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Twelve Questions: Polly Gillespie

Polly Gillespie and husband Grant Kereama were longtime breakfast radio hosts on ZM and this week helped launch a new station, The Hits. **The couple have been together for 29 years and have three children aged 15 and over.**



Polly Gillespie is interested in hearing about other people's lives.

1. What is the best, and worst, of working with your husband?

Best is we share our lives, woes, goals, triumphs, and hours, while at home having different interests. We get to hang out in the afternoon and watch our favourite TV shows. It's like having your best friend around all the time. The worst is I would be lost without him, and do feel like I'm missing my brain when he's not around for a few hours! Do we get sick of each other? God, no, I don't think so. I'm actually much more laid back than I appear and we just like the same things.

2. Why do you think women relate to you?

I really like other people and their stories. I'm interested in hearing about other people's lives. I find other people and their journeys way more interesting than mine. I love men, but I adore women. I don't understand women who don't like other women. Women are gorgeous.

3. You've talked about being bullied as a teen, and bullied as an adult.

How's your self-esteem now?

What woman doesn't fluctuate with self-esteem? A fibbing one. Blimey - all around us are perfect size 10s in magazines, movies, online. I go to Hollywood and interview tiny perfect people. Everyone has issues right? It's not my job to be beautiful. It's my job to be content and do what I do well. I don't read what other people say about me, and I try not to be too self-absorbed. If I'm being of some service to other people, including my family, then I'm not thinking about myself. It's better that way. It's actually not all about me apparently!

4. You say it's not your job to be beautiful, but you put a lot of work into your appearance. How does that work?

I think it would be really inauthentic to pretend that any of us doesn't worry about how we look. There must be loads of women who don't worry about their weight and the way they look but I don't know any of them. I did really well on the Dukan diet a while ago and lost about 18kg but I got really sick of eggs and chicken and now I've put it all back on. Exactly the amount I lost. Other people do craft or scrapbooking. I diet. On my tombstone it will say 'She Dieted'. I started the paleo diet today.

5. Your marriage has survived very public ups and downs. How has it endured?

That's the "ever after"! The truth is that all long-term relationships have ups and downs, despite Hollywood trying to convince us otherwise. The end of the fairytale isn't riding off into the sunset, that's where it begins. It's an adventure.



6. How would you describe your childhood?

I grew up in Papatoetoe then Burwood in Christchurch, and Central Hamilton. I had a great Dad, great Mum, one sister who had a genius IQ that made my life awesome and quirky. It was a humble life, not a lot of stuff but warm and wonderful family and extended family. Very boring good solid values and making do on a tight budget. Mum sewed all our clothes, and for a treat on Friday nights we'd get a packet of Pebbles.

7. You live in Wellington now: what's the real difference between Aucklanders and Wellingtonians?

The biggest difference is the Kathmandu puffer jacket. That's how you know a girl's in Auckland or Wellington in November. Auckland girls will wear a singlet top, shorts and Havaiana jandals. Wellington girls wear a singlet top, shorts, Havaiana jandals and a puffer jacket.

8. There have been lots of rumours about you having plastic surgery: What about that makes you angriest?

None of it makes me angry. I don't see any of it. It's only when people get angry "for" me that I even know about it, and then I'm like "Don't worry about it!" It's not the real stuff, it's just petty. You might get 300 people, 299 of whom will say you're great and one will say "I hate you, you've got Botox". The way I live now, I honestly don't give a shit. I do love this quote from Erin Gloria Ryan too: "You may not agree with a woman, but to criticise her appearance - as opposed to her ideas or actions - isn't doing anyone any favours, least of all you. Insulting a woman's looks when they have nothing to do with the issue at hand implies a lack of comprehension on your part, an inability to engage in high-level thinking. You may think she's ugly, but everyone else thinks you're an idiot."

9. Have you had plastic surgery?

Yeah. I had a head transplant. I used to have a different head. What I should have had was a body transplant.

10. When have you been at your lowest, and how did you survive?

The saddest times for me have been through the death of someone I've loved. We lost our first baby, a little boy, with a very late miscarriage and that was unbelievably sad. I wanted to die of grief. I just threw myself into walking, looking after my body, going to a naturopath and looking forward. My sister Jeanette died of the flu when she was 38 and that was incredible sadness. She was a runner, a vegetarian, doing a doctorate at Waikato university. She caught the flu and died five days later. It was the most horrendous thing - you bleed out of your orifices, your eyes and ears, your hands go black. Everyone must get that influenza vaccine.

11. When and where are you at your happiest?

Gee that's tough because I have great moments of happiness in my life all the time, also great moments of profound sadness. The happiest have been with all our three kids present. I think I'm happiest when I'm on holiday and making some amazing dinner for my family. When I'm working from 4am I'm grumpy mummy. When I'm on hols I'm 'Happy Cooking Mummy'.

12. If you could change one thing about New Zealand, what would it be?

I'd make internet bullying illegal and punishable by flogging and/or prison.

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