' says Anthea

You've spoken openly about having had Botox...

Yes. I don't have a frozen face, though – I just have some on my forehead and nowhere else! Each to their own and if you don't want to admit it, don't, but I'm happy to speak about it. To be honest, I couldn't have a forehead like this at my age without Botox!

When was the first time you had it done?

Years ago, when I was in my early forties. Up until then I could never imagine having wrinkles. We all think our skin will last forever so you don't give it a moment's thought, and suddenly it doesn't feel the same anymore.

You've also had breast enlargement surgery. Would you have more work done?

It's not on my agenda, I think you have to be careful. I'm all right for 55 – I'm holding the line!

Are you squeamish when it comes to surgery?

I've had far too many accidents to be squeamish. I've got pins in my ankles and have broken one knee in five places from horse-riding and skiing – and there's a whole list of other things!

There's a photo of you and Eamonn Holmes [right inset, with Anthea] in the lounge. Are you pals now? [The pair hosted GMTV from 1994 to 1996 but famously fell out.]

Yes, I cannot think of anyone better to be in a studio with than Eamonn. We kissed and made up along time ago. It's not like it was ever really that bad. I had a lot of happy times at GMTV when we were on the sofa together.



The star has patched things up with her former GMTV co-host Eamonn Holmes

You recently presented The Health Lottery. How was that?

I'm proud to have done a stint on The Health Lottery, I was interested in the concept. I'm glad The Health Lottery has quite a specific goal – the health of the nation. Money doesn't go to the arts or anything the NHS would normally fund. It goes to organisations that would not get a look in otherwise. It's on a grassroots level. It's designed to get money back into the community, that's the reason it's been set up, which I think is great.

I also work as a consultant for various different companies doing marketing and PR, which I adore.

What advice would you give your younger self?

I might be a little bit more protective of my heart now, but I've always gone with my gut instinct. But honestly, do you know anyone who's fun, who you can have a laugh and a gin and tonic with, who hasn't been hurt and made a few mistakes? If you've managed to live your life in the middle lane, I can't imagine you'd be the person I'd find inspiring. I'm drawn to inspirational, gutsy women who fully admit to being flawed individuals but who are have-a-go merchants. All of my favourite people have made mistakes, had their heart broken, dusted themselves off and got on with things – that's life. **OK!**

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INSIDE ANTHEA'S APARTMENT

Which is your favourite room?

I do like the lounge as it's open plan and the view of the Thames is nice. Although it's an apartment, I don't feel claustrophobic at all.

What's your favourite piece of art?

My lady in the hall [below]. I'm not a snob about homes, I buy what I like. My kitchen is from Ikea. I'm a collector and I love finding things but if I find it in TK Maxx then all the better. It's the hunt I get excited about.

What have you done to the apartment in terms of renovation?

I moved a bathroom and gutted the kitchen and have redecorated everywhere. I love doing interiors, I'm never happier than when I'm choosing



paint and putting things together. It took me two months to redecorate – I'm very good at making homes.

How would you describe your style?

Fresh and light. I tend to go for a New England look – I'm not very good with dark colours. I always want to open rooms up or knock walls out.

You seem at home here, but you used to live in a six-bedroom mansion. Could you live in a really big place again?

I honestly don't think I could! Before, I had two dogs, four cats, three horses, a massive garden. Now my domestics are simple, which allows me freedom – that's what I really want.