

B A L A N C I N G

# act

THROUGH THE FIRES OF FAMILY AND FAME SHE FORGED HER OWN FULFILLMENT

WATCHING MARIEL HEMINGWAY IN THE kitchen of her Santa Monica home, going about the usual tasks of daily life—unloading the dishwasher, taking a call from her husband, greeting her daughter and a friend—it’s hard to imagine her as a celebrity who has a bloodline filled with tragedy. Her family has been plagued by suicide, disease, mental illness, troubled marriages and alcohol abuse. Top it off with the fact she became a child actor at the tender age of 13 and it’s that much harder to comprehend how this 46-year-old beauty ended up so, well, normal. But Hemingway herself seems to understand her journey of ups and downs just perfectly.

“When you grow up in a family like mine, that’s just who you are,” she says. “I never was Mariel Jones, I was always Mariel Hemingway and I think I’ve survived. A lot of my life was about survival and about the choices that I made.”

Mariel was raised in Ketchum, Idaho, the youngest of Jack and Byra Hemingway’s three daughters. An outdoorsy kid, she became a downhill ski racer at age seven on the slopes of Sun Valley. The straightforward and exhilarating sport was in sharp contrast to her unstable home life, filled with tension from her parents’ troubled marriage, her eldest sister Muffet’s rebellion and

mental breakdowns, her mother’s battle with cancer and her father’s penchant for alcohol. With middle sister Margaux off in California pursuing an acting and modeling career, Mariel fell into the role of her mother’s caregiver. Still, while such a childhood might have turned others into bitter adults, she is surprisingly at peace with her past.

“I had a great childhood in many ways, but it was kind of isolated. I didn’t have masses of friends and things like that,” Hemingway says matter-of-factly. “It was a small town and I was pretty much a homebody.”

That small-town life changed drastically when 13-year-old Mariel got her own shot at fame. Big sister Margaux had landed the lead role in the 1976 film *Lipstick* and quickly suggested her real-life kid sister to play the character’s on-screen younger sibling, Kathy. Without even auditioning, Mariel got the part and arrived on set in Los Angeles soon after. Though critics panned the film (and Margaux’s performance, for the most part), Mariel was heralded for her moving portrayal of the innocent victim. The role put her on Hollywood’s radar, but that initial success was bittersweet.

“It made me very nervous that I got such attention for it,” she admits. “It was my sister’s thing, so it made me feel really guilty and really bad.” »

## BIT BY THE ACTING BUG

They say you can't help who you fall in love with, but in Hemingway's case she couldn't help what she fell in love with—performing. Despite being just 16 when she completed her second film (Woody Allen's *Manhattan*, which earned her an Oscar nomination) it was that project that helped Hemingway unequivocally decide that acting was the career for her.

"I was totally, totally hooked. That was what I wanted to do with my life. It was just like an eye-opener," says Hemingway. "I thought, 'Oh my God, I love this!'"

Though she reveled in the craft, she admits that she never mastered the business aspect of acting: the schmoozing, the networking, the name dropping. "The whole rest of it didn't really make a whole lot of sense to me," she acknowledges now.

The next few years brought more time in the spotlight with edgy lead roles. Hemingway played a bisexual track star in *Personal Best* and then jumped to the other end of the character spectrum when she took on the role of troubled Playboy playmate Dorothy Stratten in *Star 80*. But defining success as a young actress was hard to do, and Hemingway never truly appreciated just how dynamic her career was in such a cut-throat business, until it started slipping away. "I was huge and I didn't even realize it," she says. "I had no clue, I was a kid. It wasn't until I was in my mid-twenties, and I wasn't as...sought after, that I realized what I had," Hemingway recalls. "I didn't know the kind of success I was getting until it wasn't there anymore."

a much more codependent relationship. The key to the couple's longevity, says Hemingway, lies in their ability to embrace the evolution of their marriage.

"Being in a good, healthy relationship is a journey of letting go of old patterns that don't work and inviting yourself to have new ones and new feelings and being open to that and realizing that the other person...will change. It's accepting your partner's journey," she says. After more than two decades, her relationship with Crisman is still evolving. "Now we're sort of coming into a place of complete individuality, and yet meeting in the middle somewhere, which is a great and beautiful place to get to."

Mariel gave birth to the couple's first daughter, Dree, in 1987, and youngest daughter, Langley, was born two years later. "Before I ever would have done anything else, that was always something that I really wanted," says Hemingway of becoming a wife and mother. She put her career on hold and charted her own parenthood path.

