

#BehindtheSelfie with... Gladys Sithole

 By Leigh Andrews

22 May 2019

This week we go behind the selfie with Gladys (Sithole) Mutele, Hot 91.9FM's head of news who has once again been crowned as the Liberty Radio Awards' best newsreader.



Sithole captions this: "My partner in crime and selfies. It just doesn't work out when I'm on my own."

1. Where do you live, work and play?

I live in the North of Johannesburg, work in the North of Johannesburg and play wherever the mind and body agree they want to play. That could range from extremely loud environments to dead quiet spaces.

2. What's your claim to fame?

Oh well, besides being a three-time award-winning newsreader, I pride myself in going home every evening, knowing that I once again have fulfilled my purpose of being the bridge between the voiceless and the powerful.



Hot 91.9fm takes Station of the Year for the third consecutive year!

HOT 102.7FM 16 Apr 2019



3. Describe your career so far.

It's been a long journey, full of ups and downs. Probably more downs than ups, but perspective is everything. The hard times continue to be what test and shape my character.

For every loss or disappointment, I've gained a whole wealth of knowledge.

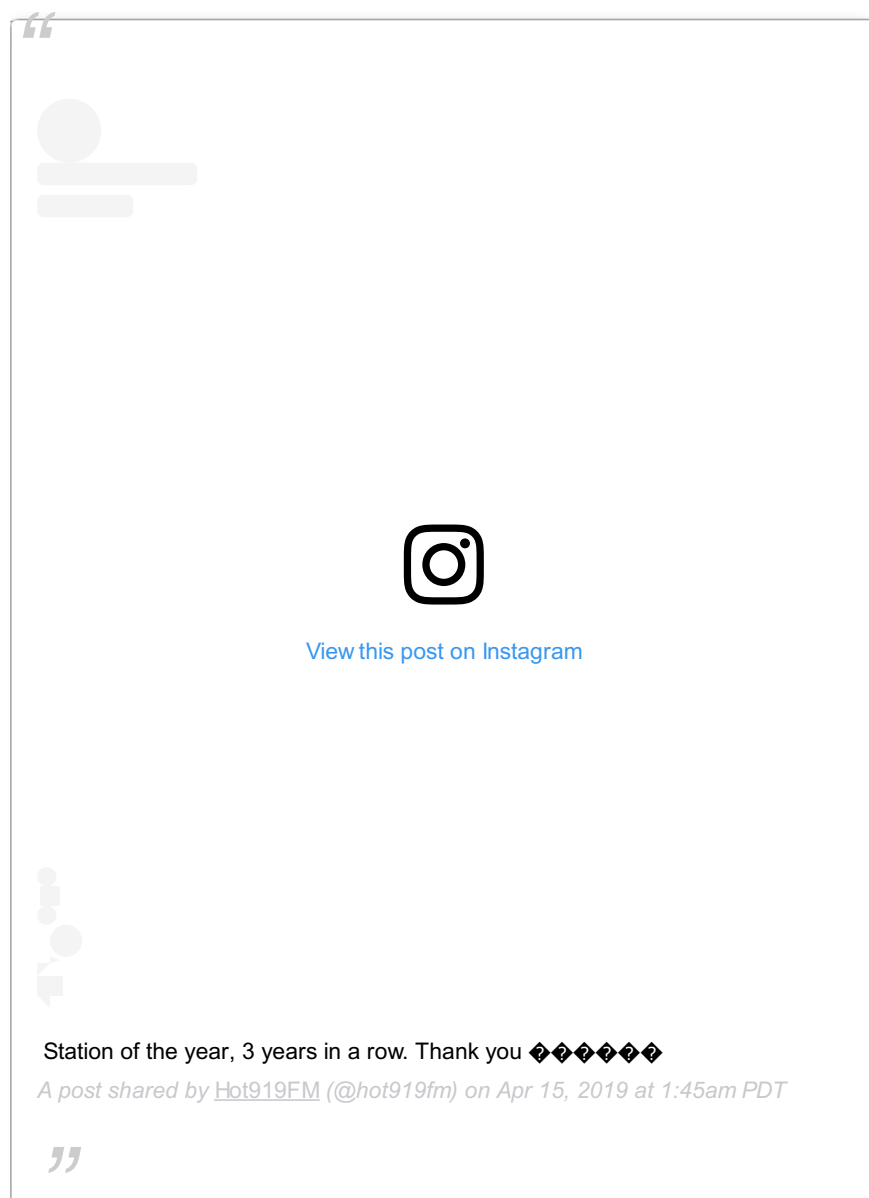
4. Tell us a few of your favourite things.

