

Kate with kids Billy and Darcey at Disneyland Paris in 2012



Above: With her first husband Ian.  
Right: With her husband Derek Draper.

One person who's been swept up in Kate's midlife rejuvenation experiment is her husband, former spin doctor Derek Draper. 'I wanted to write about midlife sex because to anybody under 25, the idea of anyone over 50 having sex is revolting,' Kate laughs. 'But actually I think this age is a time of adventure for women. There's this idea that when all the caring hormones from childbirth have faded away, you have this clarity of thought and energy. And that power is incredibly sexy for women.'

And presumably pretty sexy for Derek too, when Kate commandeered him into the 'two-week challenge' recommended by her French friend Sylvie. 'You have to have sex every single day for a fortnight,' Kate explains. 'Derek and I sat down with a spreadsheet, our diaries and multi-coloured pens – the romance! But it was fun. Until day eight when he fell over at the park with the kids and broke four bones. Which is a dramatic way to get out of a snog with me! But it was still lovely, because we'd booked the time out for each other.'

Working in daytime TV has given Kate a ready-made pool of experts on diet, beauty, fashion and fitness for her project, but she admits some of her colleagues have inadvertently added to her insecurities. 'It's easy to compare myself and come up wanting,' she says. 'I'm not sexy at all. Somebody like Susannah Reid is SO sexy and she doesn't even realise it. She jokes she's been on the slide since 45. Rubbish!'

One thing Kate has seriously considered during her midlife musings is whether to have a facelift. 'I've spent a long time tugging my skin back in the mirror,' she laughs. 'I did it so much that our son Billy, who's seven, asked what I was doing and he was horrified when I told him about facelifts.'

'I'm not entirely ruling it out, but I spent a lot of time talking to people about it, and it made me realise I'd become so obsessed with looks and I didn't like it. I feel you have to make peace with yourself at some point. But I reserve the right to change my mind!'

For now, Kate's hoping her new lifestyle tweaks will keep her away from the knife.

'It makes such a difference to how you look and feel. I didn't realise I was such a sugar addict until I started this. I've cut that down a lot, and I try to get more sleep. I've noticed my energy rhythms are different now.'

It's been an emotional exploration for Kate as much as a physical one. 'I had therapy, which forced me to stop and think about things I wouldn't normally,' she says. 'My first marriage [to her former boss Ian Rumsey] ending was particularly devastating, and for me piecing together why that went wrong was really helpful. I've always been a pleaser. I'd always say, "I don't mind, whatever," which meant he had no

**'We had to plan our daily sex schedule on a spreadsheet'**

chance of knowing me. I'd tried hard to be his perfect woman and that's what he'd fallen in love with – rather than me.'

Kate believes this pattern started in childhood, ironically thanks to her own parents' happy marriage. 'I never saw my parents rowing when I was growing up, which was a joy on the face of it, but it meant any kind of row was frightening for me because I'd never seen it in the context of love.'

Her second marriage has reset her romantic views. 'It's hard to be with Derek and NOT have a row in the context of love! He's pretty in your face. I remember the first time we disagreed on something he said, "I just disagree with you, I'm not finishing with you, I'm still in love with you." I was like "Oh! That's possible?"'

Writing the book has also enabled Kate to come to terms with not having the third baby she'd desperately wanted. She was 39 when she had her eldest, Darcey, now 11, and at 45 was told by doctors she was too old to conceive again. 'I'd have happily had 20 babies if I'd started earlier,' she says. 'But now I've been through this process I think OK, I won't be having any more children but I've got two wonderful kids and I've got lots of chapters of motherhood to look forward to.'

Kate's keen to stress she doesn't have all the answers – 'I've not even been through the menopause yet, who knows what I'll feel like when I'm there' – but she just hopes to champion a more positive attitude to getting older. 'People say it's all downhill from here,' she says. 'But what's so wrong with downhill if you're in charge of the journey? It certainly beats an uphill struggle.' ■

## KNICKERS IN A TWIST!

Kate still blushes about the time her practical undies were revealed live to the entire nation on *Good Morning Britain*. During an item last year about an assault course challenge, Ben Shephard scooped her up and pretended to dunk her into an ice bath, exposing rather more than he intended to. 'Suddenly my phone started pinging in my pocket as people tweeted pictures they'd taken from their TV screens,' she recalls.



## HOW DO YOU SPEND YOUR SUNDAY?

### ■ Lazy lie-in or up with the lark?

I need more sleep, so my perfect Sunday would be a lie-in!

### ■ Hungover or fresh as a daisy?

Fresh as a daisy. There's nothing worse than being hungover with kids bouncing on your bed.

### ■ Weekend away or Sunday brunch at home?

I like both, but if I had to choose then Sunday brunch at home. However, we do have friends who've moved out of London, so we try to make the most of going to see them.

### ■ Gym or lazy day?

I love a lazy day!

### ■ Big breakfast or fruit?

Out of choice, big breakfast, but I'll try to make it a healthy one – avocado with eggs and toast!

WORDS: LYNNE HYLAND. PHOTOS: ADAM LAWRENCE, PHOTOSHOT, WIREIMAGE, REXSUTTERSTOCK.