

The Brick by Brick Approach to Succeeding in Radio

In 2010, I was on holiday in Denmark. I was standing at Aarhus train station waiting for my girlfriend to arrive. Today was the day she was flying in from London to join me for a holiday. It's fair to say I was very excited. When she arrived, my face broke into a massive smile, and I gave her a big hug. Immediately she said, "we've got to talk." She told me she'd made a mistake by dating me and dumped me there and then in the train station. It's fair to say I blubbed like a teenager. After she'd ripped my heart out, she went back to Copenhagen airport to fly home. She had a BBC project she wanted to work on, and I was an inconvenience. I lost 5kg's that week. I couldn't eat. I was totally devastated.

The Book of Life

The day I was due to fly back to London, my Danish friend and I went to a small charity store in a tiny Danish town. There I found a book called "[The Magic of Thinking Big](#)" by David J Schwartz. It was five Danish kroner (50p / 74c). To stop me blubbing on the plane home, I started to read it. There and then I knew I was holding a great book. In 2010, I wasn't ready to act on Mr Schwartz's advice. However, after I'd landed, I made sure I kept the book.

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When the Student Is Ready the Teacher Will Appear

Four years later I re-read it. The chapter on goals really stood out for me. David says: *"The person determined to achieve maximum success learns the principle that progress is made one step at a time. A house is built a brick at a time. Football games are won a play at a time. Every big accomplishment is a series of little accomplishments. Winning any objective requires a step-by-step method. Make the next task you perform, regardless of how unimportant it may seem, a step in the right direction."*

Belief Moves Mountains

If you want to get paid to work in radio, the very first thing you have to do is believe you can do it. While this advice sounds like typical fluff, I've actually found it to be very true.

A Goal Is a Dream with a Deadline

Napoleon Hill (1883-1970)

My mission in life is to provide affordable training. When I first had the idea, I needed to buy some software. The software was £150 / \$200 to rent for a year. 90% of my friends and family said it was too expensive. They told me to save my money. I almost stopped there, but something inside of me said: *"I'm going to build this training site no matter what it takes."* I had no idea how I was going to do it, all I knew was that I was going to try. I've always wanted to run a radio training school, but I could never afford the premises, and I could never afford the equipment. I still can't.

All Glory Comes from Daring to Begin

Les Brown says: *"Not only is it possible for you to have your dream, but it's necessary that you go for what is yours in the universe. You do what it is you're supposed to do. If you're supposed to build something, and you don't know how to do it, then learn. It's on you. You've got to make that happen; no one is going to bring it to you on a silver platter. No one is going to say, here's your dream. It's hard, yes it's hard. It's difficult, yes it's difficult, but it's worth it."*

Go Anywhere as Long as It's Forward

David Livingstone (1813-1873)

David Schwartz says: *"Goals are as essential to success as air is to life. No one ever stumbles into success without a goal. Goals provide energy. Energy increases when you set a desired goal and resolve to work towards that goal. The most amazing thing about a deeply entrenched goal is that it keeps you on course to reach your target."*

The Driving Force of Goals

Because I finally had a "goal", it meant I had something inside of me driving me forward. And my destination? That was simple. To lay the "first brick." As soon as I paid the £150 for the software, I was committed towards my goal of providing cheap, quality, online radio training. I couldn't go back now. I'd paid! I deliberately paid the money on purpose, so I had to go forward. Spending the money was my first brick.

What I Must Do Is All That Concerns Me, Not What the People Think

Ralph Emerson (1803-1882)

I joined Udemy and online instructor Facebook groups. There I watched in amazement as everyone produced training course after training course. By the time I'd written my first script, other people were already publishing their second course. Many members were showing the groups their large payslips of thousands of dollars earned. Meanwhile, I was stuck in a south London bedroom wondering how the hell I was going to build this course.

