The background of the cover is a dark, blue-toned hallway that recedes into the distance. The walls are lined with various pieces of film equipment, including cameras on tripods and boom microphones, all rendered as dark silhouettes. In the center of the hallway, a white silhouette of a person is walking away from the viewer towards the vanishing point. The floor is dark and reflective, mirroring the lights and equipment. The overall mood is professional and cinematic.

KENNY HEATLEY

SCREENPATH

An Honest and Real  
Guide to Landing  
Your **Dream Job** On Air

# SCREENPATH

**An Honest and Real Guide to Landing Your Dream  
On-Air Job**

by Kenny Heatley

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For Dad

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## Acknowledgments

I want to thank everyone who contributed to *Screenpath*, for sharing their time, stories and wisdom — Tim Gundry, Ahron Young, Emma Freedman, Matt De Groot, Ron Wilson, Josh Holt, Gavin Morris, Natalie Forrest and Kelly Heatley.

Finally, to my wife Jayne for all your support and love.

K.H.

## Foreword

Ken and I worked together at The Weather Channel in a producer/presenter role for over five years. We have sweated through enough heatwaves, shivered and clambered through severe thunderstorms to forge a lifelong friendship.

When I look back at our working relationship, however, there is one severe weather event that springs to mind that left me in awe of Kenny's ability as a television presenter.

Cyclone Ului was bearing down on the North Queensland coast. We were gathered in The Weather Channel's Met Centre in Sydney with Chief Meteorologist Dick Whitaker, trying to pinpoint where this cyclone would make landfall. It was the first cyclone The Weather Channel had covered from the ground, so they wanted to get it right, and we wanted to be directly in its path.

A Category 3 cyclone, Cyclone Ului was one of the fastest intensifying tropical cyclones on record. We flew to Mackay on a Dash 8. The turbulence was so heavy we thought the plane's wings were going to rip off. It felt like we were heading into battle.

We made our way into position, and our forecasts were right. We were directly in the path of this monster cyclone. We were closely monitoring the warnings issued by the Bureau of Meteorology and what was about to happen really started to weigh on us.

The system made landfall near Airlie Beach, just north of Mackay, at about 1.30am.

Wind gusts up to 200 km/h were hounding down on us. Debris was flying around like missiles, roofs were being ripped off, and electrical power lines lay damaged with sparks flying off power poles dangerously close.

They say it sounds like a freight train and it's true — the noise that night was extremely loud.

We were running on pure adrenaline. We'd been through blizzards together, but never a tropical storm like this. We should have been fast asleep, but Kenny was in his element, tracking the storm

minute by minute, with live on-air crosses beaming across the country every 15 minutes.

He wasn't missing a beat.

I was watching first hand what Kenny later describes in this book as a 'sickening work ethic' in motion. It was beautiful to watch. What makes Kenny stand out is that he is prepared to do more than anyone else on a day-to-day basis and this is, in my opinion, the reason why Kenny has had such a successful career in television.

What you will read is a brutally honest account of Ken's experiences as a presenter, the highs and lows and some very useful insights of the industry from some of the best in the business. This book is informative, motivating and entertaining.

I hope you enjoy reading this as much as I did.

Tim Gundry  
Digital Producer  
Yahoo7

# Introduction

First of all, thank you. It's extremely humbling that you purchased this eBook and my advice to you is — read this with an open mind. Some of my experiences and recommendations may go against what you've already learnt, or have already been doing, to get a break into TV. But the hard truth is, if it was working for you, why did you download this in the first place? I'm going to explain my path to you and do my best to give you the clarity and direction needed for getting into the industry today.

Later in the book you'll also hear from some of the best and well-known TV and radio presenters in Australia. Their tips, insights and experiences from inside the industry will no doubt give you the edge you need to land that dream role.

I hope you enjoy reading this as much as I enjoyed writing it and putting together these interviews from incredible on-air talent talking to you through the television screen today.

Kenny Heatley



# The Challenge

*Television! Teacher, mother, secret lover.*

Homer Simpson *The Simpsons*

I wouldn't be telling you anything new by saying on-camera roles don't come around very often, compared to other jobs in the industry. For decades it has been one of the most competitive job markets in the world. I'm sure you've had a friend or relative say to you that you're crazy for pursuing an acting or presenting career, and many 'friends' will often say hurtful things like 'be prepared to wait tables for the next 10 years' or 'you'll make more money doing something else'. While this may be true for some people, what I am saying to you now is that the worst thing you can do is listen to these comments and let them become *your* reality. The *only* reason why presenters or actors might be out of work is because they haven't followed the right path or done the right things to get there.

If you still have doubts, ask yourself this: would you rather work hard doing what you love and what you're passionate about or slog away in some other 9 to 5 job that you hate because it's more 'secure'? The truth is no job is 'safe' or 'secure'. You can be fired at any time from any job in any industry if circumstances change. It could be due to simple supply and demand, technology going

out of date, a company restructure or merger or the government passing a law that makes your business unviable. It could be anything. So why not work hard doing what you love?

Now that you have your motivation back, you can do it. It is not impossible. It may take time and hard work and you may have already set the wheels in motion. But it is not a pipe dream, and it's certainly not out of reach. You just need to know how to get there. I do not for one second regret becoming a TV presenter, it's been an absolute blast and I've forged lifelong friendships with amazing people. As with any job there will be things you hate, but it's an incredible ride that is unlike any other job in the world.



# The Health of the Industry

With the rise of YouTube, Netflix, Facebook and countless other forms of entertainment streamed over the internet, it is no secret that the traditional TV networks around the world are undergoing significant change, with some even fighting for survival. Before these internet services started taking off, the networks had a monopoly on advertising dollars. Back then, advertising on TV was the most effective way to sell your product or business to the masses. Here in Australia, that huge revenue stream was shared by only a few national networks, and is the reason why popular TV stars got paid so much money.

The way we consume content has changed. Forever. In the 1990s, parents typically came home from their job, made dinner and the whole family would sit in front of the TV and watch their favourite shows — and sit through the ad breaks.

Today, the amount businesses are spending on marketing has actually increased but today, there are countless other online content providers to grab our attention and wherever our attention goes, the advertising dollars follow. So now, all that money is not just divided up amongst a few networks, but shared with all those huge online companies like Google and Facebook. There is a reason why these companies are worth so much money. They use algorithms to create very specific advertising targeted to the individual, which many would argue is more effective than simply placing an ad on TV, where you don't know who is watching. And now that people own smartphones and iPads,

what do they do through a TV ad break? Check Facebook and other social media. The TV commercial is all but useless.

Needless to say, television CEOs have a big job ahead of them to combat the goliath that is the internet. Major structural reform within these networks has already taken place. They now have their own websites and online apps so viewers can stream videos and watch targeted advertising on demand. Why would anyone wait for a TV station to show their favourite program when they can open their laptop and stream it instantly and cheaply, if not for free? The answer to why traditional television networks are still getting viewers every night is that the show they are airing only exists on that channel, or it is broadcast live.

News, sports and reality TV programs are instant, and most of the time they are broadcast live, so by the time someone manages to stream a copy through the internet, it's already old news. But for how long? With the Periscope app, journalists can broadcast live to their viewers via their smartphones, without a news van and without a TV network. The TV of old is on the way out. New companies will rise, old companies who cannot adapt fast enough will fall.

What the traditional TV networks have, though, is credibility. When news breaks, people may jump on to Twitter or Facebook to get initial information quickly, but still turn to the people and companies they trust to provide them with the complete picture. There will always be a place for well-known, trusted media personalities.

So who cares and why does it matter to me, I hear you ask? It matters because where and how you get work is changing, so how and when you get paid is also changing. And in 10 years' time this book may be completely out of date — that's how fast things are evolving in the industry. The way we consume content in 10 years may be completely different to streaming online, who knows? It might even be holograms! It's exciting, but as someone working within this industry, you will have to move with the times at the same pace, or get left behind.

Not long ago I was having a discussion with a friend who asked me where I think the news broadcast industry is going. I believe we are already starting to see glimpses of it now. On Facebook you may have seen the 360-degree videos you can now watch in your newsfeed. It's a normal-looking video online but the difference is, while the video is playing, you can move your smartphone around or click on the screen and drag the video left, right, up and down and watch what is happening in any direction. This is also related to virtual reality and virtual reality headsets like Oculus Rift. They shoot these videos with specialised cameras that can film in all directions, and are also

edited in a unique way. I believe this is where TV news is heading. Soon journalists and cameramen on the ground will be equipped with these special 360-degree cameras and you will be able to put on a virtual reality headset and look around the war zone or UN summit with the journalist in real time as it's happening. That's incredible to think about, but the technology is already here, I believe it's just a matter of time.

This does not mean traditional TV presenter roles will become obsolete. There are hundreds of full-time TV presenters, journalists and actors in Australia — you will hear from some of them in this very book. But even they have used techniques to stay relevant by branching out into other areas, such as social media, that didn't even exist until the late 90s. Just think, Twitter was created in 2006! That's not very long ago, and what an impact it's had. Now it is not only a good idea for a presenter to have a social media presence, it is essential to have multiple accounts that have to be updated constantly!

With the traditional TV industry in a contraction phase, and online streaming in a growth phase, you might think opportunities are even more limited than they were before. This could not be further from the truth. Yes, it may be harder to get noticed among the thousands of people and companies pumping out content every day, but start inserting yourself into that stream of content in a clever, considered way and you're halfway there.



# Your Background

*I've never really viewed myself as particularly talented. I've viewed myself as slightly above average in talent. And where I excel is ridiculous, sickening, work ethic.*

Will Smith – CBS *60 Minutes* 2 December 2007

When I left school I knew I wanted to do something in TV or radio. I didn't know what, so I just chose something I thought was a good combination and went with that. I ended up doing a degree in broadcast journalism at one university, and studied acting and voice at another. It would be a lie to say my time at university didn't have an effect on my actual career, because it did. Now keep in mind, I graduated in 2003 and the world was a very different place back then. I'm not saying you shouldn't go to university, especially if you want to be a journalist, but these days you don't necessarily need a university degree to have a TV career. For example, who's to say an online video of yourself going viral is not better than a university degree, if the end goal is to be on TV?

University was a great experience. I loved every minute. But it's also expensive, so you have to be sure it will help you achieve your goal of being an actor or a TV presenter. Seriously, think about the type of presenting you want to do, then ask yourself *'would I be better off spending that time on other projects to get noticed and getting my foot in the door somewhere. So I can get relevant*

*industry experience?’*

Don't get me wrong, education is so important. In fact, in my opinion it's the most important thing to a fulfilling life — that, and travel! But these days, you don't need a university for that. If you are motivated enough there are hundreds of books already available to give you the advice you want, such as the one you're reading right now! This is a book with honest ideas and teachings from people who have made it and are working in the TV industry. But remember, there are so many ways to educate yourself nowadays, you just have to make sure you spend the time — and money — wisely.

Just like the traditional TV networks, universities have credibility. If you want a career as a journalist or political commentator you will need credibility in spades, but nobody gets discovered by going to university. Look at the retired Olympians and ex-sport stars now hosting shows, doing commercials and making TV guest appearances. Did they study acting, journalism or presenting at university? Probably not. They were discovered through their sport or actions and, with hard work and charisma, have turned it into a successful TV career.

Larry Emdur dropped out of school when he was 15 and became a copyboy at *The Sydney Morning Herald* and just four years later he was Australia's youngest ever national newsreader for the Seven Network. He then went on to become one of Australia's most loved game show hosts and at the time of writing is co-hosting *The Morning Show* on the Seven Network. Larry got his foot in the door at a newspaper as a teenaged copyboy and is now one of the most successful TV presenters in Australia. See, you may think the experience that you've had so far or the jobs you've been working have been a waste of time because they are not directly related to an on-camera role, but there are countless ways you can become a TV presenter. People from all backgrounds will talk to you through the TV. You just have to find the path that works for you.



*When someone offers you an amazing opportunity and you're not sure you can do it, say yes — then learn how to do it later.*

Richard Branson

You may be at the point where you've sent your show reel or demo and CV to TV stations and have had no reply. Not even an email acknowledgement. You may have sent countless follow-up emails. You may even have had the contact details of the Executive Producer and still have not had a single reply. Or the reply you get was from another person saying your services are not required at this point. Sound familiar? I've been there, too. I spent hundreds of dollars on DVD show reels, professional printing and customised CD covers in the hope I would get noticed in the pile. This is just a fact of life while trying to land your first paid TV role. But what do you do while you are sitting in the pile, if indeed your show reel made it there in the first place? The answer: get experience any way you can.

After graduating, I thought, 'The TV networks were going to be so impressed with me now that I have a degree, so I'll make a show reel and send it in!' I couldn't have been more wrong. It was really a waste of time because what I lacked was experience in *anything* related to the industry. I realised I had to make a start somewhere. It may be disheartening because it's not exactly what I

wanted to do, but each job adds weight to what makes you attractive as a presenter.

While all this may seem obvious and plain common sense, it works a little differently in other industries. Let's say you want to be an electrician. You finish school, or leave school early to do an apprenticeship. You become an electrician's assistant, then an apprentice electrician until eventually you are a qualified master electrician. Your set path to becoming an electrician is very clear and very direct. You would not do three years of bricklaying in the hope of becoming a master electrician.

