

If I could see me now...

What your younger self would make of you today

Lorraine Kelly

56, television presenter

If the 10-year-old Lorraine could see me now she'd think: "Bloody hell, who's that mad woman?" I was a painfully shy and quiet wee lassie growing up in working-class Bridgeton, in the east end of Glasgow. Our family was lucky because my dad was in work so we had an inside toilet, which was really posh, even if we had to go to the public baths once a week to wash. The young me would be amazed to see my Arts and Crafts home in Dundee now. It's not some big, daft, flash house, where you're worried about spilling red wine on the carpet, but never in a million years would I have thought I'd live in a place like that.

My parents were all about education. They weren't pushy - I can't be dealing with today's so-called "tiger mothers" - but they taught my younger brother and me that we could achieve anything if we put in the graft. I loved school. Mum was really house-proud and would send me off looking neat as a new pin in my ankle socks and Clarks sandals, my hair done up in ringlets with old stockings. I might as well have been wearing a sign saying "beat me up". I was bullied until my 16-year-old auntie Carol, who was 10 years older, turned up at the school and told everybody off. I vividly remember her storming into the playground in a miniskirt and big thigh-high boots: the kids were all terrified of her.

Most girls at the time would say they wanted to be an air stewardess, but from as young as I can remember I was the strange kid who wanted to be a fighter pilot. This was the Sixties and Seventies, so I got laughed at - you wouldn't believe how loudly I cheered when we got our first female Red Arrows pilot many years later. If that young girl had known that I'd one day be asked to be a passenger in an RAF Phantom jet, flying upside down in a special g-force suit, she'd be proud that I didn't feel scared. The richest man in the world couldn't buy that experience.

My first job was in a shop called Chelsea Girl when I was 14. I'd do four hours on a Saturday and earn a £1 note in an envelope. I was always hugely inquisitive as a child - my nickname used to be "But why?" - and at 18, even though I had a place at uni, I decided to apply for a job as a baby reporter on a local newspaper. Suddenly, everything started to fall into place. I eventually joined the BBC, where I always used to be the one sent out to gather vox pops



Top of the morning: above, Kelly hosts ITV's *Lorraine*; below, with presenter Eamonn Holmes in 1993; right, as a one-year-old



because people would talk to me. The head of BBC Scotland, however, told me that I'd never make it in television with my accent.

It's weird how things work out. That same day, I applied for a presenting job at TV-am and got offered the 6am-7am slot for a trial week. Thank the Lord there wasn't Twitter then - I was terrible, and so nervous I raced through all my material in half the time. But that job allowed me to make all my mistakes, and I soon found that the sofa was an environment where I felt very comfortable. I'm still shy, though, even if most people wouldn't believe it.

I think the moment I became the person I am today was when my daughter, Rosie, was born in 1994. She completely changed me. Her father Steve had been my cameraman in Scotland and we'd got together following a year of friendship after



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one horribly drunken night at Glencoe. Our first date was to see Dundee United - his team - play Hearts. So romantic. We married in 1992 but I was still career-driven and never imagined I'd become a mum. When Rosie arrived, I thought: "OK, that's what life is about. I get it." From then on I became a much less selfish person and also much better at my job, for which empathy is very important.

I suppose my younger self would look at my life and think I was very grown up, but I don't feel it. My daughter is more grown up than me. There's still so much I need to do: top of the list is visiting Antarctica. Ernest Shackleton is my hero.

Interview by Olivia Parker

Penguin A & E with Lorraine Kelly will air on Channel 5 at 9pm on Tuesdays, from May 10