

CELEBRATING HER BIRTHDAY IN THE SUN

ANTHEA TURNER

ON HEALING HER HEARTACHE AND WHY SHE WILL NEVER GIVE UP ON LOVE



(MAIN PHOTO) COVER-UP: MELISSA ODABASH. SUNGLASSES: JEEPERS PEEPERS. JEWELLERY: ILIASLALAOUNIS.COM. (INSET RIGHT) TOP: KYRA LOVES

It's like a scene from the movie *Shirley Valentine*. TV presenter Anthea Turner is gazing across the azure Aegean Sea feeling more positive about the future than she has for years as she celebrates her 57th birthday on the idyllic Greek island of Mykonos.

"This is the first year I have woken up and felt normal, and not lost," says Anthea. "I'm in a good place for the first time in a while and I intend to stay there."

Anthea is clearly in good spirits as she relaxes by the infinity pool of the luxurious Skye Villa Mykonos, a chic six-bedroom villa nestling in the hills above Agios Stefanos, where she is winding down after the recent spate of publicity around her new book, *How to Survive Divorce*.

It was last year in **HELLO!** that Anthea revealed she was writing the self-help book, which is based on the painful breakup of her marriage to businessman Grant Bovey. Her aim was to help other women, but in the process she found she helped herself.

"Writing the book has helped me close a section of my life, take the

good bits from it, and move on," she says. "I'm seeing this as a positive time of looking forward."

It wasn't always so. She says she found it hard and upsetting to relive the heartache of their split when she first started work on the book. "I began writing it a few years after my marriage break-up and thought it would be fine to look back, but there was a point when I wished I hadn't started. The book had to be delayed six months as I found it so hard to write. I misjudged it because when I should have been moving forward I was having to delve back into the bad bits of the past instead."

And those "bad bits" were tough. After ten years of marriage, Grant embarked on an affair with a woman 30 years younger than Anthea, hiding their relationship for nearly three years.

When a friend tipped her off, Anthea turned into a "proper Miss Marple" to uncover the truth, logging onto the computer to find journeys he had made, as well as checking credit cards and text ►

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A radiant Anthea celebrates her 57th birthday on the sun-drenched island of Mykonos. Putting her painful divorce from Grant Bovey behind her, she says: "I'm in a good place for the first time in a while" **27**

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messages. "I hated being the sort of woman who checks up on her husband. I promise I never used to be, but unfortunately his behaviour turned me into her," says Anthea. "It didn't take me long to collect my ammunition and sure enough, as I'd suspected, Grant was back seeing the other woman."

TAKING STOCK

It seemed to some as if history had repeated itself, as Anthea and Grant had got together in 1999 when both were married to other people. "Looking back, I regret the pain we caused. It was a terrible time of hurt all round and, knowing what I know now, I am so sorry about it all," she says. "I can understand why some people think I got my comeuppance when my relationship then went on to deteriorate in the way it did. But I loved Grant, and I can't regret the 15 years we had together. There were some very happy times."

Anthea was not able to have children with Grant, but thinks things may have been different if they had. "I did once ask him if he would have stayed if we'd had our own children, to which he replied, 'Possibly,'" says Anthea, who underwent numerous IVF attempts.

"I shall never know, of course, but I can't pretend that wasn't painful to hear. It was a double blow, I guess."

Undoubtedly, the greatest thing to have come from her marriage is her relationship with Grant's three daughters from his first marriage.

"I couldn't love Claudia, Lily and Amelia more than I do and we have a great relationship. I see them all the time and Claudia has come out here to do my make-up for the photoshoot. She is a qualified make-up artist and we work together whenever we can."

While the book is candid about their father and his behaviour, Anthea says she didn't need their blessing to write it. "The girls saw it and lived it. There is nothing in the book they don't already know. They love their dad to bits, but it doesn't stop them having a close relationship with me because I have been a part of their lives for 18 years now and we will always have a special bond, which I don't take for granted."

Claudia, 20, lives with Anthea in her apartment in Richmond, south-west London, a considerable departure from the Surrey estate they used to call home. But she is philosophical about downsizing: "It was hard at first, but I have grown to love my flat and it is actually a weight off my shoulders. I no longer need all the trappings that come with having a big home. It's just me and Claudia in our own little space, and it feels good."

"Nobody expects or hopes to be starting again in their 50s, but I am. There are so many women like me out there in the same position, which is what made me write the book



A keen follower of the Alexander technique, the TV presenter cuts a svelte, glamorous figure as she relaxes by the pool at Skye Villa Mykonos (above and below). "Women in their 50s used to be written off, but times have changed and thankfully we live in a much more ageless society," she says





Anthea is positive about the future and hasn't ruled out finding love again, although she adds: "I won't be going on any dating sites, that's definitely not me. I'm very relaxed about it" **29**

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BACK IN BUSINESS

Anthea is positive about what her future holds. "I had a great TV career, but you can't look back. It's someone else's turn now, but recently I have done some filming for Channel 5 and ITV's *Lorraine* and some studio items for *This Morning*. And I'm doing some work for the BBC over the summer, so I'm very happy with that. I hope I will continue to get opportunities to do the job I love."

She is also launching a new business in the autumn called The At Home Box Company, which will deliver lifestyle products in a monthly box to subscribers. "It's a tiny indulgence and will make a perfect gift or treat for yourself," she says.

With her professional life looking rosy, what of her love life? "Let's just say I'm auditioning," she says coyly. "I'm in a happy place and I don't need anybody, but if someone nice were to come along I'd be open to loving again."

Anthea's appearance certainly belies her age. She swears by the Alexander technique, which she discovered in her teens when she studied ballet. "It's great for balance and posture and I'm certain it's the main reason for any toning I have in my body," she explains. "And when it comes to food, I never deprive myself, but just try not to over-indulge... although when it comes to wine, that's a different matter," she laughs.

As she contemplates the highs and lows of her life so far, what advice would she give to her 30-year-old self? "I would tell myself not to be a slave to fear. And this applies to most women. Fear is a thing that drives most of us and can really hold us back. Once you have some self-belief you can start to live the life you want to and that's what I intend to do now." **H**

INTERVIEW: VICTORIA WHITE
PHOTOS: DAVID VENNI

HAIR & MAKE-UP: CLAUDIA BOVEY USING STUDIO 10
STYLING: ARABELLA BOYCE

Anthea stayed at Skye Villa Mykonos; visit whiteblancmange.com. *How To Survive Divorce* is available through splendidpublications.co.uk.

ADDITIONAL PHOTOS: AVALON; ANTHEA TURNER; DRESS SELF PORTRAIT

30 Despite her split from Grant (together right), Anthea remains close to stepdaughters Lily, 25, Amelia, 23, and Claudia, 20 (all far right with Anthea)

