

MAY 7, 2014

REEL PEOPLE: SECRETS OF A REEL MAMA

Vancouver actress Nicole Oliver finds her voice after postpartum depression

[Sabrina Furminger](#) — WE Vancouver

May 7, 2014 01:34 PM



Vancouver actress Nicole Oliver. — Photo supplied

If you're an A-type personality, the onset of motherhood can rattle your soul.

Everything that was once in your control — your career, your schedule, your sense of self — is suddenly out of your grasp the moment that new life is placed in your arms.

For self-described over-achiever Nicole Oliver, new motherhood offered a chance to get to know herself all over again — albeit after a bit of a bumpy ride.

Oliver is a familiar face (and voice) to television watchers and industry insiders. She's a Leo Award-winning actress with a long list of film and television credits, including *Kung Fu: The Legend Continues* and *Stargate SG-1*. She's one-half of an industry power duo (her husband is award-winning composer Chris Ainscough).

In recent years, she's found global success supplying the voices for cartoon characters ("It's freeing to voice a little boy, and then a little girl, and an older woman"), including that of Princess Celestia on mega-hit *My Little Pony: Friendship is Magic*.

But eleven years ago in August, Oliver became a mother for the first time (to her son, William) — and then nineteen months later, she gave birth to her second son, Grady.

In those early years of motherhood, Oliver tried to be both Supermom and Super-Actress. Within a few weeks of both births, she was back at work out of town, often flying breast milk home via Harbour Air. She rarely asked others for help and didn't recognize the futility of her efforts to be everything to everybody — until she found herself full of despair.

"One day I stopped for a woman to cross the street with her baby, and this pick-up truck stopped beside me and [the driver] screamed at me, and I started to cry, and I couldn't stop crying," she says. "I cried for a couple days and then I went, 'I need to get help.'"

The realization that she was suffering from postpartum depression was the wake-up call she needed to find her footing as a mother, an actress, and a woman.

Her journey took her to Royal Roads University, where in 2011 she earned a Masters Degree in Communication. Her Masters thesis was an exploration of Supermom Syndrome.

Today, the focus is on keeping her sense of self — which still includes working hard and aiming for greatness — while also cutting herself some slack. "It's been a journey of identity. 'Who am I?' I'm so many things, and more, and to not be able to answer that question is okay, too," she says. "I'm Nicole, and that's enough."

Even though she won't call herself a Supermom, she's clearly doing a super job. Both William and Grady are happy, well-adjusted boys. William just received a Leo nomination for his work on *SEED* (dad Chris received a nomination for scoring *Down River* with Kevin House); Grady isn't interested in acting, although he did talk himself into being his brother's photo double on *R.L. Stine's The Haunting Hour*.

Oliver is brutally honest with William about the realities of life in showbiz. "I've been honest with him and said, 'this is a crappy business, it's horrible for kids, it's horrible for adults.' We struggled with it because we really want our kids to be kids, but he loves it and he's continued to thrive at it."

Find Nicole Oliver on Twitter ([@mouthnoize](#)).

Follow Sabrina on Twitter [@sabinarmf](#) or send your film & TV news to info@sabinafurminger.com.