



**Thank you for taking the time to complete the feature questions below.**

**Please, tell us about you and the work that you do?** I am a radio presenter for QA Radio and before that Radio Haslar in Gosport. I also have been a Programme Controller and a Fundraising Manager, also for Radio Haslar. I present two shows for QA Radio. The first, on Wednesday between 3pm and 5pm is a purely music show where I play music that I would like to hear if lying in a hospital bed. The other, between 11am and 2pm on Fridays is sometimes a music show, sometimes a chat show, sometimes an attempt to bring culture to the listener in the form of live music, poetry, short stories and plays. I try to steer away from the doom and gloom stuff because I feel that people, especially the people that I broadcast to want to be entertained not depressed. Sometimes, you can't avoid the depressing stuff as people also need to be informed as well, but if you can do it in an entertaining way then that will aid recovery and bring stimulus to the brain as well by playing something that evokes a memory, that in turn will bring a smile and lift spirits. That's why we do it. I am also a civil servant, and my employers have proven to be an ally in my endeavours. They have actively encouraged me to keep going.



**Has this, and if yes, how does, this link to mental health?** The reason I started in broadcasting in September 1999 had to do with mental health. I was going through a bad patch at the time. The degree that I got in Literary Studies (with a media element) from Portsmouth University wasn't getting me anywhere. I also have qualifications in teaching adult education. It proved to be a bad idea because I couldn't deal with clientele that you must deal with. I went along to Radio Haslar because I had an interest in Radio and Broadcasting and I needed something that would help me fight this state of depression that I was going through. This, I thought, would be it. It was a risk. I was low in confidence and my speech wasn't outstanding, but I knew there was something there. I was right. There was. Radio helped me to come out of my shell. Even now, I'm not all the way out. There are still things I can't do, like form a loving relationship, but being a broadcaster and doing what I like doing was a major aid to my mental health

**What has been some of the best moments of your journey creating your work?** There was a sense of freedom when I started broadcasting. It was something I could do, and it didn't really matter if I made a mistake because you can turn it into a part of the show, and in turn make people laugh. Things have got even better since. Thanks to Andrew Hay, and I do credit him for this, I started interviewing people and found that I'm not bad at all. He is still better than me at interviewing people, but I am learning. My journey has taken me to places that I wouldn't have dreamt to have gone to when I first started in 1999. I went to Bletchley Park and conducted two interviews there, I've conducted several interviews with celebrities including one or two Hollywood stars, and I've been to the Houses of Parliament and other historical places on radio business, again something that wouldn't have happened in 1999. I've been to several concerts and met stars of stage and screen, and I play music that I like on my own show. All of this wouldn't have happened if I hadn't had taken that first step. Its advice I'd give anybody, find a way to make that first step, and if it works, you'll never look back.



**What projects are you currently working on?**

**And if yes, which are there up-coming?** The nature of my Friday show means that there are always projects that I'm working on. I'm working on a crime and policing special and a radio mystery festival, which, by the time this goes out, may have already gone out. My ambition is to bring poetry, short stories and plays to my shows that highlight the talents of local artists. There is a lot of talent out there in Portsmouth and I want to bring it into the light using my show.



**Do you have any 'coping strategies' that you use, either with daily life or in mental health?** I try to stay as optimistic as I can, and with the current political, climate and health concerns that is difficult. I seem to have this ability to go into a trance and think about only the present. That is used with breathing techniques. Doesn't always work, but when I get angry, the breathing techniques helps to calm things down. - Sometimes writing things down helps. I did this, for example, as a sort of a mental health exercise. I felt it was a good idea to be open and honest about myself in a hope that it will encourage others.

**How do you view the journey of recovery?** The journey of recovery is hard. Help is not always there when you need it. People don't always understand you and the fact that you need help from them to move on and to recover. That is frustrating. There is a me - me, me society out there now, and that unfortunate fact is really coming to the fore right now. I believe that you must stay true to yourself and trust your own abilities. You do have them, it's just a matter of finding that ability and maximising it to your best capability, and you will get there. Trust yourself.

**What does the future hold for you?** It can be bright. All I need to do is stay healthy and keep doing what I'm doing. I'm learning new things even now, and I hope to keep on learning. It's all you can do

**Favourite Quote?**

*"...stay true to yourself and trust yourself..."*

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