With TV, it's a little different. The path to your career as a TV presenter couldn't be more unclear and the options are unlimited. As long as your job is related in some way — it could be by 'six degrees of separation' — it's still valuable. Besides, TV executives are not looking for someone who can only do one thing. You have to be a jack-of-all-trades and be able to show you are capable in many skills they may find to be useful. Your skill set will set you apart from someone else.

After university, there was no way I could get a paid role on camera straightaway. I had many unrelated jobs and experiences working in retail, pulling beers in bars, cleaning toilets in Sydney, ski instructing... you name it. But there came a time when I knew I should make a start to get into the TV industry — so I went into radio. Seems odd doesn't it? Why try to get a job in radio when I wanted to be on TV? Because it's all valuable experience that I knew would add weight to my skill set, and make me more attractive in the long run. Eventually, I landed my first on-air role hosting the *Hot 20 Countdown* on a local radio station in the Snowy Mountains of New South Wales. That job was my break into TV.

The point is, whether it be producing, editing, filming, social media, writing, blogging, sound recording, technical operator, promo truck driver — whatever it is — work at it like it's your break into TV. The road to the studio is never straight and it may take you through many twists and turns. But along the way, if you remain focused and motivated with an 'I can do anything' attitude, nothing can stop you.



# Appearance

*I don't mind making jokes, but I don't want to look like one.*

Marilyn Monroe

An unfortunate — and obvious — reality is that most people on TV are attractive, good-looking people. However, if you consider yourself to be less attractive than some TV presenters you know, that does not automatically mean you are not going to get a job. And although looks may help, I am living proof that they're not everything!

The average person watching TV may get disheartened by looking at all the beautiful people on screen. But there is a reason why they look the way they do. I guarantee if you spent as much time preparing your appearance, you would look just as polished and professional and you would also feel like a million dollars! And don't forget, they have the resources and expertise to help them do it.

TV standards can also be more onerous and a bit unfair on women. For men, it is relatively easy to get a good haircut every four weeks and wear well-fitting suits. The pressure on women is much greater, and I sometimes feel sorry for my female colleagues who start getting ready up to an

hour before me as their routine is far more extensive. Consider your routine as you get ready for a normal day's work. You do your hair, perhaps apply a bit of make-up, etc. Imagine the process of getting ready for a formal event every day — that gives you some idea of the lengths women go to in order to look good on air. Do you think they go to as much trouble with make-up or hair on their day off? Absolutely not if they don't have to! It's a relief not to have to go through such an extensive process that's part of the routine each workday.

The point is, going to great lengths to look as good as possible will only help your chances of landing a job and will get you used to the sort of routine that is common in the industry. If you struggle in this area, there may be stylish friends who can help you. If you can afford it, you could see a professional stylist. Getting training in how to apply make-up might also be beneficial, although this is something I did not do. But I want to stress that appearance is not the most important part of getting an on-camera job. In my opinion, your experience, charisma, attitude and confidence, the sound of your voice, your personality and work ethic are more important to landing your first job than the way you look. Being well groomed and well presented for the job you want is more important than being conventionally attractive — anyone can achieve this with a little work.

I want to emphasise this point with a story of my first screen test at Foxtel in Sydney. I had spent a few years working as a radio announcer, voice-over artist and production manager. This was a screen test for my first TV gig as a weather presenter on The Weather Channel. I did not have much of a clue about what screen tests were about, what you were required to do and say, and what you had to wear. While my shirt and pants may have been passable for an on-air presenter, my haircut at the time certainly wasn't. In retrospect, I did not look at all like a respectable weather presenter. It's not like I didn't want to be, but it just didn't occur to me to change my hairstyle to look more like the men who were already on The Weather Channel.

Reminiscing over this day with my old colleagues, they admitted they were shocked when I was called in for a second screen test. The producers who were working at the time of my screen test said I didn't look like a TV presenter at all. I wish I had a photo of myself from this day so I could show you. So why did I get a call back? It wasn't because of my looks — I was severely lacking in that department. The managers who hired me at the time admitted years later that the only reason they gave me the job was because of my voice. They could tell I had training and sounded good on air. In their opinion, I could be taught everything else on the job.

Think about that. I had one thing that gave me an edge over the other hopeful presenters; something that held more weight. I also have to admit that, looking back, the other people who were

screen testing at the time were much better looking than me and had obviously taken more care with their appearance beforehand. Having a great appearance is part of the complete package, but it is not the overriding factor. Let's explore this now.



*Setting goals is the first step to turning the invisible into the visible.*

Tony Robbins

As I mentioned before, I studied voice and acting during my time at university and later extended my voice training while working in radio. I started voicing commercials on the local network and eventually became so well known that companies started requesting my services directly. Becoming a voice-over artist was a natural progression from this point, and I found it was a great way to make money on top of my normal wage. I eventually started a voice-over studio and company, which continues today.

I truly believe that, if it weren't for this training, I would not have had a career on TV. I highly recommend voice training from a qualified professional or voice-over artist if you are not naturally gifted with an amazing voice. A great voice can be developed with training and practice.

So, what is your special quality? Have a good think about the one thing you could develop and master that would give you an edge over someone else going for the same screen test. Is it your incredible knowledge in a particular area? Is it your surprising singing skills? Is it your impeccable

comedic timing? Is it your ability to talk about anything or have perfectly timed questions? You don't get nervous? What about your natural body language? Your ability to memorise words or pages quickly? Find out, develop and then exploit your edge to land your first gig.

You will need something to help you stand out from the crowd. For me, my voice got me over the line, but it was still a package deal. My degree in journalism and experience in radio also played a part, but do you think that alone would have got me the job? The answer is no. I studied voice and acting at uni more for fun than anything else. I did not for one second think it would launch my presenting career. Working daily on developing your particular edge will create the difference between you and everybody else.

Play your edge like a casino plays their edge. A casino doesn't care if one player walks out with more money than what they came in with, because they know that, over time, the odds are stacked in their favour and eventually they will win. Your edge might not land you your first presenting gig, but in the long run, it will.



# Show Reel and Photos

*I don't know if the camera likes me, but I do like the camera.*

Celine Dion

Creating a decent show reel that you would be proud to show a TV executive can take time. I have to admit it has been the most hated part of my job. It seems the work and time you have to put into show reels is never ending: chasing up and collecting footage of work you've done; researching how to put them together and getting conflicting advice; choosing music; keeping them up to date; creating different versions tailored for different jobs; updating editing software... the list goes on. Unfortunately, when starting out in the industry, a good show reel is a must as it's usually the first impression a network will have of you, and you need the video to showcase your talents quickly.

You don't need to spend money getting a good show reel produced at a top production house. At first, I asked people I knew for help with editing and putting together the clips in my reel. I hated doing this and vowed to teach myself how to edit videos professionally in Final Cut Pro. I thought that would be another thing I could put in my CV, but it's easy to go overboard in the production of the video and lose the primary purpose of the reel, which is to showcase your talent. Having a professional-looking show reel is a good thing, but you must not let it take away from its goal

of showing what you can do. For example, you've probably heard that TV executives only watch the first 30 to 60 seconds of a show reel and, if they like what they see, they'll keep watching, otherwise they'll just move on to the next one. Think about that for a second... your entire future and career can depend on that one minute. So it pays not to have a long montage to music at the start of your reel. Get straight to your best work presenting and talking. Anyone can edit a montage together, but not everyone can sound and look good on camera, have presence and grab attention. Put that at the start, straightaway.

What if you haven't done much work on film? Or you haven't been able to track down all the presenting you've done and have only one thing to show, rather than a range of clips presenting different scenarios? When I was working in radio in Canberra, I approached a local up-and-coming production house that I had done a few voice-overs for and told them I would like to do some on-camera work. They soon contacted me and said they had a job they thought I would be good at. They wanted to create a pitch to car companies Volkswagen and Audi to produce online promotional videos. They would film me driving around doing *Top Gear*-style reviews of the cars. It was the only thing I had that was professionally shot at that stage. The production house agreed to let me use the best bits of it as my show reel, so I got a friend to help me put together a basic two-minute video of me talking about cars. That was the show reel I would take to Sydney.

Back then I wanted to be a weather presenter, so I sent my show reel in to The Weather Channel. It would probably have been a better idea to film me talking about the weather, but I sent them a video of me talking about cars! The point is, your reel doesn't have to show you doing or talking about anything in particular. That very simple show reel landed me a screen test at Foxtel and eventually a full-time presenting role.

Some tips for your show reel:

1. Keep it simple, keep it smart.
2. Put your best stuff *first*.
3. Don't overproduce.
4. Keep it short.
5. Try and show a variety of work, if you can.
6. Have quality digital copies ready to go online and copies on disc, as you might be asked to provide both.

Professional photos are also essential as a TV station may be after a particular look. When I was

just starting out, a friend who is a professional photographer took both full length and headshots under studio lights for a reduced fee. If you don't have a photographer in your circle of friends, you may be able to find one that suits your budget. Having these photos come up on social media and in search engines when someone types in your name rather than blurry shots at that 21st party you went to last year can only be a good thing. After the photo shoot they usually provide you with a CD or USB that can easily be uploaded online. It is also a good idea to include one or two photos when sending out your CV and show reel.

When I sent my show reel around, I always tried to get the name of an Executive Producer at the station or channel I wanted to work for. In the past, this was extremely hard, as receptionists were not that accommodating and would not give out details of the people who worked there. Today, it is a lot easier to find someone thanks to social media, such as LinkedIn.

There is a cost involved in sending out professional standard copies of your show reel, headshots and CV, but, in my opinion, you are more likely to get noticed, especially if you follow it up with an email to that person. While they may like to have online copies for their records or talent bank, TV executives get hundreds of emails a day. If you do send an email, put their name in the subject line as it helps them to identify emails that are specifically for them even though, unfortunately, there's no guarantee they will pay any attention to it. Also, they receive fewer packages in the post than they do emails, so it's another thing you can do to be remembered, and to be in the 'pile' in a literal sense, not just in their email inbox. It also shows them you are serious about landing a role and are willing to go to the effort, rather than just sending out bulk emails. From my experience, when TV executives are looking for new talent, they go through their physical copies and photos first.

The CV or resume is probably the least important item in the whole process, but is still important and should include *brief* summaries of your education and relevant experience. Remember the jobs I spoke about in section 4 'Take that Job!'. Include anything you think will show you are, or could be, a great 'all-rounder' and willing to take on anything that comes your way, not just on-camera experience. But don't worry about including work experience that is totally unrelated, like selling clothes at the local shopping centre. Keep it relevant, keep it short and succinct — even use dot points if you have to. Your CV should be no more than two typed pages and should include lots of 'white space'. These people are extremely busy and if you can make their job easier, that's another foot in the door.

I know this part of getting a job can be soul destroying. Sending out copy after copy with follow-up

email after follow-up email and not getting any reply or acknowledgement can, and will, happen — you may not even know if it made it to the right person. Meanwhile, you wait in hope, a little unsure of what to do next. Trust me, I've been in this position and it's hard not knowing a timeline or what's happening behind the scenes at the station. Are they even looking for new talent? Did they just throw it in the bin and move on? These are all things you ask yourself. But believe me, they didn't. Rarely are presenting jobs advertised online. Why would they go to that effort and expense when they already have a pile of show reels ready to look at? You just need to be in that pile.

When I was working in radio in Canberra, I sent my little car video and photo out to most of the networks in Sydney, including Foxtel. After not hearing back for months or speaking to anyone about whether they saw my show reel or what they thought of it, I was starting to doubt if it even had any impact on my search for an on-air job. But if doing that doesn't work, what are you meant to do? It's an extremely frustrating process and you are not the first person to go through it. But I can confidently tell you that at least a few managers received your show reel and when the next presenting job comes up, they will retrieve your package from the pile. I waited six months after I sent my package to The Weather Channel until I eventually received a phone call asking if I would like to come in for a screen test. *Six months!* And when it came through, it was an amazing surprise because, by that point, I thought all hope was dead and was planning the next update of my show reel. My point is, it can take time and sometimes you just have to ride it out. But as long as you are in the pile, someone will eventually look at your show reel.



*There's something liberating about not pretending. Dare to embarrass yourself. Risk.*

Drew Barrymore

Getting a call from a General Manager or an Executive Producer who liked what they saw can turn out to be one of the most exciting and happiest days of your life. I remember when I got the call from Julian Delany, the then General Manager of The Weather Channel, I was absolutely buzzing for days at the thought of this opportunity that could really kick-start my presenting career. But it's also hard not to feel great concern and doubt. 'What if they call me in for a screen test and interview and I get nervous and blow it? I'll never get an opportunity like this again!' Well, for one, that's not true, but it is a nerve-racking experience.

A screen test is when you are called into the TV studio so the managers and executive producers can see what you look and sound like on camera. They want to see if you can live up to what is on your show reel, how you perform under pressure, whether you have any chemistry with the on-air talent and how well you take direction. Exactly what the studio executives will want you to perform for them will depend on the job you are going for, but regardless of what kind of job it is, the screen test will be the best and usually only chance you'll have to show them what you've

got. Most of the time they will screen test several hopefuls who match their criteria, then create a shortlist of two or three and call them back for a second screen test.

When it comes to a screen test, managers and producers are not looking for someone who knows everything right away and could anchor a half-hour live program the very next night. If they were looking for that person, they wouldn't need a screen test, would they? If they want a TV star who is already well known to audiences and has loads of experience in front of the camera, they already know what that person looks and sounds like. They are not looking for that person and are not expecting you to be that person. So breathe easy! They have called you in because they see something in you they like. It may be your look, your mannerisms or your voice. This is your chance to show them all your other attributes and skills.

