

# 'Age does *NOT* define you'

Michaela Strachan tells us about being out in nature and flying the flag for older women

She may be turning 59 this April, but there is no slowing Michaela Strachan down. From *Springwatch* to *Dancing on Ice*, the TV presenter is determined that age will not hold her back.

Michaela, 58, feels incredibly lucky for the opportunities that come her way. Having started her career on children's television shows such as *Wide Awake Club* and *Wacaday*, the TV presenter is now known for her work on wildlife shows, including *Winterwatch*.

However, Michaela took on one of her greatest challenges at the start of 2025, swapping her welly boots for sequins to appear on *Dancing on Ice*. When asked about her ice rink success, Michaela says, '*Dancing on Ice* was completely, wonderfully absurd. Who thought it was a good idea to put boots with sharp blades on and skate around a hard surface? The human species is quite potty. The show was my bubble of joy. It was so colourful and fun, and I think something like that in a world that is full of heartache and trauma is wonderful.'

Michaela, who was diagnosed with breast cancer in 2014 and made a full recovery following a double mastectomy, hopes her time on the ITV show, where she reached the final, has inspired others to embrace life. 'I want to fly the flag for the older woman,' she explains. 'Age does not and should not define you. I hope I am an inspiration for people to try something new.'

Her advice for anyone feeling nervous about stepping out of their comfort zone? 'The first day is always the hardest. Commit to it and push yourself.'

For Michaela, the show came at the perfect time. Her son Oliver, 18, who she shares with long-term partner Nick Chevallier, recently left home. She is also a proud stepmother to Nick's three adult children from a previous marriage: Jade, 37, and twins Tom and Sam, 33.

Revealing that she has embraced this new chapter of her life, Michaela shares, 'My son left to go to university last year, and I could have been an empty nester at home, feeling sorry for myself. Instead, here I am, living and loving it. Your children do end up defining you, and your life revolves around them. Then they grow up, and you suddenly get time to pursue all the things you couldn't do before because you were busy running them to football or dancing.'

Away from the ice rink, Michaela can be found soaking in the wonders of the natural world. However, the outdoors wasn't always her path in life. The star grew up in Hinchley Wood, Surrey, with her parents, Ian and Josephine, and her older brother, Gary. Her early years were spent in more glamorous settings, having studied musical theatre at college.

Now, Michaela is perhaps most known for her role on BBC's nature



Michaela and partner Nick share a love for nature

series *Springwatch*, which she has presented since 2009. Opening up about the show, Michaela smiles,

'Not only do we have a family that make the show, but we have a family of viewers that watch it. They seem to be a really loyal audience that look forward to it.'

'I love the storytelling side of *Springwatch*,' she adds, 'and what is so good is that we encourage people to get involved. People watch some wildlife programmes and don't know how to help. We might have rhinos being poached in South Africa, but what can the average person do? If we have a problem, we encourage people to get involved. Right now, a big focus is making sure we're washing our bird feeders to stop disease spreading. I think our viewers appreciate the empowerment that we give them to help the wildlife that they love.'

Alongside getting up close with nature, *Springwatch*, which returns to our screens next month,

gives Michaela the chance to explore our beautiful nation. Sharing her favourite spot to visit in the UK, Michaela says, 'My happy place these days is a mountain. I love Yr Wyddfa (previously known as Snowdon).'

However, Michaela is now more likely to be found on sunnier hikes. In 2002, she relocated to Cape Town, South Africa. She shares, 'Table Mountain is my local mountain back home in Cape Town, and I spend a lot of time hiking around it. I feel very at peace when I do that. My friends and I don't go out for lunch very often. We'd rather go on a hike up the mountain and chat.'

And nature-loving Michaela has one message she hopes the world will listen to. 'We have to respect nature and realise that it is part of us. We are, and should be, a species within a species, rather than being so arrogant about dominating everything – sometimes at the cost of losing it. If we can change that attitude in our brains, it would be an enormous step.'

'We have to respect nature'

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Her *Dancing on Ice* partner was Scottish skater, Mark Hanretty

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