

2467

Q&A WITH MICHAEL KIRBY

Men's Health Magazine

The Hon. Michael Kirby AC CMG

MEN'S HEALTH MAGAZINE

LIFELINES Q & A

The Hon. Michael Kirby AC CMG

Most satisfying moment?

Trying to keep this decent, I would nominate 11 February 1969 when I first met my partner Johan. Alternatively, each time I have hot chocolate at Lindt in Martin Place, Sydney. Chocolate reproduces the feelings of love.

Early advice?

To be braver

Learned about women?

Women are kinder. They have to be. They generally pick up the pieces of disasters made by men.

Biggest mistake?

Silence on my sexuality. But that was how things were in those days. I learned to be a good actor.

Managing pressure?

Work harder but get a good sleep.

Getting ahead?

Thinking forward. Killing enemies with kindness. Being ready to admit mistakes.

Lowest point in life?

Departure of my first partner Demo. I got over it by meeting Johan two weeks later!

Greatest mentor?

Jonathan Mann, first head of the World Health Organisation Global Program on AIDS. He taught me the importance of an international approach to problems today and to keep up energy and enthusiasm in the face of adversity.

Learning about money?

It does not matter much. Love and companionship are priceless. If you fluke it and find them, everything else falls into place.

Personal shortcomings?

Too many to mention. I need to smell the roses more before I forget what they are.

Lesson from my family?

Always to forgive people when they say they are sorry. It rids the mind and body of bad vibes.

Life-changing experiences?

Meeting my grandmother's new husband, Jack Simpson, when I was aged 9. He was Treasurer of the Australian Communist Party. Everyone hated Communists. But he was a fine idealist. This made me sceptical of orthodox opinions and questioning of ignorant assumptions. It was a good start for later discovering my sexuality. Down with prejudice!
