

Total Mommy Fitness

November 2013

Martie Maguire

of the Dixie Chicks
talks motherhood,
life, love and finding
balance.



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Martie Maguire

opens up about the challenges of motherhood, staying fit and what she keeps in her fridge.

By Tatum Rebelle



Recently I had the pleasure of chatting with Martie Maguire of the Dixie Chicks and Court Yard Hounds at a quaint Greek café in South Austin. I wanted to find out how she juggles two bands, three young daughters, and her own fitness.

Martie called to let me know she was running late because an appointment with her life coach ran a bit long. We spoke briefly about how much she enjoys her coaching sessions and what they accomplished together that afternoon. She arrived soon after looking casual in a t-shirt, jeans and boots, yet still polished and chic.

We sat on an old couch with two glasses of red wine and a plate of hummus amidst the loud buzz of a book club discussion, a group knitting blankets for charity, students studying and entrepreneurs on their laptops. We talked for several hours about life, career, motherhood, and health. I began the interview already thinking very highly of Martie, and left our conversation with even more respect.

She grew up the daughter of schoolteachers, and middle child of three sisters. Martie has been a professional musician since the age of 12, and co-founded the most successful female band of all time with her younger sister Emily Robison. She is a singer, songwriter and fiddle player who has graced the covers of Time Magazine and Entertainment Weekly, and has won Grammy awards in the double digits.

Audio Clips from our Conversation

Martie explains the creative trick her parents used to get her to practice.

Listen

Hear what Martie listens to at home with her kids, and who her influences were.

Listen

Listen to a touching story about the kind of mother that Martie had and the mom she wants to be.

Listen



"Even if you have a lot of resources you still want to be a good mom, you want to be there for your kids, and you still mess up."

Life

What is a typical day in your life look like?

I'm up at 6:30am, three lunches, hairdos, breakfasts, and backpacks ready. Before I take them to school I brush my teeth and put on sunglasses. [laughs] I try to do a 9:30am yoga class. I feel like that's my gift to myself, and I try not to schedule anything near it.

Then work, usually on the computer, I wish it were writing songs, but there is so much business involved in what I do. I get Harper [her youngest daughter] at 2:30pm, then we have mommy and Harper time until the twins get home from their after school activities. After dinner there is piano, reading, homework, a little playtime, bath, and bed.

Do you ever feel overwhelmed and commit to too much? If so, how do you get out of it if you've already committed?

I am the kind of person that tends to take on too much. And, I tend to drop balls then feel really guilty about it. So, I'm trying to just communicate when I've overextended myself. It's a work in progress and something that I've always had a problem with because I'm a "yes" person. I want to help everybody and save the world, and I've had to learn that people will understand if I say no. I tend to retreat and kind of get into my own little world and not feel very open sometimes as a protection.

How do you find the time for yourself?

I decided a long time ago to simplify. I've stripped my life down to the needs of my kids, what I need to stay healthy and the basic necessities of life. I keep a few friends that I care about, and put my heart into music and work. But, I feel insecure when I get asked what I do for myself because I don't even have a hobby. I don't have time, but I think one day I would love to read a good book. I wish I were more interesting. Eventually I want to learn to sew and play tennis, but I can learn when I retire and my kids are in college.

There's a perception that celebrities have it easy because they can afford healthy food and nannies, and have flexible schedules. Do you think there is truth to that?

I'm as hands on of a mom as I can possibly be. I feel lucky that I have a job where I can be there when they get home from school. I make the same mistakes and have the same stresses of life. Even if you have a lot of resources you still want to be a good mom, you want to be there for your kids, and you still mess up. I've forgotten my kids at school, and my kids got lice just like all the other kids. Normal things happen. You lose your temper, you feel stressed, you feel overworked, and unattractive after having a baby, you feel what other moms feel.

"A little each day equals a lot in the long run... you can't cheat or take shortcuts with an instrument or a fit body."



Career

What do you think has given you the discipline to stick with music for so long, and do you apply those same skill sets to your fitness?

My parents instilled a work ethic in me, and my sisters, from having us learn instruments at a young age, and realizing that a little each day equals a lot in the long run. You do what you do every day and hone your skills. It gave me the understanding that if you have a big goal to reach you have to do a little each day, you can't cram for that test. I crammed for all the others, or cheated off of my sister [laughs], but you can't cheat or take shortcuts with an instrument or a fit body.

How do you stay grounded with all of the success that you've had?

