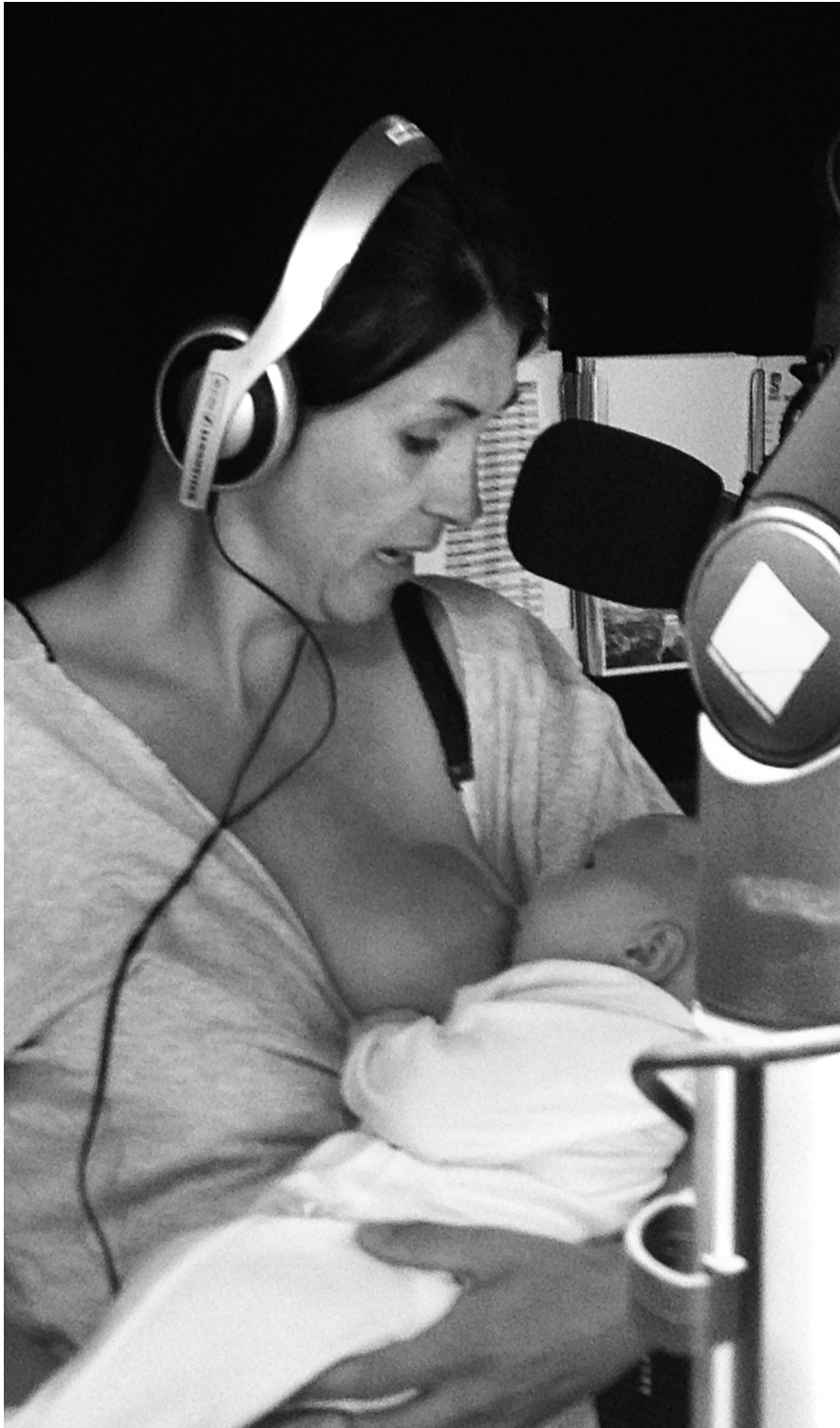


I'm not Superwoman

BRIDGET DE GOLDI, Christchurch as told to Angela Lovett



Bridget is mum to two girls, Lucia (nearly four) and Evelyn (six months). Those who live in the South Island may be familiar with her name or voice on the radio, as she works for More FM in Christchurch. At the time this article was written, as a result of the Christchurch earthquakes, More FM was broadcasting out of a temporary studio inside a portacom by the Addington Raceway in Christchurch.

