

MY DREAMS OF A HEALTHIER COUNTRY

Michelle Bridges

Many of you may know Michelle Bridges from her work on television as a trainer on the popular Australian version of *The Biggest Loser*, or from reading one of her several successful fitness / motivational books. Though there is so much more to this super woman we have uncovered, which we don't generally get to see. Fortunately we were lucky enough to catch up with Michelle to ask her opinion on a few important questions, and talk about her life experiences, and just life in general.

For Michelle and partner Steve Willis, life has just become a whole lot more interesting, not only are they devoted to the creation of a healthier nation, but they decided to embark on another of life's little journeys, and a most important one, with the birth of their son Axel. So how does this powerhouse in the Australian fitness world, juggle such a busy, or hectic lifestyle, Michelle puts it down in part to important life lessons learnt early, through her participation in sports.

Michelle grew up in Nelson Bay, NSW, and has fond memories of school and family, we asked has she always had this passion for exercise, and health? Where did it come from, were you a healthy child, and were you encouraged to eat well?

"I was a busy kid. Always doing something, was the lament of my mum. I loved sport, netball, hockey and basketball were my top three, but I also played any and every sport I could get my hands on. My school encouraged sport so I had a chance to try lots of different things.

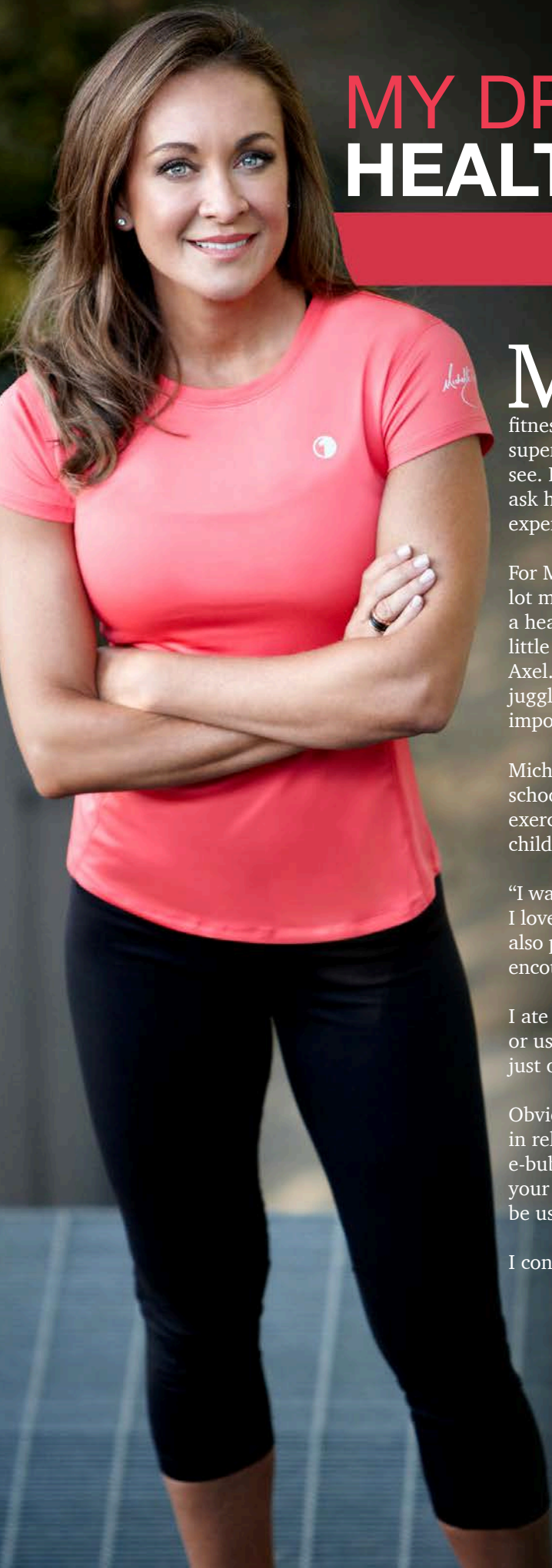
I ate very well at home, but like lots of kids, I had lollies after school, or used my pocket money to buy chips or an ice cream. But it was really just once in a while. There was absolutely no junk food at home."

