



Styled by Karen Shapiro. Hair by Korey Fitzpatrick for Exclusive Artists using Davines Haircare. Makeup by Nicole Blais.

Tracy Anderson wears a Fendi skirt; Sam wears Scotch & Soda; Penny's outfit from Stella & Ruby.

# METHOD

## Mom

Renowned Trainer & Fitness Entrepreneur  
**Tracy Anderson**  
Gets Personal About Motherhood, Work & Working Out

BY MIA WEBER

PHOTOS BY JULIE GOLDSTONE

**IT SEEMS LIKE** on every street corner in Manhattan there's an oh-so-trendy boutique fitness studio. On a cold winter's day, any New Yorker can certainly warm up with any number of shiny new workouts from barre to boxing (and trust me—as a millennial woman, I've suited up in my on-trend athleisure gear to sweat it out all over town).

To the untrained eye, the Tracy Anderson Method studio on East 59th Street checks all the requisite boxes: Instagram-worthy reception area with beautiful blonde-wood floors? Yep. Style-savvy workout clothes for sale up front with tasteful neon accents? Of course. But here's the thing: Once you're in the heated studio (I was told, when I arrived for an early-December class, that it was "totally fine" for me to step outside if I felt like I was "going to pass out") for a TAM workout with your mat and your towels (they recommend you bring in several for a 50-minute class) and weights—and especially once you wake up the next day acutely feeling muscles you had no idea you even had—it's clear to see that TAM isn't part of the trend; rather, it *gave birth* to the trend.

And as for TAM's creator Tracy Anderson? Well, it's with good reason that she's probably the first name that comes to mind when you think "Fitness Industry Success Story!"

In person, Anderson—a 42-year-old mom-of-two originally from Indiana—is more introverted (by her own admission) than the larger-than-life fitness-goddess/Gwyneth Paltrow-bestie image that gets projected in the media (though, it is true that Anderson and Paltrow are business partners and have been friends for over 10 years). To state the obvious, yes, she is in amazing shape; but underneath her enviable physique is an awareness that it's about putting in the work to be healthy and balanced, not just about the pretty picture. At her core, Anderson is a busy mom who takes her life's work extremely seriously, but she also is at her happiest when spending time with her children, 19-year-old Sam and 5-year-old Penelope (who goes by Penny).

"I have a real modern family—I'm a single mom of two kids that have a really big age gap [between them]... I feel really blessed with the two of them because, even with the age gap, they have this special bond. It's family, just like if they were a year apart or a couple years apart," Anderson says of her kiddos, Sam from her first marriage, and Penny from her second.

Having kids far apart in age has given Anderson perspective on not only parenting in general, but on how to be more present, and an awareness of just how quickly our world is changing.

"It was easier for me to have uninterrupted parenting with Sam than it is with Penny. The world moves faster now. Social media was not a thing and texting obsessively was not a thing when Sam was little; I had more quiet time and down time to be able to just kind of be with him," she explains. "I find that I have to fight for that for Penny and I; I have to fight for our right to that and be more protective of that, and in myself, [I have to] learn to shut down all the opportunities and options that I have to be Tracy Anderson and be servicing the people that I care so much about. I have to really work on myself to shut all those things down and just go: 'Penny, my little daughter, needs me right now!' She needs me, and no one else; she needs me and my focus."

It's understandable that Anderson feels the need to carve out specific time away from her work life. For her, work is multi-faceted and always evolving—though everything she does is grounded in her passion for fitness and wellness, in nearly 20 years of research, and in her belief that opportunities for health and balance need to be accessible for all.

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“My business is built on 20 years of research and content creation that no one in my industry has done for women. I did a five-year study on 150 women; I’ve done two other studies since then; I 100 percent know what I’m doing; and I’m for all of [the people who try TAM],” Anderson explains. “I don’t just train celebrities, I don’t just train people that can afford my gyms; I’m for every single person having the right and opportunity to be their most balanced self through the focused work that I’ve done all of these years. I think I have a very inclusive brand and as a businesswoman, too, I’ve made very tough decisions to not make the money that I could have made, [and] to not train the celebrities I could have trained.”

Anderson’s path to the fitness industry really began during her childhood in Indiana; her mother was a ballerina and owned (and, in fact, still does own) a dance studio where Anderson cultivated a love of dance and a knowledge of movement. However, when she moved to NYC at age 18 intending to study dance, she unexpectedly gained 40 lbs and was unable to shed it, and ultimately, she put her dreams of becoming a professional dancer on the back burner.

