MASK's Dad Dialed In: Bret Michaels

Written by Arizona Foothills Magazine

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As a rock star, a life-long diabetic and, most importantly, a dad, my life is a constant balancing act. It's not easy to juggle everything, but I find a way because I want to. My career, my health and parenthood are the most important things in my life, and I work mindfully every single day to make sure I'm not just meeting my responsibilities, but also rising to the challenges as best I can.

It's no secret that the rock star lifestyle can take its toll if you let it. As a 25-year veteran of the music industry, I've done some partying in my day. But I have also seen people destroyed by the world of excess that comes with the music and the lifestyle, and I have taken that as a cautionary tale.

Moreover, as a lifelong diabetic, I've always had to prioritize my health. Heavy drinking has never been much of an option for me because, among the other destructive side effects of alcohol, as a Type 1 diabetic, it could literally kill me. I've triumphed over a lot of adversity health-wise, and I owe that to tenacity, clarity of values and priorities in my life, and a healthy respect for my body.

They say every cloud has a silver lining and that's certainly true with diabetes. Make no mistake, it is a serious health condition that I've battled all my life. But I am grateful that being a diabetic has forced me to learn how to prioritize my health. In a lot of ways, being a diabetic has saved my life. It has taught me, out of necessity, to maintain a healthy, balanced lifestyle despite the world of debauchery that being a rock star is associated with. For that, I'm thankful.

Becoming a father was also powerful motivation to prioritize my health. My two daughters, Raine and Jorja, are the biggest blessings in my life. I look at them and want to be there for them for as long as I possibly can be. This means living a clean, health-focused life, and these are values that I am passing down to them as well.

We are the definition of an active family—we ride dirt bikes together, play outside and I'm already teaching them the importance of exercise. Teaching your children to value their health is one of the first steps towards teaching them to avoid alcohol. Furthermore, being active together as a family opens the lines of communication. Riding bikes with my girls isn't just about exercise, it's about bonding, and that creates an honest, open line of communication for us to discuss things like alcohol.

Without dedication to a clean, healthy lifestyle, I wouldn't have accomplished a fraction of the things I have. From winning "Celebrity Apprentice" and creating my best-selling diet Snapple Trop-a-Rocka Tea as a way to give back to diabetes research, to triumphing over a myriad of medical issues, to being a devoted father—all of those things are possible because of the lifestyle that I lead. It enables me to focus on the things that truly matter in life. And that's a beautiful thing.