

# David Cassidy

**In our occasional series, people in the public eye tell us what life's taught them**

I'll be 57 this month. Do I mind getting older? Yes, of course. Don't we all? But I've had a struggle to get where I am today, which

makes me appreciate life all the more. These days, I feel in charge of myself. The choices I make are mine alone. And that feels good.

In 1971, I was the biggest recording artist in the world. I was 21 and I had everything anyone could want. But I was miserable. There was a hollowness about my success. My fans were in love with a guy who wasn't real; a character I played on television (in the television series, *The Partridge Family*). It was as if I'd been robbed of my personality.

So, in 1974, with a dozen hit singles under my belt, I did the bravest thing I've ever done. I walked away from it all. No more stretch limousines. No entourage of 32 (including three bodyguards, a personal hairdresser and a psychiatrist). Nothing. I locked myself away, sometimes for weeks on end. I felt a failure — ashamed of who I was and the mistakes I'd made.

In time, I married twice and divorced twice, and became a dad to my eldest child, Katie, who's 20, and about to play Lucy Ewing in a film version of *Dallas*. Then, in 1987, I got together with singer/songwriter, Sue Shifrin, and we married in 1991. We have a 16-year-old son, Beau, who looks like he'll follow us into the music business.

Last December, there was an auction of my memorabilia from the Seventies — stage outfits, *Partridge Family* lunch-boxes, you name it. After 25 years and more, I liked the idea of sharing them with the fans who gave me my career — and it also raised lots of money, a good portion of which I gave to charity.



David is touring the UK this month



The Partridge Family

David became an instant star in the Seventies hit show



Teen idol

I haven't had a facelift. I don't drink. Small cigars are my only vice. I don't care about not being hip or cool. I never was, never will be. But this time round, I feel I'm driving the bus. I've been in charge of my career for over ten years and it's been the most successful decade of my life. The same females come and see me. The only difference is that their voices are an octave

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lower and they bring their daughters, too. Back in the Seventies, it was mayhem — at the end of my first week in the UK, the management of The Dorchester in London had to ask me to move out. There were 10,000 screaming fans blocking Park Lane. It was insane. I don't think that'll happen when I tour the UK again later this month.\*

I realise now that fame isn't good for the young. How could a

20-year-old know how to cope with that level of fame? When you get so famous you can't send out your laundry for fear it'll be stolen as souvenirs, you realise superstardom is a double-edged sword. In the end, it's not fame that survives but talent. To me, it's always been about entertaining. If you can hold an audience with your voice, your guitar and your stories,

there's nothing more satisfying.

At 23, I was on the cover of *Rolling Stone*. Inside the magazine, I was quoted as saying that, in ten years' time, I'd be living on an island somewhere and my hair would be long and grey. I read that quote again, about a year ago, and it kind of shocked me. Apart from being ridiculous, it made me realise that, if life's taught me anything, you should live in the moment. On

the other hand, as long as I feel as emotionally and physically good as I do today, I'd want to continue to do the work I'm doing now five years down the line. I'd also like to be helping to guide my children in their careers.

I'd sooner have on my gravestone that I was an honest, trusting, loving man. All the rest is fame and money. And it adds up to nothing. I just thank God every day that I was dealt this kind of a hand and that I was able to play it right. I survived superstardom. Then I came back and did it my way. I'm proud of that. You're looking at a very contented guy.'

\*David Cassidy's UK tour runs from 10th-21st April. Call the National Ticket Hotline on 0871 220 0260.

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Sharon Maughan