



## Broadcast Transcript

**Broadcast:** Dr. Dobson: The Man Behind the Mic – Part 1

**Guest(s):** Chris Fabry

**Air Date:** October 9<sup>th</sup>, 2017

[Listen to the broadcast](#)

Announcer: Today on Family Talk.

Roger Marsh: Welcome to Family Talk with your host, psychologist, and bestselling author, Dr. James Dobson. I'm Roger Marsh. As many of you know, Dr. Dobson, of course, is the host of this daily radio program, but today he's taking off his headphones and sliding over to the guest microphone and answering some questions from our good friend, Chris Fabry. Chris is the host of Chris Fabry Live on Moody Broadcasting and has been in the radio business for over 30 years. Chris is the author of more than 70 books, and he'll be asking Dr. Dobson about his 40 years in radio, how he got started, and he'll also highlight some career accomplishments along the way. It's a lot of great content. So, let's get to part one of Dr. Dobson's conversation with Chris Fabry here on Family Talk.

Chris Fabry: One of the first guests I remember inviting onto this program when we began back in May of 2008 was Dr. James Dobson, and today he's back with more answers to my questions, and we do this because 2017 marks the 40th year in broadcasting in his career. So, we're going to take a guided tour through the last four decades, the ups, the downs, the highlights. He needs no introduction really, and every time I hear people say that, they give a lengthy introduction, but if he needs no introduction, why give one?

Chris Fabry: From his studio in Colorado where he conducts Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk, Dr. James Dobson. How in the world are you?

Dr. Dobson: I'm doing great Chris, and I love you like a brother. It's a real pleasure to be able to talk to you today.

Chris Fabry: Same here. Now, I've got some questions to ask you. First, you are the first person who told me the upsides of throat coat tea and using yellow legal pads. Are those still on the table there in front of you?

Dr. Dobson: I don't even know what throat coat tea is? That went the way of all flesh. I do find it helpful when my voice is scratchy, and it does get that way every now and then, to gargle with salt. I don't know what that does, but it does help, and

there are also some other kinds of throat lozenges and so on that help. I've been at this, as you said, for 40 years, and I never know exactly what I'm going to get when I open my mouth.

Chris Fabry: You know, here's the other thing, we scheduled this back in July, and the folks that work with you said, "Well really, the first time we can do this in September because of the schedule." And I thought, "Well September is just, you know way far away. But I'll wait for September for Dr. Dobson." And what has happened is it has slipped up on me. I find that time has accelerated in my own life in the way that I look at things, and you turn around and that week's gone, that month's gone. A year or 10 are gone. Has time accelerated for you the same way?

Dr. Dobson: You know, when I was a kid I was told that the older you get, the faster time moves, and I'm telling you it is absolutely true. I didn't believe it then. I sure do now. I mean, we're right around the corner from Christmas again. It's just amazing how fast it goes, and I'm enjoying every minute of it. I hope you are, but I sometimes wish that I could slow it down a little bit.

Chris Fabry: Yeah. Well, one of the reasons why you got into radio ... Let's look at your four decades, your 40th anniversary, one of the reasons you got into radio was that whole thing. You were going around the country and speaking and doing video conferences, seminars, that kind of thing, and you really could see your family kind of slipping away, or connection with your family. Is that why you got into radio?

Dr. Dobson: Well, honestly, there are several things that had an influence on me, but that was probably at the top of the list because my daughter was 13. My son was, I think, eight. They were both headed straight for adolescence, and I was feeling the need to be with them and not let those years get away from me, and I was doing far too much traveling.

I guess it's because my early books were successful, and people were talking about them. I was getting sometimes 300 speaking requests a year. I didn't take them all, but they were there. And finally I just said to Shirley, "You know, I don't think that we're giving our kids the amount of time we ought to." I never really did fail to go places and do things. I started hunting with Ryan very early, and we bought a ski lodge and man, that turned our life upside down. We absolutely loved to be together, but I did do a lot of traveling and a lot of speaking in those days, and I thought radio was a good way to get the message across and stay at home. And it turned out to be exactly that.