I am passionate about my work and tropical islands with pristine beaches, but even that takes a backseat most of the time.

The real deal is: God first, then my husband, family and friends, and last but not least, the hubby's healthy sandwiches, which he always makes with love!

5. What do you love about your industry?

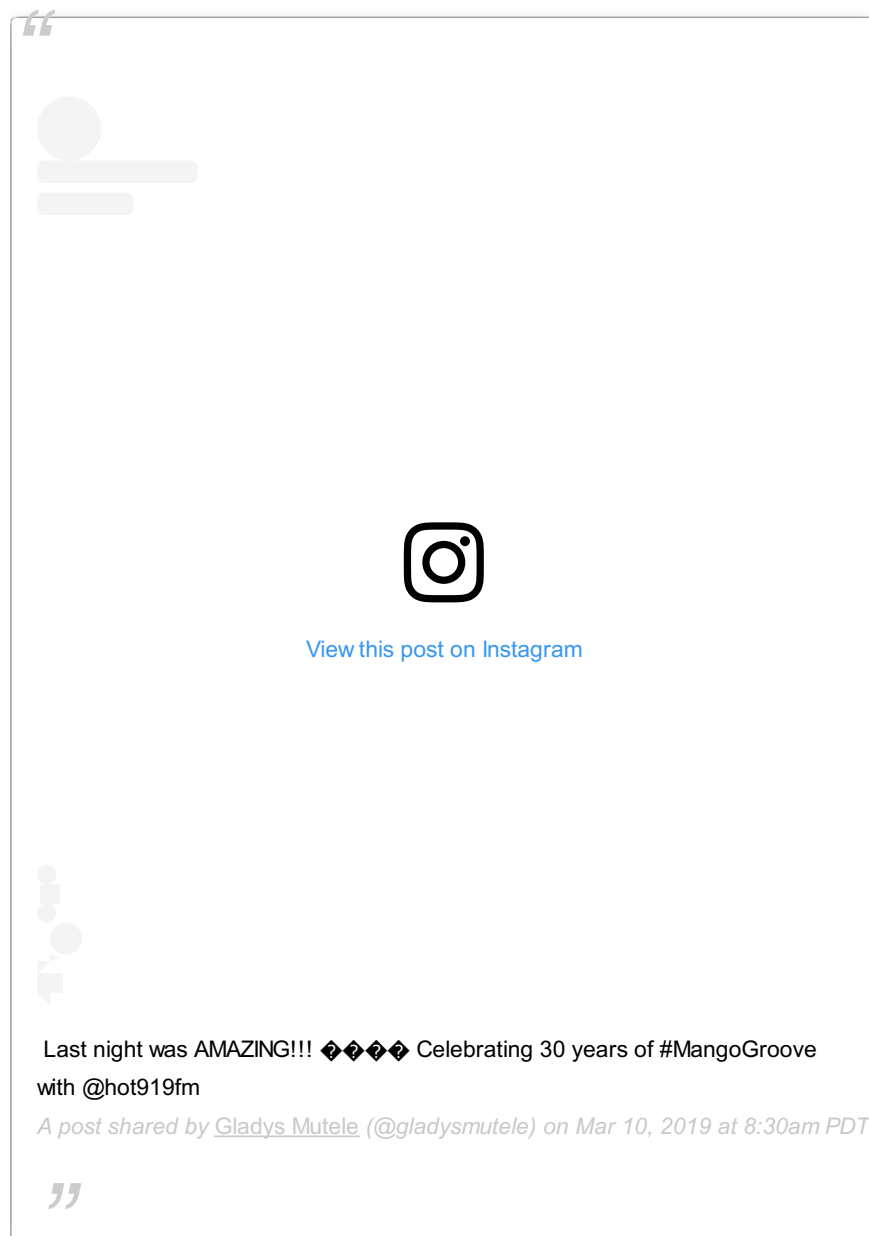
Just how sharp and up-to-date it keeps me. There's always new stuff emerging to conduct more research on.



