



SO THEY WANT TO BE... AN ACTOR

Q&A with actor Lois Robbins. BY MELONY TEAGUE

APART FROM BEING AN ACCOMPLISHED ACTRESS HERSELF, both on stage and on screen, Lois Robbins has raised two daughters who are both in the music industry business. One is a singer/songwriter and the other works in artist relations with Scooter Braun, who manages Justin Bieber. Her son, meanwhile, is a history major. Robbins' advice to parents whose kids want to get into the biz: Know your kids well.

How can parents encourage their children in the entertainment industry?

I told my children from birth, "You need to follow your dreams." Because, if you don't have dreams, you have nightmares. I really feel that it is our job as parents to help our children to wake up in the morning and be happy where they are going. I have very grounded, ambitious children and I think part of that is because I have always said that they are not on my journey; they are on their journey.

What did you wish you had known before going into acting?

I have learned that you have to be the CEO of your own career. I was working pretty early on. I did not realize that I had to get a PR team behind me, like I have now. It is a business that is all about momentum and I wish that I had understood that.

How can parents support their teens' dreams?

When I was doing a guest shot on *Sex and the City* in the first season, I asked Sarah Jessica Parker about that because my eldest daughter was expressing an interest in wanting to be an actor. Sarah said, "If she wants to do that, only let her do theatre [acting] because theatre teaches you a work ethic and you will know very quickly whether or not she has got what it takes." I thought that was really great advice because doing TV and film can be glamorous. Theatre is exciting, but does lack glamour to a degree. Being in sweaty rehearsal rooms and the back side of the theatre is not as exciting as the stage part of the theatre. I think work ethic is important especially if you are going to have longevity in the business.

What are the rewards?

I'm passionate about what I do.



An accomplished actress, Lois Robbins is best known for her roles on daytime television including "One Life to Live," "Loving," "Ryan's Hope" and "All My Children." Her additional television credits include appearances in "Sex and the City," "Law & Order," "Kingpin" and "Once And Again."

I get excited creating a character and building a character and it is very rewarding especially when you are doing theatre. You know you are touching people in a very immediate way. I love the actual rehearsal process almost more than I enjoy performing, unless I am doing theatre. I love building up a character and the excitement of rehearsal...you learn new things everyday. I love that about my work. It is the same with film, but you don't live with the characters as long.

What is the biggest challenge in acting?

Well, certainly, as we get older, there are less roles for women ►

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of a certain age, although that is changing for the better. There are just so many people that want to do this but there is much less opportunity because there are fewer films being made every year. I walk into an audition as if I already have the role. I am not competing against anyone but myself. Just do your best work because you are auditioning for a role. So if you are not 100 per cent right for that role, as long as you have done a good job, they will bring you in for something else. Getting in the [audition] room is your greatest challenge.

What is your advice about study at a post-secondary level?

There is great benefit to enrolling in one of the great acting programs because the connections you'll make there and the experience that you will get will be invaluable. Jack Falahee (*Blowtorch*) is now on *How to Get Away with Murder*. He was right out of NYU: TISHC and started working right away, because you are really well-prepared when you come from a program like that. If you audition for a program like that, you'll see the wealth of talent out there. You are also challenging yourself, because only the best get into these programs. It is important for kids to be kids, so a college experience is just wonderful to have as an opportunity to grow and learn and figure out who you are.

Should parents encourage a back-up plan?

I told all my kids to have basic accounting but I never suggested a back-up plan. My children are extremely hard-working; my youngest daughter was very clear as to what her path was, and I have no

doubt that she is going to be very successful. So, no. At this point there is no back-up plan, as long as I see that whatever plan they have is a viable plan and that they are working hard at it.

How did your own life experience as a mother help you play Ann Willis in *Blowtorch*?

I remember when I gave birth to my first child. I was holding her in the hospital, tears were coming down my face. I remember calling my mom and saying, "Oh my goodness, I can't believe there is somebody in the world that loves me this much!" That was so overwhelming to me, and the experience of raising children and loving them as much as I do, the horrible thought of ever losing a child—I could tap into that very easily. I am not sure I could have done that if I wasn't a mom.

What are you working on now?

I just finished writing a television pilot. I am hoping that it gets picked up and turned into a TV series. ■