

Samantha Cowen joins Hot 91.9FM's breakfast show

By  Jessica Tennant

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Samantha Cowen, with over 20 years in breakfast radio, has made her comeback, joining Sasha Martinengo, John Walland and Simon Hill as of today, 1 August on Hot 91.9FM's breakfast show, weekdays from 6 to 9am.

Here, she shares her career journey, the unique challenges she's faced as a woman in radio and how she has overcome personal battles to get to where she is today...

❏ ***Congratulations on your appointment. How do you feel about working alongside Sasha Martinengo, John Walland and Simon Hill?***

I'm excited to join the team.

“ I've worked with John before so it's like having daily coffee with an old friend, albeit very early! ”

Everyone else has already made me feel very welcome.



❏ ***How do you feel about being the only woman in the team?***

It's a new face, a new woman with whom to shoot the breeze! I think we are all there for the same reason: to entertain listeners and play great music, and if that can also be a whole heap of fun, then we're all winning aren't we?

❏ ***What excites you most about Hot 91.9FM and where it's going?***

I love Hot 91.9FM because it's the music and presenters of my teens and twenties.

“ From bumper stickers to coffee mugs, it's wall-to-wall nostalgia, it's a refuge from bad news and pessimism, it's a space designed for the listeners to find fun and familiarity. ”

❏ ***Breakfast radio rocks! You get to start your day on a great high with great people, and you get to set that tone for everyone tuning in. What do you love most about your career in radio and breakfast radio in particular?***

❏ ***What did it take to get to where you are today, as a woman in radio?***

I think it's a series of things: being ready and willing to learn, having fantastic mentors, working with fluidity and good humour, and learning to stand up and speak up with very powerful personalities.

The secret to success? Four things: use your talent, pitch up on time, do what you say you'll do by when you say you'll do it and be nice to people. Do that and you can't lose, and that goes for any industry.



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❏ **Any specific challenges you've faced that you think were unique to you being female?**

“ I think having children was a challenge. It's one thing to get up early for work, it's another thing to get up early having been up all night, and despite all progress and a super supportive husband, it's still the main responsibility of the mom. ”

I missed a lot of their firsts because I was so desperate not be viewed as 'slacking off' or being a 'typical woman'. I wouldn't do that now.

❏ **What's going to be at the top of your to-do list in your new position?**

Learning where the coffee machine is and how it works!

❏ **Brilliant! What are you currently reading, watching or listening to for work?**

I listen to a lot of true crime podcasts and I have a book on the bedside table about hostage negotiation called *Never Split the Difference* by Chris Voss, and another one about the benefits of growing your own vegetables.

❏ **What motivated you to write your own book, *From Whiskey to Water*?**

This is a book I wouldn't have dared write a decade beforehand.

“ I have come so far through the tunnel of sobriety that the light at the end of it is no longer a bloody great train! ”

I wanted people to know that there is nothing you cannot come back from, if you want to. In a world where everything has to be perfect, and even failure needs a filter, this book is supposed to be that hand that holds yours in the dark and says, 'I get you'. It's painful and honest and funny with flashes of beauty; basically, like life itself.

❏ **What would you say to empower women battling with alcohol addiction?**

I'd like women to know there is no shame in asking for help. Every time I give a talk or a workshop I invite questions, and those that are asked in a public forum are a fraction of the amount that I get in the carpark as I'm leaving or in the bathroom, or on email afterwards; women don't want anyone to know they're asking. We're so ashamed of the stigma attached to being an alcoholic.

If it's all getting too much, ask for help. There are many places to get it, from groups to therapists to coaches. I coach people about managing their recovery, and, in my experience, everyone needs someone to listen.

❏ **Tell us something about yourself not generally known.**

I will always stop for a sunset. Can't get enough of them. Ordinary miracles every day. A sunset happens on its own time; it won't wait for you, but it won't rush either.



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■ ***This Women's Month, what is your word of encouragement to aspiring women in business or radio particular?***

“ Ask yourself who you would have to be in order to want to work with you. ”

When I'm not on air, I coach full time and it's a variation of a question I ask all my clients. There's no right or wrong answer, but on the days that you feel uncomfortable, insecure or held back in any way, by yourself or others, ask yourself that question: Who would I have to be to be proud of myself? When you know your worth, others can't help but see it.

ABOUT JESSICA TENNANT

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