Before the screen test, you should have a fair idea of what you are going into. What sort of presenting role is it? Is it a reporting role? A news reading or weather presenting role? A music or lifestyle presenter? This will determine what you wear and what you will be expected to perform. If you are not sure, have a look at what the other presenters on the channel look like and try to base your look around that. For a weather presenting role, you will be expected to talk and try and point to graphics in front of a 'green screen' or large TV. This is quite strange and difficult the first time you try it because everything will seem backwards! You will also be required to have banter with the other presenters or interview someone to see if you can engage properly with other talent.

So, is there anything you can do to prepare yourself? Usually you'll only have a few days to a week between the phone call and the screen test so, hopefully, you have developed your presenting skills as much as you can beforehand. Maybe you could practise interviewing your friends on camera. You could download an autocue app and practise reading scrolling words as they do in a studio. However, I believe your mindset, or state of mind, is the most important aspect and can make or break a screen test. Let me explain.

If you have a shot at a presenting role and the only thing standing in the way is the screen test, then naturally you are going to be putting yourself under a huge amount of pressure. In fact, some people have used the term 'freaking out'. You could be a master on the topic, but if you can't speak freely with confidence on camera or in the studio in front of TV professionals, they will probably give it to the person who was able to effectively display their natural personality. In the end, they are looking for someone with a great personality and enough confidence to be able to showcase this naturally on camera. Notice how I said 'naturally'. They are not looking for someone who acts as if they are someone else, or puts on a persona. This is why getting yourself in the right mindset

is extremely important.

When I went for my first screen test at The Weather Channel, I was extremely nervous. I kept thinking of negative phrases, such as ‘I don’t know enough about the weather’ or ‘I’ve never stood in front of a green screen before’ and ‘There will be someone better than me, for sure’. But once I began accepting this, my nerves started to subside. Then I thought, ‘If I don’t know enough about the weather to be a weather presenter and they know this, and if I haven’t been in front of a green screen before and they know this, then what are they looking for?’ This realisation helped me a lot going into the screen test. What they are looking for is *personality*. So I said to myself, ‘I’m just going to go in there, have a laugh and have fun.’ Once you truly get into that frame of mind, then there is no way your nerves can take over and you will be able to speak freely with the other presenters. Don’t take yourself too seriously. Accept that you *will* make mistakes, you *will* stumble over sentences. In all the years I’ve worked in TV, I have not seen one perfect screen test. The way you pick yourself up and move on from those stumbles is what they are looking for. It is your friendliness, your sense of humour and your ability to listen and take direction that are the most important elements of a successful screen test.

Let me repeat that.

The way you pick yourself up and move on from those stumbles is what they are looking for. It is your friendliness, your sense of humour and your ability to listen and take direction that are the most important elements of a successful screen test.

With this in my mind, and with the right mindset, I went into The Weather Channel, really listened to what they wanted me to do and stumbled around the graphics, all the while laughing and cracking jokes at my mistakes. After I left the studio, I thought, ‘There is no way they are going to hire me because they probably thought I didn’t take it seriously enough.’ I couldn’t have been more wrong. What I did was show my personality to the best of my ability, and in a few days’ time, I got a call back for a second screen test. I now had a fair idea what they wanted to see and was able to provide a better performance than the first, and not long after that I was offered a full-time contract.

To sum up: to say screen testing for a presenting role is easy would be a lie. There are not too many job interviews where you are expected to perform like that but, as I said, a network is not going to hire you just because you have several degrees. They want to see you in action. It is a stressful process, but if you have fun with it, let your natural personality shine through and show them who you really are — not a fake version of yourself — you are 80% there. I know this is easier than it

sounds, considering so much is riding on that first impression. So take the time before you enter the studio to go through the process of getting yourself in the right state of mind and be truly thankful for the opportunity.



# Social Media

*Social media: It has been a complete revolution of how to interact, promote and share things.*

Tony 'The Birdman' Hawk

Social media has been around for long enough for everyone to know how much it has changed the world, and I'm not going to go on about whether I think it is good or bad because it doesn't matter. But it is such an important aspect of our personal and business lives that it is essential you use it correctly, and to your advantage.

If you're anything like me, you'll have several different social media accounts. And there are new ones popping up every day. When I first started working in TV, Facebook was only a couple of years old. There was no 'social media' person or employee monitoring 'likes' or posting articles, there wasn't even a proper account! It was a very new thing and no one knew how to use it effectively. Eventually the popularity of Facebook and Twitter were hard to deny and the quest to get followers online began. During the early stages, some presenters like me were not even allowed to have personal social media accounts for fear we would use them incorrectly and bring the company or station into disrepute. Now it is probably one of the most important factors, depending where you work, and you are required to have a professional social media presence.

I am going to leave it to you to work out your social media strategy. There are many free tips online on how to have effective social media accounts that will do a much better job than I could. There are even freelance social media professionals who can manage your accounts for a fee, although I have never done this. Once you land a job, I'm sure the social media department would be more than happy to give you some pointers on how to build an audience and post appropriate content that is in step with the culture and brand of your workplace.

Be sure to use your social media with caution. We have all heard horror stories of someone posting a comment that was, or interpreted as being offensive. Every time you write something on a social media account, such as Twitter, you are publishing a comment that is difficult to remove before it's too late. As a rule of thumb you should assume that once you post something it will be available online forever, even if you delete it. Many TV presenters have been suspended or have lost their jobs because they let their guard down, posted something and inadvertently created a media firestorm. The last thing your company wants is negative press about their talent.

It is also a good idea to Google your name and see if anything that could be seen as inappropriate is linked to you in any way. Maybe get your friends to un-tag you from those photos you don't want your new boss to see. Delete any and all inappropriate postings from your own accounts. Remember those professional photos you had done? Upload those and tag your name to them so that when someone searches your name those images come up first. Create new, professional accounts where the sole aim is to promote you and your brand. That is what you are and are trying to be — a brand. As soon as you decided to become a television presenter, everything about you becomes part of a brand that you must develop over time. These days your online profile is extremely important, and even more so if you are trying to become a public figure. Start creating that brand online today and you never know what opportunities may arise.

I say 'opportunities' because I have gained a lot of work through social media accounts: I have picked up voice-over work through offers coming through my SoundCloud page; I have landed presenting work for commercials through a site called StarNow; and I have even landed a job reading the news for one of the largest national radio networks in Australia just by connecting with someone on LinkedIn and sending them a message. You will be amazed by the opportunities and the income streams you can generate if you manage your social media accounts effectively.



*Natural talent only takes you so far and then it's who's the hardest working.*

Trevor Borland

Sounds tough, doesn't it. Well, it's not if you love what you do. Let's just say at this point you have landed your first presenting job. Congratulations! Now the work really begins. You will be expected to put in long hours, sometimes even double shifts, especially if you work in a 24-hour news channel. Be prepared to work weekends, nights, early mornings. TV never sleeps! But don't let me put you off. You will thrive on the excitement each day brings and you will look forward to going in to work every day. How many people can say that about their job? Not many, I suspect.

At the end of this book you will hear from TV presenters who not only have talent, but are also where they are today because of their work ethic. They got promoted because every day they go above and beyond to be the best version of themselves on camera. You should never stop learning. You should never stop asking questions. Learn from the more experienced people around. Learn what other people in your company do and how they do their job and you'll see their respect for you grow in the workplace.

When I got my first job as a weather presenter on Foxtel, before my shift I would research the weather for a full hour at home, then go in to work an hour and a half early. I used this time to speak to my team, learn the graphics program and build shows, learn something I didn't know about the weather, memorise maps and geography — anything I could do to become a better weather presenter. Not every presenter during my time there did that. You need to make yourself so valuable that there is no way anyone could possibly think about letting you go — the place would fall apart without you!

After a few years of maintaining this routine, I was selected to train new presenters, build permanent shows and graphics and even manage the entire channel when the manager took leave. My 'talent' is not responsible for this. It was because I was prepared to do more than anyone else, every day. This is still my routine, whether I'm reading the news, presenting the weather, doing a lifestyle or promotional segment — you cannot be too prepared and it is the people who put this extra time in who have long fulfilling careers in TV. Your 'sickening work ethic' will come naturally to you if you love what you do. You may clock up quite a few hours extra a week, but you'll sleep well at night knowing that you are going to wake up and work at your dream job in the morning and that you have given yourself every opportunity to perform at your utmost best.



# Representation

*Surround yourself with only people who are going to lift you higher.*

Oprah Winfrey

No doubt by now you've looked into getting either an agent or manager. But do they work and are they beneficial? Your experience with agents will depend greatly on the particular agent — there are good and bad agents. They can definitely be useful, but you'll need to proceed with caution.

When I was young and impressionable, I spent some time in Brisbane. I wanted to work in a different location and see what the city had to offer. I thought an agent could plug me into the stream of work in Queensland and the marketing and promotion would be taken care of by someone else. So I went along to see an 'agent' not knowing anything about how they work or what the process was. I couldn't believe my luck when they said they wanted to sign me up straightaway! All I had to do was pay an upfront fee and I would be involved in the next big movie or production that was about to happen. I met with a 'director' who talked up a production coming up and thought I could audition for the role. I handed over my money and walked out of there thinking I'd just hit the jackpot and how lucky I was to be in the right place at the right time.

How wrong I was. After the initial meeting the agency stopped returning my calls and I found it extremely hard to contact them. A few weeks later there was an article in the paper about how this agency had been busted for being fraudulent and the man I had met with was being charged! I never reclaimed the money and felt like an idiot. Thankfully the industry is much more regulated now so it's harder to prey on young people who have stars in their eyes. It's also a lot easier to verify an agency online and hear what people say about them — but still proceed with caution. In my opinion, never go with an agent who is asking for an upfront fee. Agents should make their money by promoting you, finding you work and then taking a small cut of your earnings from that job. I have never paid an agent more than 10% commission for work performed through them. They also should not be taking a cut of any work that you find yourself. This also includes any full-time job.

A manager may be different. There are some differences between a manager and an agent. A manager should not only try and find you work and take care of your PR strategy, but may also negotiate contracts on your behalf and get you invited to high profile events. A successful friend of mine has had a good experience with a manager and has done very well for himself up to this point, but I'm fairly certain he has to pay the manager a percentage of *everything* he makes for a period of time, even if he should find a full-time job. Would he have gotten where he is without the manager? Perhaps. He is extremely talented and ambitious. You have to be careful that the manager you select to represent you understands exactly the sort of career you want, but also does not just sit back and take your money without earning it. They may also be managing several other presenters or actors and you may not get the attention you deserve. I have never had a manager and probably never will. I find that I'm a pretty good manager of my own career. It is a personal preference, but requires a fair amount of research.

Experiences with agents can vary greatly and I've seen both ends of the spectrum of great agents and bad agents. I once signed up to a very well-known agency in Sydney and within the first month I picked up a presenting contract through them for Telstra that lasted 12 months and made us both some great money. During this time the same agent was also getting me work with other very high profile multinational companies and I thought I would never have to look for my own work again. A year later, the work dried up. I stayed with them for two more years but only did two small jobs before I left them for another agent. It can happen — you stop being 'flavour of the month' or they become too big and sign too many people, or they sign talent with a higher profile and put them forward for all the work instead of you. There could be a variety of reasons for this fluctuation, but what I do know is it is never a steady stream of work.

I have gained some incredible and very high paying freelance jobs through agents in the past, but

it's also been difficult at times managing them, especially as I was already employed as a presenter somewhere. When you get a full-time presenting job at a network, you will have to sign a contract. If you can, show this contract to a lawyer and get them to explain in simple terms what your obligations and restrictions are. You may have to negotiate terms to even be allowed to have an agent in the first place, but that's unlikely. What may happen is that the TV station will seek to restrict you from performing on camera outside of your own station, which would render an agent useless.

You may be able to get around this by getting your employer to agree to sign off on outside projects. They may agree to this as it prevents their talent showing up in a TV commercial that may not reflect the network's values, or a commercial promoting a competitor. Juggling this can be hard. It sometimes takes too long to get written permission for a job from a manager who has better things to do than review your dealings outside the channel. By then it's too late, you've missed the job and your agent has missed a potential payday. Of course, this is not a problem if you work as a freelancer and are not locked into a contract. If this is your situation I would recommend researching and finding a great agent. You may be surprised by some of the work that you get from an agent and it is exciting because every day will be different.

When taking a job, whether it be from an agent or one you've found yourself, don't just think about how much you are getting paid. Think about each job you complete as part of your permanent record. Is there anything about the product or service or company you are promoting that could be viewed in a negative light? The extreme example is doing an ad for 'Girls Gone Wild' or something similar. In this day and age you need to be extremely careful about what you are putting your name and face to. There have been presenters in the past that have taken a pay cheque to promote something and it has been construed as a sexist ad, or promoting something that could damage the environment. A lot of harm can be done to your reputation in a short amount of time. Take those safe jobs with respected and responsible companies, use your own judgment and you should be fine.



