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# Virtually Podcasting: Parkinson, AI, and the podcast interview.

Dr Richard Berry,  
Associate Professor in Radio and Podcasting,  
University of Sunderland, UK.



University of  
Sunderland



# *Virtually* PARKINSON

- *an attempt to explore human connection in a way that, “respects the legacy of beloved figures, and builds pathways for future creators to thrive alongside technology.”*

- Ben Field, Broadcast, 12/11/24





- *Interviews are about listening, and AI Parky was programmed to do that. But its listening skills simply led it to make a summary of what Derulo had just said... and then move on to the next banality.*

*Proper interviews, as the real-life Parkinson showed, are about connection, conversation, understanding or lack of it; an in-the-moment spark between two personalities. A familiar voice and a set of statements with question marks do not an interview make*

- Miranda Sawyer, The Guardian, 18/1/25

# Repeated question structure

- It's interesting how those moments of fear can leave such a lasting impression. Winning Strictly Come Dancing must have been a unique challenge. How did you manage to turn that fear into the success you ultimately achieved on the show?
- The journey from grassroots development to reality TV is indeed fascinating. That famous moment with a cockroach must have been quite the experience. And how did participating in I'm a Celebrity, get me out of here, change things for you personally and professionally?
- Fascinating how you've applied that mindset across different facets of your life. I'm curious, how has your relationship with your daughter evolved as she grows, particularly with the unique challenges and joys of fatherhood?
- But truly, Steven, when you unfold these intricate storylines, there's a real mastery to it. Shifting gears a bit, let's chat about something that some might find surprising. Throughout your career, you've infused your personal experiences and struggles into your stories. Does writing about these parts of your life bring a sense of catharsis or connection with your audience?

## Co-presence: If I can't see you, are you really there?

- “There’s no response to what you’re saying at all. There’s just a pause and then another question. Look at the way we’re talking now. I just said something, and you slightly raised your eyebrows. That’s important communication. Even if you’re doing radio, people will laugh or butt in or respond”
- Monty Don. Quoted in Stuart Heritage, The Guardian 13/1/25





- a podcast host's ability to convey a pleasant identifiable personality and establish a parasocial relationship is a very important ingredient to being a successful podcast host, and in our interpretation also more important for podcast hosts than for radio and TV hosts.

- Heiselberg, L. and Have, I. 2023



- **The Louis Theroux Podcast**
- Questions are shorter, sometimes just prompts “Really?”
- The host is self-reflective and self-correcting
- It’s a co-created dialogue with natural flow, anecdote, and a sense of the podcast as an entity.
- **“His awkwardness, far from being incidental, operates as a form of soft authorial control. It blurs the boundary between detachment and complicity, suggesting both proximity and critical distance.”** (Lee, 2025, P4)



- “..if you take the ego out of the interviewer, it's not concerned about how it sounds or how it interviews. It's not interested, is it? ....
- Every interviewer is always looking for the killer question. What's the killer question? And really, that's where we don't have that issue, really, which is, again, **a weird experience**”
- Mike Parkinson (2025), *Chris McCausland Post Interview Debrief with Our Producers*, 13'46” – 14'13”



**Although, I haven't been in the presence of you as such, I really, really feel like I have been.** So for me, it's been an absolute honour to meet you, whether it's been in the AI form. For me, it certainly hasn't felt like that. So, thank you for having me.



AI is a wonderful thing as I've always said, if it's kept in the construct, it should be. I mean, for an interview, it's always nice to actually sit and I think **I would have loved to have seen you on the other side of the sofa, Michael**



Well, I suppose the biggest difference for me in this is that there is no, you know, my laughter, the tone of my answers is not received. **It's very much based on the words.** .... It's also been a very difficult audience because there's been no mirroring or response or reaction to the chuckles or the touches of humour.

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DANKE!  
 THANK YOU!  
 MERCI!  
 GRAZIE!  
 GRACIAS!  
 DANK JE WEL!

