

## Marcel Hemingway

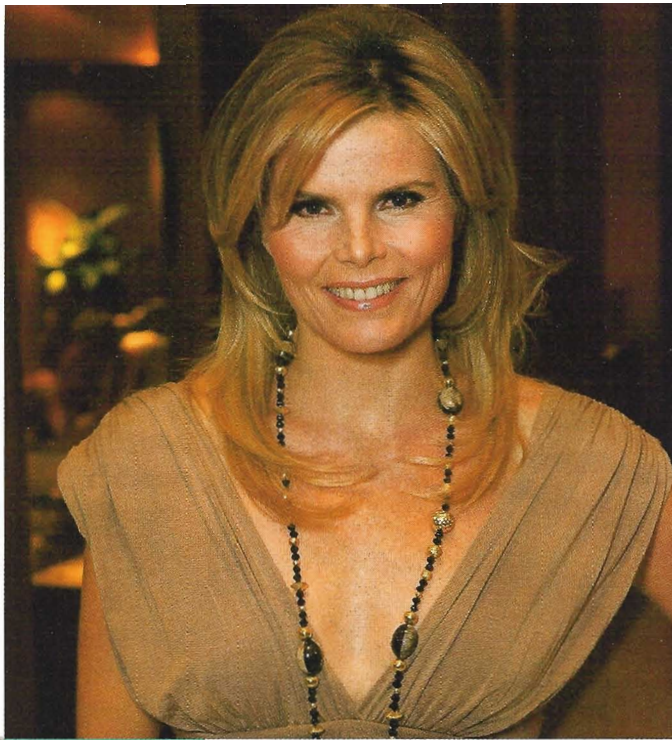
# 'I'VE FOCUSED ON LIVING A BALANCED LIFE'

Granddaughter of novelist Ernest Hemingway, Marcel hit the big screen 30 years ago in *Lipstick* and then *Manhattan*. Now 45, she talks about the secrets of her 23-year marriage, family tragedy and the importance of healthy living. By Robert Epstein

**When I did  
*Manhattan*,  
I thought the  
music was  
written for me.**

I was such an idiot – I lived in that self-centred world you live in until you're about 20. Then you start to realise it doesn't all revolve around you.