He Who Has Patience May Accomplish Anything

(Rabelais 1494-1553)

When you start anything new, it's frustrating. It sucks. You have no idea what you're doing, and it takes ages to learn all the new skills that you need. I'm still learning now. My first course, "*Discover The Secrets to Successful Media Interviews*" took me nine months to make. I made so many mistakes, and I wasted a lot of time trying to build it. I came close to quitting on numerous occasions. There were times when I just wanted to throw the computer at the wall. For months, I had technical problem after technical problem. Whatever could go wrong, did go wrong. A couple of times I even laughed out loud thinking that someone in the universe was deliberately trying to stop me from making the course. I regularly stopped, took weeks off, always thought about quitting; yet I always returned.

Don't Dwell on What Went Wrong. Instead, Focus on What to Do Next

(Denis Waitley 1933-Present)

Two things drove me on (and also drove me insane). I'm old fashioned. I would rather spend ages trying to make a course great, then spend three months rushing out a course that was just average. Why? It's all about having a good product. If your product is good enough, it will sell itself eventually. For me, that's a no-brainer. The second thing that drove me on was the fact that I had come so far. It was now impossible to stop. To spend four months making 50% of a course and then quit would be stupid. Put simply, I grumbled like a bitch, but I had no choice but go forward. It's why you should always just start. Starting builds momentum and momentum carries you forward.

The First Brick Is Where You Make The Mistakes

My second course, "**The Under Priced Awesomely Made Radio DJ Training Course**" took me six months to make. I didn't make half as many mistakes the second time around. While I still moaned here and there, I did enjoy making it a lot more! The second time around I was much faster. Why? It's because I'd learned a lot from making my first course.

Believe You Can

As David Schwartz says: *"Belief, strong belief, triggers the mind to figuring ways and means and how to. And believing you can succeed makes others place confidence in you. Those who believe they can move mountains, do. The 'okay-I'll-give-it-a-try-but-I-don't-think-it-will-work' attitude produces failures."*

It took me a long time to figure this out.

Don't Listen To The Doubters

Negativity surrounded me for years. I could never see it. It was only when I heard the Les Brown YouTube video "**Negative People**" that I

suddenly became aware of all the negative comments around me. That's when I finally realised how badly these negative comments were holding me back.

Tip

If you listen to the doubters, you'll be living YOUR life how they want you to live it. Ignore the non-believers.

Find Your First Brick

If you want to work in radio, find your first brick. This could be writing an email to a college, enquiring about joining a community station, reading a book, phoning a hospital radio station etc. Next, join a community/hospital radio station and get involved with everything. You might start off wanting to be a radio DJ; then you may go and make a radio package. Suddenly, you might love being a community radio reporter. Maybe you'll enjoy working the mixing desk? Might this experience get you to consider being a tech op instead of a radio DJ? Who knows? However, you won't know these things until you try everything. And community radio stations are perfect for this. They'll let you try everything.

When you join a community radio station, you'll start learning new skills and experiences. Then you'll meet new people. Meeting new people with the same passion as you will open up more doors. After a while, you'll have a good skill set. Take those new skills and join a bigger station. Learn even more skills and make more contacts. Soon you'll have lots of radio experience.

Consider that everything you do is a CV for yourself. Get yourself a portfolio of quality shows or quality radio packages etc. Now you can make a great demo tape. After that, you can start applying for radio presenting/reporting jobs, etc. This is how it works. It's all about experience and having an excellent portfolio of quality work.

Give this blog on radio application forms a read.

Applying for Jobs in Radio

Your first brick will set you in motion. It will start a chain of events.

My Radio Chain

In 1997 I laid my first brick. I enrolled in Lambeth College and learned the basics of radio. Afterwards, I joined Radio Kings, a hospital radio station in south London as a volunteer. (Ironically, it was my volunteer work where I learned the most radio skills.) Two years after joining Radio Kings, I became the manager of a radio station with two studios and thirty volunteers. Now I had professional authority. For the next five years, I trained in all aspects of radio. From 1997 to 2002, I put in five application forms to the BBC World Service. When they rejected me, I went away and got more experience. Then I reapplied. In 2002, on my fifth application form (and second interview) I became a studio manager. I stayed at the BBC for nine years.

Belief moves mountains.

