

CATRIONA ROWNTREE

Following the successful launch of her beautiful book, *A Grandmother's Wisdom: Lessons learnt at my Nan's knee*, everyone's favourite intrepid Aussie traveller, Catriona Rowntree, is on the Gold Coast for a special appearance

I think I'd love to be Catriona. Not only has she travelled the world continuously for the past 18 years (what a dream), but she's managed a magic media career despite doubters, haters and those suffering tall-poppy syndrome who have tried to step in her way. She attributes much of her positivity and determination to what her nan taught her, and believes it's the power of just one person that can make a difference on our individual paths to achievement. Much more than just a *Getaway* reporter (although for me, that would have been enough), Catriona reinforced to me during our catch-up there are so many things in life to be grateful for, but be mindful to prioritise what's really important in the end – a key message of *A Grandmother's Wisdom*, which I found to be an interesting, charming and insightful read.

SB: Really lovely idea for a book; obviously this is dedicated to your own nan with whom you evidently shared a very special bond, but what sentiments do you hope to inspire in readers of this new release?

CR: I'm thrilled I've been able to honour my nan, and for my family's sake, that we've been able to create this keep-sake, even if just for my sons and nieces. I hope there's something in this book that speaks to all people. It doesn't just have to be a grand-parent relationship, but best friends, parents, siblings. It's about how you can do anything with faith shown to you from just one person. It's about how empowering it can be when you have someone in your corner who believes you can do anything.

SB: Do you think we take the importance of family for granted now (in our busy contemporary lives), or is that just a negative stereotype?

CR: I had someone ask me to do a speech once about how times have changed but I couldn't disagree more. I think it gets down to each and every individual and family. What I see happening in my family, is my mother-in-law has the most beautiful relationship with my children. I dare not crucify a whole new generation, I believe it's very personal. If you want a beautiful relationship it can be achieved, and it comes down to how much time and patience you want to put into a relationship.

SB: What did your nan think of your move into media?

CR: She knew I was a chatterbox as a child and encouraged me to get into speech and drama. She turned a blind-eye when I spent

most of my school afternoons in detention for talking. The natural progression was that one day I'd be paid for talking! It's a journey we enjoyed taking together. The only thing she didn't like was when I risked my life for stories.

SB: Which of her positive traits do you think have rubbed off on you?

CR: I hope it's being patient with other people, and listening to others' stories – not interrupting or one-upping them. My nan and I both love other people's company and learning their stories. I could see that anyone who came in my grandmother's midst walked away illuminated. She would focus on them, never judge. Everyone felt they were a better person for being in her company. A mantra I try to employ on a daily basis, when frustrated or if you feel like yelling, choose kindness.

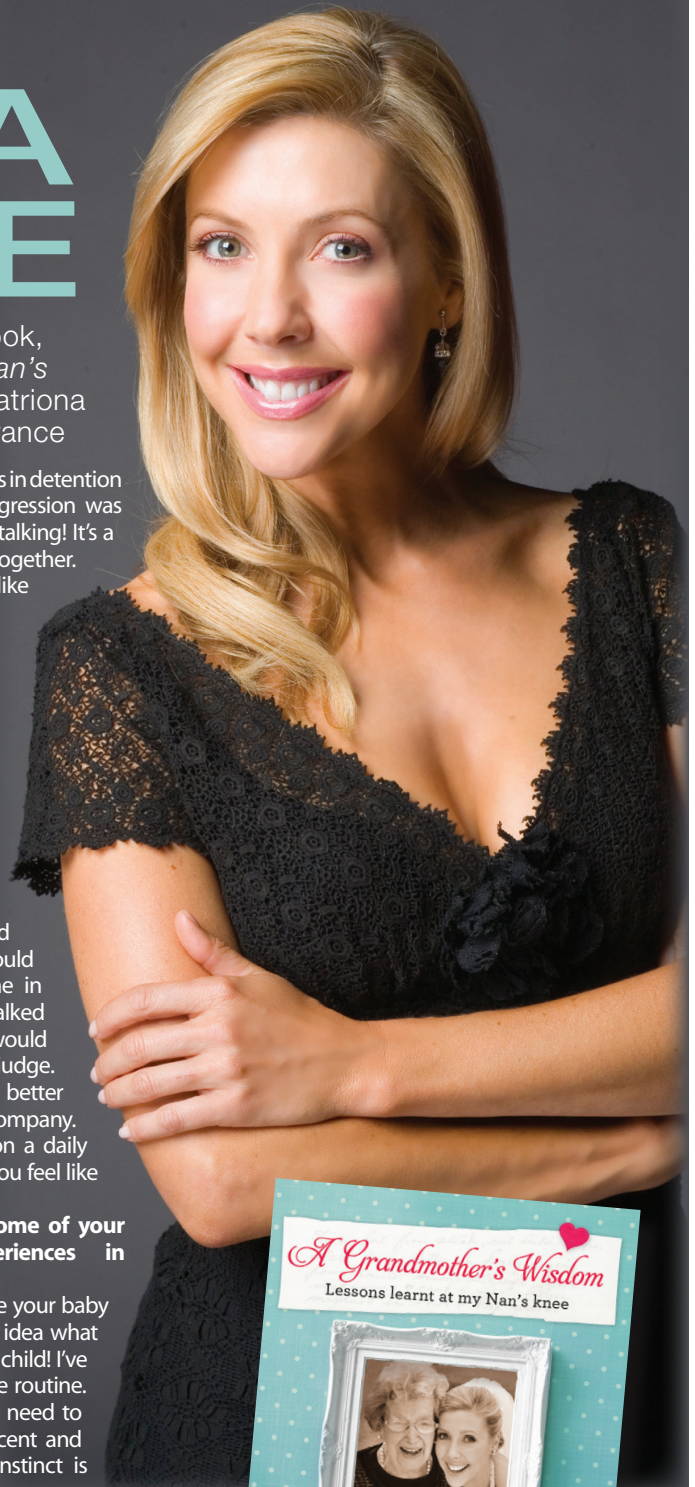
SB: What have been some of your biggest learning experiences in becoming a mum?

CR: You can never cuddle your baby too much. Everyone has no idea what they're doing with their first child! I've also learned that babies love routine. And, when on a plane they need to suck on something on descent and ascent! Finally, a mother's instinct is always right.

SB: What key message would you most like to spread throughout this book-launch campaign?

CR: From my travels I've met some extraordinary people across all levels of life and I've seen first-hand it doesn't matter how many trinkets you're able to accumulate, if you're going home alone or feeling lonely in yourself, none of it means anything. What's important is feeling that you're loved and you're contributing to the relationships around you.

A Grandmother's Wisdom (Allen & Unwin) is available from all good book retailers, RRP \$24.99; and you can catch Catriona on April 11 for the Gold Coast Women in Business



breakfast, 7am–9am, Versace Ballroom, tickets \$49.50 – book online stickytickets.com.au/10502. For more from this interview with Catriona, visit TravelLiveLearn.com where she shares secrets to successfully balancing hectic work, travel and family commitments, plus her favourite world destinations.