

NEW ARRIVAL, NEW START

Having babies and taking the plunge career-wise just aren't compatible, right? Wrong. Lizzie Gore-Grimes meets four people who found parenthood showed them what they really wanted in their working lives. Photographs by Mark Condren

EVERYONE knows about the sleepless nights that new parents experience. It's possibly one of the hardest things to adapt to. But there is

something about sitting on the sofa, in the middle of the night, with a feeding baby in your arms, that makes you think about this tiny new life in front of you, you think about how precious life is and how you don't want to waste a minute of it. For a lot of new parents this is a time that compels them to take stock of where they are and gives them the courage to change.

The urge might be to clean the house and get healthy, while others experience an epiphany of their own for their own parents' example to act on it - but all will feel an almost painful need to protect this new life. You are hit with the enormous responsibility of being a parent, with all the details. With perspective gained many people realise more from their lives. They are able to spend as much time as they want with their families, but still feel them and feel satisfied - not just by what they do, but by what they are. Not at all. We meet four people who have



Isabelle Coyle

Portrait and wedding photographer

HAVING worked as a portrait photographer for Photogenic Studios in Dalkey, Co Dublin, for three years, Isabelle Coyle (32) decided to go out on her own after her daughter Freya was born last June. "I didn't want to have my baby in full-time care during the week," explains Isabelle. "I decided to take the risk to go out on my own so that I could be more flexible with my time. I always wanted to work for myself and during my maternity leave I realised that I had to grab the opportunity now or never. So I invested in a mobile studio and I now travel to people's homes to photograph them. I love photographing children and I think it works really well to photograph them at home, when they are relaxed and at ease and I can get great shots of them playing with their favourite toys, out in the garden with their parents or eating a bowl of cereal - we can play and experiment. It's added a new dimension to my work now that I can bring my experience as a mum to bear.

"Having a child has changed the focus of my career in another way too. Once I became a parent I felt a much stronger drive to be successful. My husband runs his own business too, Arborist Tree Services, and so I felt we both had to work harder than ever to ensure the future for our fledgling family. We have number two due in a few weeks!

"It's not easy being a working mum. But for my own mental health it has been important for me to maintain a place for work in my life. I'm passionate about what I do and I would really miss it if I couldn't do it."

HOW ISABELLE DID IT...

"The first thing I did was invest in a good website. As photography is a visual medium I knew that a strong website was going to be imperative to my business. I get about 65% of my jobs through the website, so it is crucial to the business.

"I had invested in equipment over the years while I was on a salary so that really helped to have that side of things sorted. I did all the red-tape stuff of registering my company and all that through the internet and found it surprisingly painless. I manage my own accounts and leave most of my marketing to word of mouth which is working very well for me at the moment."

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