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Taija Sparkman • Oct. 29, 2013

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Lord of the Rings.

How did you get into the accounting profession?

I originally wanted to go to school to be a pharmacist when I graduated from high school. I took my first accounting class in community college and just started doing extra homework because I really liked it. Even though I love to read, I could never be a writer. You have to be really disciplined to be a writer and I don't think I am. A lot of people think of writing as something that you just sit down and do, but you have to really work at it. I will never sit down and just write; I'm more of a deadline writer. If I had to write a novel, I would have to have a deadline or it would never ever get done.

How do you like to spend your time away from work?

I go mountain biking a lot, read a lot of books (any kind, I will read anything), watch Law & Order and play with the kids and Legos. Lots of Legos.

Do you travel any?

We go on vacation a little bit, but we mostly just hang out and play in our backyard or go for walks. We go to the beach in the summer and to Northern Michigan a couple times a year. We also go to Florida every year for Christmas.

Are you involved in any sports or other activities?

I'm not good at sports – I literally don't play any sports whatsoever. Now biking, you don't have to be very coordinated to do that. It's really good to clear your mind. I can just listen to music or a podcast and not really have to concentrate. I just do it. It's the same for me with Law & Order. It's junk food for my brain. I get really excited whenever I catch an old school original Law & Order episode. I even refer to Stabler and Benson as friends. I also read a lot. When I'm reading, I am just completely oblivious to my surroundings.

What's your favorite book?

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The last book I read is The Pumpkin Plan. I'm not a huge self-help book fan, but this isn't your typical dry, boring book. It's really good.

What ONE piece of technology could you absolutely not live without? Why?

My iPhone. Dawn [Brolin] will tell you that I haven't had it surgically attached to my body, yet. My kids are in the upgrade cycle too. My son has my iPhone 3G S and my daughter has my iPhone 4. We also have my husband's old one that's literally just sitting around playing nothing but Pandora. My son uses the 3G S just for playing games and the iPhone 4 lets my daughter FaceTime and iMessage family and play games.

Do you have a tablet?

I have the new iPad and husband has the 1st Gen iPad. I also have a MacBook Air, so I use my iPad as a second monitor for work a lot. However, as gadgety as I am, I like to read physical books. I have an entire trophy wall of books. I don't like reading on gadgets. I have this horrible habit of flipping pages while I'm reading and there are no pages to flip on eBooks.

What is your favorite mobile app, and why?

I have a new one and it's so nerdy. It's for Google Analytics and it's called QuickLytics. It basically gives me all the Google analytics for the various webpages we have. The app is just a bunch of stats, but I go on it a lot. I also use the Reddit app. I don't ever comment on it. I just read through the app, but I'm so addicted. My husband downloaded it. We have the same iTunes account and my iPhone is set to automatically download anything that's purchased.

How do you manage your work/life balance?

My personal and work life are both kind of intertwined. I don't really ever "not" work. My phone is always there. Sometimes the kids might be doing their own thing,

but I always stay up on email. When you have little kids, you can't keep work and life

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