"I was always very honest and very open. I was never perfect, and I never claimed to be. I wasn't like a 'let's be friends with my kids' kind of mom. And yet, my girls were very close to me. Kids need to know boundaries and limits. They need to know who's going to be there when they're afraid," Hemingway says. "I took a lot of years off to be a mom because it was really important to me."

What also, eventually, became important was a commitment to leading a balanced life—one with an emphasis on yoga and fitness, healthy eating, and quiet time in the sanctuary of home. The approach was quite contrary to the years of extreme diet and exercise Hemingway had put herself through as a young actress struggling with her body image and trying to live up to Hollywood standards.

Though Hemingway had been practicing yoga seriously since age 25, it wasn't until her husband's diagnosis with stage four melanoma eight years ago that she put all of the pieces together and created a plan to try to save him. "My passion for health and wellness was always a part of my life," she stresses. "But then, when Stephen got sick, it really became clear. We were trying to find ways to heal him. And so he really healed through lifestyle."

Crisman saw a homeopathic doctor who put him on a prescribed diet and vitamin plan. He went into remission, and though doctors encouraged him to try chemotherapy when the cancer returned four years later, Crisman refused. He is now, once again, cancer free.

## MARIEL'S KITCHEN

With her latest endeavor, Heminway hopes to create awareness and offer better health choices for people, with some of her own favorite recipes. Healthful food for balanced lives, Mariel's Kitchen products are all natural, all tasty and all good for you. Find out more on her new site, [www.MarielsKitchen.com](http://www.MarielsKitchen.com)

But at the same time, she was discovering success in a completely different realm: marriage and family. At 23, Hemingway wed writer and producer Stephen Crisman and the two have been married ever since—a long time for any couple, but practically an eternity for a celebrity marriage. In reflection, Hemingway has no trouble defining what's behind the success of her marriage. She was a far different person when she first met Crisman, more than half a lifetime ago, and the two started out in

## TELLING HER STORY

In 2002, Mariel took a leap of faith when she revealed, in her own words, her personal story about growing up Hemingway. Her first book, *Balanced Living*, was no conventional memoir. In it, she describes a series of yoga postures and allows them to lead into stories and anecdotes about different stages of her life. It is her commitment to yoga that has helped lead her to where she is today. "I didn't want to write an autobiography like 'Oh I'm so special. I'm such a Hollywood wow person,'" jokes Hemingway. "But I felt that there was a story—something about yoga, something about my life and something about how I could look at my life through yoga."

By the time Hemingway wrote *Balanced Living* she was 40 years old and finally ready to move beyond the demons that haunted her past. Her mother had succumbed to cancer in 1988 and her father, who'd struggled with heart disease much of his adult life, died 12 years later. Perhaps most famously, her paternal grandfather, the celebrated author Ernest Hemingway, had killed himself four months before Mariel's birth. Though her parents rarely mentioned her grandfather, both Ernest and his suicide wound up back in the headlines in 1996, when Mariel's sister Margaux (who'd previously struggled with alcoholism and bulimia) tragically took her own life at 41 years old. Some called the family cursed, noting that Ernest's father as well as two of his siblings also killed themselves. Add to that Mariel's other sister Muffet's battle with mental illness, and it's easy to imagine how Mariel could assume she would be next.

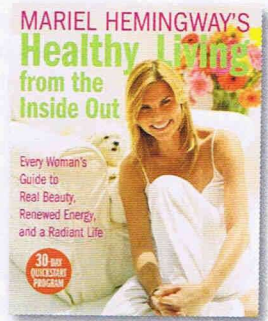
"I actually thought, because [Margaux] was gone, that now I had to carry some weird sort of mental suicide something. I thought now it was my turn," Hemingway recalls. "And then the curse thing came out and it affected me. It needed to be addressed in me. That was a big bugaboo, a big fear—going completely wacko."

But through her balanced living with an emphasis on yoga and meditation, her belief in God, and help from friends and family, she came to terms with the fact that she wasn't her sister. And she wasn't her grandfather. Mariel Hemingway was, in fact, her own person, with control over her own life and destiny. "It was really understanding more about myself, helping me to understand who I was and who I wasn't," says Hemingway, who believes that the transformation will always be a work in progress. "I'm still in that process of shifting over to 'Oh, I guess I can be okay with every part of me, and every part of my life.'"

