

What Kelly Ripa has learned about love

Kelly Ripa has never been shy about following her heart. Just look where it's led her: She's got three great kids, two fabulous jobs, and one very hot husband (who knows how to pen a sweet love note!). **Here, the petite powerhouse goes live with everything she knows about love...and sex...and more.**

by Michael Callahan • photographs by Jack Guy



“Do the catwalk!” someone yells from the audience. It's a commercial break during the 60-minute morning pajama party that is *Live With Regis and Kelly*, and the command from the woman in the second row sends Kelly Ripa right into action. Sometime during the past few years she's developed a shtick imitating fashion models parading down the runway. In a flash she begins clomping in her copper peep-toe heels across the front of the set, swiveling her hips and lifting her knees in a movement that's somewhere between a prance and a gallop. When she reaches the end of the stage, she pivots to face the studio audience, pouting in full-on Naomi Campbell (or is it Derek Zoolander?). The audience squeals in delight. “You like it, don't you?” she yells, sounding a little like a German dominatrix. “I want to be adored!” No problem there. Every day at 9 a.m., from the moment Regis Philbin, the toastmaster general of morning television, and his wisp of a first lady begin ▶

hosting another hour of what *Entertainment Weekly* once fittingly called “bright, airy, cloudless entertainment,” the Kelly-worship begins.

As any veteran *Live*-ophile knows, the host chat—the initial 15 minutes or so of the show where the cohosts banter back and forth—is often the program’s highlight, as Kelly lobs Regis’s verbal serves back across the net. Today, the topics ranged from the news that Oprah Winfrey was finally going to appear on *Late Show With David Letterman* (“She’s never done anything for us,” Kelly deadpanned) to Clay Aiken to which end of a turkey to stuff.

Perched on her stool in a flouncy peach top, slim-fitting pencil pants, and those copper heels, this 35-year-old mother of three (Michael, 8; Lola, 4; and Joaquin, 2) with two jobs (her other one is ABC’s sitcom *Hope & Faith*, now in its third season, where she plays a washed-up soap star wreaking havoc on Faith Ford’s perfect family) has seemingly endless energy. She is bubbly, bouncy, and impossibly tiny.

With Kelly’s willingness to be as silly as the situation demands (and sometimes more so!), she has become America’s goofy kid sister, and in the process helped cement *Live*’s place in the television pop culture landscape as *The Little Talk Show That Could*. In a word (or three), we love her.

Which is why we asked Kelly to talk about love: what she adores, what she knows about romance, and how she keeps things burning with that *en fuego* husband of hers, Mark Consuelos, 35, whom she met 11 years ago while their characters were suffering through their many travails on *All My Children*.

You’re going to love what she had to say.



on loving mark

(and Robert Wagner)

WHEN WAS THE FIRST TIME YOU FELL IN LOVE?

I fell in love with Robert Wagner on *Hart to Hart*. And I mean, *love*. To the point where he would do shower scenes and I would peek down the front of the television to see if he was really naked. And now he plays my father on the sitcom!

WHAT’S THE BIGGEST LESSON YOU’VE LEARNED ABOUT LOVE?

You can’t force it. It either happens or it doesn’t. And take your time because love happens about 15 times a day when you’re young. I always fell in love within three minutes. I would be like, “Guess what, everyone? I’m in love!” And everyone was like, “Yes, we know, we know.” I don’t think you can ever deny chemistry; I fell in love with Mark the day I met him. But I fell in love with physical Mark. I saw him and swooned. As I got to know him, I realized he was exactly like my dad. My dad was chivalrous and dapper. And Mark was, too. If I excused myself to go to the ladies’ room at a restaurant, he would stand and pull out my chair. The only other person I had ever seen do that was my dad.

WHEN DID YOU REALIZE YOU WERE IN LOVE WITH THE WHOLE MARK?

We were friends and spending a lot of time together. We were both dating other people. But we would have lunch during *All My Children* and talk about world events. He really took an interest in me. I had one ex-boyfriend who would talk and talk and never even say, “How are you?” Mark was very generous with his time and his heart and his interest. That meant a lot. About six months in, I thought, “We have to stop seeing these other people and start seeing each other.”