Also, it's hilarious now people, especially family members, expect newsreaders to know *every single thing*, including who is going to win the elections and the outcome of court proceedings. It's an honour!

6. Describe your average workday, if such a thing exists.

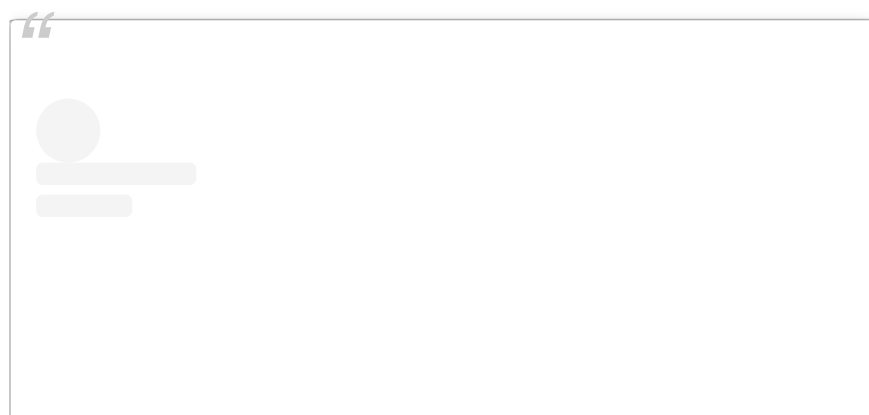
A day that gets off to a normal start could end up steering towards a completely different direction.



Some days are unbelievably slow and then, the majority of the time, you find yourself dealing with the usual heart palpitations as a result of the news cycle going crazy and out of control, and lots of information coming through at the same time, so you having to prioritise what's relevant in terms of what people want to know versus what they need to know.

7. What are the tools of your trade?

It's important to constantly stay "plugged-in" by keeping tabs on everything and everyone – thank goodness for social media – and reading further than just the headlines.





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HAPPY BIRTHDAY PARKY!!! 🎉🎉🎉🎉🎉🎉🎉🎉🎉🎉 Thank you for making work fun. Thank you for always backing your words with action. Thank you for showing up! Thank you for the hard lessons and for enforcing the AMAZING concept of sitting on my hands lol. Thank you for setting such an amazing example of true fatherly love. Thank you for offering to step in as my uncle when there was a possibly that one or two wouldn't show up (I'm actually laughing out loud at this lol)! 🎉🎉🎉🎉🎉🎉 Thank you for making tight hugs, kisses and constant words of encouragement fashionable to us, the youngins...and... ..thank you for staying relevant and keeping up with the latest trends. Some I know nothing about, which goes to show that I'm the one getting older here. I love you so much and we are all so lucky to have you in our lives
#HappyBirthday #RoleModel

A post shared by Gladys Mutele (@gladysmutele) on Jan 7, 2019 at 4:50am PST

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news apps, community whatsapp groups, newspapers, current affairs panel discussions, lots of pens, a notebook/diary and a recording device (my phone helps)... just in case I find myself somewhere when a story breaks.