Obviously you have your thoughts and opinions based on experience in relation to vitamins and health supplements. As this issue of e-bubble life is devoted to exploring just that, can you provide us with your recommendations for the five must have vitamins, families should be using?

I consider food my vitamins, so my top 5 foods for vitamin intake are:

- Green Leafy veggies - spinach, broccoli, kale are my favs!
- Blueberries
- Salmon
- Lean beef
- Apples (best convenience food ever invented!)

We have already heard of Michelle's passion for exercise and





health and how that came from her early childhood as a 7/8 year old. Though was there a favourite sport, anything you were drawn to above all others, and what were those important life lessons you talked of earlier? All sports, some of it more than others, but I just loved the movement, the agility, the hand to eye coordination, the camaraderie. But the biggest thing was the life lessons I was learning. Discipline. Commitment. Accountability. Responsibility. Being a Team player. Striving to be a star performer. Learning how to win, and how to lose. Massive important lessons.

Now we all have our likes, and dislikes, or taste preferences in relation to the foods we eat, so what about you Michelle are there any favourite tastes or food preferences you have, what do you like to eat?

“Please don’t roll your eyes, but I love fresh green veggies either raw like a salad or cooked.... And I love fish.” Taking into consideration your objectives of creating a healthier nation, I need to touch on the seriousness of the overweight and obesity problem throughout, not only Australia, but the world. I asked Michelle, in her opinion why does she think we have this issue of unhealthy eating, poor food choices and lack of exercises, especially with children?

Whether we accept it or not, I believe our biggest role models are our parents. We watch them, learn and copy from them. In my experience most of the time when parents are active and eat well, their kids generally do to. Many adults have been sold on “convenience food” marketing giants telling them “your too busy to cook! And you deserve this!” Once you’ve bought into handing you’re eating over to others, after time, cooking becomes diminished as does grocery shopping and skills get lost as does confidence in the kitchen. The good news is though, it doesn’t take long to get them back. It’s the same with exercise or just being active. Make it part of your lifestyle and it will be the norm.

Michelle you have created such a successful career, and balanced family life, what advice could you pass on to parents, being that you are now an inspirational parent yourself. Regarding children eating healthy or how to provide healthier food option for the family, what would that advice be?

Be the role model! And don’t forget, you call the shots. You don’t need to be aggressive. But you do need to be assertive and consistent with your messaging. I asked Michelle tell us what are the 4 things, we usually ask for 5 but today I am taking it easy on her, that she could not live without, excluding body parts?

1. My family
2. Quality whole food

3. Water
4. Shelter

(It’s pretty simple. But it’s all any of us need really) In your spare time, that is if you have any, as you seem extremely busy juggling several various projects all at the same time, I am exhausted just thinking about them. Do you get time to relax and if so what do you like to do?

We like to get out of the city. Whether we go to the country or a remote beach or a hike in a national park, by occasionally removing myself from the city I feel like I can relax. Breathe. And be free.

So far in your career you have reached numerous milestones, and have assisted in inspiring and guiding countless others to reach goals they, in some cases never had imagined achieving. So tell us, for you, what is next, what is the next big challenge for Michelle, is there an ultimate goal?

Parenting is probably my next big role. And it’s a role I am thoroughly enjoying. My dreams and aspirations for a healthier more vibrant country are still well and truly alive however. That’s something I will do for the rest of my life. But right now for me, growing a family is where I am.

It has been a pleasure talking with Michelle, getting her insights and thoughts on these subjects, and we are honoured that she was able to answer all of our niggling questions, a huge hug and a thank you we send to Michelle, and her team. For me the experience proves that this machine of a person is truly passionate, driven about being part of the solution in creating a healthier country. Which entails in many cases making a stand for you and not allowing your excuses or reasoning obstruct the way for a healthier you.

We enjoy talking with likeminded people who are passionate about making a difference in the world, and Michelle is a true champion for creating a healthier nation.