

**TAKE
10**



SUBJECT

Hilary Barry

**FRANCES COVENTRY CHATS WITH
THIS POPULAR TV PRESENTER,
RADIO BROADCASTER, HAPPY WIFE
AND PROUD MUM ...**

1 A great night out for you would go like ...?

HILARY: I have to confess we're real homebodies. But if we did go out it would start with a glass of bubbles with my husband, Mike, at the kitchen bench. Then a walk down the road to a local restaurant for dinner. If the kids were with us it'd be off to our little Japanese place where sushi's their food of the moment. For a special occasion like a wedding anniversary, we may book into the French Restaurant. That's if we could plan ahead for three months to get a reservation! I love food and cooking, and as the kids get older I get a bit more adventurous.

2 Who do you most admire, and why?

HILARY: Aung San Suu Kyi, Burma's opposition leader. When I was researching her life for a story, I discovered what an extraordinary woman she is. Her dedication to her people and the way she's coped with that situation is amazing. I consider her this decade's Nelson Mandela.

3 If you could do anything in the world and could not fail what would that be?

HILARY: Climb Mt Everest. I love the outdoors and exploring new places, but I've never climbed a mountain before. You're absolutely sure I couldn't fail? To be honest, it's that assurance that makes it look attractive!

4 What's the best thing and the hardest thing about being a mum?



HILARY: One of the best things is laughter. My boys are now 7½ and 10 – and it's so much fun to see their sense of humour developing. They're starting to get our jokes now. They join in, especially when I'm taking the mickey out of myself. The hardest thing for me is getting that work/life/family balance. If the family's out of sync I find it really unsettling. Mike's gone back to teaching so that he can do all the after-school activities and get the boys ready for school the next day. I couldn't do my jobs without him.

5 What book is currently on your bedside table?

HILARY: *The Thirteenth Tale* by Diane Setterfield. It's a gothic suspense novel and a great summer read.

6 What's your fondest memory growing up?

HILARY: Summertime by the beach with the extended family. Aunts and cousins all over the place. There's something very special about building repeated memories through your childhood.



7 What's the first thing you'd change about NZ if you could?

HILARY: I'd get rid of the culture that knocks people. I don't like New Zealand having a reputation as a nation of knockers. We need to *celebrate* people! There's even a tendency to think someone's taking the mickey out of you when they pay you a genuine compliment. I'm a positive person and I don't like that whinging mentality and the cynicism that goes with it. But I've no desire to move overseas;

there are so many experiences to be had here, and our natural environment is wonderful for a family.

8 Imagine you're stuck on a desert island with just one person – who would that be, and why?

HILARY: Well, assuming he's reading this, it would have to be my husband. However, if he wasn't available it'd be George Clooney. I'd like to have a chat with him! Even if he couldn't talk, I could just look at him for hours!

9 What's the best advice you could give young parents?

HILARY: Don't worry too much. Things will improve, and one day you'll get some sleep. If it's your first child you can stress so much, because it's all so daunting and foreign. If I could go back, I wouldn't be so concerned if my child didn't fit the *Plunket* book or the self-help parenting book I was reading at the time. I'd relax and enjoy it more.

10 Have you any tips for a young wife?

HILARY: Yes. Don't sweat the small stuff. Twelve years on I've given up trying to break the wet-towels-on-the-floor habit. I just scoop them up and throw them in the hamper. My husband has so many other good qualities that make up for it – and honestly, I don't think he'll *ever* pick up the towels!

Focus on the big picture. Don't lose sight of the reasons why you married each other in the first place. And don't forget: *you chose him!* 🌸