

Lifestyle

guide

*Emma
Isaacs*

MENTORING

**WHAT'S ON
IN SYDNEY**

Sydney's
Update
on the
**Lockout
Laws**

Inner-City
REAL ESTATE
STATISTICS

**SPECIAL
FOCUS**
ON MENTAL
HEALTH

MICHELLE BRIDGES



MICHELLE

Sydney

Q. Personal trainer, TV personality, entrepreneur, mother – how do you balance it all?

A. I don't always balance it all, to be honest; I don't think anyone ever has things perfectly in balance all the time! Neither Steve nor I have family here in Sydney. We rely heavily on friends and colleagues to help us do everything we do. With so many moving pieces in my world, there are definitely times when one or more of the pieces goes awry, and then it's a mad scramble to get everything back on track.

Q. You've built an empire and inspired people all over the world. What has given you the most satisfaction?

A. Personally, having my little man, Axel. Hands down, he's my single greatest achievement and my love for him is bigger than anything I've ever experienced. Professionally, creating my 12WBT program. Helping thousands of people change their lives for the better is something I'm hugely proud of.

Q. You've been training people since your teens. Where did your love for health and fitness come from?

A. When I was little, we moved around a lot and I went to a bunch of different schools. I was bullied badly, and sport became my way of feeling good about myself. At 14, I started teaching fellow students how to be active, and I became hooked on the buzz of helping others.

BRIDGES'

Fitness guru Michelle Bridges shot to fame on *The Biggest Loser* in 2006 and has gone on to create the 12WBT program, develop an activewear range, write more than 10 books and appear on television screens across the country. *The Dancing With The Stars* celeb talks to Katy Holliday about work-life balance, the connection between mental health and exercise, and her favourite place for a healthy meal.



Q. You teamed up with Black Dog Institute this year to promote Exercise Your Mood Week. What are some of the benefits of exercise for mental health?

A. I'm a longtime ambassador for Black Dog Institute – they do such important research into mental health. They recently led a landmark study published in *The American Journal of Psychiatry*, which revealed that regular exercise of any intensity can prevent future depression, with mental-health benefits seen regardless of age or gender.

Q. Favourite outdoors exercise spot in Sydney?

A. A run or a walk around the Botanical Gardens, looking out over the harbour and seeing the Opera House and Harbour Bridge – you can't beat it!

Q. With lots of different television shows under your belt, which has been your favourite to appear on and why?

A. Oh, that's like asking me to choose a favourite child! I did really love *Dancing With The Stars*, even though it was bloody hard! I fell in love with dancing and learning to train my body in a new way. I'm also eternally grateful for *The Biggest Loser*. It was like a nine-year uni degree in human behaviour.

Q. Becoming a trainer on *The Biggest Loser* saw you rise to recognition. What was your biggest challenge starting out in the public eye?

A. My biggest challenge was that people recognised me. It made me feel really uncomfortable because I didn't feel like I was famous. When people would stare or say "Michelle! Michelle!" I'd be embarrassed and deflect by turning away. A good friend called me out on it and said, "Acknowledge those people, smile and wave, and when they ask, 'Are you Michelle Bridges?' say 'Yes!'" It changed everything.

Q. Where is the best place in Sydney for a healthy meal out?

A. It changes all the time, but a staple when it comes to consistently good is China Doll. The smoked duck is OMG-good.

Q. What's in store for you in 2020?

A. So many things! There are a number of new, exciting projects within 12WBT that I cannot wait to see launch, I also have a new book coming out, and I'm continuing to find more work-life balance. I'm determined to spend more time at my Southern Highlands bolthole.