*I don't have time to feel sorry for myself. I don't have time to complain. I am going to press on.*

Barack Obama

I hope reading this book has helped you in some way towards landing your first role on TV. While writing this, I tried to imagine what I would love to have known when I was in the same position and what I wish I could have asked or had someone tell me. It would have saved a lot of time and worry! This is the main reason I took the time to put this guide together. What you have just read are the insights and experiences of just one person working in the industry. But don't stop here! I have hand-picked some of Australia's hardest working and experienced professionals working on air today to give you their insights into their own experiences and to provide you with advice from the inside. These presenters come from all walks of life and some have many more years of experience than I have. There are even people here who were my own personal mentors and role models and to have them included in this book is humbling for me, but extremely valuable for you. Read what they have to say carefully. If they can teach me the art of TV presenting then they can certainly teach you as well. I would not have had the experiences or career I've had so far if it weren't for the generous people who helped me along the way.

These people gave a guy from the country a chance and believed that I could be greater than I was.

I always remember this and pay it back to them with hard work and determination. If you do this as well, you will become known as a person who can be relied upon. Be that person they can call at the last minute for an extra shift because someone called in sick. Be dependable and a team player. Don't make crazy demands or be a diva. This industry is very small and if you get a reputation somewhere as a nightmare to work with, it will plague you forever and limit your future opportunities. It seems obvious, but I've seen my share of diva moments in my time. Sometimes people snap under pressure, it's a fact of life in a high-stress, fast-paced environment where sometimes people have been up since 3am, but try to be respectful and make it fun to work with you. Always remember, your producers and colleagues are not robots or servants. They are just as passionate about the product that is getting broadcast into people's lounge rooms as you are.

You will make mistakes, which is okay, but remember your producers will also make mistakes, which will sometimes make you look silly on air. It happens. Unfortunately, when something goes wrong, you are the one standing there looking like a fool in front of the whole country. This is just a fact of life of live television as technical errors can happen. Computers and autocues crash. Being able to handle mistakes and carry on with the broadcast is one of the most important skills you can have. And if it was the mistake of the producer, don't fly off the handle at them as soon as you are clear from studio. Laugh it off! If you looked silly, remember that is on you. Yes, something technical may have gone wrong, but you could have turned that into a positive by cracking jokes or turning it into a game and making the viewer laugh with you until the situation is resolved. If you do this successfully, just watch how many positive comments about you come through on social media! I guarantee it.



# Q and A With the Stars

It's now time to hear from some seriously talented people whose careers have eclipsed my own. Does that matter? Not one bit. These are people I look up to in the industry and why the following pages are probably the most valuable. Each person was told to be honest, not to hold back and was given free rein to discuss anything they thought was important that might help you.

As a result, what follows are extremely thoughtful bits of wisdom that will no doubt give you guidance for your journey. These are also people with personalities who are trained to entertain, so you will find swearing and laughter. But they are all genuine in their approach. Let's begin.

## GAVIN MORRIS

Gavin was really my first mentor in TV. I was his replacement once he made the shift from Fox-tel in Sydney working as one of the full-time weather forecasters and presenters on The Weather Channel. A huge lover of coast lifestyle — surfing and hang-gliding — Gav made the decision to head up NBN News' weather studio in Newcastle. This inspired me to make the move to Canberra to present the news and weather for Prime7, as I love skiing and mountain bike riding.

I was impressed by Gavin's ability to instantly relate to any audience and his incredible knowledge about the weather and how it affects people. When I started my first TV gig as a weather presenter, I was instructed to 'just do what Gavin does'. So I planted myself under Gav's wing and he was more than happy to help me find my feet in front of the camera. This is why Gavin is in this book. He was one of the first people I thought about when I had the idea to do this.

Gavin Morris's experience in the industry, not just in Australia, is far ranging. Before TV, Gav had a 10-year career in radio as an announcer. After that, he travelled the world and landed on his feet in New York with his first TV gig working as a presenter for ESPN. Since returning to Australia, Gav has featured on The Movie Network, Prime Television, Network 7 and, of course, Foxtel and Network 9.

In my opinion, Gavin is one of the best weather presenters in Australia today, and I'm extremely happy to bring you his thoughts on presenting and the industry now.

### **1. What is it about your job that makes you get up in the morning?**

*My lifestyle! See, that's the thing for me. I would be doing what I do in regards to my work, checking the weather on a daily basis even if I wasn't a weather presenter. I'm one of those people who have a crossover, blending work with play. It's an incredible place to be as everything I love doing personally involves the weather and knowing what it is going to do. So it is just as important to me as it is to my audience.*

## **2. What are the best things about working on camera every day?**

*Working on camera is unique. It's you and a machine but the connection through it needs to be 100% human. Truly understanding that can take some time — many people never really get it. I also love the camaraderie on the floor. When you work with a team you build something quite special with the camera crew and fellow presenters because it's a small team that broadcasts to thousands — if you're lucky enough, millions. Crazy when you think about it.*

*Hair and make-up is also fun, believe it or not. It gives you a break from the machine and your make-up artist does actually end up becoming a kind of therapist, as you talk about everything and nothing ever leaves the room. (Not with the good ones, anyway.)*

## **3. What are the worst things about working on camera every day?**

*I'm trying to think of something, but I can't. It's something that I've enjoyed my whole life. It's what I trained and studied for. To me, my time on camera is too short so I cherish every second and constantly strive to make every second count and be the best I can be every time the red light comes on. I love it.*

## **4. What do you think is the reason why you made it in the industry?**

*I genuinely love what I do! I respect what I do, my employer and the people that help me do it. I don't whinge or get involved in workplace politics.*

## **5. If you could go back in time and tell yourself one thing when you were starting out, what would that be?**

*Even though I'm very happy with where I am in my life and career, if there is one thing I could change it would be to be more prepared for the big opportunities that came early in my career. There are two things that happen if you are not.*

*Number one: You get that big job but you don't cut it and your career ends up being like a big 'Fire Cracker'. Everyone sees it, but it fades very quickly and everyone forgets they saw it. (That wasn't me, thank God).*

*The second is: You don't score the big job because you weren't ready at that particular time. Your ferry arrives but leaves without you. Waiting for the next ferry can take some time and it may not be the ferry you should, or want to, be on and there's nothing you can do about it until it reaches the next wharf. You then have to decide, do I get off or stay on a ferry I don't really want to be on?*

**6. What is the best thing someone could do when trying to land an on-air role?**

*Work hard at knowing your subject. I've always taught this to presenters I've helped over the years. If you know your subject inside out, media is easy. The ones who are bluffing or trying to be something they're not on a subject they don't really know anything about, don't last long. Fire Crackers. The longer you are in the business the more Fire Crackers you will come across. Their explosions can be quite spectacular but you forget their names quickly. So don't be a Fire Cracker.*

**7. What is the worst thing someone could do when trying to land an on-air role?**

*Have an oversized ego. Egos in our business aren't all bad, but your ego has to be smaller than your talent and ability. If it is the other way around you'll be a Fire Cracker. Focus more on confidence in your ability. Knowing and being aware of your ability is very important in managing your career over a long period.*

**8. Do you think it's harder or easier to get an on-air role than 10 years ago and why?**

*It's never been easy. It is one of the most competitive markets on the planet. Always has been, always will be. The truth is, you have to offer something special. Special comes in so many different forms. It's up to you to figure out what makes you special and what you can offer to the public. If they decide they like you, you then have to find a boss that does as well.*

**9. Is the life of a TV presenter going to be different in 10 years' time? If so, how would you prepare for that now?**

*Evolve! I recently celebrated 30 years in the media. I've never been a major household name, but my work has allowed me to travel the world doing everything I wanted from it and now raise a family in an environment I want to be in. The reason for this is that I have evolved through the years working with, not against, the evolution of media.*

**10. With the way people consume content changing so rapidly, what things have you done to stay relevant and to move with the times?**

*I'm sure most people will answer, 'with my Twitter accounts I do this ... on Facebook I do that... on Instagram, this' etc. These are important but none of these pay my wage. I work my ass off and focus on giving my TV audience a one-stop shop during my segment. All the information I give is available to them online but most don't have the time to look it up separately. That's my job. If they can get everything they need in my TV segment and I deliver it accurately in the shortest amount of time, then all the rest will come.*

**11. Is there anything else you would say to someone working towards an on-air role?**

*In the early 90s when my TV career was starting to take off my then manager said to me, 'Do you cook?' I said, 'A little.' His response was, 'I recommend you go and learn to cook really well because I think TV chefs in the future are going to make a lot of money. If not, go learn landscaping or a profession like that so you can be part of a lifestyle show.' At the time I didn't understand what he was trying to tell me.*

*Right there is the key to a successful media career. Know your profession! It's one thing to be a host, but if you don't have a craft or an interest in something that you are truly a master at, something you love, your career will be short. You have to make yourself a commodity. Understanding this is really important.*

*My advice is to get really good at just one thing and eventually somebody will pay you good money for that one thing.*

*Good Luck.*

# AHRON YOUNG

When Sky News eventually took over The Weather Channel, I was fortunate enough to continue in my role as presenter for Sky News. Ahron Young was one of the first people I wanted to get to know. When watching Sky News I was constantly amazed that Ahron was there at almost every major event, reporting live, from the ground. This man has been everywhere from Afghanistan, to the Boxing Day Tsunami in Thailand and the London Bombings. He has even worked in London as a European correspondent for Southern Cross Radio. Ahron has some serious journalism kudos under his belt and was given an ASTRA Award in 2013 for being the Most Outstanding Broadcast Journalist.

His coverage from Melbourne Airport of the Qantas groundings was nominated for a *TV Week* Logie award in 2012; he's had a state premier sing him Happy Birthday during a live interview; and he's even featured as a news reader in two episodes of the popular TV show *Wentworth*.

Ahron is now a Sky News Anchor and the Melbourne Bureau Chief where he manages 12 staff, and has hosted his own Victorian-focused news programs, such as *Melbourne Agenda* and *Victorian Agenda*.

I always looked forward to crossing live to Ahron when I was working at Sky News. I don't think I've ever seen him stumble on air. A true professional, and a great man to have in your corner.

## **1. What is it about your job that makes you get up in the morning?**

*The thrill of not knowing what's happened overnight. Last night Wall Street opened 1000 points down. I was watching live coverage overnight and before I knew it, it was 2am! I went to sleep wondering what I'd wake up to. I think that's a big part of why I do what I do. The excitement of doing something or covering something I've never done before.*

## **2. What are the best things about working on camera every day?**

*I try to be as polished as possible, which can be tricky to achieve in a news channel environment. Quite often behind the scenes things are unpredictable and a bit chaotic as multiple events happen at once. The trick of my job is to glide through them to make the bulletin look planned. I try to avoid a messy intro or link between live events. So I really enjoy learning what works and what doesn't work. Every day I learn something new about how best to handle a new situation. All goes in the memory bank.*

*Also just being part of a live event. Sometimes we are fortunate enough to be on air when something truly incredible happens. I remember once being on air when Ariel Sharon went into a coma. I was living and working in Moscow at the time, and I had to speak on air for 45 minutes about it with no notes. The skill of the ad lib is a privileged skill on a news channel. Most plans go out the window very quickly.*

*Note: 'Ad lib' is the ability to keep talking on air about the subject without using script or autocue.*

### **3. What are the worst things about working on camera every day?**

*That most plans go out the window very quickly! It's a double-edged sword. I enjoy the unpredictability of the job. Though you have to be in the right mood every day for the uncertain to happen. I started anchoring when I was 23 years old. I thought I was an expert back then! But when you sit down for a six-hour news shift during the day, anything can happen, at any-time, anywhere. And you have to be prepared for that. As I often say to my newer colleagues — breaking news and your big moment is unlikely to happen when you're looking your best, or on a day and time when you're in the right frame of mind. It's about always being switched on, or ready to go. I've cancelled a lot of plans over the years. It's not a job, it's literally a lifestyle that requires constant participation.*

### **4. What do you think is the reason why you made it in the industry?**

*Persistence and the ability to change quickly. At 17, I sent out 365 letters to every TV and radio station in the country. In the end, I got my first paid journalism job with the local paper where I grew up on the Mornington Peninsula. The editor could see potential in me. I made so many mistakes at first, but I used it to learn skills such as how to get a source to trust you, how to understand the people reading or watching your stories. It was invaluable. And it*

*was a small operation, so I learnt to set the pages and take the photos, as well as write the words. These days it's a privilege to be a paid journalist. The way to stay ahead of the pack is to make sure you're a jack-of-all-trades.*

**5. If you could go back in time and tell yourself one thing when you were starting out, what would that be?**

*That you're going to make it. I spent so much time panicked I'd never get in the door that I probably put too much pressure on myself. We are constantly told it's unlikely we'll get a job in the news industry. That the best years ended in the 80s. Rubbish. The best years are now. I wish I'd had 33-year-old Ahron to talk to when I was 16 or 17. There's no need to be in a rush. Calm and consistent is the best approach, and it's a fine line between keen and annoying!*

**6. What is the best thing someone could do when trying to land an on-air role?**

*Work on your voice all the time. I used to mimic radio newsreaders when driving in the car to work on inflection and pace. Eventually it becomes second nature. I used to have a lisp, and saying the letter 'L' was tricky, so I used to work on it all the time. I wouldn't avoid it, I'd go at it head on. Eventually I overcame it. To me, the sound is more important than the look. The look is subjective, whereas your voice is who you are. Remember, you're a journalist first and foremost.*