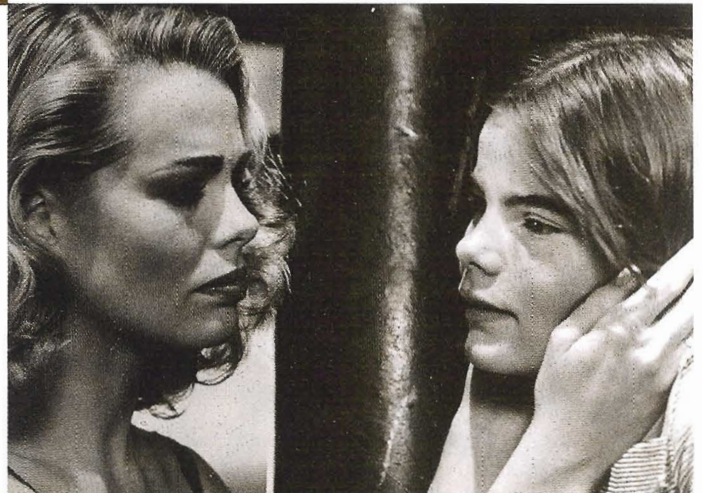




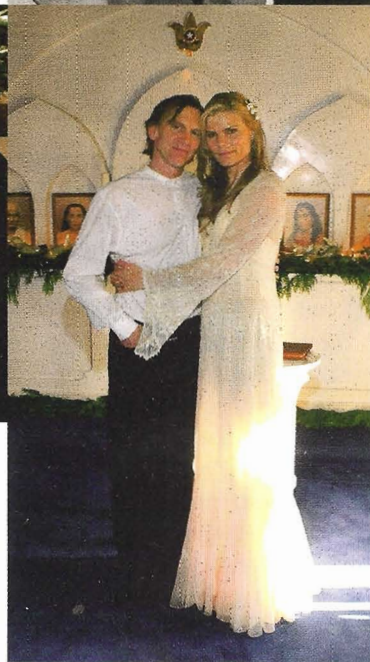
◀ I'm currently working on a film called *My Suicide*, where I play a terrible mother. The film is about a high school student who becomes wildly popular after he announces his upcoming suicide, and his mother is completely in denial about how bad a mum she is. The message of the film – that suicide is a much too permanent solution to a temporary problem – is extremely important. And the script has humour, so I think kids will pay attention. It's not a dry documentary; it's about a kid who's staging his own suicide and filming all of the steps leading to it. He's joking about his life and participating in his own 'death'. But then he learns about the reality of suicide. The interplay of his humour and the real pain of suicide is powerful. And it's a film teens will want to watch; it feels like it's made by a teen.

Clockwise from top: in Beverly Hills in 2007; in *Lipstick* with her sister Margaux in 1976; renewing her wedding vows with Steve Crisman at the Lake Shrine, Los Angeles in 2004; at a book signing with daughters Dree and Langley Crisman in 2007; with Woody Allen in *Manhattan* in 1979

▶ My sister Margaux and I grew closer towards the end. When she committed suicide, it was a surprise. It seemed as though she was doing well. It was hard on the family, especially on my dad. We were told by the coroners that it wasn't suicide, so when they said it was, we refused to believe it. It was four years ago that I admitted it to myself. It was important for me to come to terms with that, and to help get rid of the taboo about what suicide means. The more we talk about mental disorders, the more help people can get.



▲ Being with my kids is the most important job I'll ever have. We made a choice to live in the suburbs – it's been good for us not to be caught up in the Hollywood madness. My daughters are doing well. It's hard raising kids, but I have a lot of tools – meditation, yoga and a good diet – that have helped me. Parents who take care of themselves are good role models. If you can't take care of yourself, how can you take care of others?

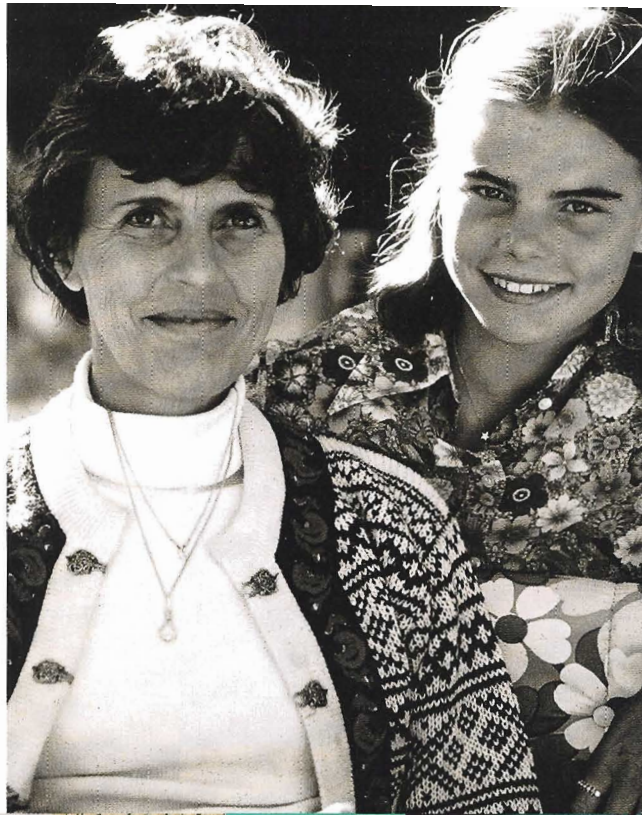


◀ My husband and I renewed our wedding vows in 2004, after 20 years of marriage. We renewed the feeling that life is sometimes hell at best, yet we're here, we're real, and all that matters is that I love you, even though I've hated you. It was very powerful.

