



## Rachel Bull

News Editor [Event Magazine](#),  
Founder-Editor [LiveUrbanLoveRural](#) (PG 2008)

**Lorna on Rachel:** As far as I'm concerned there's no fine line between nannying students and nurturing them. For me, nurturing young people for jobs in the media world means preparing them for the real world. Some students equate my depiction of this real world as my persona. Others take serious note of what I'm saying, as did Rachel. If you want to work in this business it's like going into battle. You need armour to protect yourself, you need self-belief to launch yourself, and you will need mental stamina to keep going, no matter what is thrown at you. When Rachel emailed me to tell me she got a dream job, I was overjoyed; and when she emailed to say she'd been made redundant I was sad that someone as bright and talented should be so disappointed early on. But the thing about age and experience is that you learn that terrific things can come out of hard times, and I knew that Rachel would get through this.

The name Rachel Bull will always conjure up grace and power. And it's one to watch out for.

### **Rachel on Lorna:**

**What I learnt from Lorna:** Lorna isn't an easy one to impress. Which is just as well, because being a journalist isn't easy either. I realised very early on that one of my main goals at LSJ would be to impress her, which took drive, determination, originality and resilience. She brought out these qualities in me, and showed me how to harness them in a journalistic context.

**The key messages from Lorna that helped me:** Find your Unique Selling Point – your niche – that thing that makes you different from the rest.  
Be arrogant about how good you are.

**How I've carried Lorna's mentoring with me over the years:** At the end of 2008, and with zero experience on consumer magazines, I beat more than 100 candidates to the job of features assistant on Country Living magazine. It was a dream come true; so much so, that I took a whacking great pay cut for it. Seven months later I was made redundant. Being among the 15% of Natmags staff that had to go was a painful experience. (To this day, when I hear people talking about the feelings of worthlessness and guilt that come with redundancy, my chest feels like it's filling up with expanding concrete that pushes up behind my eyes until it stings something rotten.) I felt rejected from a profession I had wanted so badly to crack – thought I had cracked.

After applying for countless jobs and sending out loads of pitches without any joy, I came very close to giving journalism up for good. My confidence had taken a serious hit, and I wasn't sure I could cope with any more rejection. But I didn't give it up. I had a USP – oh, and I also had experience and contacts on Country Living, a national title, so I convinced myself I could turn the situation on its head. I also knew that Lorna would have been disappointed and unimpressed if I'd given up, and I couldn't let that happen.

I started a blog called employabull (a handy play on my surname) and got venting, empathising and – most importantly – writing. It was a relatively small step, but I made contacts through it, taught myself how to manage a blog and read site analytics, and it got me freelance work on other consumer mags. Eventually, I found full-time work again and secured regular freelance commissions. Having that voice in the form of Lorna V in my mind, willing me to get up and carry on, was one of the things that saw me through. She championed me at LSJ, so I couldn't let her down.

The whole experience made me more focused, more determined and taught me what I wanted from my journalism career. Which is why last year (alongside my day job as a news editor) I launched my own online magazine: [liveurbanloverural.com](http://liveurbanloverural.com) (LULR) showing readers the country side of urban living. Managing a project from a concept through to reality, creating great content and building my own brand has been a fantastic experience. It's taught me a lot and opened doors, and it's thanks to Lorna's teaching and belief in me that I got there.

**What I did that paid off:** Where I've succeeded in job interviews and at work is where I've shown the most passion. It's hugely important to employers, so show you're excited about your subject and always have millions of ideas.

I've also made my own luck. Sometimes you have to. Launching LULR has been an amazing project. It has also helped me to get freelance work, build my contacts and given me leverage at interviews. It's hugely competitive out there, so you need to give yourself an edge, whatever that may be.

**What should wannabe journalists be doing?** Know two things:

- Despite all the doom and gloom, there have never been more opportunities for budding journalists to get published – online. Digital is creating new and exciting opportunities for writers that we have to embrace. Build contacts via social media, contribute to key blogs that you're interested in and away you go.
- You are really good. Everyone battles with confidence issues – I have more moments of self doubt than I care to admit – but believe you can do it and have confidence in your writing. It will show through and it will pay off.