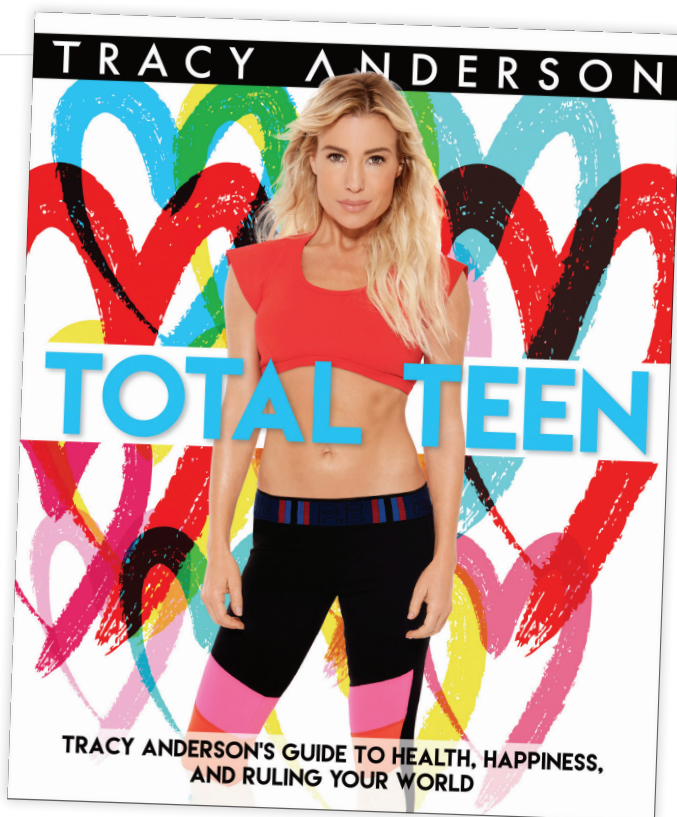
“I was lucky that I had a mother who was a ballerina and who owned a dance studio, and that I actually had talent,” she recalls. “But then, even though I learned how to move, I still gained 40 lbs at school for dance and I didn’t know what was happening to my body; and when I was there, nobody had the tools to help me.”

Around the same time that she was re-evaluating the role dance had in her future, her first husband—NBA player Eric Anderson, with whom she had her son Sam—was participating in a rehabilitation league in Puerto Rico for his injured back. In Puerto Rico, she met a doctor who introduced her to the concept of easing the strain on the large muscle groups in athletes by strengthening the small, accessory muscles. This concept—coupled with her dance background—ignited a spark in Anderson that eventually resulted in the TAM of today, which works to consistently challenge and engage accessory muscles, while also working the larger muscles as well.

Presently, the Tracy Anderson Method is available via streaming platforms (online studio subscription and online video workouts), 170+ DVDs (including cardio dance DVDs and Pregnancy and Post-Pregnancy DVDs), Tracy’s Vitality Weeks, TAM studio locations (in NYC on East 59th Street and Tribeca; as well as in East Hampton and Watermill, and in California in Brentwood and Studio City), and her book *Tracy Anderson’s 30 Day Method*.

“I work every single day, tirelessly, to make sure that I show up for every level, every age, every size, everyone’s different tolerance for a workout experience,” she says of her business. “I’ve got an entry-level pass for everyone and every price point—whether it’s the streaming where I have beginner, intermediate, and advanced, or it’s one of my studios, my DVDs, or my books. I work really hard to make sure that everyone has support—but it’s up to them to do it.”

Anderson’s latest business venture is a book aimed at teenagers called *Total Teen: Tracy Anderson’s Guide to Health, Happiness, And Ruling Your World*, which just hit shelves on December 26, 2017, from Rodale Kids—it’s a project that is especially close to heart given that she has two children herself (one being a teenager) and that she



looks back on her own teenage years wishing that she’d had proper exercise and nutrition guidance from a younger age.

“I wanted to write a book for teens because, honestly, I’ve seen so many women in my office—thousands upon thousands over the course of the 20 years I’ve been focused in my lane in this business—and I think most of the time, if I could have [worked with them] when they were 16-17, we could have built a stronger set of principles for their physical self, to where they wouldn’t have become so distanced physically,” Anderson says. “You have to work out and you have to work out 5-7 days a week—and it has to be a focused workout and playing tennis doesn’t count and playing in a soccer game doesn’t count—you have to have your focused workout that is about keeping the design of your muscle structure healthy, knowing how to feed your body healthy, nutritious things, and wanting to be you, no matter what that looks like.”