**7. What is the worst thing someone could do when trying to land an on-air role?**

*Focus only on their clothes and hair. Plenty of people will do that for you. You need to focus on the things that make you special. Your general knowledge and your manner on air are really important. You want to be friendly, knowledgeable and easy to watch. I see a lot of young people try to stand out from the crowd. I think consistently delivering a solid product helps you stand out. Also, when you start, lots of people will give you free advice. If you are there simply for the excitement of being on TV and 'the look', the constant subjective jabs of people, even if they mean well, will wear you down. You need to believe in yourself to overcome it.*

**8. Do you think it's harder or easier to get an on-air role than 10 years ago and why?**

*I think it's the easiest time ever. Until 10 years ago, the only place you could get an on-air role was radio or TV, and the choices were limited. These days, every newspaper has a video department. And websites are springing up everywhere with easy on-air roles. Foxtel and Freeview have brought more opportunities to be on air as well, such as Sky News. I think the tricky part isn't getting the job, it's keeping the job. The long hours, the hard work, the constant expectations to be available on weekends. A lot of people burn out. Between 20 and 22, I spent 18 months reading news from 8pm to 4am on 3AW on Thursday to Sunday nights. While all my mates were out, I was reading the news. I stuck it out because it was a great opportunity. Even these days I read news every second weekend. Why? Because it's a great opportunity. That's how it works.*

**9. Is the life of a TV presenter going to be different in 10 years' time? If so, how would you prepare for that now?**

*It's constantly changing even now. I don't just present, I run a bureau of seven staff, including hiring and dealing with HR issues. I'm in charge of our studios and crew car, relationships with police, government and courts. I do the rosters every Monday morning while I'm reading the news. And I love to report. So, quite often after I introduce a story on air, while it's playing, I'm writing a one minute 30 package, voice it, then edit it to be on air in the next bulletin. I think a big change is that anchors are also on-the-road reporters. All news channels in the world seem to be moving in that direction. CNN kicked it off, where their anchors go into the field and can be fired on while reporting! A few days after I started anchoring for Sky, I was sent to Afghanistan to report with the Australian Army. I'm of the view that reporting skills make a better anchor, and anchor skills make a better reporter.*

**10. With the way people consume content changing so rapidly, what things have you done to stay relevant and to move with the times?**

*I invest heavily in technology. Things like iPad prompters. Last December I was sent to Cairns to anchor our coverage of the eight children murdered just before Christmas. It was a horrible story. I took my iPad with me, and producers would email me the news bulletins*

*scripts. I'd then load them up during the break, attach the iPad to the camera, then use my iPhone to control the remote autocue. Because I can do it, I get given opportunities like that. I've also invested in a home studio, so I can film and send reports quickly either at night or on weekends. I also have a microphone that attaches to my iPhone so if I'm out somewhere and something happens, I can quickly voice a report and get it on air fast while I figure out what we will do. I also use social media both for research and to bring audiences online into our TV coverage. It's become an invaluable tool to figure out what's really happening somewhere, rather than relying on traditional sources. You still rely on police and paramedics etc., but it's also good to see from the point of view of eyewitnesses.*

**11. Is there anything else you would say to someone working towards an on-air role?**

*Work on your voice. Read as much as you can and as widely as you can. Don't bring your ideology along. You might be conservative, or socially progressive, but the news is the news. And a job is a job. And when you're applying for a job, make sure you spell the manager's name correctly!*

# EMMA FREEDMAN

You may have noticed most of the talent featured in this book are men. Believe me when I say this was not intentional! I know and have worked with a lot of extremely talented women in television, and so you can imagine my excitement when Emma agreed to contribute! Not just because she is a woman, of course, but also because she is a superstar.

I actually didn't get to know Emma through the industry, but rather through a family connection. Emma's rise to fame began in 2010 when she started presenting the weather for *Weekend Today* on the Nine Network. It was evident straightaway that she was headed for the big time with her friendly, natural and relatable personality. Her infectious smile and laugh made the show's live crosses fun no matter what the location or situation. The network bosses were noticing as well. Emma was soon presenting the weather alongside Steve Jacobs on Nine's flagship program *The Today Show* and it wasn't long before Emma Freedman was a household name.

Emma comes from a well-known, established horse racing family and has featured on TV from quite a few Spring Racing Carnivals. With fashion such a large part of the racing industry, David Jones sought to capitalise on this combination and made Emma an ambassador. But it was also Emma's love of sport that saw her appearing in Nine's *Wide World of Sports*, her versatility on screen helping her to gain mass audience appeal.

Since leaving *The Today Show* her media career has gone from strength to strength starring and winning *Dancing with the Stars* in 2015 and in the same year beginning a successful radio career hosting *The Scoopla Show* alongside Jules Lund on Today's Hit Network across the country. Ladies and Gentleman, Emma Freedman.

## **1. What is it about your job that makes you get up in the morning?**

*So many things. I just love being able to be creative every day and to work with a bunch of people who make me laugh until I nearly pass out. For me, it's all about innovation, enjoying working hard, being surrounded by legends who are the best in the business and variety. I'm a simple creature, but I definitely couldn't work the same 9 to 5 every day. The constant*

*change in my workday keeps me motivated and inspired.*

**2. What are the best things about working on camera/radio every day?**

*Best things are the people, creative nature of the work, how it makes me feel. I genuinely feel a great joy and buzz when I am working. Everything about both mediums I seriously love. Being able to tell stories with words, sounds, music and pictures is a privilege and a whole lot of fun. I also love the fact I can be myself. I'm not anyone else other than me when I'm on and off air and I'm very grateful both of my bosses as well as listeners and viewers are cool with that.*

**3. What are the worst things about working on camera/radio every day?**

*Everyone will say the hours. They are random and unpredictable. Some days you're up at 3am and may not wrap until 10pm (no word of a lie). Other days I might only work six hours in the afternoon. The weekend work can be great, but can also cut into personal time, too. Be under no illusions though, work is still work and we all have days where we would rather not be in the office but on a beach in Mexico. It's human nature.*

**4. What do you think is the reason why you made it in the industry?**

*Well, for you to even think I've made it, I'm flattered! I think I have plenty of things to work on. You never stop learning and I don't think many people in our industry can ever say they've made it. I don't have many skills. I can talk, write and laugh and that's about it. Not sure any other industries would have had me. Plus I'm fairly quirky and unusual sometimes — in any other workplace I stick out like a sore thumb. Around the 2DayFM offices I fit in a treat. We're all as kooky as each other.*

**5. If you could go back in time and tell yourself one thing when you were starting out, what would that be?**

*Everything happens for a reason. I believe firmly in that now but I don't think I always have. Gotta trust in the process.*

**6. What is the best thing someone could do when trying to land an on-air role?**

*There are so many things... Don't be an asshole, be yourself, work hard, be nice, kindness is key, don't talk about yourself a shitload, listen, ask questions. Being on air is what it is... but you're still part of a bigger, broader team. You're not the most important person. When you start thinking that, get out because you're wrong and you've turned into that asshole I was talking about.*

**7. What is the worst thing someone could do when trying to land an on-air role?**

*See above. Lol.*

**8. Do you think it's harder or easier to get an on-air role than 10 years ago and why?**

*It's probably easier. There are so many online opportunities and a huge variety of channels creating content. I think the typical profile of a presenter has changed as well. You can be so many different things and present. It's not a 'one mould' bill any more. I think diversity is celebrated and encouraged.*

**9. Is the life of a TV presenter going to be different in 10 years' time? If so, how would you prepare for that now?**

*Probably. I think the hours will stay lengthy. I think you've got to be innovative in the way you create content but, in the long run, you can't reinvent the wheel with presenting. There are still benchmarks to hit and ways of presenting that will stand the test of time. I think you've got to be willing to be multi-skilled though. Whether you can shoot, write, edit and produce. And that's not just to get a job and keep it. I mean that more in a way that it's a saturated market and full-time positions are hard to come by. Freelancing in a variety of fields I think really keeps things interesting. I have a home base in radio where I am five days a week and that's my priority. And then I do plenty of other little things on the side. It means I learn a lot more as well.*

**10. With the way people consume content changing so rapidly, what things have you done to stay relevant and to move with the times?**

*I'm not sure I'm terribly innovative with new ways to generate content on a technical level, but I'm open minded and flexible. There is nothing worse in this industry than when someone is so totally set in their ways. Having some old school values is absolutely fine, if that's what you stand for, but there are some people who refuse to budge. Their way or the highway, so to speak. Staying relevant is about immersing yourself in a variety of different mediums, with people who expand your mind and to just stay on top of the changes. In terms of social media, you've got to stay true to what you believe in, whether that be creating individualised content or keeping things 'strictly business'. Choose a method and stick to it. The actual consumption of content (and I assume you mean digitally as it's so prolific nowadays) is changing every day. But one thing that I think we are all noticing is the integration of sponsored content is massive. If you're going to get involved with that, just stick to your beliefs and don't compromise what you believe in. It's a fine line. But we can't all work for free. The money has to come from somewhere.*

**11. Is there anything else you would say to someone working towards an on-air role?**

*Be patient. But be open-minded. I love producing as much as I like being on air, and that's the truth. You need to love the whole industry and every part of it. There's no job too small. Plus be yourself, never try and be someone else. People can smell it a mile away...*

# JOSH HOLT

How many people out there do you think could choose between having a successful career as a sportsman, or a successful career as a television presenter? Before choosing TV full time, Josh won three first-grade Sydney Cricket Premierships, played cricket overseas in England for two years and was on his way to the national level of the sport.

Currently the nightly news and weather presenter for Network Ten in Queensland, Josh's total belief in his own abilities is the reason I believe he's had so much success in his career. Since I've known Josh he's never shielded himself from challenges or hard work and the people that go above and beyond what is needed are the ones who do the best. It's that 'sickening work ethic', natural skill and charm that has allowed Josh to rise through the markets of TV.

I first met the highly trained and educated Josh when I started presenting on The Weather Channel. By that stage, Josh was one of the full-time presenters on the morning show with Magdelana Roze. I was instantly impressed at how comfortable he was on live TV, and how many hours he was on TV for every day! Not only that, there were also countless live radio crosses peppered through his busy TV shift, with radio programs all around the country wanting his down-to-earth take on what was happening weatherwise. We are roughly the same age, and when I first started with Foxtel, I knew that if I wanted to be as good as Josh, I was going to have to work as hard as he did.

If you look at some of Josh's work online, make sure you take note of his on-location work, in particular his highly commended work during the Brisbane flood crisis and Cyclone Yasi in 2011. The ability to tell the story while having the worst thrown at you is why he was nominated for Most Outstanding Performance by a Broadcast Journalist at the 2010 and 2012 ASTRA Awards.

## **1. What is it about your job that makes you get up in the morning?**

*When I first started in television, I did the morning program on what used to be known as The Weather Channel on Foxtel. It was a Monday to Friday 3.30am get-up every day, so, to be totally honest, it was actually extremely painful and it never got any easier over a five-year period. You have to be disciplined and give up a lot when living that lifestyle otherwise you*

*would never survive. When I get out of bed each morning I know the day will be different from the day before. In weather and in news, you never know what's around the corner or what story is about to break, so that makes it very exciting.*

## **2. What are the best things about working on camera every day?**

*Nothing beats a live television environment. As stories break, it's our job to be the storytellers. I have had the wonderful opportunity over the last 10 years to cover some huge weather events. Whether it's been a Category 5 Cyclone or in the middle of the Brisbane flood crisis, it is a big responsibility to get the most up-to-date and accurate information broadcast to viewers. I love being able to take a viewer who is sitting in their living room and try and make them feel like they are there with me.*

## **3. What are the worst things about working on camera every day?**

*Make-up. Plain and simple. When I was little I was a little terror when Mum took me for a haircut. I found it boring and all I wanted to do was get out of the chair and run around. Nothing much has changed.*

## **4. What do you think is the reason why you made it in the industry?**

*I don't really think I have 'made it' at all. I have been very fortunate in my career so far to have been given some wonderful opportunities to work in this amazing industry. In saying that I have also worked my backside off to repay the faith that has been shown to me over the last decade. I know I have got a long way to go, but I am enjoying every moment and I always try and learn something new each day. If I can do that and keep pushing myself I know I will only get better.*

## **5. If you could go back in time and tell yourself one thing when you were starting out, what would that be?**

*It would be 'don't worry about all the little things that happen'. Along the way you will work with some interesting people who you may not get along with. When that happens it's import-*

*ant to let all those little things go and not let it wind you up and affect the way you do your job. I would say just concentrate on yourself and forget other people.*

**6. What is the best thing someone could do when trying to land an on-air role?**

*The hardest thing to do when you start out is always being yourself. That may sound silly, however, when most people begin their careers they more often than not have a preconceived idea of what or who they want to be like and then mould their performance around that. It's the worst thing you can do. Anyone that has been successful in this industry has had their own unique way of presenting and that's what the viewer will eventually relate to and like.*

*The other piece of advice I would give would be learn how to be a strong ad-libber. Any report or live cross that I do on the weather, no matter how long, is totally unscripted and off the cuff. News these days is all about live crosses and being in the moment. You have to be able to immerse yourself in a situation and tell a story and sometimes that can go on for a long period of time. If you cannot ad lib you will find this extremely hard to do. To help yourself with this skill set, learn your subject matter. If you don't know what you are talking about, you will come unstuck very quickly.*