“ Another important thing to consider is that one needs to have the heart and the tolerance for some of the heart-wrenching stories you tell and read about. ”

It's an ongoing cycle of the rich getting richer, the poor being more marginalised and another person who has lost their life. An important tool for this is the ability to switch off and focus on filling my cup, which I'm getting so much better at doing.

8. Who is getting it right in your industry?

I've always looked up to journalist and broadcaster, David O'Sullivan. When I met him for the first time, he spoke so much life into me and continues to do so every time we have an encounter.

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Congratulations to my Head of News, 3 x award-winning News broadcaster AND the lady that taught me all I know... when it comes to News. You are tough competition!!! It was an honour being nominated beside you. Glad you brought it home 🎉🎉🎉🎉🎉🎉🎉🎉🎉🎉

A post shared by Gladys Mutele (@gladysmutele) on Apr 15, 2019 at 11:27am PDT

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Quite recently, I started learning a lot more about journalism under the guidance of my coach, Paddi Clay. She has more than 40 years of experience in the industry and she challenges me to think critically and to just get by.

Whenever I start highlighting challenges, she compares them to those that journalists back in the day had to deal with, and I all of a sudden forget what I was going on about. It's a humbling experience.

9. List a few pain points the industry can improve on.

Speed and accuracy.

“ I'm starting to notice that exclusivity is slowly becoming a thing of the past with media houses because our move into the 4th industrial revolution means that citizens will always have the exclusive material that makes up a story. ”

Citizen journalism is fast growing and there's not much that the industry can do about it, except to verify and double-check the facts and then take the story further, which is what we're equipped to do.