Of course, much of the book—the tailored workouts and movement tips, the nutrition advice and meal plans—comes from the fitness mogul side of Anderson, but the intentions behind the project and the emphasis on cultivating confidence and happiness, come from her heart as a mother.

“There’s so much in teens’ faces where it’s like: ‘Okay, what is displayed to me in the world are these very narrow descriptions of beauty and I need to figure out how I can fit into that and figure out how I can get my body to be that.’ And yet, there’s no real support system or education on how to just be your most balanced—which is essentially what you need to be to shine your brightest,” she explains. “The book is packaged in a fun way and it’s easy to read. The content is really quite serious and deep for a teen—hopefully it’s meant for them to go: ‘Well, this is great information to help me look better and feel better in my own body and to honor myself.’ And also, it’s an opportunity to slow them down so they don’t miss the opportunity to be themselves.”

“It’s good to learn from where you didn’t show up for yourself the year before, and to identify the ways in which you are not going to repeat the things that you consider mistakes.”

If spending an afternoon on-set for our photo shoot is any evidence, both of Anderson’s own kids have a strong sense of how to be themselves with joy and ease. Anderson’s daughter Penny is full of laughter and energy; she’s playful, outgoing, and has an infectious spirit of sweetness. “I look at Penny now and she is this bright light,” Anderson gushes. “She is literally so accepting of other people and she spreads these giggles and beams of light. She’s so fun and so happy and so social!”

And Sam, like his mother, is more introverted and reserved. But he also has a quiet passion when it comes to his beliefs, his ambitions—he’s a talented artist and photographer—and his family (as you can see in the photos here, he’s a natural at making his little sister smile).

“Sam is very much like me. He’s very righteous and full of humanism, where he’s got this big dump truck of love in his heart, but it’s bound by the fact that he can’t stand injustice, he can’t stand discrimination, he can’t stand the things in the world that are big problems but that seem like they should be so simple to fix,” Anderson says of her son. “He wanted to go to school for photography, and I think that was his way of feeling like he could make strong statements and big statements and impact and evoke people’s thoughts and emotions through a lens...he’s a really, really cool person.”

Anderson also adds that Sam’s upbringing really ran parallel to her starting her business and then finding major success in the fitness industry. “I was so young when I had Sam and I stayed home with him, and it was right when I was doing the heavy lifting in the research of building my Method, so I wasn’t in front of people yet,” she explains. “He has struggled the most with the Tracy Anderson that’s on the cover of DVDs in a little tiny sports bra and shorts. He likes the researcher and creator and teacher side of me way more than the commercial side of me. I think it took him a long time to find his way with that and realize how many lives I impact.”

But because Sam has essentially grown up with his mom’s business, Anderson has him as a special built-in support system who understands her challenges from a unique perspective. “I think he has more compassion for how difficult it’s been for me to play the game—to tolerate being called a ‘celebrity trainer’ in the press and to tolerate people ripping off my intellectual property,” Anderson says. “A lot of the lessons he’s had to see me learn—like how to champion through and not let my ego get involved; how to stay focused on the big picture—I think have set him up for a stronger position in being an artist, because there’s so much criticism that comes with art. I think that it will help him see the value in not being distracted by that commercial noise and [help him see] that if you stay true to your craft and your gift and your intention, you can really be of service to people.”

As the New Year dawns, Anderson’s mind is always



spinning with new ideas on how to serve her clients (be they Alessandra Ambrosio, or ordinary fitness seekers, like me, for example) and her #TAMily. She has plans to open new studios in 2018, as well as exciting plans to upgrade her streaming service; she’s also working on another new book for adult women. And while she “doesn’t usually make New Year’s resolutions,” she does believe in setting goals. “I think it’s good to learn from where you didn’t show up for yourself the year before, and to identify the ways in which you are not going to repeat the things that you considered mistakes the year before,” she says.

One goal Anderson always keeps top of mind, New Year or not? To spend as much quality time with her kids as possible: “I’m definitely my happiest and most at peace when the three of us are together...that’s the most special for me.”

**TO LEARN MORE ABOUT TRACY ANDERSON, VISIT [TRACYANDERSON.COM](http://TRACYANDERSON.COM)! TO PICK UP YOUR COPY OF *TOTAL TEEN*, VISIT [RODALEKIDS.COM](http://RODALEKIDS.COM)!**

Tracy Anderson wears a Fendi dress.