

FABULOUS FRIENDSHIPS

Famous friends talk to Carrie Mitchell about laughter, life-changing trips, and the valuable lessons they've learned from one another

Presenter Kate Garraway met Richard Arnold 15 years ago through work. Kate, 47, lives in London with her psychotherapist husband Derek Draper, and their children, daughter Darcey, eight, and son Billy, four.

I can't believe it's almost 15 years since Richard and I met. It doesn't feel that long until you start thinking about the life changes we've been through. When we first met, I was married to someone else so Richard's been with me through the divorce then all the crazy dating and inappropriate men years; then when I married one of the inappropriate men! He gets on really well with my husband but to be honest, I'd rather have Richard to myself. I'll take the kids to go and meet him in our local park on a sunny afternoon. He's great with children and godfather to four already so when I was pregnant, he used to say, "I'm not taking on the burden of your children too!"

On my first day at GMTV in 2000, I remember he came and sat down and immediately starting insulting me: "What the hell is this mess under the desk? Oh my god, we would never have this with Lorraine!" I was very nervous and it broke the ice immediately. I think he is always incredibly rude

to me because he loves me. At least I hope that's the case.

We're able to laugh in the grimmest situations. A few years into our friendship, I got a lump on my kidney and although it turned out to be fine, for a while we thought it was cancer. No one knew what to say to me but Richard just sent me a text: "I've eliminated myself as a donor so I now feel free to visit cause you're not

"Our friendship is different to female friendships because there is no jealousy or competition"

gonna ask me for my kidney – is there anything you'd like me to bring?" It was such an inappropriate thing to say but that's why it was great. He normalises everything and makes you realise it's not the end of the world.

Our friendship is different to female friendships because there is no jealousy or competition like there can be with other women. I trust him to keep my secrets and keep an eye out for me. And I also trust him professionally – if I throw him a line, I know he'll have a good line back...

most of the time a better line than I could have thought of.

It was sad when Richard left GMTV in 2010 when it became Daybreak. That whole period was horrible because there were lots of changes, and we had all worked together for ten years and become a close-knit family. A few months after he left, he called me up asking for a quote for his magazine column and I asked him where he was: "I'm in Cannes, darling, having lunch by the pool!" I didn't feel so bad after that – he was having the time of his life while I was exhausted trying to juggle my role as entertainment editor while also filling in for Christine Bleakley after she left.

It was hilarious when Richard came back to ITV the following year. The lift doors opened, he walked into the Daybreak studio and said at the top of his voice, "I'm baaaack!" I was, "Oh God, here we go again!"

Kate appears on Good Morning Britain weekdays on ITV and the mid-morning show on Smooth Radio.

Presenter Richard Arnold, 44, lives in North London.

Kate and I hit the ground running the minute I flagged up her Lego hair on air! From that point on, we struck a fine line in banter to the point where people thought there might be something other than friendship going on! I think the chemistry comes from having so much in common.



"Kate is never ready on time – it's the only thing that ever winds me up"

we're both very self-deprecating, riddled with flaws and insecurities, and know exactly where to find each other's Achilles heel. We have a unique kind of brother-sister-type relationship and sometimes we forget that we're on TV, not at home bickering.

My favourite thing about her is that death rattle of a laugh of hers.

We share a great gallows sense of humour, which, given the nature of the industry that we're in, helps you out no end. We've weathered the highs and lows of this burly-burly world of showbiz together and we've always supported each other. After my break from ITV, it was great to rejoin Kate on the sofa again. She always said she knew I'd be back.

Our friendship hasn't changed since the day we met. I still see Kate as the wild 30-year-old that I fell in love with all those years ago. The fact she's a mum – and a terrific one at that – doesn't really register when we get together. It's just all about us catching up and having fun, generally with an amaretto over ice. She's also a good one for being on the phone for an hour. I know when I see her name come up that I've got to sit down and take some time out. I love stopping all the clocks and having a good old natter.

The only thing that ever winds me up about Kate is her timekeeping. In the early days, before I realised what she was like, she'd say, "Oh we're going to this do, just get the car to stop by and I'll be ready." I soon found out she is never, ever ready on time. But then she looks at you with those Bambi eyes under that fringe and you can't help but forgive her.

Richard appears on Good Morning Britain weekdays on ITV. >>