

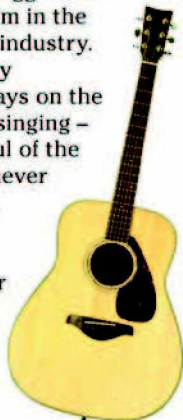
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THE PEOPLE WHO MADE ME

WRITER AND TV PRESENTER
DAWN O'PORTER REVEALS THE
PEOPLE WHO'VE HELPED MAKE HER
THE PERSON SHE IS TODAY

ENCOURAGES ME

My dad is my biggest fan. He loves that I'm in the entertainment industry. He's a big, burly Scotsman, always on the guitar, always singing – the life and soul of the party. As I've never lived with him, we don't have a traditional father-daughter relationship – we're just really good mates.



INSPIRED ME

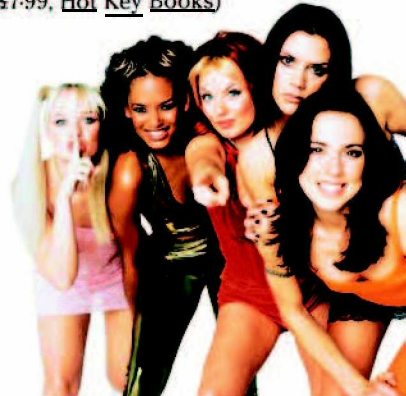
Reading *Oranges Are Not The Only Fruit*, by **Jeanette Winterson**, at A-level, made me want to be a writer. Though I was nothing like the character, one line in particular spoke to me – 'I cannot recall a time when I did not know that I was special' – meaning slightly different,



rather than amazing. I completely related to that; I felt different at school because of losing my mum and living with relatives.

MOTIVATED ME When I turned 17, I wanted to be one of the **Spice Girls**. Back then, I was fixed on being a performer and an actress. So seeing these five normal women achieve the ultimate dream was incredibly motivating. I also loved how fun and refreshing they were.

The Booby Trap And Other Bits And Boobs, edited by Dawn O'Porter, is out on 19 September (\$7.99, [Hot Key Books](#))



WORDS: AVIVA INGRAM PHOTOS: ALAMY, GETTY

Gives me drive

For years I would deny that my mum passing away from breast cancer affected me. But making the programme, *My Breasts Could Kill Me*, in 2009, was the moment I realised that everything I'd done in my career had been because of the constant thought that you've got to live your life. I do think it's a very positive drive.

MADE ME CREATIVE

My aunt and uncle have probably influenced me the most. My mum died just before I turned seven and, when I was 10, my older sister and I went to live with them. They were very arty and into anything creative – from painting to flower arranging to writing. I don't know how I would have become what I am or been so supported in what I do, if I'd been raised in a less creative household.



GOT ME COOKING I adore food and love to cook. When not working, I've cooked my way through recipe books – I particularly like **Jamie Oliver's**. While I don't have as much time to cook as I used to, I make Jamie's sweet cherry tomato and sausage bake – a roasted one-pot dish – at least once a week. With balsamic vinegar and loads of garlic, it's just the best.



Gives me confidence

I've always found it difficult to tell people I like how I feel. Despite my outspoken public persona, when it comes to my relationships, I don't like to rock the boat. My husband, [Chris O'Dowd – *Bridesmaids* and *The IT Crowd*] has changed me; he's quite fiery and expressive, and I'm not. Over the course of our relationship, we've met in the middle. He's taught me to stick up for myself more – and to do what's right for me in my career, rather than worry about being liked by everyone.



MENTORS ME I interviewed the writer of *Dirty Dancing*, **Eleanor Bergstein**, when I made a programme about the film a few years ago. Not only have we become great friends, but Eleanor's my mentor and biggest writing inspiration. She's great at portraying real emotions in her books, has a young heart and is very open-minded. I run my ideas by her and she reads all my work. She gives me feedback, which is always right.

