



Sunshine Coast couple Jo Desmond and John Smeaton.

PHOTO: JOHN MCCUTCHEON

## STRAIGHT TALK

JUGGLING WORK DEMANDS WITH RAISING FOUR BOYS HAS RELATIONSHIP INFLUENCERS JO DESMOND AND JOHN SMEATON ON A BUSY SCHEDULE BUT THEY MAKE SURE THE FAMILY'S LINES OF COMMUNICATION ARE ALWAYS OPEN

WORDS: JOANNE WILSON

You'll be truly inspired by the example set by this week's interview with an incredible local couple. The stunning Jo Desmond co-anchors the Cairns, Townsville, Rockhampton and Toowoomba news editions for Channel 7. With her supportive and industrious husband John, they are true "Relationship Influencers". Their enviable lifestyle is not without its challenges, raising four amazing boys whilst juggling work demands.

**Jo, due to your high-profile role on Channel 7, you're considered a highly regarded Influencer. How did you come to be on our glorious Sunshine Coast in the first place?**

**Jo:** I began in the media industry when I was 17 and followed my ambition, moving

states to chase better job offers, until I met John. It was then I made a conscious decision to choose opportunities that were best for our family, not just my career. I admit, it was tested a few times when a high-profile job was thrown my way, but I have no regrets and it ultimately led me to where I am now.

An unexpected phone call offering me a job on the Sunshine Coast to co-present two new bulletins that were being launched, was a dream come true. We had always wanted to raise our kids on the coast. It was a "no-brainer". We packed up, with two kids in tow and moved here two weeks later. That was 15 years ago. I now read four bulletins each night. We pinch ourselves every day that we live in such an amazing place.

**How did you both meet and how**

**long have you been married?**

**John:** I was working in a nightclub in Townsville and saw Jo there one night. I thought she was beautiful and knew I needed to meet her. Luckily, a workmate knew Jo worked at the local television station. I sent flowers to introduce myself and asked her out to dinner. It's now coming up to 25 years since that dinner and 23 years being married.

**What is the highlight of your respective careers so far?**

**Jo:** I love the opportunity of being able to meet so many people from many different walks of life – from politicians, sport stars, to heroes and battlers. Each person has a message or story to tell and it's incredibly humbling to be able to share that with others.

**John:** I've loved being able to work for myself for the last 20 odd years. I've enjoyed many careers in building, home renovation, management, real estate, and with international aid companies. My most recent venture and most satisfying, is designing and custom-making furniture for our locally based business Hampton Chair Company, where I make Hamptons-inspired outdoor furniture that is shipped all over the country.

**I've admired you both for many years prioritising your four great sons yet seemingly calmly and ingeniously execute successful careers? Any secrets there?**

**John:** Our kids have always come first. We just fit everything around them. Our house is

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