

#BehindtheSelfie with... Darren "Whackhead" Simpson, breakfast show host on Kfm 94.5

By  Jessica Tennant

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This week, we go behind the selfie with Darren "Whackhead" Simpson, breakfast show host on Kfm 94.5's Kfm Mornings.



This interview forms part of our radio and podcasting content feature, and just last week, Simpson won Best Commercial Breakfast Show Presenter at the 2020 Radio Awards.

“ It's incredible to receive this award, especially in an industry that thrives on recognition, so to be singled out as the 'Best Morning Show Host' in South Africa, ahead of all of your peers is truly wonderful... It's our Oscars, so it's a great honour! ”



All the 2020 Radio Awards winners announced!

17 Apr 2020



1. Where do you live, work and play?

I live in Blouberg Cape Town, work in Green Point Cape Town and play with my kids wherever they want to go.

2. What's your claim to fame?

That my wife is 10 years younger than me!

3. Describe your career so far.

This is my 27th year in radio. It has been one helluva ride, with many highs and lows.

“ People only really see the highs because they are published. I've won the awards, broken the records, but none of that came easily. There were many injuries along the way. ”

The first 10 years were littered with excitement and sustained disappointment. Everything was new. I was naively overambitious. The only safety net was, "Well, if this doesn't work out, I have time to do something else."

The next seven years I possibly had the biggest growth spurt, failed many times, but started to believe that maybe this is what I was meant to do, and just maybe I could go quite far.

The next 10, I call 'the business end', when experience started to prove its worth and when the big opportunities started to come in, and with that, all the responsibility too.



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4. Tell us a few of your favourite things.

My favourite thing to do is play snooker. It's quiet and peaceful, and gives me respite from all the chaos. I have always played snooker and as a child dreamed of turning pro.

“



[View this post on Instagram](#)



Snooker, what I do to chill. Clearing the colours, Jammy Blue, but top Pink!

A post shared by [Darren Simpson](#) (@thedarrensimpson) on Dec 8, 2018 at 12:27pm PST

”

5. What do you love about your industry?

The creativity and the spontaneity. Every day it's a different playground. It is always a thrill turning on that microphone.

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

Wake up at 4am, start the show at 6am, finish at 9am (that is the easy part). A few meetings until about 11am. 11.15am is breakfast time (yes, my first meal of the day). During breakfast and until about 2pm, I plan the show for the next day (although the planning never stops - I am always thinking of the next idea). 2pm to 5pm is playing soccer, cricket, baseball, whatever sport in the backyard with my two little boys. 6pm dinner with 'wifey', and when the kids go to bed at 8pm, then we have our time. 11.30ish is what I call bedtime.

7. What are the tools of your trade?

The modern-day broadcaster requires a very different skillset from the broadcasters of yesteryear. Arm yourself with a sense of humour, knowledge and reason. I can't describe it as aptly as a listener did on Kfm's Facebook page about me, from Maxine Nerwich:

8. Who is getting it right in your industry?

Kfm, without a doubt.

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

Tolerating lazy broadcasters, who would rather become a TikTok star or an 'influencer', and who take the 'original' social media, radio, for granted. Radio is still the most powerful medium by far, however, it doesn't give you instant likes.

10. What are you working on right now?

My next solo stand-up comedy show, and I have two requests for an autobiography. So busy working on both.

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

I personally hate buzzwords and catchphrases because all too often they become platitudes. If you had to force my hand, I would say it's the Navy Seal slogan: "The only easy day was yesterday."

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

When I am not trying to think of them, when I am trying to turn a chicken breast into a schnitzel, or when driving.

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

I can spin the decks too.

14. Are you a technophobe or a technophile?

I will admit that it's half and half. If I am interested in it, I will learn it, otherwise, you will hear me saying "can somebody help me get this stupid Zuckerberg thing to work."

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

That's out of bounds. I am on quite a few WhatsApp groups, and as you know that stuff goes straight to your camera roll.

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

Stick it out, don't expect to be an overnight success, give it at least 10 years, and just open yourself up to learn as much as possible.

“ Prepare to make the coffee, carry stuff and do the grunt work. Many newbies want to walk straight into prime time. That just doesn't happen, and if they by some chance do, they don't last. You have no idea howmuch you can learn from doing all of that mundane grunt stuff, just by absorbing everything. Make the best coffee for little pay. That's exactly what I did. ”

Watch everything and listen to everything happening around you. Ask questions and look for opportunities. Learn the entire business, not just the on-air side. Later in your career, you will see what I mean by this. Once you are in the building, you are on your way.

I know a guy who worked on supermarket radio, got offered a weekend graveyard position on a commercial radio station, but he thought he was too good for weekends and turned it down, because, you know, he was doing weekdays for the frozen fish section. Now, five years later, he does afternoons for the fruit and veg aisle. Silly man.

Follow Simpson @WhackheadS on [Twitter](#) and @thedarrensimpson on [Instagram](#) and listen in to his show on Kfm 94.5 from 6am to 9am.

*Interviewed by [Jessica Tennant](#).

ABOUT JESSICA TENNANT

Jess is Senior Editor: Marketing & Media at Bizcommunity.com. She is also a contributing writer. marketingnews@bizcommunity.com

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