HOW DOES HE SHOW HE LOVES YOU?

He’s soooo romantic. He’ll send me a card on a Tuesday telling me that he’s

lucky to have me and thanking me for giving him such beautiful children. He does little things. Like, he knows that I love Christmas music, so from the day after Halloween, he’ll play Christmas music in the house.

HOW DO YOU SHOW YOU LOVE HIM?

I constantly tell him I love him. But men and women are different. Women want the big buildup. Men want to be touched. When we’re driving, he’ll do this. [*Looks to the side, nods her head to the right.*] That means, “You’re not running your fingers through my hair.” I’m not as thoughtfully romantic, but there are things I do for him that he loves. [*Smiles*] There are ways I show him. Ways that he likes. [*Smirks*] And I’m not saying another word.

SO WHAT DO WOMEN WANT?

To sleep more. [*Laughs*] How much depends on the woman, her age, how many children she has, and how many jobs she’s working. I get about five hours. On the weekends Mark lets me sleep in. “Sleeping in” means I get about an extra hour. But let me tell you, that extra hour makes all the difference.

WHAT’S THE BEST TIME OF DAY TO MAKE LOVE?

I prefer the end of the day/nighttime. The kids have gone to bed, we have



Kelly with handsome hubby Mark at a movie screening.



Kelly with 4-year-old Lola.

time to ourselves, time to play music and snuggle. Mark likes it first thing in the morning—he likes to wake up that way. I prefer not to have morning breath. So we compromise. If it's the weekend and the kids are taking a nap—we've gone somewhere and they've fallen asleep in the car—we'll gingerly carry them inside, put them in their beds, and have a nooner. Mom and Dad, please don't read this.

YOU'RE MARRIED! IT'S OKAY.

To your parents, you're never married.

WHAT IF THEY WERE HAVING THIS DISCUSSION? WOULDN'T YOU WANT TO LISTEN IN?

I would absolutely close the magazine. And perhaps burn it.

on lasting love

SO MANY CELEB MARRIAGES CRASH AND BURN. HOW DO YOU AND MARK AVOID ALL THE TRAPDOORS?

We've never been competitive. When I'm working, he's my biggest fan. And when he has to work, I cheer him on. Our priority is the kids.

WHAT DO YOU LOVE MOST ABOUT HAVING KIDS?

The sheer joy they bring you. It's unconditional love. And children are unspoiled by everything: their

**KELLY RIPA:
5 things
I ♥ about me**

1. I'm a very devoted parent. The kids come to work with us. Michael, who's 8, is the only one who understands that his parents don't have conventional jobs. At 4 and 2 years old, Lola and Joaquin believe that everyone does what I do for a living. They'll say, "What show is your mom on?"

2. I have big, wide feet so I never fall down. Wanna see? [*Slips out of her stilettos*] That's a triple E, baby. They're very Flintstonian.

3. I'm low maintenance. For example, I have no problem going without makeup. The only time I'll wear makeup in public is for an event. Like if I have to present an award and the person receiving it will be embarrassed if I'm not made up.

4. I'm empathetic. I get that from my parents. They believe in helping others out and being a decent human being. They're not materialistic, and they don't think that any of this celebrity stuff matters. My parents gave me a good foundation.

5. I have thick skin and a good sense of humor. I think that's all you really need in life.

surroundings, other people. They're just joyful, smaller people. People before they become jaded by life.

BUT LIFE CAN BE STRESSFUL. HOW DO YOU AND MARK HANDLE IT?

We fight, just like anyone. But in fights a little thing becomes a huge thing. Egos get involved and nobody wants to say they're sorry. I've apologized when it's not my fault. So has Mark. You do whatever to end the argument because, ultimately, it's not a big deal. Everybody's trying to establish their "I'm married, but we're independent people" thing: "That's my closet," or "I didn't realize you were a slob."

"Mark likes to make love first thing in the morning—he likes to wake up that way. I prefer not to have morning breath."

ARE YOU A SLOB?

Compared to Mark, I'm a slob. Compared to Mark, people in charge of hospital surgical stations are slobs.

DID YOU KNOW THAT ABOUT HIM BEFORE YOU GOT MARRIED?

