

“It’s never easy giving someone a diagnosis of cancer. It’s even more difficult when they’re young with a young family of their own.”

reward. As silly as it may sound, it’s this ‘inner core’ that gives us our magnetic field, protects us from harm, and gives us strength of solace.”

Robin and Kevin have six grown-up children and seven “grandbabies”, as she calls them. While she could be forgiven for retiring to enjoy the next phase of her life, instead she balances the two practices and the love for her family on her petite shoulders.

I ask Robin how she managed to raise six kids, varying in age from 36 to 20, and she explains that three are hers, two are from her second husband Kevin’s former marriage, and one is “theirs”. She says people often catch her out on a technicality that “she didn’t have six kids”, but she is quick to say “but seriously, which ones would you give back?”

How does she manage it all?

“One of my biggest challenges was, and still remains, balancing my personal and professional lives. As much as we think we’re ‘superwoman’, eventually there comes a time where ‘balance’ is essential. You can still have the lot, but within reason. It’s not realistic to think we can give full capacity to taking care of the home, the kids, the husband, community, work and not to forget, ourselves.”

Robin makes perfect sense – a lesson for women everywhere. “You have to come to terms that it’s not a competition, and when you look at it, a compromise isn’t a sense of failure. Just because you are compromising, doesn’t mean you aren’t giving it your all with the time that you do have.”

I wonder about Robin’s life to date, her journey. How did she end up in the Tropical North running a specialist centre and fighting the good fight against breast cancer?

“My whole life has been a balancing act. If it’s not plan A, then plan B comes into play. I wanted to go to university and become a doctor. But, what happened was a nice touch of reality. I got married, started uni, and soon found out we were going to have children. By the time I was 21, I had three young children. I couldn’t do a full load of uni [subjects], so I took a few courses each semester. When all the kids were back at school, I finished my Bachelor of Science in nursing.”

It’s clear Robin is a nurturer, a caregiver – a nurse by trade, a mother by nature.

“While working full time and taking care of the home and kids, I decided to continue at uni with my Masters in nursing. It was an opportunity that could not be passed.” It’s at this point her first marriage ended.

“Relationships change but as one chapter of my life ended another began. It was a challenging time as I was raising the kids and working full time at the hospital. My solace was that my mother and grandmother were there.

“The days I had off were at uni, and every other weekend I was working as a nurse. But it was my choice and I needed to do it that way. Everyone is different but that doesn’t mean you can’t achieve certain goals. You can have the things that are important to you, but it’s a matter of priority and balancing your life to make things happen.”

After completing her Master’s degree, Robin was drawn to France for a holiday. She wasn’t sure why, she just knew she had to go. It was here she met Kevin – what ensued was a fairytale romance.

Following her chance meeting with this charming

Australian, the couple exchanged faxes and telephone calls – as well as the news they both had previous marriages and children. Robin recalls her mother being wary of someone so far away, so when she visited Kevin in Australia, she took home stationery to prove to her mum “he was who he said he was”.

Soon after, they married, and Robin relocated to sunny Cairns, the perfect place to raise their Brady Bunch-like family.

A few years on, Robin was encouraged by her husband to further her love of study and become a lawyer. “I topped the class in contract law.” Again, Robin impresses me. But she has done it all looking after herself along the way.

“For me, taking care of myself comes in many ways: body, mind and spirit.”

Body? Tick. Robin is like a vision from a New York runway – impeccably groomed. So, how does she maintain ‘that’ body? “A good diet, sufficient rest, exercise, and all the necessary yearly check-ups that most of us tend to avoid,” she tells me.

Mind? Tick. She gains so much inner worth by fuelling her brain with information – hence her tertiary study in law and science (nursing). “Education is the key to empowering women. It’s the key to independence and sovereignty. It’s something that no one can take from you, yet, if used correctly, can lead you to an unimaginable plateau,” Robin explains.

Spirit? Tick. Her office boasts an obvious theme of ‘hands’ in both paintings and decorative items strategically placed around the room. These hands are known as ‘Chamsa’, a symbol of power, good health, fortune and a protective hand known to draw upon positive energies. She tells me that, “Growing up it was in my households, and it gets rid of the evil eye.”

And this isn’t the only creative side to her somewhat eclectic office. Her walls are adorned in colourful artwork, many of which have been created by her family – several of her children are artistically gifted, it seems. She also has an appreciation of religious artwork and artefacts.

One key piece is an abstract of the ‘Ten Commandments’ by Australian artist, Victor Majzner. She also has several pieces of Aboriginal, Native American and Indian works on her walls – each with a special meaning or distinct link to the work she does.

Her love for art is up there with her passion for cooking and fine food. Robin is part of an international gastronomic club that originated in France in 1248 called the ‘Chaine des Rotisseurs’. The Cairns chapter of the club started 21 years ago, with a group of friends coming together over a mutual enjoyment of good food and wine.

To add to her already cluttered to do list, Robin is considering learning to play the clarinet, re-learning Spanish, and perhaps returning to university to complete her PhD. Talk about a full dance card. Ironically, Robin is proof that no matter how busy your life is, there is no excuse not to take care of your body, your mind and your spirit.

Robin’s success comes from self-drive. Yet, she is still reluctant to spruik her fortunes.

“I am no different to most other people out there. Everybody has the capacity to feel accomplished, regardless of what they do. Whether you finish uni degrees or TAFE, or online training – people can get to

As CEO of Cairns Women’s Imaging, Robin Gordon encourages women to be breast-aware, focusing on early detection