I think my parents raised three really strong women who were pretty confident. I've modeled how I want my career to go after artists like Emmylou Harris and Dolly Parton. My heroes always reinvented themselves and they never had to be where they were. It's nice to have role models in the industry and I've been able to watch other females who inspire me. I'm in my 40s now. The

days of Wide Open Spaces [*Dixie Chicks* album which sold 14 million copies] are long gone, but there is no reason why I can't still reminisce and feel happy for that time in my life. Now I'm in a new time in my life, and I want to embrace every age and every point in my career.

Do your kids understand that not everyone's mom has been a character on the Simpsons? Ha! I wonder how much they comprehend.

[laughs] Here's an example of when I thought, ok, they get this. We had shot an episode of Sesame Street and I didn't have kids at the time. My oldest sister brought her little girl and she got to meet Elmo. We were so excited to be on Sesame Street. I had forgotten all about it.

Fast forward a few years, my girls were watching Sesame Street and out pops mom. And, they look up at me and keep looking at the TV and then looking at me like, *how did you get in there?* [laughs] Our first single was "I Can Love You Better," and they changed it to "I Can Love That Letter." It was so cute! I loved it. That was a big moment.

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Motherhood

How has being a mom changed you as a person?

Now that I have kids, I see the joy in feeling really fulfilled in my life and looking at my kids and going, you have your whole lives ahead of you. What do you want to do? I want to be there for you.

I want to support that and watch. I want to pass the torch. I still have goals and dreams, but I feel like now my role is to be what my parents were for me. My parents were very selfless.

What is the hardest thing about motherhood?

Keeping them from things that are going to adversely affect them and from the realities of the world for as long as I can. I can't protect them from sadness. It's really tough when they have to learn a tough life lesson. I feel their pain times ten because I feel like I'm supposed to protect them. So it's just scary trying to keep them safe and naïve. That's my biggest challenge.

What advice would you give to a new mom?

My advice would be to take the help where you can get it and get some sleep. I luckily had a husband who would help me, but neither of us were getting any sleep. I would also say just try to have a sense of humor about it and let things go that don't really matter.

What was your pregnancy or birth experience like?

Looking back I think I had some postpartum [depression]. I remember just feeling overly emotional and weepy. I felt guilty that they were out in the world, like I wanted them back inside me. One of the twins didn't want me to bathe her and everything agitated her. Every food we gave her she would throw up violently, and she was colicky. I just felt like she wasn't ready for the world.

They were a little early and I remember feeling this huge sense of guilt that she was not ready. I blamed myself for all of her ailments. I remember telling them I was so sorry. I was apologizing to my newborn baby that she was born. It was horrible. I do wish there was more talking about the emotional roller coaster, let alone your body. I wish that it was something that women were more prepared for.

You've mentioned the love for your children is unlike any other. How is regular love different from the love for your kids?

It is a scary love. It's a desperate love. It's like my life will end if anything ever happens to this being, to where you are not even worried about yourself or scared about your own mortality. But, then when I think about it I know they'd be devastated if something happened to me, so I have to be healthy.

Diet and Exercise

How do you workout when you're on the road?

I need a lot of energy, and I notice when I'm active and eating the right foods I feel better on stage and I have the energy to keep a rigorous schedule. What helps is having Emily, my partner in all of this. We challenge each other. If she's looking really buff from doing Pilates then I think hmm, maybe I'll do some Pilates. We team up together and make it a goal to workout or find a gym or a yoga class on the road.

Do you feel pressure to stay fit?

I saw the pressure, on women primarily, in my industry from a really early age. I would see it first hand. Other women on the label getting called in about getting on a diet. Luckily Emily and I were born with pretty decent genes to begin with, and we were very athletic in school. We played sports growing up and understand about fitness and the benefits of being healthy. But, there is a lot of pressure, and it's harder as I get older.

What does the inside of your fridge look like?

My fridge is always packed because I have so many kids. I tend to buy a lot of the same things. You'll always find baby carrots, good cheeses, probiotics, ground chia seeds, almond butter, eggs, beer, lots of fruits and veggies. I sneak kale and avocados into fruit smoothies because you can't taste them.

What motivates you now compared to when you were younger?

It's definitely more about health. I'm trying to get off sugar, and when the girls ask why, of course I don't want to say so I don't get fat. I say because I'm trying to be really healthy. So that's my main motivation now. I was already an older mom when I had kids and I want to be active for them. I want the stamina to make it through the day and still have energy for my kids.

