

LAURA ANDERSON:

I like myself MORE NOW I'M A MUM

The Islander-turned-radio host tells Charlotte Roberts how motherhood changed her life

We first met her lounging in the *Love Island* villa, but now Laura Anderson is pacing the streets of Glasgow as she chats to *heat* on the phone. The plan?

Get baby daughter Bonnie off for a nap – a mission that is accomplished during our 30-minute natter, with Laura laughing, “She’s fallen asleep, her face is so funny! Like a grumpy old man.” It’s clear that for the Stirling-born star, 35, life looks very different from when she first stepped onto our screens back in 2018. For starters, she’s a single mum – welcoming Bonnie last year with her ex, actor Gary Lucy, who she met while on *Celebs Go Dating*. Alongside being a first-time mum, she’s busy co-hosting her breakfast radio show. She’s certainly busy, but as Laura tells us, she loves it...

How is everything going for you right now?

It’s all so full on, I’m still trying to find that balance. I’m still quite new to being a mum, and now having that kind of five-day-a-week job with my radio show.

Even when I was flying as cabin crew before *Love Island*, I never had that structure. But I think it works well with having a baby. I’m away in the morning, and then we have our afternoons together. I feel lucky that Bonnie’s so good. Touch wood – anytime I say she’s great, she does something crazy.

How are those early morning starts?

I live an eight-minute drive from the studio, but I get up at half four. There’s cameras all the time now, so I have to put my full face of make-up on!

We need the old days where people could turn up in their PJs...

Like when it was COVID and you’d be on video meetings with your bottom half not done. People are always joking that I’m like Amanda Holden, because she does those funny fashion videos in the office at her radio show. She’s my inspo. If Amanda can get up early and get ready, then I can.

Let’s talk motherhood. What have been some of the biggest challenges?



PHOTOGRAPHY BY
MARCO VITTUR



On *Love Island* in 2018

Enjoying her new chapter



Weaning. I was really stressed at the time because Bonnie didn't want to eat anything I was making. I've also never been someone who's cooked that much, especially living on my own. I'm like, "I'll have cereal and toast."

Any surprises?

How quickly she's developed. She's turning one in a few weeks, and she's almost walking. This year has gone so fast, and she's such a unique little character. I didn't think she would be so intelligent and funny early on. She laughs at my jokes – I'm like, "Are you getting sarcasm already?" I think she's been here before.

You jetted off for some sun recently. Are holidays more magic with Bonnie there?

Seeing her do everything for the first time is amazing, like putting her feet in the sea in Dubai. Touching her feet on grass was hilarious, she wasn't a fan! The firsts are special. I'm always telling my mum off, because she looks after her in the mornings. She took her to soft play a few months ago, and I was like, "Mum, I haven't even done that yet." [Laughs.] I get quite territorial, because you can't get those moments back.

Does Bonnie remind you of yourself?

My mum says I was a daredevil when I was young, flinging myself down slides headfirst, and Bonnie's like that. She loves to be thrown up in the air. She's very entertaining, as well. I guess her dad's an actor, so maybe that is from him.

For her first birthday, are we thinking an intimate gathering or a big old party?

I would love a big party. I didn't have a baby shower, so I'm kind of using that as an excuse. There'll be a bouncy castle, soft play, ball pit, bubble machine and balloon wall. I'll get a massive cake, too.

Will you whip out the arts and crafts kit for some homemade decorations?

Bonnie would literally just

I'm like, "What did I do with my time?" I watched so much TV, I took long showers, I ate hot meals... What's your advice for other single parents? The whole mum-gut thing is so true. I didn't believe it until I felt it myself. I

her brain?" You're just so connected. It's also important to remember that, even when things are difficult, this too shall pass. You learn so much every day. I can literally put on a wash, eat a bowl of pasta, and change her nappy all at the same time.

You always look so happy on Instagram. What's one thing you've learnt about yourself since becoming Bonnie's mum?