**7. What is the worst thing someone could do when trying to land an on-air role?**

*Not understand the hard work that it takes to get that role. Everyone basically has to do their time. This may involve taking up a position in a regional area, working behind the camera instead of in front of it, or even working terrible hours. If you are not prepared to do the hard work early, then choose another career.*

**8. Do you think it's harder or easier to get an on-air role than 10 years ago and why?**

*I think it's always been hard. However, due to ad revenue dropping during the last 10 years, free-to-air networks do not have the pool of money they once had to pour into production. This has a flow-on effect, including the amount of positions for on-air talent.*

**9. Is the life of a TV presenter going to be different in 10 years' time? If so, how would you**

**prepare for that now?**

*I think the landscape of TV is forever changing and to survive in this industry one must adapt with it along the way. The best way to do this is to constantly upgrade your skills, learn more tools and try to add as many strings to your bow as possible. You never know what lies around the corner and if you have more to offer as a presenter than someone else it will only work in your favour.*

**10. With the way people consume content changing so rapidly, what things have you done to stay relevant and to move with the times?**

*In recent years I have tried to improve at social media and using the internet to cross promote what I am doing on television. To be perfectly honest, I have always found keeping up on social media difficult. It is constant thing that you always have to do and keep up with right throughout the day.*

**11. Is there anything else you would say to someone working towards an on-air role?**

*You must love what you do and have an absolute passion for it. You have to want the job for the right reasons and be prepared to do the hard work. However, things will not always go to plan, and there will be tough times ahead, but the love and passion for what you do will always be your strongest tool to get you where you want to go.*

# RON WILSON

I first met Ron when I started filling in for the Nova news readers in their Pyrmont studios. At the time, I knew Ron Wilson was reading the news for Smooth FM, but what I didn't know was Smooth FM and the Nova newsrooms are in the same room and I would be sitting next to one of television's greats. At the time Ron was busy writing the next bulletin in the drive shift, and when I was introduced he stopped what he was doing immediately, came over and shook my hand with the biggest smile. I grew up watching Ron on TV as a kid, at a time when you subconsciously formulate ideas about what you want to do in life and who your idols are. If you are serious about wanting to succeed in any profession, it is so important to learn from people who have a ton of experience and are better than you. After my initial star-struck moment wore off, I settled into the role, gaining more and more shifts, with the desire and intent of learning as much as I could from Ron.

I bothered him with so many questions, asked for feedback on my own presenting, asked anything I could on how I could become a better journalist, and he was more than happy to help. I would sit there in awe when he told his stories about how, in his early TV days, they used to gather stories for the news, for example, editing was cutting the reel-to-reel tape and physically splicing it back together. Ron is an extremely funny man and I would laugh constantly through my workday. We would argue about different political opinions and talk about the snow and skiing. Ron is still winning awards for news reading, and also happens to be one of the nicest guys you will ever meet.

To list Ron's experience and achievements across the decades he's been working in TV and radio in Australia would require a whole chapter in itself, and I'm sure if you haven't already heard of Ron Wilson, you can search online. I encourage you to learn about his career as one of the best, if not the best, newsreaders in Australia. It is such a humbling honour to have worked with Ron and to be able to pass on his experience to you now.

## **1. What is it about your job that makes you get up in the morning?**

*The challenge and excitement of documenting history. Many news journalists forget that every day they are putting their spin on the annals of time.*

*It is a great responsibility.*

*I think if we occasionally remind ourselves of what we are really doing, it gives the job great value. Also, the first thing most people do every day is turn on a news bulletin. It gives them a glimpse of how the world has fared since they retired the previous evening. It tells them what to wear, if they will be able to put food on the table and how they might entertain the family next weekend. I love the fact that people are influenced in so many ways by the things I say and the advice we give them.*

## **2. Can you tell me how you got your first job in TV?**

*My family lived in Darwin when I finished school in 1973. My mum and dad were very keen on me becoming a solicitor. Like an obedient son, I took up law studies externally through the University of Queensland. It also required me to become an articled clerk to a licenced lawyer. My master at law was Dean Mildren of Mildren & Co Solicitors. I hated it.*

*Not so much the law... but lawyers. They really fancied themselves above the rest of us. An articled clerk is pretty much slave labour. You work a full week and get \$30 for it. In Darwin, that wasn't even beer money. I drove taxis at night to earn extra money.*

*A friend of mine did a little kid's show on the local television station, NTD8, every afternoon. It took him about an hour to record the voice-overs for it and he got paid about the same as I did for a shift behind the wheel.*

*Just before Christmas in 1973 he decided to leave. He asked if I was interested in taking over the show. I said, 'Why not!'*

*I met Jim Touhmey, the station manager. He said they were going to can the kid's show, but they were looking for someone to read a few minutes of news at night. Again, I said, 'Why not!'*

*He gave me a bunch of scripts to read. Having never read aloud in my life and spending most of my school life in remedial English classes, I did not produce the best result. Not to be put off, Mr Touhmey told me to go away and practise and come back the next week.*

*I did. He saw improvement... and here we are more than 40 years later.*

### *3. What are the best things about working on camera?*

*I love working on camera, but it wasn't always so. Live hosting of functions left me absolutely weak at the knees. It's amazing how self-critical you can become. Every molehill becomes a mountain. Times have changed. These days I love it.*

*It comes down to the 'don't give a shit' syndrome. It's a condition that strikes people at different stages of their lives. Sometimes it never happens. It's the day that you can stand on a stage or in front of a camera and push everything to one side, especially self-doubt. It's like putting on a suit of armour. A disguise of sorts. It is the art of the actor.*

*Every producer or other adviser who has never stood in front of an audience, just says 'relax and be yourself'. I have never found this to be the answer. You have to imagine what you want to be and act out that role. As for relaxation, what you have to do is act relaxed and in control.*

*Nerves are there to be embraced. They pump you full of adrenaline. They increase your awareness to the point where time actually slows down. You often hear people struck with nerves saying that moment felt like forever. That is the gift of adrenaline. Athletes have the ability to slow their breathing and their heart rate while using adrenaline to make everything around them slow down. This allows anyone with the skill to think through a situation that may only be moments in real time.*

*Practise this method. It may take years to achieve, but it gives you tremendous control of otherwise calamitous situations. Am I blathering on yet? It is a bad habit of mine!*

*So what is the best thing about working on camera... that's easy. It is THE RUSH!*

### **4. What are the worst things about working on camera every day?**

*The worst thing about being on camera is the self-assessment. You need to be able to see between the praise and criticism to assess the reality of what you are doing. Many on-cam-*

*era people seem to be hardest hit by the petty nit picking of the audience, or more precisely, certain elements of the audience. That is why the self-assessment angle is so important.*

*Having worked on camera for more than 40 years, I know there is also a loss of anonymity. Most of us crave the recognition that comes with working in the public eye, but it can be a two-edged sword.*

*Even the slightest indiscretion can become a major problem.*

## **5. What do you think is the reason why you made it in this industry?**

*Persistence, consistency and don't try to fake it. I used the expression 'Why not!' earlier. You might have noticed I made it a statement, not a question. 'Why not!' is a state of mind, not a resignation to the inevitable.*

*In this industry take every opportunity to prove yourself. There is no place for self-doubt. I came through the journalism grading system before there were university degrees in media. You started as a cadet then became a D grade journo then D+ and so on. By the age of 23 I had achieved the highest level, a super A grade.*

*Once you have stepped up and proved yourself, the next challenge is to achieve consistency. I always say anyone can do my job on a good day... but try it on a bad day. That's when you earn your pay.*

*That leads to the third point: don't try to fake it. There is an old saying in this business: the camera never lies. Never. The audience can spot a wanker a mile off. Almost always, they'll give you one chance to prove yourself. Getting a second chance is a whole other ball game.*

## **6. If you could go back in time and tell yourself one thing when you were first starting out, what would that be?**

*Everyone has an agenda.*

*Perhaps I was a little too trusting of many people... perhaps gullible. This industry is full*

*of people who promise the world, but when it comes to the crunch, their memories are very short. Try not to owe favours. Achieve success on your own merits.*

**7. What is the best thing someone can do when trying to land an on-air role?**

*Don't oversell yourself. I have worked with many people over the years who came with a big build-up only to let everyone down, including themselves.*

*Be persistent. Don't take 'no' for a final answer. It's only ever 'no' for today. The industry is always changing, so don't be disheartened. Sometimes going around the problem is more effective than trying to climb over it. You do not know everything! And having a degree doesn't change that statement. Be prepared to learn at every opportunity.*

*And a word for those on work experience or internships. The most important thing you can take away from any workplace experience is contacts. Build personal relationship so you have points of contact for the future and never leave any work experience situation without making arrangements to get back in. Even if it is only for a coffee every now and then.*

**8. What's the worst thing someone can do when trying to land an on-air role?**

*A big ego is the one thing above all else that is despised in the industry. Every successful on-air program is the result of teamwork.*

*Treat those around you very well because in a sticky situation they can make or break you.*

**9. Do you think it's harder or easier to land an on-air role than 10 years ago and why?**

*This is a yes and no answer.*

*The reason I think it is easier to get on air these days is that most employers have lowered their standards. They are often looking for adequate talent rather than great talent. The main driver of this is cost. In my view, this lowers things like reporting and journalism skills in the industry generally. More expensive, highly skilled workers are forced out with the loss of all their experience and mentoring.*

*The reason I think it's harder to get on air these days is the number of people jockeying for jobs. Journalism and media courses are pumping out huge numbers of graduates, while the industry is actually contracting.*

**10. Is the life of a TV or radio presenter going to be different in 10 years' time? If so, how would you prepare for that now?**

*This industry changes at a rapid pace.*

*I started in the early 70s just as the Vietnam War was coming to an end. In those days cameramen were shooting 16mm black-and-white film in the war zone. It didn't reach TV screens in Australia until a week later.*

*In the second Gulf War in 2003 I was talking live to journalists embedded with coalition forces in the lead tanks as they raced across the deserts of Iraq.*

*At RVN2 in Wagga Wagga in 1975, I was shooting news footage with a clockwork Bell and Howell 16mm film camera, which you had to wind up with a big key on the side.*

*Today we shoot news with iPhones and upload it straight to the station.*

*I always worked as a reader, reporter, producer, director, researcher and anything else that came along. Even 10 years ago the various roles within any station or news department were well defined. Today, everyone does everything. I think that is the key to the future.*

*Be aware of what everyone around you is doing and broaden your skills as much as possible. Working in country and regional stations, we used to be able to do a bit of everything. Try not to become pigeonholed in just one role.*

**11. With the way people consume content changing so rapidly, what have you done to move with the times?**

*Keep up with technology and remain relevant. Relevance to the audience is always a vital*

*ingredient in a media career. Learn to relate to the audience as easily as possible and talk to them, not down to them. The technology side of things has been hard but crucial. I'm no tech head, but I have made it a point to stay up with whatever is relevant to my role.*

*You have to remember mobile phones weren't available until I was well into my 30s and the World Wide Web (www) wasn't introduced until 1991.*

## **12. Is there anything else you would say to someone working towards an on-air role?**

*For most people, getting a journalism or media degree is just the very start of a long road to getting an on-air role. You can work hard, get to know all the right people and still not make it. Take every opportunity that is presented to you, even though a gig in the back o' Bourke may not have been what you had in mind, it is still experience.*

*If opportunities don't present themselves, it is up to you to make them.*

*I remember in the Ten newsroom we used to leave work experience students to read the paper ... and see how long it would take them to realise it was up to them to find out what was going on. Some could sit the whole day. Others would last an hour before getting up and start asking questions. They were the ones most likely to make it.*

*Then there is the most important ingredient of all — luck.*

*Good luck to you. You'll need it.*

# MATT DE GROOT

Matt de Groot is the reason why I love LinkedIn. I knew of Matt as we had, once upon a time, worked at Canberra FM, but not at the same time. We connected on LinkedIn. At the time I was reading the news and presenting the weather on a freelance basis on Sky News. I really wanted to do some radio again and found Matt de Groot on LinkedIn as I knew he was the National Newsroom Manager for the Nova Network, as well as the morning news reader for the very popular *Fitzy & Wippa* show on Nova 96.9 in Sydney.

It was pretty much instant — Matt gave me a job reading the news when I wasn't filling in on Sky News and it was one of the best things I've ever done. Matt has hired newsreaders — he would like to say he's fired newsreaders, but as far as I know he hasn't — and at the same time has his fingers in so many pies you wonder if there are any jobs left for anyone else. Matt not only reads the news on Nova for *Fitzy & Wippa* but also features frequently on *The Morning Show* on the Seven Network and around the biggest stadiums in the country hosting sporting events and calling the rugby on radio. He is a very busy man.

Matt and I connected instantly and I'm happy to call him one of my very good friends to this day. But that is not why he's in this book and it's not why you should listen to him. Matt is talented and knows what it takes to get noticed. He continues to teach students in Radio and Journalism at the Macleay College and has also been a tutor at the University of Sydney, so this is not the first time he has given career advice.

He has so much to offer someone just starting out, plus he's incredibly funny, so I hope you enjoy reading his comments as much as I enjoyed wining and dining him until he agreed to share his wisdom.

