

# Be great, in order to build greatness in others

 By [Chris Jordan](#)

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I have been training all walks of life for around 17 years now, the same amount of time I have been a broadcaster working in the radio industry. For the better part of eight years I have been training and developing young talent that are on the rise in the industry, but also been a lecturer in radio broadcasting teaching tertiary studies of the craft to students who want to pursue the dream of being involved in one of the most exciting mediums in the world.



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If you are in the fortunate position of building someone's knowledge and passion for being on air, you will realise that it is quite something to have to reboot yourself in many ways to understand the process they are going through and to overcome hurdles that all broadcasters must take on in becoming a professional. It is difficult. What seems to be commonplace and of a second nature to you after years and years of trusting your gut instinct in making radio magic, is really something you must be able to relay to a blank slate, and realise that you are imparting tools, techniques, mistakes, experiences and, well, talent to this blank slate.

So, you can't just teach radio. I did in the beginning. I taught the mechanics, I taught the formatics, I taught the do's, then I taught the don'ts – and I don't think I made very much progress.

I have since learnt from my mistakes. And as a result, my students have learnt from me. A lot. First things first, is that they will **not** like you while you are teaching them in the right way. You will receive praise for what you have done well after the fact, when they are working in the industry, and all the facts, truth and hard realities you applied in your teaching is all they are experiencing – and dealing with successfully.

So, stop the popularity contest. One, you're not in it for that, and two, you won't win it anyway.

When teaching radio broadcasting to a student, remember to do, and keep in mind, a couple of things:

**1. You are their first impression of the industry.** Try keep it honest, but not bitter. Your experiences are not theirs. Anecdotes are great, because you are raising storytellers. And, we love to talk, you can't help but talking about yourself. Just remember, it's their journey, not yours.

**2. You must get them talking.** In any way you can. Firstly, they need to loosen their lips. As an exercise (as unorthodox as this may sound – especially, with students that have any kind of accent), I make them memorise and recite the words (and accents!) to Mary Poppins' "Supercalifragilisticexpialidocious" (my spell check was on, so that was spelt correctly). I do this for a couple of reasons. First, and most importantly, students see this as an unconquerable task. It is rather daunting. Get everything correct. It is (after all) the title of a song, you will run into some tongue twisters for sure during your career. Get the accents correct. This puts you out your comfort zone. Keep up. The pace is fast. And so are your shows. There are many moving parts to getting a great show out there. Keep up. You can do it. And when you can (get the song right), you feel accomplished. Small feats that you recognise in your career are accumulated to major leaps and bounds to being a great broadcaster.

**3. So, get them talking.** About fruit, or tables, or friends, or music, or whatever. Let their personalities find some ground in the waffling that will first take place. But the stronger they become, the stronger what they're talking about will be.

**4. Give them the correct crit.** Listeners are brutally honest. Managers are brutally honest. Colleagues are brutally honest. So, why aren't you? They will, again, thank you for it later. If it's "sh!t", then a rose by any other name, is still a rose.

**5. Make them understand that they can be only as good as how much or what they know.** This is not a bad statement. If you are just starting out, you might only be at about 3% capable of being a professional broadcaster, but you can be 100% of that 3% that you know. This is really important. You cannot progress and grow to 50% or 80% if you haven't respected the work you put in at 3%, 10% or 37%. Don't sell yourself short.

These are some start out off-the-top of my head points that really work for me and my students. Be great, in order to build greatness in others.

## ABOUT CHRIS JORDAN

Chris Christou Jordan is a multifaceted South African Author and Radio Industry Specialist.

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