

M READER



Ben Merens

Bayside
48 | radio talk show host and public speaker | married 21 years | one daughter

As a talk show host on Wisconsin Public Radio since 1991, Ben Merens has done his fair share of listening. Though most people don't listen for a living like Merens, he thinks more people should give listening a chance. "People are dying to be heard," he says. Merens has produced two audio books and one DVD on the art of listening, which he calls "uni-tasking." In addition to his day job on WPR, he has been on the public speaking circuit for the last two years.

"You can buy just about anything these days if you have enough money, but you can't buy someone's willingness to just listen," Merens says. "This is a gift we should give ourselves and to others as often as we can."

For more on Merens's take on the subject, check out www.benmerens.com.



Who did you want to be when you were younger?

"I wanted to be Johnny Carson's replacement."

What is your favorite live-in-the-moment moment?

"Watching my daughter play soccer or giving a speech about listening and feeling connected to a room full of people."

Are you a chocolates or flowers guy?

"I'm a flowers guy."

If you could go back and give your younger self one piece of advice, what would it be?

"Don't be afraid to take creative chances."

What makes you laugh?

"Things I don't expect."

What is your favorite food?

"Deep dish Chicago pizza."

What is your favorite TV show?

"Frasier.' I love the writing in the show and how the characters interact. While I'm a talk show host on radio, the radio part of the show is the least interesting to me."

Led Zeppelin or Bruce Springsteen?

"Led Zeppelin. It's one of the first albums my older brother let me listen to with his friends. So the memories go back, and they go deep."

Regular or decaf?

"Regular."

Blackberry or iPhone?

"Neither."

Where do you find peace?

"On stage, reading on the couch or in bed, in the nature center or swimming at the Y. M"

Before I die, I'd like to ...
"Appear on stage at the Apollo Theatre in Harlem."