But there are other things. I saw the institution of the family falling apart, and I really just felt that I ought to do what I could to try to make a contribution, and radio looked like that was it. And I think it turned out to be that, where I could reach a large number of people without traveling, without being gone.

But let me tell you one other thing. I don't want to filibuster here, but there's something I don't think I've ever told you or anybody else. Shirley and I frequently went to London in those days, and the publishers paid the bill for it, for both of us, and so I wrote a number of my books there and in Scotland and in Australia and other places, and I got really interested in the BBC, and they had all kinds of various things that they talked about and that really looked good to me. I thought that ... The most Christian radio that I saw was Sunday morning sermons, and there's nothing wrong with that. I'm just not a minister, and that's not exactly what I came to do. Instead, we talked about a wide variety of things in the model of the BBC, and so that had a big influence on me, too.

Chris Fabry: Well, and the content of the BBC as well. And you listening to that probably made you think, "Why can't we do something along those same lines to engage people at the heart level?" Because you don't have to have the, the pictures, the video that's going on to cloud things. It's just you, your voice and that other person. Right?

Dr. Dobson: Yeah. And let me tell you one other thing that I don't know if I've talked about publicly a lot. I had an opportunity to do television and radio at one time when I left the children's hospital in USC School of Medicine, and I wasn't sure which one I should do. People were providing money for television, so I just called my dad. Always, when I had a question like that, I called my dad, and I said, "Dad, I've got an opportunity to do both radio and television, and what do you think I ought to do? Would you pray about that?" He said, "I will pray about that." And you can bet he did. And about four days later, we were talking on the telephone, and I'd kind of forgotten the question, and he said, "By the way, I've been praying about what you asked me about." And I said, "Well, what conclusion did you draw?" And he said, "It's radio." He said, "I really think you can accomplish a whole lot more with less of your time and energy and less money and all that. Television, it just absorbs every energy." He said, "I think it's radio."

Chris Fabry: His influence was so strong in your life, just like my own father. When he talked, and he wanted to get his point across, he would put both hands out there, and he would move his hands. Your hands are very important to every broadcast you do. Is that true?

Dr. Dobson: You know, I'm not aware of it, but as you mentioned it, yes, I do move my hands. And the interesting thing about radio is that people are very influenced by the nature of your voice. It's really interesting to me that some people, their voice is not attractive to them, and they probably ought to be doing something else. And I find that for some reason, people like my voice, and they feel comforted by it. All I know is what they tell me. And my voice is a little scratchy today, so it's probably not a good time to say I've got some great gift here. But there is something about a voice that is either warm and comforting, or sometimes it's irritating, and a whole lot in radio depends on the sound of the voice.

Chris Fabry: Yeah, I agree. And I think part of it is too, you've got these graduate degrees. You are learned, but you didn't lose the Louisiana part of you. And even when you say the word perspective, it comes out perspective, and you know it's the E-E-V, and I know that you could have changed that. You could have enunciated and cleaned up everything, but that's part of where you come from. That's part of your stock, isn't it?

Dr. Dobson: Well, yes. But I left Louisiana when I was, I think, 10 months old. So, I didn't spend a lot of time there. Although I have relatives there, but I spent a lot of time in Texas and Oklahoma, and I spent the first grade in Arkansas, and then a big mix of California, and you put it all in there, and people can't figure out who it is or what it is they're listening to.

It's really interesting to me that a lot of comedians have tried to mimic my voice, and that it's not a one of them that gets it. Maybe they think they do, but I don't think it sounds like me at all because I've got a mix of all kinds of junk in there, and so it's just not easy to identify.

Chris Fabry: But not only your voice though. There's a warmth. There is a power there. There's an invitation that the voice gives, but there's also an importance of the content. There's a message that you have had through the years that has stayed really on point, and I think that's another reason why people have gravitated toward you. Talk a little bit about that for the last 40 years, the power of your message.

