

multitask like never before. While I've done it well, it's left me with less time for my loved ones—my husband and family. I work after-hours to make this happen. I get invited to functions and have to make appearances. I'm doing it because I have a personal interest and investment in this show, an emotional investment. I'm very confident as a producer; I come in under budget, I'm on time, I do my stuff, I know how to look at

the big picture. The sales stuff I've had to learn along the way. This has been an incredible learning process.

What's the best part of your job?

I'm fascinated by everybody. I love to hear *anybody's* story. People feel comfortable telling me about themselves. I often get people to cry on camera. I always come away with something I've learned. Making connections is the most meaningful part of this.

You've said, "I'm doing exactly what I want to do." What does that feel like? It's controlling your own destiny. I just gave up a whole year of paid work and I make good money! But when you're in control of the product—you took a little pearl of an idea and you're nurturing it—it really does feel amazing. It's like jumping off a cliff many, many times, but I really believe in risk-taking.

How did you get to LoveFM?

When WLIT cleaned house they showed me the door. I was unemployed for three and a half years and didn't think I'd ever go back into radio. I felt like a big loser but then I thought, 'This has happened to a lot of people. Just get back on the horse.' So I called LoveFM and they offered me this great opportunity to do middays. I didn't think jobs like this existed. I thought, 'I can drop the kids [twins, Shannon and Declan 8, and Matthew 5] off at school, come do my job, wrap up work and go pick them up. That's amazing! This is my shot!'

blow that out of the water! Every change takes about two weeks to adjust to, whether it's bedtimes or shopping schedules. Then there's the question of finding the balance between work and the kids. Time devoted to work takes time away from them. My kids are young, in that needy stage, and will be for a while. I'm just doing the best I can.

Is radio still a male-dominated field?

There are a lot of women in the business, although not as many as I would have hoped. When they talk about the great DJ's in Chicago, with the exception of Yvonne Daniels and Terry Hemmert, it's mostly guys. When they talk about the history of talk radio it's all the guys. There are some really great women in Chicago radio, but it's still mostly guys.

What have you learned from 'the guys'?

Men don't back down. They have an opinion, they stick with it. They're not expected to soft-peddle it. It's so ingrained in women to apologize for everything or to say, 'In my opinion,' or, 'This is just what I think.' I'm trying to let that go. Whether I agree or disagree, I love it when people, especially women, say, 'This is what I think,' and they don't back down.

So what's next for you?

In the corporate world nobody has a sense of job security these days, but I have a sense of employment security. I know there's always something I can do, and probably some things I don't even know about yet that'll present themselves. I've lived a charmed life; I was lucky to be in the right places at the right times. I'd like to think that some talent has played a part in that. I've got some ideas and luckily, here at LoveFM, they listen to ideas. When something works, why not go with it? Accept every

MEGAN REED

42, Midday On-Air Personality LoveFM

When did you know you wanted to be in radio?

I grew up listening to WLS and all through high school I knew that was what I wanted to do. When I got to Iowa State someone said, 'If you want to get on the air call the campus radio station.' So I just kept calling. I think they finally got tired of me and said, 'OK, come on in,' and things started falling into place.

What happened next?

After school I returned to Chicago, interned at WXRT, then took a part-time job at WAUR in Aurora. Three days after I started, the 7 to midnight jock threw a temper tantrum and they asked me to take his shift. I was 22. After three years of this I was still living with my parents, making under \$15,000 a year. I thought I'd go back to school and get an MBA, but I got a call from the program director at WLIT with an offer I couldn't refuse—I agreed to do the 7 to midnight shift. Six weeks later they put me on the afternoon drive. They wanted to do something different; it was 1989 and there weren't many women on drive time. My goal was to be on drive time by the time I was 25 and it happened. I was there for almost twelve years.

You're on the air from 10 AM to 2 PM. What goes into your show?

The first thing I do when I get up in the morning is read [Rob] Feder's column to see what's going on in the radio business. Then I look at newspapers and pop culture Web sites for tidbits I can glean. I always try to find things going on around the city, stuff in the tabloids, whatever anybody's talking about. I really love Chicago so I like to be as local as possible and find things that'll resonate

I love it when people, especially women, say, 'This is what I think,' and they don't back down.

with the audience.

You seem to have a handle on time management.

Now that we're into school I'm getting it, but the first big holiday will



PHOTO BY VEN SHERROD, WWW.VSPHOTO.COM