WHEN LUCIA was born, Bridget took a step back from her work to spend some time figuring out what it was she really wanted to do, but found that she kept coming back to radio and broadcasting. After 20 years in the industry, she's at home in the studio and it felt abnormal for her to be away from it. She'd find herself planning things to say and making sure she was keeping abreast of news and local happenings; she couldn't just turn off from it.

Bridget started back at work when Lucia was about five months old; and a few months later, the earthquakes hit Christchurch. She really didn't like being on air during earthquakes though she recognised the importance of providing reassurance to listeners and sharing the information that they would phone in with. She felt good about being able to do that, despite losing her own home.

Towards the end of Bridget's pregnancy with Evelyn, she would be on air every week or so, filling in, and she would often talk about being pregnant and make jokes about having eaten all the food in the studio. One thing Bridget loves about community radio is that she is sharing "life."

It's all about telling a story, and you have to talk about your life. It's changed a lot – I used to talk about which bar I went to in the weekend... now it's often about mum-related topics. It can't be all about me though; I have local news and events to talk about too.

When you're a mum, you can share local news and events and things of interest to other mums and families. A friend of mine had organised a chalk-drawing competition, and because I know her, I knew it would be good so I was comfortable promoting it on air. They got something like 150 entries in the competition thanks to that extra exposure.

After Evelyn's birth, she continued to be rostered on part-time. Bridget found her employers at More FM very supportive and encouraging, especially about Evelyn coming along to work with her. After sharing her pregnancy with the listeners, her baby's presence was like a continuation of a story, but it wasn't easy.

I underestimated how difficult it would be (having Evelyn there at work), that first time. I expected her to sleep at a specific time, but the environment and the sounds and the people were all different, so of course she didn't sleep. As you can understand, the baby always comes first. If she's happy and content, then I can do my job; but if she's not, then I can't concentrate. I've never been able to shut the door on a crying baby, that's not me.

As time passed and Evelyn went for longer periods between feeds, Bridget found that she could go into the studio alone for the first couple of hours and prepare for the show. Mark (her husband) would bring Evelyn in when she needed to breastfeed, and then she would usually fall asleep and remain with Bridget from that point onwards.

Bridget has had a positive response to having Evelyn in the studio with her, but there were some moments of panic when Evelyn was screaming. Luckily she was able to latch her on and settle her, but she also communicates to her listeners what's happening.

Evelyn will make little noises when she is feeding and I'll explain that she's there in the studio with me; or that I'm going to have to put three songs on in a row if she needs to be pushed about in her stroller. Evelyn also doesn't like me wearing headphones and will try to pull them off.



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Bridget doesn't think that anyone new to the industry would be able to do it; the confidence she has comes from years and years of experience, and from really feeling at home in the studio.

She likes how motherhood gives her an extra element of relate-ability now. No matter what age their children are, mothers who are listening can relate to the same things. Like if she forgot to pack the wipes, she'd announce it: “Uh-oh I forgot the wipes, it's going to be a messy afternoon.”

Bridget is very professional about her work, particularly about addressing divisive topics on air.

“Obviously I am pro-breastfeeding, but if someone I knew was pulled up by a stranger for breastfeeding in public, I would steer away from it – it's too inflammatory.

My main role is to entertain and inform so I have to be very careful about which topics I will declare my stance on. Some debate is good, as long as it's done without alienating people.”

As well as working for More FM, Bridget has other projects at home. She has her own recording studio set up at the back of the house where she'll voice commercials, and she is also involved with a new PR Company which she has formed with four other industry professionals. Luckily they are all very

understanding about her family commitments. On top of this she is overseeing the building of her new house.

At times her commitments can feel quite taxing, she can't put her feet up when the girls go to bed, and she often has to make the call between her work and the house. But on the whole, she really enjoys her work, and the nature of it means she can fit it around being available to her children. Sometimes she does have to let the phone ring; she feels strongly that people who are going to work with mums need to understand that baby comes first.

Bridget stresses the fact that she is *not* superwoman.

I don't want people to (read about me and) feel like they should be able to have a baby and go to work and do everything. It wouldn't be possible for me without having really supportive people around me, helping me. Most people I know don't have jobs where you could do this; it's great to have a workplace where breastfeeding is supported.

When asked about her plans for the future, Bridget had some ideas about where she would like to be, and what she would like to be doing, but her point of view has altered since the earthquakes. She knows firsthand how things can change so quickly, and she is more accepting of what she can and cannot control. ♥