New social media tools empower citizen journalism

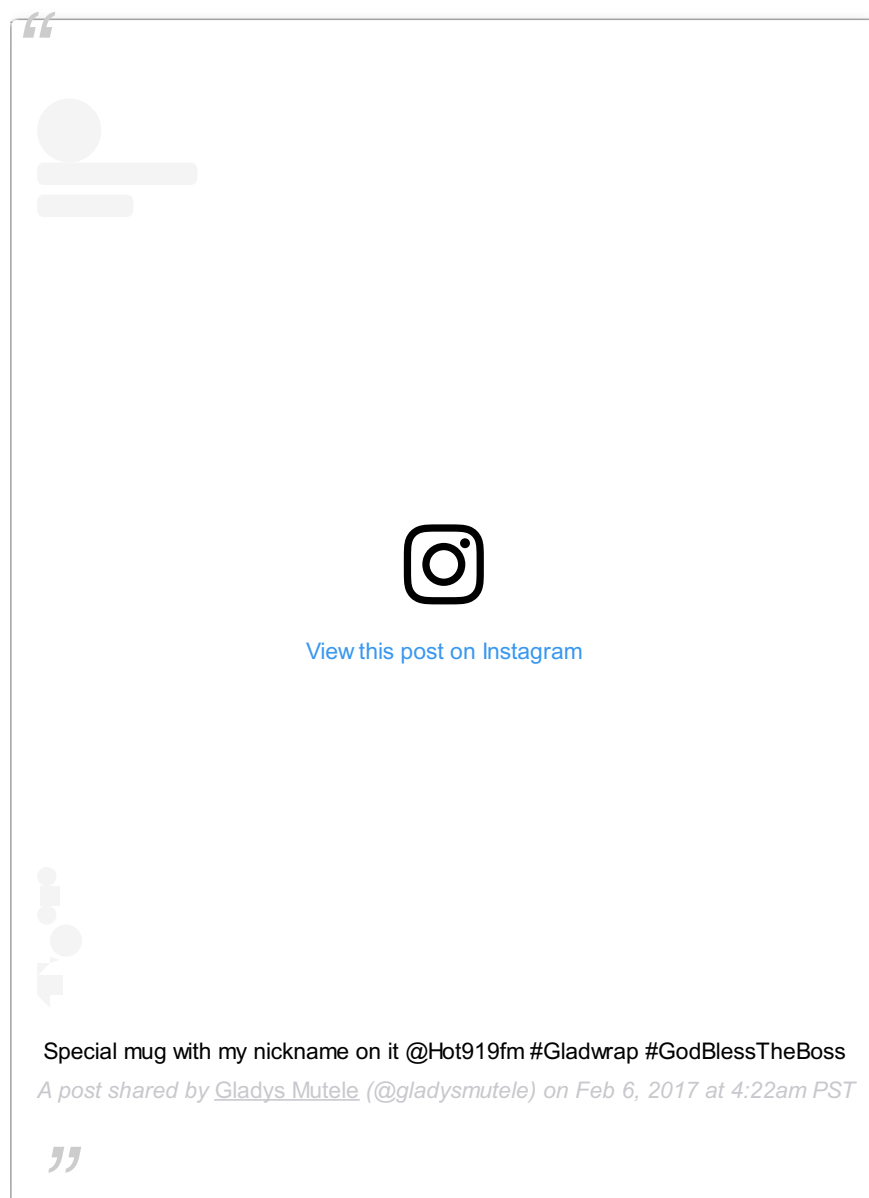
19 Jul 2016



I'm seeing too many journalists apologising for getting the facts wrong or having to retract their statements because we're constantly in a hurry to break the news before anyone else does it. Don't get caught in a trap.

10. What are you working on right now?

On a personal note, I've been on an ongoing journey of getting to know myself in order to work within the confines of my purpose. I'm trying to observe more and speak less, the operative word being "trying".



I battled with anxiety not long ago, so I'm working on my relationship with God and trusting the process.

11. Tell us some of the buzzwords floating around in your industry at the moment, and some of the catchphrases you utter yourself.

On air: "According to...", "And finally..."

Off air: "Who?", "What?", "Where?", "When?", "Why?", "How?" and the usual: "We should get a sound bite for this..."

My ultimate phrase: "Focus on informing and not performing."

12. Where and when do you have your best ideas?

In the shower. There's something about water that opens up the floodgates to my creativity.

On that note, when is somebody – anybody – inventing a recording device for the shower, so I can stop panicking about running to my diary or phone to jot things down?