My Current Chain

In 2014 I laid the first brick of the Online Radio School. I started working on the script for my *"Discover The Secrets To Media Interviewing"* course. Then I started making it. It killed me, but the sense of achievement I felt when I finally launched in 2015 was fantastic. I then made a second course. That killed me.

Then a station contacted me and said: *"Hey your website looks good, can we enroll?"* Then two more stations enrolled. Now my website had some credibility. More individual students registered. Then I wrote an ebook called *"The Beginner's Guide To Making Radio Documentaries."*

I emailed it to a few community stations. One station wrote back and said: "Hey, you should contact Dr. Matthew Linfoot, Course Leader in **Radio Production at the University of Westminster**. He may have some part time work for you." I emailed the university, he liked my book and

said: *"Let's hook up for a coffee after the summer break."* Then I volunteered at a local hospital radio station in east London. I started training for free. My new station manager recommended my training courses to a larger organisation. Today they emailed me and enquired about my courses. Nothing has happened yet, but just by putting myself into that environment I've suddenly made a new opportunity. If I hadn't volunteered my time for free, my new manager wouldn't have recommended me to this larger organisation.

You make your own opportunities in life by simply laying bricks.

Brick by brick. This is how it works.

Lay your first brick in radio today. Do anything that will move you forward.

I still have a long way to go. However, I've also come a long way. If I hadn't laid that first brick two years ago, I wouldn't be where I am now. In two more years, I'll be even further down the line.

Brick by brick.

If you keep going forward, you will arrive at your destination.

If You Quit, You Will Never See It

Know this. Getting into radio may not happen in the time that you want it to happen. It might take six months, 18 months, 24 months. It took me five years and five application forms. But if you quit, if you give up, if you stop, if you do not persevere, you will never see it. It will never happen.

Listen To Motivational Tapes Daily

Les Brown says, if you listen to motivational tapes every day it will change the way you think. He's right. I started spending ten to fifteen minutes a day just playing motivational tapes from YouTube.

Whenever I was cooking, washing dishes, having a shave, etc. I played Les Brown videos to motivate me. Those videos started to change the way I thought. As Les says: "87% of all self-talk is negative. You've got to make a conscious, deliberate, determined effort to say yes to your dreams. Why not?"

Birds Of A Feather Flock Together

"If you hang around with losers, you'll end up a loser. Unconsciously you'll pick up their ways. You'll pick up their habits; you'll pick up, most importantly their attitude about life. If you're around cynical, negative people all the time, you will become cynical and negative."

I don't hang around with the same negative people that I used to anymore. It's not because I don't like them, far from it. They're all good people. I just don't hang around with them anymore because a) I don't have anything in common with them now and b) it drains me. Any positive thing I would say was always met with a barrage of negative comments. They were negative not because they wanted me to fail, but simply because they'd bought into the negative way of life.

As Les says: *"It doesn't take any effort to be a loser. It doesn't take any motivation, any drive, in order to stay down there on a low level. But it calls on everything inside of you to say; I'm going to challenge myself."*

Maybe it's a British thing. We're quite negative here. I've found it hard to find people who will give you reasons why you can succeed. Most people I know find reasons why you can't succeed. It's why I moved on from my negative friends. Whenever I said I wanted to do X, Y or Z, they'd just tell me the reasons why it couldn't be done. This is why I'm a big Les Brown fan. His words on YouTube are my new positive friends.

Recap

Believe you can work in radio and you will.

Lay that first brick.

Join a local station. Volunteer for everything. Present radio shows, make radio packages. Drive the desk. Get yourself a portfolio of quality work and skills. Showcase future employers these assets.

Surround yourself with positive people. Their enthusiasm will rub off on you.

If you quit, you will never see it.

Keep going forward.

Enjoy it too. I'm having a blast doing my own thing.

As for the ex-girlfriend who dumped me at Aarhus train station and ripped my heart out? I forgave her a week later. I never really spoke to her after that, but internally I forgave her. At the end of the day, I had to accept that she didn't want to be with me. That's life. Forgiving her was easy. It also set me free to work on my dreams!

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