## **1. What is it about your job that makes you get up in the morning?**

*Quite specifically, my 4am alarm gets me out of bed every morning. But that's an occupational hazard you just can't get around. You wouldn't do that, however, if you didn't love what you do. Well, you shouldn't.*

*I am privileged to genuinely love what I do, and the people I do it with. That doesn't mean it isn't work; there are definitely pedestrian or bad days. It is, after all, a job. But there is such a thrill in live broadcast, in listener interaction, in not knowing who or what you will be doing or meeting each day, that the pros heavily outweigh the cons.*

## **2. What are the best things about working in TV and radio every day?**

*Living in a world of the unknown.*

*There are many jobs where you walk out of the office knowing exactly what will greet you the next day and how big that workload is going to be. What a horrid way to live. In broadcast, when you walk in to work you know only the bones of what you will do with no clue what meat will fill that framework. Especially thinking back to my days as an on-the-road reporter — that was sensational. Every day is filled with different and remarkable people, destinations, crimes, athletes, politicians, court cases, whatever!*

*Compare that to someone who sits in front of Excel every day?!*

*Another side perk is that you are regularly the most interesting person at any party or group dinner situation. And that's fun.*

*To be fair, on the reverse, people will always think you earn far more money than you do. We can thank Laws and Jones for that.*

## **3. What are the worst things about working in TV and radio every day?**

*The hours. The pay. Downsizing.*

*I don't know what fool decided the most prestigious timeslot in TV and radio should start at 6am, but that person should be shot. Early bed times, and constant jet lag becomes a way of life. Your body does adapt, and having the afternoon off is pretty tidy. But it's never exactly ideal.*

*More significantly though, the reality of where broadcast sits in the current commercial*

*environment is a concern. Supply of jobs definitely outstrips demand, and so employers can afford to offer the role to the lowest bidder. It means newsrooms and many programs are being filled with younger journos and producers, with less historical understanding and life-context. As such, the quality of journalism suffers.*

*The phrase 'press-release journalism' is a sad reality. Australian media is quickly becoming too full of reporters who don't know the tough, right or even logical questions.*

*And the third problem is the growing trend of networking programming and downsizing. This obviously means there are fewer jobs on offer, while those that have a job are forced to cover the roles of more and more.*

*But more on that after this quick commercial break.*

#### **4. What do you think is the reason why you made it in the industry?**

*I paid many, many people along the way.*

*Otherwise — versatility, rarely fucking up and never saying 'no'. Given there are fewer roles, you need to have a wide range of strengths. If you don't like sport — learn it. If you're weak on international affairs, learn it. Don't like editing? Get used to it. What's this Twitter thingy? Figure it out.*

*To be fair, if learning these things doesn't interest you, media probably isn't for you anyway.*

*Then consistently produce strong, creative and accurate work. If you can do this, I've found people trusted I'll not balls up and ask me to do more. If you do screw up (and we all do), I found calling it out rather than being found out served me well. People seemed to appreciate the honesty. You will still get roasted for it.*

*The final key has been going above and beyond. All the time. If you want to be the one that gets the job, or advanced faster simply do more than those around you. I did as much work experience and extra work along the way as I could and it's paying dividends now.*

#### **5. If you could go back in time and tell yourself one thing when you were starting out, what**

## would that be?

*Hmmm — there's definitely more than one.*

*Understanding that not moving forward doesn't mean you're going backwards. I live my life in a professional rush to get to the top and worry if I am not advancing. I am still very much like this, but I also know that chances will come if you do everything right along the way, they may just take time. Often that advancement has more to do with the movement of others rather than your own skill set.*

*Similarly, if you are enjoying your current role, don't race to leave it just because it isn't your perceived end game. I never thought I would be at Nova for the years I have been, as it didn't mesh with my news background. But the company is such a sensational one — why leave? It has been a game changer.*

*Also — and importantly — be aware how you are being perceived and understand it may be different to what you think you're projecting. I've since been told I was far too arrogant for my age and experience in the early years of being a reporter and in tall-poppy Australia that could have really hamstrung me.*

*(I suspect people still say it now. But they're fools. I kid!)*

*You have to be self-aware, and conscious of your brand. I get that it sounds wanky, but in broadcast there are big personalities and it's easy to get lost, so at times you will need to be your own publicist. I've often found people will mistake my enthusiasm and confidence for arrogance. It's not ideal, but perception is reality. If someone above me then writes me off because they don't like how they perceive me, that is my fault, not theirs.*

*Be conscious of that yourself.*

## 6. What is the best thing someone could do when trying to land an on-air role?

*Probably win *The Bachelor*.*

*However, if you're a more self-respecting style of a person, then it's about hard work and*

*seeking feedback.*

*The big one is getting behind a microphone at any level. I started at community radio. I was horrible. But I got better, quickly. No amount of study will make you a better on-air performer. Nor get you any plush on-air role. Talking into a (preferably live) microphone is inimitable.*

*Once you are on air, start seeking feedback. Send your tapes to every PD, News Director or producer at every station or channel you want to work for.*

*They won't reply.*

*Send them again.*

*They won't reply.*

*Send them again.*

*I've always been far more receptive to people who send in demo tapes, wanting to know how to improve, rather than sending in an often less-than-stellar tape asking for a job. Those who seek feedback are still putting themselves on my radar, but in a far more subtle and endearing way. I've been guilty of both approaches over time — and I can comfortably say that positioning yourself as someone totally open to learning and feedback will beat the other guy, every time.*

*Unless their tape is a lot better, then you're probably stuffed.*

## **7. What is the worst thing someone could do when trying to land an on-air role?**

*Say 'no'.*

*Young people these days tend not to enjoy working for free or in their spare time. Especially weekends. I assure you, if you are willing to do those extra yards, and quickly become known as someone who readily makes yourself available, you will be called on often.*

*Those who are hard to track down, cancel or constantly say 'no' will find the door closes very quickly.*

## **8. Do you think it's harder or easier to get an on-air role than 10 years ago and why?**

*There are two ways to look at it.*

*As there are fewer jobs, obviously there will be fewer on-air opportunities. However, as pay rates are dropping, those vying for roles are getting younger. In turn, opportunities are opening far earlier than they used to.*

*The big problem, though, is networking, and a fear from programmers to take a risk on something or someone untested. There are far too few regionally based TV or radio roles compared with 10 years ago. I do believe we are getting to a point where it's as centralised as it will get. People will always want local news, so these jobs — regional breeding-ground roles — will still exist, but just barely.*

*I really believe the next opportunity will be in the development of the digital space — that's where you will start seeing jobs reopen.*

*But more on that after this quick commercial break.*

## **9. Is the life of a TV or radio presenter going to be different in 10 years' time? If so, how would you prepare for that now?**

*At its most basic, I suspect it will be the same. Broadcasters will still read words, off a screen or page, and speak into a microphone or down a lens. The change will be in who is consuming it, and how. The rise of podcasts and streaming apps (both video and radio) in the aforementioned digital space means people have more control and options than ever before. We have to adapt to where listeners or viewers are going.*

*You see it already, where people will rather podcast radio shows to skip music and ads. Others already have their favourite podcasts, or only listen to music from Spotify or Pandora. I don't think these will totally replace current radio — as nothing can match localisation and*

*timeliness of an announcer in your city, but the audience is shifting.*

*In TV as well, there will also be local(ish) news and current affairs as people like to know what is happening in their local community. The change here will be more functional, with a premium on journalists being forced to write, film and edit their own work rather than having an expensive crew.*

*And how do you prepare for it now, you ask? Run. Hide. Fear change.*

*Alternatively, stay familiar with moving industry trends and ensure you are as multi-skilled as possible. Australia isn't capitalising on digital TV or radio at the moment. It's currently a place where off-Broadway-style broadcasting goes to die. I hope companies are able to harness these bandwidths as a low-cost breeding ground.*

**10. With the way people consume content changing so rapidly, what things have you done to stay relevant and to move with the times?**

*In my role, harnessing new newsgathering tools is vital. Social media is such a powerful beast, alerting you to breaking news while also giving you a firm indication of what people are interested in or thinking at any moment. Creating engaging and relevant content is as much about reflecting what people are currently drawn to, as it is giving them fresh content to focus on. We now have tangible, real-time data telling us what stories are resonating with audiences.*

*The other important change has been diversifying my own work base. We can no longer put all our professional trust on one role. The money is often not good enough, and the stability isn't great enough. I have multiple income streams, all in relevant roles, but across different platforms. I teach, MC, am a TV panellist, a columnist and more — which all top up the bank account while offering a place to turn if I lose my main job.*

*Keep yourself as mobile as possible, in case the landscape changes on you, rather than by you.*

**11. Is there anything else you would say to someone working towards an on-air role?**

*My hope with writing the above isn't to warn someone off broadcast. But to warn someone into it. Nearly all industries are cutting costs and contracting their workforce, so don't use it as a deterrent against giving this career a crack.*

*Just be open to hard work.*

*I've yet to speak to anyone who has felt the rush of live broadcast that isn't then drawn to it over and over again. The feeling of being on air with the net taken away and delivering is addiction defined. In media, you will meet more remarkable people than you'll remember. You will see more of your city, your country or the world than you could have thought. You may influence people on a wide scale. Inform just as many. You may challenge others to challenge their own views of the day. And do it all again, tomorrow.*

*What a remarkable and exciting thought that is! Scary as shit, too.*

*There'll always be jobs — just be the one that wants it more than the next person.*

# NATALIE FORREST

If you are a young journalist who has, maybe, just finished university and are looking to get that first foot in the door in a television studio, then the following words from Natalie Forrest are probably the most important in the entire book. The reason I say this is that Natalie, over the years, has interviewed and hired dozens of people just like you.

Natalie is originally from Western Australia where she studied broadcast journalism and started her career as a TV journalist for the Golden West Network. That's where Nat rose through the ranks to become Chief of Staff, while working as a casual journalist at 7 in Perth.

In 2004, Nat was promoted to the role of Network News Presenter and Editor at Prime7 located in Canberra where she has, for the past 12 years, been the face of news updates across the ACT, New South Wales and Victoria, while also reporting from Canberra to 7 News in Sydney.

When starting out in television, it is not unusual for journalists and weather presenters to work in a regional area before going to a metro network. Being a senior member of a regional network's management, plus the head of the editorial team, Natalie is one of the people who will not only give you your first foot in the door, but will also train you. Many journalists have started out under Nat's wing and have gone on to have successful careers in journalism and this is why I'm extremely excited Nat has graciously given her time to share her thoughts with you now.

## **1. Can you tell me about your first job in TV and how you landed it?**

*I actually didn't start out to be a journalist. After high school, I went to university to study a Business degree with the idea of becoming an accountant. But after two years of economic boredom, I realised it wasn't for me. So I headed overseas and a couple of months travelling in the Middle East quickly cemented the idea of becoming a journalist.*

*To say my parents weren't thrilled at the career path change would be an understatement. My mum quite bluntly told me she didn't think I'd make it, that I didn't have the voice to work in TV.*

*But I've always been stubborn and I've never liked being told I 'can't' do something, so I re-enrolled in a double major in English and Media at Edith Cowan University. About half way through my degree, I realised I really needed some practical skills. I was learning lots of theory, but I didn't have the ability to get out there and report on the road. So I organised a week of work experience at the local TV station, GWN.*

*After five days shadowing reporters, I promptly marched into the News Director's office and said, 'Give me a job.' He (quite rightly) told me I had no experience, to which I replied, 'I'm not going away until you give me a job.' And so I proceeded to go in one day a week throughout the rest of my degree, learning how to get interviews and write stories. By the time I finished my degree, I was putting together news packages for GWN's half-hour news bulletin. It meant when the next reporting job popped up, I was front and centre... and so I became GWN's Albany reporter.*

*Oh, and yes, I put my very first news story that went to air on tape (VHS back in those days), which I gift wrapped and very smugly gave to my mum. We both laugh about it all now. (But I still don't like being told I 'can't' do something).*

## **2. What is it about your job that makes you get up in the morning?**

*The ability to influence how people see the world and to cause change. We have the opportunity to ask the hard questions — to hold our politicians to account or expose powerful corporates who rip off the vulnerable. It might sound idealistic, but we get to be the voice for our audience (who are often voiceless and powerless). Journalists also tend to be fairly nosey — we become a bit addicted to knowing what's happening in our towns, across the state, around the county or the world.*

*The best part, by far, is the people you meet — whether it's extraordinary people or just ordinary people in extraordinary circumstances. Being able to tell their stories is an absolute privilege. But ultimately you've got to love what you do. We spend so many hours at work every day — if you don't love it, you're wasting such a huge chunk of your life.*

## **3. What are the best things about working in TV every day?**

*What's not to love about telly? I love watching it and certainly love working in it.*

*But I guess the first thing is its immediacy — there's nothing like breaking a news story, it's an adrenaline rush like nothing else. And live television adds to the drama and excitement (as opposed to pre-recorded). Also being invited into people's lounge rooms to have a conversation with them, being entrusted to give them the information they need. Whether it be stories that will make them laugh, cry, want to throw something at the TV or a combination of them all.*

#### **4. What are the worst things about working in TV every day?**

*Definitely hair and make-up! (Ha, ha, you do it all yourself in regional TV.) Oh, and the couch critics.*

*It's definitely a tougher industry for women than men. Guys can just chuck on a fresh tie and they're good to go. For women, there are so many more avenues for things to go wrong with your appearance on air. And the audience can be brutal. They won't hesitate to tell you when you've got it wrong (factually and, most definitely, appearance-wise). And social media means the trolls are there 24/7.*