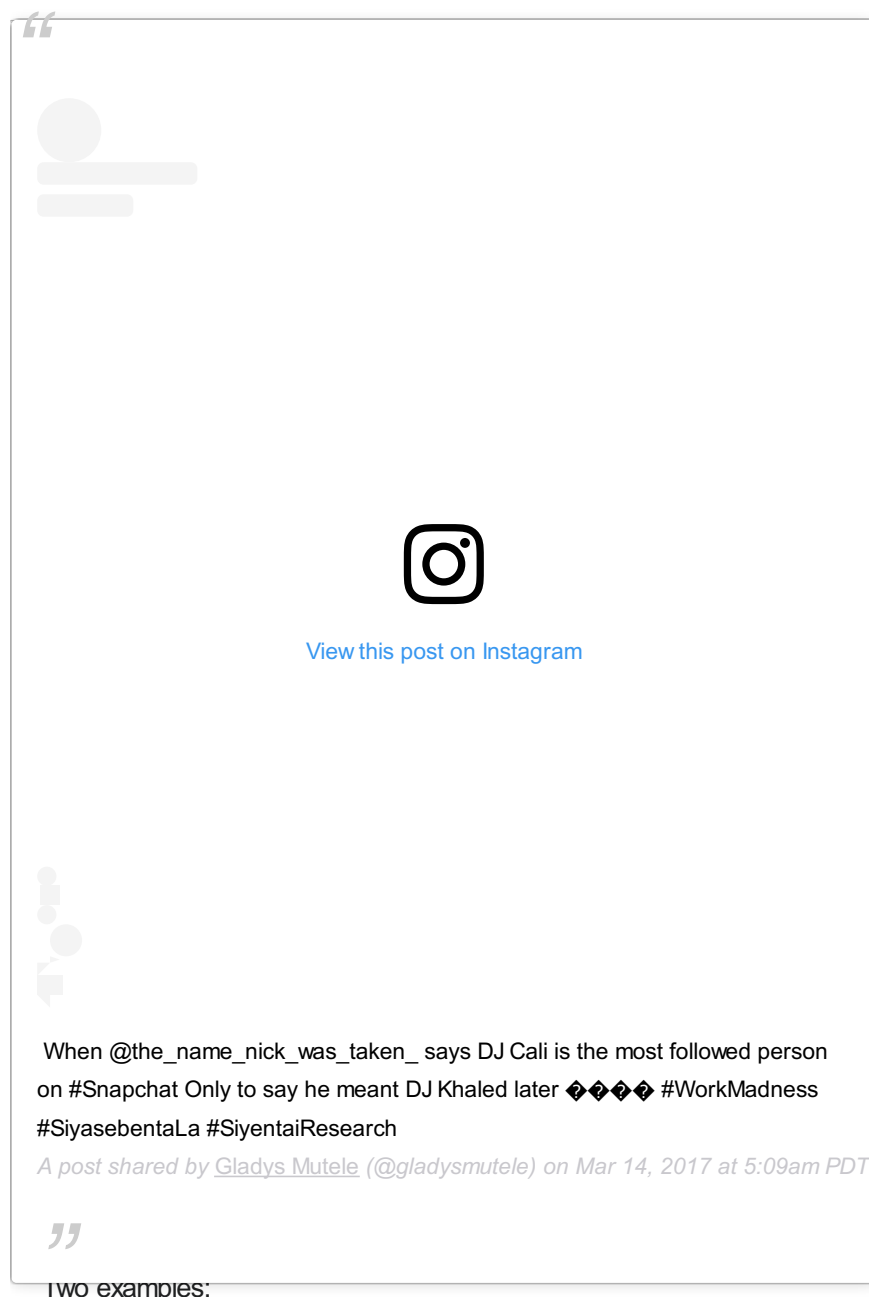
13. What's your secret talent/party trick?

It has got to be my photographic memory. It freaks my husband out at times, how I can always remember where I saw something, when, what time of day it was, the words spoken and how they made me feel.

My memory is also triggered by certain smells. The disadvantage of this is that it's easy for me to relive a bad experience.

14. Are you a technophobe or a technophile?

This answer shocked me actually because of the thinking that had to go into it, and me having to concede that, contrary to what I believed... I'm actually a real technophobe.



Two examples:

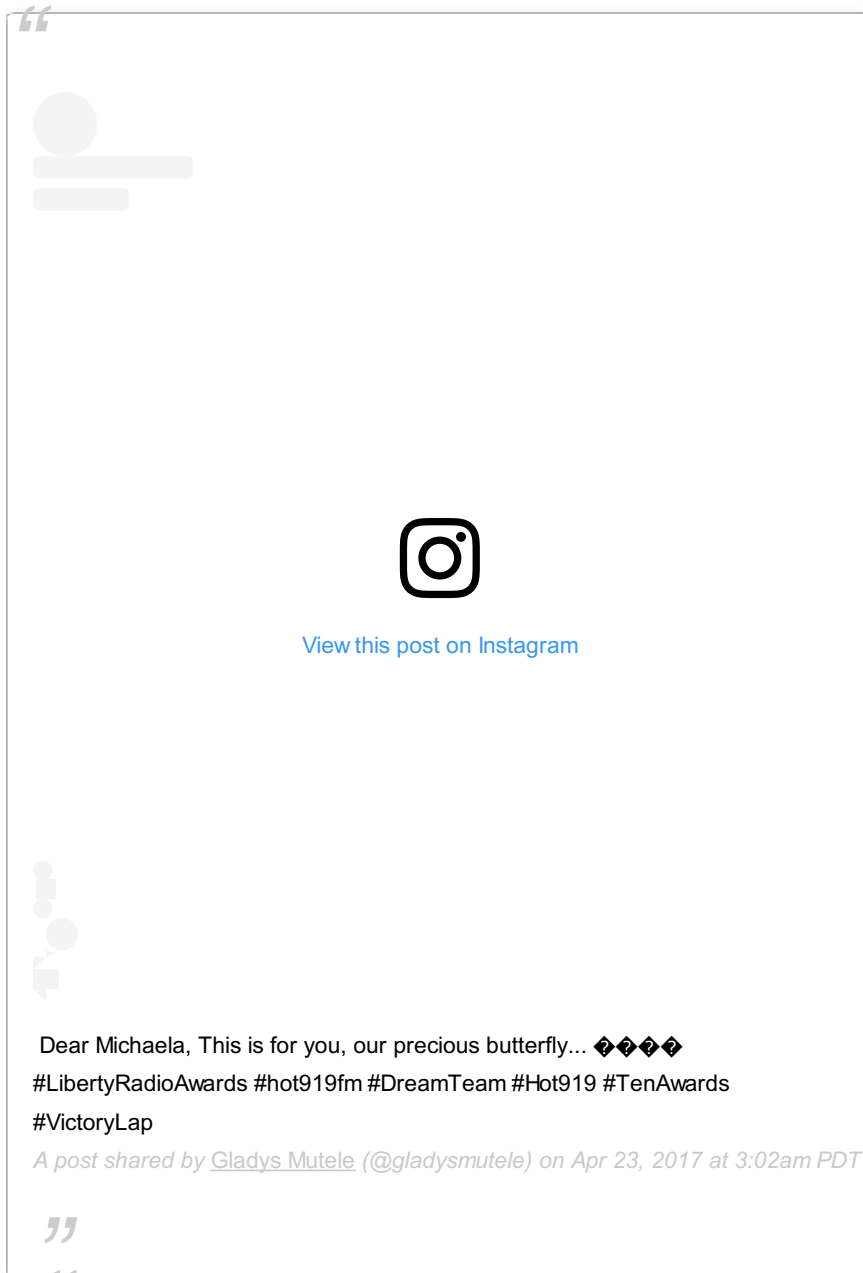
1. My brother got me a smartwatch months ago and the thought of configuring it stresses me out. So, it's still sitting here... staring at me.
2. Brand loyalty is a real thing for me. If I use something once and it works, I don't see the need to get an upgrade. The only way to switch to my new phone was to give my old one to my mom. I panicked about important documents that might not have been backed up. I used to have both phones with me everywhere I went. Letting go was hard.

15. What would we find if we scrolled through your phone?

Wow! Thousands of unread WhatsApp messages (I can explain!), news app notifications, a million pictures and a whole lot of notes and reminders.

16. What advice would you give to newbies hoping to crack into the industry?

The sooner you face the awkwardness of listening to a recording of your own voice, the sooner you can get started on tightening the bolts.



“Many people I’ve worked with who are new to the industry worry too much about how they sound versus if whether or not what they are saying makes sense.”

I always say to newsreaders in training: “I need to listen to you and know that it’s you reading the news bulletin. Above all, I need you to inform more and perform less.”



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Leigh Andrews 14 Oct 2014



Simple as that. Follow Sithole on [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#), as well as the [Hot 91.9FM press office](#), and their [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#) feeds for the latest updates.

*Interviewed by [Leigh Andrews](#).

ABOUT LEIGH ANDREWS

Leigh Andrews AKA the #MilkshakeQueen, is former Editor-in-Chief: Marketing & Media at Bizcommunity.com, with a passion for issues of diversity, inclusion and equality, and of course, gourmet food and drinks! She can be reached on Twitter at @Leigh_Andrews.

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