

As a kid did you ever want to just 'run away' and join the circus? - Well that's pretty much what **Gai Weaber-Buchal** did.

But this was no ordinary circus. This was the famous '**Ashton's Circus**' !

We met Gai in Hervey Bay QLD on one of her stopovers while she's travelling Australia by herself in a mobile home, Gai is not only funny, she has a unique way of telling her story we know you'll enjoy.

Listen to the **Podcast** below or check out our '**Podcast with Pictures**' for some unique images!

Prefer to read? [Full Transcript here](#)

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Some images in this video (c) <https://infamous.net.au/>

TRANSCRIPT:

INTRO:

In the two years we've (Kaye & Brian) been full-time on the road we've met & chatted with four lovely solo females travelling around this great country of ours. We recently got chatting with one of those on her stopover in Hervey Bay QLD and discovered she had an amazing story to tell! The following is a transcript of our chat. You can also listen to the audio only version or watch our podcast with pictures.

BRIAN:

Gai. Welcome to **My Life My Story .. Bloggers!** - Tell us your life story in the next, you know,

30 seconds.

GAI:

I was born on the North Shore, finished school and ran away and joined the circus.

KAYE:

Why?

GAI:

Because I could! And I was always looking for adventures. I wasn't a wild child but if anyone was in a tree, it was me.

BRIAN:

You come across as a bit of a wild child!!

GAI:

No, but anyway,... I joined the circus and ended up falling in love with the catcher on the flying Trapeze... as you do! And of course, we were together for 46 years.

KAYE:

Yeah, obviously you got around in tights and things like that. But how did your family react to you falling in love with the catcher in the circus?

GAI:

Well, my mum wasn't very pleased. I took off and dad said, "**don't worry, she'll be home in three months...**" Well it was seven years later. Married and pregnant, as you do. But as soon as they got a sniff that I had met someone I really liked, they jumped in the car one night from Sydney, drove all the way through the Hay Plains all the way to Adelaide, non-stop to check him out.

KAYE:

He clearly passed master.

GAI:

No, he didn't. And his mother actually sidled up to my mother and said, "**oh... they'll marry you know.**"

And my mother, being from the North Shore, said "**over my dead body!**", which we always knew that story. but she didn't think we did. And on her death bed sort of thing, she confessed to my husband that she'd been really horrible.

But it took her a long time to address the fact that I had married a circus guy and she wasn't really pleased about it at all. But he was just a brilliant husband. Brilliant dad. He never set a foot wrong.

When we left the circus eventually he went and joined the police force. He did a lot of things in

the police force. Then we owned businesses and things like that. And then he was with the Star Casino for 15 years as their top investigator.

And, you know, so he was a good bloke. But it wasn't till she was dying, she decided, well, he's been all right, really.

KAYE:

How extraordinary! So I don't know how many were in your family, whether you are the only wild child?

But you know... what prompted it? Was there any particular thing that made you just get up & go?

GAI:

I didn't want that lifestyle... Look, I think they'd been very, very strict, and I think I got to the stage I just wanted out. I'd actually won a scholarship to Teachers College and I said I don't want it. I couldn't cope with studying any more. And because I had actually been on a sheep farm and done a lot of those sorts of things as a child with friends, they (the Circus) had a governance.

Well, to me, that was the best job ever. So the first job that comes along was governance with the circus. So that's where I went from there. And it was **Ashton's Circus**. My husband is an Ashton. So we went from there.

KAYE:

Is that the same Ashton Circus that goes to New Zealand?

GAI:

Yes.

KAYE:

Well, I might have met your husband because many many moons ago... as a reporter in New Zealand I did a feature on the Ashton Circus in Dunedin.

GAI:

Okay - we left from Dunedin but we were there with the '**Clown Who Lost His Circus**' (Pantomime) and we actually got engaged in Wellington. We did the three months over there with the Pantomime and then they decided to extend. So we said, we've got to go back. We can't stay any longer. I won't go into the nitty gritty.

But anyway, we persevered and we got our airfares back and we went back, picked up our van and our truck, and we went and then joined Sole Brothers Circus.

KAYE:

Good on you! You're not going into the nitty gritty and you don't have to. But can you hint what the problem?

GAI:

Financially we couldn't afford to stay in New Zealand. New Zealand dollars didn't equate to what we were paying off in Australia in Australian dollars and we were just a young couple early 20's, plus, Jim's parents had gone to Sole Brothers Circus and so his mum, dad and brother were there. So we took that opportunity, and for us, it was another couple of years with another family and everything.

But we weren't popular because we were family leaving family, but we had to do it.

KAYE:

It's a very interesting thing talking about family because sometimes... family can be right royal pains, as we know!

BRIAN:

Royal being the operative word at the moment eh?

GAI:

And a lot of people are a little bit nervous about circus families.

KAYE:

Oh I know!... there's a derogatory comment – '**Carnies**' - Did you ever get that from people?

GAI:

Completely different people. And the show people that do all the showgrounds, they hate that word. And they're very hard working people and we still have through my husband, relatives that work those shows as well. Now, they've just spent all that money taking everything to the Territory, (NT) and they've cancelled all their shows. Now, can you imagine the amount of diesel and the hours of driving to get up there to have everything cancelled?!!

But no, they hate that word Carnies... and they are showmen. And they are one of the hardest workers I've ever come across.

BRIAN:

Yea and they're very professional. It's a little bit like Gypsies. And Nomads, you know? We work!

GAI:

Back to Jim's family.

I'm introduced to everybody as a cousin. And that's it. It can only have that little drop in you and my children that are third and fourth cousins, no matter what they're treated royally. You are cousins.

And the communication, the love and support that we've had, especially what I've had from

them lately.

I mean, I've just spent a week in the Gold Coast 'on the lot' (Showground) again with them at ['Infamous'](#).

I'm glad I didn't have to wear what they wear!! but anyway, it was great to be there!

KAYE:

I'm sorry. I don't know what you're saying. Can you explain?

GAI:

Infamous?... You haven't seen the show? Peppy Ashton. He's the grandson of Duggy and Phyllis right? And as the family grew bigger, the show wasn't big enough anymore to accommodate and be financial for all the families. So he took off over to Western Australia and started his own show.

And he travelled around as Joseph Ashton Circus. And it was starting to get a little bit... not mundane because he's acts are brilliant! - Everything about them is just top notch, five star. But they've now gone into the cabaret side of it. You have to be 18 plus. At least ! it's a completely new take.

It's a brilliant show, though. You still have all your circus acts, the beautiful choreography you've got, the little dances and topless and all sorts of things.

BRIAN:

Where can I see this show? (Laughter)

GAI:

Yes, it's on the Gold Coast, but it's just a brilliant show. And 10 out of 10 for them to pick a niche that is warranted. They weren't allowed to have their animals anymore, so they had to find another avenue. And this is what they've done. They've got a full operational bar. You can take your wine in, there's table service. The costumes, beautiful music.

KAYE:

Fantastic! It's Theatre, isn't it?

GAI:

That's what it is, plus the extras. But it's great. But I stayed with them and I was in there every night watching, and I love it. And I just felt at home. And that's what they're still like. And they'd say... "you can't go yet?" and I said "Well, I have to go."...then "Well, make sure you stay on the way back.

They're just ... they're family. And that's it. ?