## SELF PORTRAIT

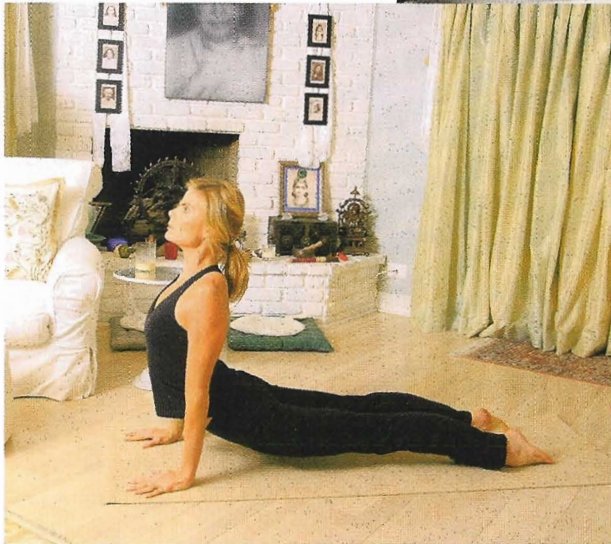
### ► I was close to my mother.

I was 12 when she got cancer, and I took care of her for several years. But it wasn't a problem – I loved her. And my parents loved me. But I have two older sisters, and by the time my parents got to me, they were tired. It wasn't that they didn't want to protect me, but when I was 16 and wanted to move to New York, they just said, 'Whatever – she can go, she's the good one.'



### ▼ My sisters were so much older than me.

I looked up to Muffet – she was my idol, so beautiful. Margaux was huge – the first model to get a million-dollar contract. She bore the brunt of a society that can't wait to make you a star, only to knock you off the pedestal. With both of my sisters, alcohol and drug abuse probably contributed to their mental illness.

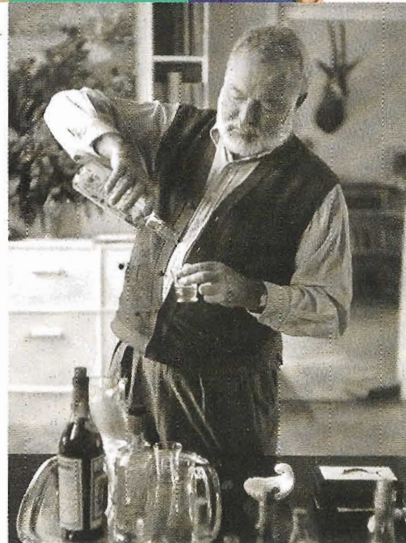


*Clockwise from top: with her mother Byra in 1976; Muffet, Margaux and Mariel with their father Jack Hemingway in 1986; Mariel's grandfather Ernest Hemingway at home in 1960; keeping fit and healthy at home in Los Angeles in 2006*



### ▲ I wrote my new book because I want to empower

people to take care of themselves. There's not just one diet or one exercise that works for everyone. I created a programme to help people figure out what works for them. How should people eat to satisfy their metabolic type? What sacred space in their home will nurture their sense of peace and calm? What kind of exercise will benefit them most? I use questionnaires to help people figure these things out. I also try to get people to focus on sustainable changes. Don't change your whole diet, change breakfast. Big changes are daunting, and they also turn your life upside down. No one can maintain that with ease. I think people really do want to be healthier, especially as they start to get a little older. When people start to make some changes, they realise they actually feel better, and that can create some momentum.



### ◀ My grandfather was a notoriously big drinker.

That was a big part of his image. Many people have told me how many drinks they had with my grandfather. There is a lot of mental instability and addiction in the family. That's why my focus has been on living a healthy, balanced life. I want to break this chain of bad habits, so I don't pass it on to my children.

*Mariel is author of 'Healthy Living From The Inside Out' (available at [www.amazon.co.uk](http://www.amazon.co.uk)).*