Now, Hemingway shares her philosophy for leading a healthy life in mind, body and spirit in her second book, *Mariel Hemingway's Healthy Living from the Inside Out*. She divides the book into four main sections: food, exercise, silence and home, all of which play a pivotal role in her philosophy of balanced living. "It's not just food," she says of the strategy she shares in her latest book. "It's connecting with nature, it's my spiritual connection to the divine, it's meditation and silence and home, because I'm all about the creation of a healthier family."

And there's another important fact about the book that Hemingway can't stress enough: It is not a diet book. "It's about lifestyle. You don't want to be doing this just for a month so you can fit into a bikini," she insists. "You want to do this your whole life, so that you feel that good your whole life."

Mariel is the first to admit that, over the years, she's tried heeding the advice of every guru, read all of the books, attempted every variation of just about every fad diet, and always ended in frustration looking for the next magic bullet. Eventually she discovered that she, in fact, held the key to her own health and well-being all along.



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Keep an eye out for Hemingway's next book due out later this summer. Her latest book, *Healthy Living From the Inside Out*, is available online at [www.MarielHemingway.com](http://www.MarielHemingway.com).

**SUMMER  
READING**

"There was this huge shift and I realized I actually know what's healthy, what's good for me. It took me the longest time to realize that I was the best doctor, the best therapist, the best trainer...the best whatever for me," Hemingway explains. "I needed to share that. I believe that everybody is the best they can be, the most connected to spirit. They just don't know it. We've been sold a bill of goods that everybody knows better than us what's good for us."

Rather than preach a "bossy" diet plan, she encourages fast-paced Americans to slow down their lives, to actually sit down to a meal every night, and to make simple changes, like adjusting what they eat for breakfast at first. "It's their journey. It's not mine. It's not about being like Mariel Hemingway," she adds.

Many people assume that because she's a celebrity, or because she lives in L.A. Mariel has a staff of trainers and chefs hidden away somewhere. She's quick to quell those presumptions. Hemingway eats right by cooking wholesome foods and she exercises by taking walks, hiking with her dogs and practicing yoga. No army of professionals required.

"The thing I feel passionate about, being a kind of a spokesperson in this field, is that I walk the walk," she maintains. "I'm not just a Hollywood somebody who's doing it just because maybe I can make a dollar or I can look cool. It's because I truly see the benefit."

## WHAT'S TO COME

Mariel Hemingway has more to say. She's planning another book later this year, on a topic dear to her heart: leading a green life. And while, in her mind, green living encompasses the basics like recycling and buying sustainable products, there's more. It's about connecting with the kitchen by making it the heart of the modern-day home. According to her philosophy, the more we can connect to

our kitchens, the more we can connect to the food that we bring into them, which leads to better choices for ourselves and for the environment. Living a green life, says Hemingway, is simply part of living a balanced one.

"It should be a self-journey of 'If I care for my body, my home, my family, my silence, my this, my that, then I start to work it into the environment,'" she says. "When I slow down, I make different choices in the food that I buy. I start to buy more real food. I realize that there are more local people out there that I could support. And it becomes this adventure, as opposed to just doing something because you think you should."

Now, Hemingway has added yet another title to her resume: entrepreneur. She recently launched a line of eco-friendly products and healthful foods called "Mariel's Kitchen." Her first product is good-for-you cookies she's dubbed "Blisscuits." Hemingway originally concocted the gluten-free, sugar-free, all-natural, organic treats for her sugar-addicted husband when he was ill as part of his healing diet. After trying them out on friends and family over the years, she's convinced that the healthy and "amazingly good" cookies will be a hit with consumers. After that, she plans to add her own sauces and other products to the mix.

Though Hemingway still enjoys acting and continues to take on a project or two a year, it's educating others on health and wellness that gives her the most joy. "It's so nice to know that you've put something out there that you truly believe in and you know works," she says.

Physical health and mental well-being have become more than an integral part of Mariel Hemingway's life; they've morphed into her career. And though this new living might seem a bit ironic, given her family history, Hemingway actually has her past to thank for giving her the insight to arrive on this path in the first place.

"It's the experience of my life that teaches me, and that teaches others, that helps others. Because I can say, 'I've tried this. I've done this. I've been there. I've had mental illness in my family, and all kinds of physical stuff.' It's been a process of discovery for me," says Hemingway. "It was about survival initially, and then it became about a passion for health." **SL**

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Mariel Hemingway leads spiritual retreats in yoga meditation and healthful cooking in Sun Valley, Idaho and Palm Springs, Calif. Find out more on her blog, at [www.MarielHemingway.org](http://www.MarielHemingway.org).