



## Trailblazer

### *Dr Bella Ellwood-Clayton*

39 • sexual anthropologist

#### WHAT'S NEW WITH YOU?

I just did a big keynote speech at the Australian Institute of Sexual Health Medicine, where I spoke about female sexuality and how it gets depleted. I also spoke at the All About Women festival at the Sydney Opera House earlier this year about how women can have better sex. I've been working on a romantic comedy novel as well.

#### WHAT INSPIRES YOU?

I wanted to create a place where academic ideas about sexuality could be told in a mainstream voice to mainstream people, and start a dialogue. So, what inspires me is taking knowledge that was formerly in the tight reins of academia and making it more user-friendly.

#### YOUR "AHA" MOMENT?

In high school my best friend Erica, from Chile, told me that in her home culture it was common for men to lose their virginity at a brothel. Even from an early age that really interested and kind of shocked me. I spent a great amount of my career studying how the norms of one culture are different in another, and how what we think is normal or right varies.

#### WHERE ARE YOU HAPPIEST?

I love being at a cafe on a laptop, writing. I love having a bath with both my children (4 and 6) in the evening, playing water games, and I love having great conversations with my husband.

#### YOUR TOP RELATIONSHIP TIP?

The number one thing couples can do to keep their connection is to kiss with an open mouth every day. It's actually harder than it seems for couples who have been together for a long time. That one kiss speaks volumes. It says we're more than co-parents, more than co-domestics in this house – there is a sensual, special bond.

#### WHAT'S YOUR FAVOURITE BOOK?

That's a hard question. I was very influenced by Anais Nin's work when I was young. If you can write with a little bit of poetry, emotional authenticity and also have a bit of sexiness, that's a good combination.

#### WHAT'S NEXT FOR YOU?

It's my daughter's last year at home before going to school, so I hope she gets a lot of my direct, special attention and we can really enjoy our time together. It will be that balance between doing work I feel passionate about, being a great mum, being a good wife and taking care of myself. That's the challenge so many of us have.

LEANNE EDMISTONE

**BELLA ELLWOOD-CLAYTON** is one of the speakers at this year's TEDxSouthBank, State Library of Queensland, South Bank, Sat, Dec 6. [tedxsouthbank.com.au](http://tedxsouthbank.com.au)