#### **5. What do you think is the reason why you made it in the industry or had a very consistent career?**

*You've got to have persistence and a thick skin — but also a fair amount of luck. There'll always be critics — but the key is to be able take criticism and filter it. Ask yourself — is there a valid point to the critique or is it just nasty agenda?*

*Also not taking 'no' for an answer. We all have knockbacks in this industry — even those who seem like they've reached the pinnacle. Rejection is hard, but get used to it, if you're wanting to work in telly.*

#### **6. If you could go back in time and tell yourself one thing when you were starting out, what would that be?**

*Be sceptical of everything, but treat people how you'd want to be treated. Question absolutely everything — most of the people we interview or talk to have an agenda, so always keep that in mind. But, regardless of who they are, what they've done, treat people with respect.*

*Too often I see people in the media using and abusing talent for their stories — remember, they are people, someone's son or daughter, someone's parent or partner.*

### **7. What is the best thing someone could do when trying to land an on-air role?**

*Be the best 'you' you can be, because everyone else is taken. It's important to be authentic. The camera will amplify it if you're not. Know your strengths and play to them. Not all weather presenters can read news and not all news readers can be reality show hosts.*

*And I've said this before — but don't take 'no' for an answer. Just because one employer doesn't like or choose you as a presenter doesn't mean another won't.*

### **8. What is the worst thing someone could do when trying to land an on-air role?**

*Being cocky, arrogant or overselling yourself — thinking you're the star. Similarly, letting your nerves get the better of you. The key is to be warm, approachable and confident (even if you have to fake it).*

### **9. Do you think it's harder or easier to get an on-air role than 10 years ago and why?**

*This is a hard one — in some ways it's easier because there are more platforms, shows etc. meaning there are more jobs. But also there are more people wanting to be presenters (and wanting fame), so the competition is tougher.*

*In years gone by, presenting was like an apprenticeship — you spent years learning the craft and weren't put on air until you'd had plenty of practice. Whereas nowadays acting/presenting schools churn out graduates in vast numbers and organisations seem to like the option of using younger and cheaper presenters who are often more inexperienced.*

**10. Is the life of a TV or radio presenter going to be different in 10 years' time? If so, how would you prepare for that now?**

*It's all about multiskilling. Gone are the days of specialising in a role, presenters are expected to be able to do everything (report, produce, shoot, and edit) for a range of different mediums and platforms.*

*I think broadening your skills as much as you can holds you in good stead. And with ever-shrinking resources, being versatile makes you more attractive as a worker.*

**11. With the way people consume content changing so rapidly, what things have you done to stay relevant and to move with the times?**

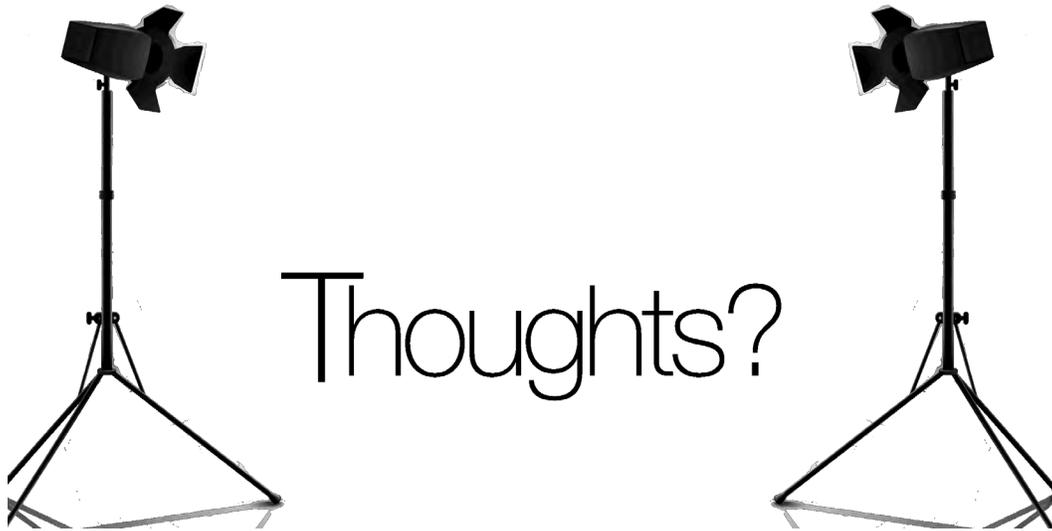
*The internet has changed everything. People no longer sit down and watch the six o'clock news, they want their shows when they are ready to consume them.*

*Getting on to social media is critical. Current surveys show the majority of people get their information/news from websites like Facebook. So that means keeping up with changing technology — it's the only way to survive.*

**12. Is there anything else you would say to someone working towards an on-air role?**

*Never die wondering — give it a go!*

*And good luck — it's a tough business, but it may well be the best thing you ever do.*



I hope you have gained some insights hearing directly from these industry leaders, currently at the top of their game. They were carefully chosen because of what they have to offer, their different experiences and backgrounds.

They all got to where they are via different roads. But despite their different backgrounds and experience, you may have noticed some common themes here:

Persistence.

Putting your hand up when others won't.

Being prepared to do things that may not be your first choice of job or task.

What you take from their words I'll leave to you, and I hope their honest answers have helped you in some way and have given you some clarity as to what's needed, and what it's really like out there.

The greatest advice I have for you, and one belief that has served me extremely well through my career is this: Treat everyone as if they are more important than you. I'm not saying belittle yourself in front of your colleagues. What it means is staying humble, having the utmost respect for

your team at all times, even on your bad days, and treating everything they say as important. You cannot imagine how much doing this will come back and repay you.

If getting a job on air in TV or radio or an acting gig is what you want, I wish you all the luck in the world. But, at the same time, be honest with yourself. At times it can be uncomfortable because you sometimes shield yourself from your motivations. The following may get a little heavy for some of you but I believe you are reading this because you are in search of answers. This book is about landing a presenting or announcing job, but I feel I have the opportunity right now to go a bit deeper for you. Essentially, the topic of what you want to do with your life is probably the most important aspect of your entire life as it is your purpose. Stay with me.

You may feel like you're at a crossroads or unsure of exactly what you want to do. I think we have all been there! Having these questions come up from time to time is extremely important and can be pivotal moments that change the quality and direction of your entire life, and the people around you.

After high school, I got into radio because I didn't really know what to do. I'd had some experience presenting on radio as a teenager and was told I was a natural at it. People said I should do radio. Being young and not yet equipped with the skills to truly dig deep and find out my purpose and what would make me happy and fulfilled as a person, I gave it a shot. I do not regret that decision at all because all of those life steps led me to where I am today.

It's only recently that I started truly navigating these crossroads consciously. What I mean is, at previous pivotal moments where I had to make a choice about the direction of my life and what I wanted to do, whether it be a job or where I wanted to live etc., I kind of just went with the flow and did the one thing that was offered to me as an opportunity that I considered to be most beneficial, or paid the most money. Don't get me wrong, I worked extremely hard to have those opportunities present themselves, but I still had to make a choice. Thankfully, most of those decisions turned out to be good ones, for a while. Did they make me happy? Did those jobs give me purpose? In my opinion, having purpose is important to happiness.

I admire your determination to gain an edge, and self-educate — extremely important factors in staying ahead of the game in your chosen field. So here you are, reading this book that you've found. Maybe it was sent to you, maybe you stumbled upon it. Something led you to this moment where you are now reading these words. So I'm going to take this opportunity to ask you one thing. You *must* be honest, as it could be one of the most important processes you will go through. There

is no one around, and you don't have to tell anyone the answer. This is about being true to yourself.

*Why* do you want to be on TV?

Give yourself a moment. Write a couple of things down or just verbalise the answer.

Is it because you have an infectious personality, so you think you would be good at it? Is it because you think you'll eventually make a lot of money? Is it because you love talking about politics, or weather, or daily events and want to do it all day? Is it because you want to be famous?

The answer you give is important because what it shows you is your *purpose* — what is *driving* you, what is motivating you. It is your 'why'. If being famous is something that you really want in life, there is nothing wrong with that because that is what *you* want.

Well done! Okay, there are a couple more steps we have to go through, and the next one is probably the most important. However, it's also the hardest and may take some time to reflect on to really know for sure.

Now you have to find out if this 'why', your *purpose*, is going to bring you happiness. Let me explain. Working in TV or radio by itself is not going to make you, the individual, happy and leave you fulfilled every day.

What you have to do is dig deeper and really understand what makes you happy. What brings you the most joy? Is it being successful? Is it working long hours? Is it having as much freedom as possible? Is it helping people? Is it being creative and producing things with your own hands? Does travelling the world give you this happiness? Does creating inspiring television programs that people talk about online for days after they air inspire you and make you happy? Do you love animals? Are you passionate about their safety and survival?

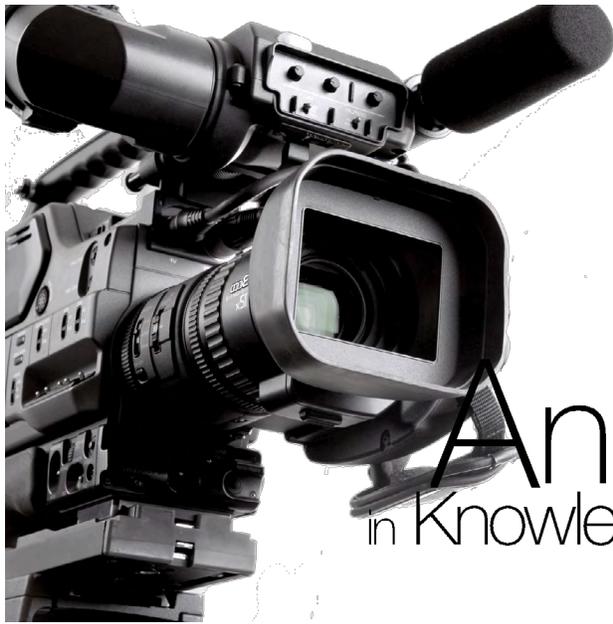
If you have successfully answered this happiness question, I congratulate you, as a lot of people, including myself for a long time, feel lost trying to explain what drives them and makes them truly happy. If you know this already, then you are incredibly fortunate, as you now have this answer in front of you. It's your answer. It came from no one but yourself.

The final step is this:

Whatever your 'why' is, whatever makes you happy — and it could be anything — can you turn that motivation or purpose into a career? Is there a way you could eventually make a living from it? You can follow this process for any career or vocation. For example, if you love travelling so much you want to do it full time, there are people who are making money from documenting their travels online in blogs, who now have a following and make money from reviewing businesses and places. Perhaps you are passionate about the climate and you made it your purpose to sell solar panels or make documentaries about new clean energy technologies. If what really makes you happy is caring for animals could you start an animal shelter or charity? Have you even looked into it? Now that you know, don't you owe it to yourself to start doing a bit of investigation?

Maybe you feel strongly about the current state of the world and believe the only thing standing between a dictatorship and a strong democracy is the media. Maybe you feel you need to investigate and expose government corruption so public figures stand accountable for their actions. Maybe you feel it is your purpose to travel to a war zone and bring those stories of suffering into people's living rooms or to focus awareness on war crimes and atrocities so cultures and governments come together to expose those responsible.

Maybe you want to inspire change?



# An Investment in Knowledge always Pays the best Interest

There is one thing all successful people do no matter what industry they are involved in, what position they hold or how much responsibility they have. They invest time and money into their own knowledge and education. I am a huge believer in self-education beyond traditional college and university courses, as it will not only most likely make you the best person at what you do, but everything you learn will guide you to becoming the best version of yourself possible.

I have created a website that you may find useful if you are interested in furthering your education and discovering what it means to be successful in all aspects of life and how to get there.

[SuccessDirectory.org](http://SuccessDirectory.org)

On this website you'll find an extremely valuable list of high impact books if you want to continue the process of learning and self-discovery. It's also a place where like-minded people can connect, share ideas and inspiration and we also post some fantastic motivational content as well so I urge you to get involved and keep learning! Keep reading! All you need to do is start. The more you do, the easier and more enjoyable it will become, and with the increased knowledge you will acquire, over time your beliefs will change, and once your beliefs change, your reality will change and when you reach this point, you will be able to mould and shape your life into whatever you want it to be.

Nothing is more enjoyable to me than hearing how other people are changing their lives for the better, working towards their goals and turning their dreams into reality. So if this book, or the website listed above, has helped you in any way, I would love for you to get in touch, and to tell me all about it. My dream is to have someone write to me and tell me the information contained in this book helped them to land their dream job in TV or radio. Or, the words in this book helped them make a decision in their life and are now on the right path according to their own creative desires.

Whatever this book has been to you, I wish you all the happiness and success in the world.

Kenny Heatley

[help@successdirectory.org](mailto:help@successdirectory.org)

## About the Author



Kenny Heatley has been working in television and radio in Australia since 2003.

After becoming established in Canberra and the Snowy Mountains as a radio announcer and voice over artist, Kenny's first break into television was with The Weather Channel on Foxtel.

During this time Kenny was sent to and reported on some of the country's largest and most dangerous weather events, some of which you can still view online on YouTube.

In 2012, Kenny was picked up by Sky News as weather presenter and news anchor. At the same time he began reading the news across the Nova radio network in almost every major metro market.

When his father Bob Heatley was diagnosed with cancer, Kenny and his wife Jayne moved back to Canberra to be closer to family, where they live today.

Kenny now presents the news and weather across New South Wales for the Prime7 network in Canberra.