So many people say they lose themselves after becoming a mum, and I don't want to not give that the credibility it deserves, but I feel like I've become a better person. I've not lost anything, because I like the new me more. It's been

nice connecting on social media, too. I've had people message me and say they're pregnant, their partner's left them, they don't know whether to keep it, asking me for advice. I'm like, "Whoa." It's a responsibility. Is that community important?

For sure. I know it's not my fault, but for my whole pregnancy, I felt like a failure. I was brought up by both my parents, so I felt guilty that I couldn't give Bonnie a two-parent household. Then you realise how common single households are, and it makes you feel less lonely. I went out the other day with one of my childhood friends – she did



Guess who, Bonnie?



With Bonnie's dad, Gary Lucy

my Instagram when I was on *Love Island* – and she's got a little girl who is maybe nine months older than Bonnie. We were both helping each other out. If her daughter was kicking off, I'd maybe hold her for a bit and she'd take Bonnie. I want to build that up, see my friends a bit more. Looking back, are you glad you did *Love Island*? Of course. Nobody regrets anything these days. Everything happens for a reason – I feel like people should just get

that tattooed on their foreheads. It was a great journey. What's your advice for this year's Islanders leaving the villa? It's difficult when you're younger. A lot of younger people these days crave that validation. They want to be successful, they want to be loved. But it's just keeping your feet on the ground. In a sense, fame isn't real. It's a bit of a fickle industry. I hope they all have good friends and family that aren't going to let them get a big head, because things do go up

and down. I think the people that do well are the ones who truly know themselves and are smart with their opportunities – because it is an opportunity at the end of the day. They'll have their platforms now, so use it wisely. Not just going out to parties all the time, but meeting people and getting some sort of job set up.

You could go into life coaching...

That's only because I've made all the mistakes already. Reckon you'd ever give *All Stars* a shot? If I was still single in a few years and they had a completely older series, maybe. But I feel like because I know all the Islanders now, it would be so strange to date one. Maybe I could go in and be a life coach instead. Wait until I'm married, though. That'll give me a bit of credibility! You've done *Love Island* and *Celebs Go Dating*. What's your advice for

other single mums looking for love?

Wait until you're ready. A lot of my friends and family know the struggles I've been through with Bonnie's dad and stuff, and everyone just wants me to be happy. They keep saying, "You need to get back out there." But I'm just not ready yet. Sometimes it's nice to take it slower than you usually would, because it's not just you any more. Whoever you're dating needs to build up that trust and privilege of coming into your baby's life. And maybe a background check is good [Laughs]. Now, there's an idea... There should be a TripAdvisor for people's exes! That's a money maker right there! Do you think Bonnie will come to you when she's older for dating advice? I hope so. You never know when she's going to get her heart broken, it happens to the best of us, and so I really hope we have an open, healthy, honest relationship where she

feels comfortable coming to me about anything. I mean, I don't know if she'll listen! But even with my mum and sisters, she's got a lot of women around her that can give advice. I always spoke to my mum about boys when I was young. I don't really want her to date though, I think I'll be quite protective. The boy will need to come round our house first, so I can vet him.

What are your plans for you and Bonnie for the rest of the year?

We're going back to visit my friends and my sister in Dubai when it's a bit cooler in October. Bonnie's also going to the dentist for the first time – an exciting moment! I might start putting her in nursery, too. I did hire my mum as my nanny, but I'd like Bonnie to be sociable. It'd be great if we could do nursery in the afternoon once a week and give me a bit of time to go to the gym or get my nails done. ■

Follow Laura on Instagram: @lauraanderson1

'I've become a better person'

eat the paint – everything goes in her mouth.

How have you found being a single mum?

I haven't got anything to compare it to, let's just say that. Not having any time to myself is tough. I look back at my life before and

remember when Bonnie was tiny, I could hear rustling about in the middle of the night. I thought, "She's got an itchy left foot." I went and scratched her foot, and she settled. I was like, "Did I somehow get into