

EMILIA FOX

The actress and presenter on an inspiring teacher at Bryanston and listening to political podcasts

What's your favourite memory of school? The summer terms when so much time was spent outside in the beautiful Bryanston grounds – either doing a play in the Greek theatre or playing sport or hanging out with friends.

What's the biggest learning experience you've had? Parenting and understanding all the decisions my parents made for me and now wanting to make the right decisions and help my 14-year-old daughter to make the right decisions for herself.

Name a cause that is important to you – and why Being involved with and protecting the natural world. I feel beyond lucky to have had a childhood spent in the wild natural beauty of Dorset – living on the Jurassic coastline, spending every bit of free time outside and then being at school in the beauty of the Bryanston grounds. There was no digital, virtual world to compete with the real, natural world and now a new balance needs to be struck. I care passionately about protecting the environment and biodiversity of the natural world and am an ambassador for Kew Gardens trying to spread the word about how we can all play a part in doing that.

Tell us three things you can't live without Books, flowers, dogs.

How do you start your day? With coffee and the *Today* programme on Radio 4 or catching up on an episode of *The Rest is Politics*.

What's the most adventurous thing you've done in your life? A show called *Mission Survive*. It was a psychological and physical challenge living in the Costa Rican rainforest. I was set challenges that I would never have done otherwise in my life

like eating a live scorpion, building a shelter and camping out in an electric storm and jumping out of a helicopter into water with no parachute.

And what's one thing you've always wanted to try but have been too scared to do (so far)? Directing TV. Lots of people have suggested over the years that I do it – and I keep meaning to take up opportunities, but think I would like to learn a bit more about the technical side of it

first just so I could be super prepared. I'd like to go to film school and study again.

Name a teacher who inspired you – and why Duncan Fowler Watt. The way he taught classical civilisation made it the most exciting subject to learn because he was so full of enthusiasm about it. He was also the most approachable teacher which in teenage years was formative.

I wanted to do well in the subject because he taught it so well and because I had, and continue to have, such huge respect for him.

What's the best piece of advice you've received? Never read your own reviews.

What's on your music playlist right now? I'm listening to podcasts more than music at the moment. I am completely hooked on *The Rest is Politics* and *The Rest is Politics US* – and am listening to a series on BBC Sounds called *Sweet Bobby*, as well as Rory Stewart's awesome series on ignorance.

What's your favourite board game? Backgammon.

Name your biggest weakness? Overthinking. It makes everything take longer than it should.

Name your biggest strength? Overthinking. I strive to do my very best however long it takes.

What's the kindest thing a stranger has done for you? When I was 24, I was rescued in a Russian airport from a perilous situation by a BA air hostess I had never met. She had me released after eight hours of being detained.

What's something you wish more people talked about? Their true feelings..

What are the best qualities you think you inherited from your parents? Kindness, love, loyalty, friendship, a strong

work ethic and the importance of the simplest things in life being the most important and rewarding.

What's been the highlight of your past year? Completing filming on my 21st series of *Silent Witness*.

What's the one thing you wish you knew when you left school? Another language. ■



Emilia Fox