



Phil De Semlyen

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Lorna on Phil: Journalism is about asking questions and getting answers. Lecturing a group of students with no questions is grim. There you are looking to inspire a new generation, ready to pass on secrets, tricks and advice, and there's silence. Phil on the other hand had a journalist's mind. He constantly asked questions, not just during the lectures, but also before, after, in the breaks, and whenever he ran into me. He was interested in the media at large, the mechanics and the minutiae of writing, as well as my experience, which made answering his questions a pleasure. And unlike some students who demand better grades, Phil constantly demanded more of himself, even though he was Mr Top Grade to start with.

Phil on Lorna: Thanks to Lorna's tuition I quickly learnt the difference between 'a topic' and 'an angle'. One involved flowery prose that was fun to write; the other was a route to a career in journalism. I still think about it every time I write something: angle, angle, angle. If this makes Lorna sound like a geometry teacher, it was possibly the most important thing I absorbed as a student. She also had a wicked sense of humour and infectious enthusiasm. If journalism training was a movie, Lorna's class would make the best word-based training montage in film history. Journalism can be a tough path, but the best thing I can say is that she'll make you want to travel it.

Phil's advice: You should try to find a job that you WANT to get up in the morning for. If you have to change careers to find it, do it, but I think it's important to see the change as a progression and not a blank canvas. I worked in media sales before going into journalism, and that time was part of the learning curve. Journalism is tough, not brilliantly paid, and amazing. There's no other job in the world that pays you to ask people personal questions, apart from maybe the police.