

What would people be surprised to find out about you?

I lived in New York for a year. Or maybe it's me who's surprised that I've already ticked off number one on my bucket list.

Analyse me

Anoushka Beazley
speaks for herself



What motivated you to become a therapist? I was always fascinated by the idea of the therapist. The stranger who talked with you about such intimate subjects as sex and your mother. Separately. Usually.

Do you have a specialist field of practice? I work with individuals and couples. Depression and anxiety are how my clients find me but underneath that there are a myriad of complex and unique reasons: attachment issues, family dysfunction, trauma, grief and the struggle to 'be' in the world, to name but a few.

How has being a therapist changed you? It's helped me to 'be' in the world. It's allowed me to view people and problems with fewer expectations and more acceptance. It's taught me a self-compassion I was severely lacking.

What do you find challenging about being a therapist? The constant personal reflections and growth that the job and profession demand.

And rewarding? The constant personal reflections and growth! Although I was always this kind of person, always pushing myself to feel the most uncomfortable feeling and

always pushing others to feel theirs. Now I get to be me in a way that facilitates others to live in their most authentic way. Parts of me that used to feel like a curse now feel like a gift. To be a good therapist for my clients, I have to examine and question myself and feel my own pain and my own vulnerabilities. It is rewarding for my own sake, but then there's that moment when I know the only reason I've been able to sit with another in their struggle as competently as I have is because I've been there myself. It's professionally rewarding in the most strangely personal way and I feel incredibly grateful to be able to do what I do.

Where do you see yourself in five years' time? Not wearing a mask to Waitrose. Still having conversations with my kids and being the kind of mother to teenage girls that I think Julia Roberts would play in a movie.

What book/blog/podcast do you recommend most often? My debut novel, *The Good Enough Mother*, a black comedy. I've wanted to write a novel most of my life - something about needing to tell my story. I wrote a couple that were tossed around in the forest of publishing nightmares for many years. Then, unexpectedly, my papa passed away and grief

swallowed me whole. Would you believe that the worst thing about it was the school run? Four times a day, I passed my father's house, and it became like a relentless, hideous groundhog day. A friend suggested I write to try and get it out. I told her that was a ridiculous idea as I had nothing to say. Six months later - a novel! One year later, *The Good Enough Mother* was in Waterstones. Today it's in development for a TV series. It's a cross between *Big Little Lies* and *Dead to Me*. Papa would probably have protested about the profanity but he loved a good TV show and a good book.

What is your favourite piece of music and why? 'This Woman's Work' by Kate Bush. Hauntingly existential.

What do you do for self-care/to relax? American cop dramas, 5k run once a week, in bed by 12, meditation.

What is the meaning of life? There is none, other than the meaning we decide for ourselves. Is there one plan that some of us get more right or wrong than others? I really don't believe so. Are we all trying to make sense of who we are and what we're doing here and, as we do that, finding meaning along the way? I really think so. ■

About Anoushka

Now: Counsellor in private practice in north-west London, fiction writer (www.thegoodenoughmother.co.uk) and film analysis columnist for *The Transactional Analyst* magazine.

Once was: In a stellar bid to express myself and my emotions, I trained and worked as an actress for five years before I started to really think about who I was when the lights went up.

First paid job: Selling clothes, aged 13, on London's Carnaby Street, when I should have been in school.

 Who would you like to answer the questionnaire? Email your suggestions to the Editor at therapytoday@thinkpublishing.co.uk