



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?

I'm one of those rare people that doesn't drink coffee or tea!

Q2. When did you first start your career?

I've been an entrepreneur literally since I was a child selling popcorn with lemonade, putting on plays for the neighbourhood, making jewellery....the list goes on. I've been blessed with a colourful career in publishing, television, styling, product development and marketing Fleurs de Villes is a culmination of my life's work and of course with the help of my tireless and talented business partner Karen Marshall.

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

As we were both turning 50 we realized we had so much left to do. We have been able to turn our love of flowers into a luxury brand, creating the first global floral lifestyle brand.

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

It just takes one great conversation with a team member or partner to get me excited. Building a business is exhausting but also so rewarding and there always seems to be something in the works to surprise and delight us.

Q5. Where do you look to find inspiration?

I find inspiration in everything - colour, fashion, a garden, a vibrant city, a great meal or a pretty tablescape. On site at Fleurs de Villes, our florists and guests bring inspiration. At each of our shows, we walk amongst the displays and talk to the people who come to enjoy the show. Bringing exceptional florals to people around the world is one thing but actually talking to them during the experience and hearing the joy we are bringing is the most satisfying and inspiring part of our job.

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

I wanted to work in the foreign service and studied 4 languages.

Q7. What has been a challenge in your career?

Scaling. Creating a cool brand that resonates is the easy part (believe it or not!) The most challenging thing is growing above the \$2m mark in my opinion. That is when businesses typically need financing or to add a strategist that can help scale and finding both can be a challenge. Getting funding during covid and tough economic times is a challenge so it's forced entrepreneurs to be creative. I have always bootstrapped my businesses as far as possible to avoid having to bring in partners or investors but at a certain point it just becomes necessary to keep growing. Scaling a business is exciting but it's loaded with challenges.

Q8. What has been a highlight?

It was a highlight to walk outside our first Sydney show and see a huge long queue of people chomping at the bit to come inside. And when they did, I will never forget this one woman who came rushing up to me, and said "I'm just so excited right now I don't know what to look at first." She was genuinely overcome by all of the beautiful flowers. It was a fabulous visceral reaction.

Our show at Covent Garden in London was also definitely a highlight.

Q9. How would you describe yourself in a hashtag?

#busybusybusy

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

I would love to design home textiles. I've had an itch to design something for a while.....

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

- Trust your instincts
- Hire an accountant early to keep things organized and tracked
- No just means try something else: never hesitate to get your hands dirty, be tireless in your pursuit

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

To bring joy to people through flowers all over the world.

Q13. Who is your current muse/s?

There are so many. All our florists inspire us but my must watches are always Tulipina, Amie Bone, Brenna Quan.

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

Wake up early in a sunny location with fresh, cooler air, likely near an ocean. Going for a fantastic walk, a game of tennis or pickleball followed by a lovely outdoor breakfast. If my kids are around that would make any day "perfect." A little shop, picking up some gorgeous flowers of course, probably a massage (my favourite indulgence) and reading by a pool in the afternoon with my hubby. Wrap the day with a bevy of friends around the table for a fabulous dinner and probably some dancing when someone puts on some music that insists we get out of our seats.

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

I'm grateful for my family. My patient husband through my travel and tireless hours and my children who recognize my sacrifice, but also have learned so much watching it unfold.

Q16. What is your most treasured memory?

There are so many. With Fleurs de Villes my favourite memory was standing at our second Covent Garden show, being squished against the wall because it was so jammed with people that you could barely move. Talk about thrilling.

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

I'd love to live in France or Italy. I just love Europe.... And I could easily see myself living there!

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

My grandmother's silverware is my most prized possession. It's the most gorgeous set from Denmark and holds such special memories for me of literally hundreds of family dinners growing up.

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

Be tireless, show your grit, get your hands dirty and always over deliver..

Q20. Song you can listen to on repeat?

Anything Abba, Aretha Franklin or the Rolling Stones.

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

I have always been and continue to be a huge Martha Stewart fan. I would love to have dinner with Martha and I think it would be quite a hoot!

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

Watch this space! Fleurs de Villes has so many incredible things coming....

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

I think some people are ok without much creativity but I think it's essential to me. If I feel like I haven't been creating I feel restless. Sometimes I change the furniture around just because I need a different "feel." If you need it - you know!

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

That is like asking which is my favourite child. But if you insist, a complex yet elegant pale pink peony makes my heart sing.

M E R C I



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