Yeah. I kind of loved that about him. He was so neat and so well groomed.

DIDN'T YOU WONDER IF HE WAS GAY?

[Laughs] You would think. But he came from a military family, so they're very neat. Sometimes it does drive me crazy. Like when we go on vacation, he packs his suitcase and I pack my stuff and all the kids' stuff and he's like, "What's taking so long?" My favorite story is when we went to Hawaii. I asked Mark, "Did you pack the hairbrush?" And he said, "No. I don't use one." I go, "I don't use any of the stuff I packed! I don't use a diaper. I don't wear a 3T dress. So I should have left those behind!"

on loving bread—

and hating tabloid gossip

WHAT SECRET FOOD DO YOU LOVE?

I'm a carb junkie. Dean & DeLuca has this bread with prosciutto and cheese baked right inside. I can eat the whole thing.

Fashions come and go. But strong

odor protection with no white

marks is always in style. That's

why Secret Platinum Clear Gel

is clearly a keeper.

MY
SECRET™



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DO YOU GET TIRED OF THE WEIGHT THING? "IS SHE TOO THIN?"

Weight's never been my issue, no matter what I've weighed. When I was pregnant and gained 68 pounds and everyone said, "She's too heavy," that was not my issue. I understand the tabloids have to make a living writing this nonsense.

SPEAKING OF WHICH, I PICKED THIS UP. [THE NATIONAL ENQUIRER HAS AN UNFLATTERING PICTURE OF HER ON THE FRONT WITH THE HEADLINE, "EXCLUSIVE: KELLY RIPA OUT OF CONTROL! WEIGHT DROPS TO 98 LBS.; VICIOUS ATTACK ON REGIS"] APPARENTLY, YOU'RE OUT OF CONTROL!

[Laughs] I think this photo is from the show and I'm blowing out birthday candles. I haven't been 98 pounds since fourth grade! [She looks at the other headlines, including, "Camilla's Breakdown: I'll Never Be Loved Like Diana."]

DO YOU THINK YOU'LL EVER BE LOVED LIKE DIANA?

I don't think so. My weight's plunged and evidently I need counseling.

on loving regis,
laughter, and free stuff

WHAT DO YOU LOVE MOST ABOUT YOUR JOB?

The hours. I'm home most days by the time my kids are home from school. And I love the laughter. I can't imagine going to work and having to be serious for even five seconds. Regis makes me laugh every day—he's the world's greatest storyteller. And everything has the dark twist. He's like Charlie Brown—at the end of the story, everything will fall apart for him.

REGIS TEASES YOU ABOUT CLOSING IN ON 40. DO YOU EVER WORRY ABOUT THAT?

Even if you're your grandmother's age and have a certain amount of wisdom, you're still going to feel 20—emotionally, anyway. I'm at that age now where...well, first, it was



Playing with the boys: Kelly, Mark, and sons Michael, 8, and Joaquin, 2.

athletes. Athletes were always older than me, now I'm older than them. Then it was the musicians. Now I'm older than all the actors who come on our show. And recently, the most frightening trend of all: I'm starting to become older than the politicians, which is truly a horror festival.

WHAT'S THE FANCY PERK OF YOUR JOB THAT YOU LOVE THE MOST?

The occasional free handbag. Getting a free Marc Jacobs bag puts me in a good mood for six months.

TELEVISION IS A TOUGH BUSINESS. DO YOU EVER WORRY IT'S ALL GOING TO END?


I plan for the end of my job every day—both shows.

SOUNDS LIKE ONE OF REGIS'S STORIES.

It is. I always treat each day like it's my last day on air, my last day of having special treatment. That way you don't get spoiled, you don't expect anything, and you don't get ruined by the trappings.

ISN'T THAT A SOMBER WAY TO GO THROUGH LIFE?

No, it's realistic. I enjoy every second of my job. I love the talk show, I love the sitcom. But if it all ended tomorrow my life would not radically change. Job or no job, fancy perks or no fancy perks, doesn't really matter, because I've never really changed my lifestyle—and I really love my real life. **R**

 Go behind the scenes at Kelly's REDBOOK cover shoot at redbookmag.com.

GLOBE PHOTOS.