



## 24 Questions with M E R C I

### *“Flowers and Coffee”*

Q1. To begin, are you a coffee drinker? If so, what is your favourite?

As we move into summer I'm finding myself enjoying flavoured iced tea.

Q2. When did you first begin your passion in your line of work?

It is tricky knowing whether your passion will translate into a successful business. Taking something you love and putting pressure on yourself to make a livelihood from it is not a decision you make lightly. After having my son, my perspective on work changed. If I was going to be leaving him to work it had to be for something that was meaningful and fulfilling to me.

My husband asked me, "If you could do anything, what would it be?" and I responded with "grazing tables". It was that moment of encouragement that gave me the confidence to take the leap of faith and start. I love how food brings family and friends together. It helps us connect with loved ones to create special shared moments.

Q3. How did you know that this will become your career?

Since becoming a mother and balancing a corporate career, building Stories to Gather has become the ultimate form of self-care for me. Stories to Gather is my creative outlet and has allowed me to focus on something that I'm truly passionate about.

Juggling all three is not easy! But being fortunate enough to have a space of my own to create, to collaborate and to connect with people has been amazing and incredibly fulfilling.

Q4. What are some strategies you adopt when you are feeling unmotivated?

I'm lucky to be surrounded by a network of other creatives that are constantly inspiring me to create and dream up new ideas, so motivation for me comes from these talented individuals.

Q5. Where do you look to find inspiration?

It's something that comes from various and at times unexpected sources, be it a soft colour palette, a seasonal fruit, the geometric pattern of marble, or the unmistakable curve on a Thonet Bentwood chair, proving that the creative process is anything but linear. People are also a source of inspiration to her. I'm fortunate to work closely with other creatives from floral artists to illustrators, which means the process is more of a conversation. This sort of inspires me more. I love this part of the process and the passion that we share.

Q6. What is something that people might be surprised to learn about you?

I'm an introvert and can be painfully shy!

Q7. What has been a challenge in running your business?

Juggling my corporate job, Stories to Gather, the new event space Casa and being a mother to my son and partner to my husband - its a lot, and I don't always get the mix right!

Q8. What has been the highlight of your business journey thus far?

My own personal growth in my vision and value, and the confidence I have found in myself as I have found my feet. It makes me a better person and mother as I feel fulfilled by having this added dimension to me.

I have had many pinch me moments, working in amazing spaces and creating beautiful events for some truly special people, many chances to collaborate with some inspiring creatives, and forming relationships with long term customers that I truly cherish. Repeat customers are, for me, the biggest compliment.

Q9. How would you describe yourself in a hashtag?

#minimalistmaximilist

Q10. What is something creative which you are wanting to learn?

The art of calligraphy.

Q11. What are your top three business learnings you would like to share?

Don't let YOU get in your own way. I was the one holding myself back for the fear of failure. Give it a go! You grow and learn and it's all the learnings that shape you and your lens on the world.

The creative and business process is not linear

You can't be everything to everyone, despite wearing many hats! Ask for help (and let go a little), and sometimes you need to learn to decline.

Q12. What is your vision and mission in work and in life?

My purpose has always been using food to bring people together; what I create often becomes part of my client's most treasured memories and I feel honoured that Stories to Gather allows me to do that everyday.

Q13. Who is your current muse/s?

For fashion it would be Courtney Grow

For business I would say my bookkeeper Bianca at Bee counting

And food I can't go past Gohar World

Q14. What would constitute a "perfect" day for you?

Slow days with family with a home cooked meal.

Q15. For what in your life do you feel most grateful?

Definitely my family.

Q16. What is your most treasured memory?

Moments with my family where we have had slow days together, a day at the beach or a weekend away.

Q17. If you could live anywhere, where would it be?

I would love to live in Japan. We recently visited and had a wonderful time. It would be a dream to live there for a period.

Q18. Do you have a treasured item in your life? Why is it significant to you?

We have a gold mirror that belonged to my husband's grandmother. He has such fond memories of her and whilst I didn't have the pleasure of knowing her I love that we have a reminder of her in our home and she has travelled with us from place to place.

Q19. Best advice you'd give your teenage self?

Enjoy the ride, it's going to be over before you know it!

Q20. Song you can listen to on repeat?

I am currently enjoying 'Sometimes' with Data & Earthgang.

Q21. Given the choice of anyone in the world, whom would you want as a dinner guest?

Being an introvert I'd much prefer my dinner guests to be my close friends and family - with whom I am already comfortable with.

Q22. Do you have any upcoming goals or projects you can share with us?

We are holding our annual Festive Market again this year and I have some exciting collaborations in the works that I am very excited about. The Festive Market will be on the 1-2nd of December in our event space Casa.

Q23. Your views on the importance of creativity in one's life?

Creativity gives me a self care outlet and opportunity. It balances me and grounds me. I believe a creative outlet can be a huge part of self care and self growth.

Q24. To conclude, what is your favourite flower/flowers? Why do you believe this flower/s most resonates with you?

Peony! I love the scent of the peony and how dramatically beautiful they are.

M E R C I