Dr. Dobson: Well, I think my message hasn't changed because it came again from what I heard at home and what I saw and what I believed. The message is a product of my love for the Lord and what I felt he called me to do, and I just have not seen any reason to veer away from it very much. My dad did have a great influence on me in all of my early life. My mother did too. Both of them were powerful people. They both loved the Lord. They ... And I have said this on the air that I learned to pray before I learned to talk. And the reason for that is that my parents had devotions every day, and they prayed a lot. And I began imitating the sounds of prayer before I knew the meaning of the words. And I just grew up with that.

And so, I have not sat down and tried to craft a message that was somehow out of the blue. I was really reporting what I had heard and what I believed and my relationship with Jesus Christ. And you know, I was four years old when I gave my heart to the Lord.

Hey, can tell you a funny story? Yeah. Thank you. My daughter went through about 20 boxes of memorabilia that I have kept since I was in college, and she found all kinds of stuff in there. And one of them was a letter that my mother wrote to my dad shortly after I had given my heart to the Lord. I went to an actual altar, and I knelt there, and I wept, and I gave my heart to Jesus, and my dad came down off the platform and put his arm around me and prayed for me. And I took that really seriously. I mean, that made a great impact on me. People

may think that a four year old can't really identify in that way, but I'm telling you, I did, and it was the most significant moment of my life and has stayed with me.

But shortly thereafter, I was riding my tricycle, and this is what my mother wrote to my dad, that I was riding along, and I slipped, and I fell. And I really hurt my hand, and I was wailing over this. I mean I was really hurt. And my mother said, "Well Jimmy, why don't you pray about it?" And I thought that was a pretty good idea. So, I started praying about it, and then I stopped praying and went back to crying and my mother said, "Well, what did Jesus say to you?" And I said, "He told me he was busy watering the trees and the flowers, and he'd get to me when he could."

That is a literal interpretation of prayer, I think.

Chris Fabry: Yes, it is. Four years old. Here's the other thing, when you bring that up, it is your memory. I don't know if you still have the same memory as a few years ago when I worked with you, but you would stop in the middle of recording a program and say, "We had so and so on that program three months ago, and she said this." Or, "Three years ago." Or, "Remember in 1970?" Whatever. How do you explain your ability to recall?

Dr. Dobson: You know, I've thought a lot about that because my field is child development, and I'm really interested in learning and how that takes place. There are people who have good memory because they recall the outcome of events, and they remember being with somebody or what have you. I think my memory and a lot of other people's memory is intense because I actually have it videotaped. In other words, when I'm telling you I remember something, I'm not just talking about a memory of a memory. I'm talking about a moment when I was in a certain place and with a certain person, and I can almost hear them say the words.

My daughter is even better at that than I am. She is scary in what she remembers. I sometimes wish that she didn't remember absolutely everything that happened as a child, but she does, and I think it's because that matter of the difference between a memory of a memory and a memory that is vividly videoed in your mind, and that is something that I enjoy. I do have a good memory.

Chris Fabry: The people who work with you, the engineers ... The engineers used to tell me, "If he says something like this, what we have learned is 99% of the time he's usually right. So just go with him whatever he said about it." Because there'll be times, "No, that didn't happen that way." And they just figured, "You know what? He usually is right. Because he's got this memory thing going."

Dr. Dobson: Well, that's been very helpful to me because a lot of my speaking and radio work is really a compilation of stories. I like to tell stories, and I tell them

because I remember them. I've got maybe a hundred memories in my second year, and I know where I was, what I was doing. One time I was playing with rocks in the driveway, and I don't know why that stuck with me, but I was ... We've got a photograph of it, and I was about two years of age. I have really had the opportunity to pull up stories and tell people, and they're not made up. I'm telling you, if I can see it in my head, then I know it happened.

Chris Fabry: I wonder if you remember this. It was my worst moment with you. Worst, meaning I was chagrined about something that I said in your presence. And we were in the middle studio at Focus on the Family when you were there, and you had come down to do a recording, and it was during the NCAA tournament. You had recorded it to watch later on, and you said, "Don't anybody tell me who had won the game." And as I was walking out of the studio, you said something like, "That team, I think they're going to go all the way." And I said something like, "Well, such and such a team can beat them." And that tipped you off as to who won that game that you had recorded. And so I messed up your whole-

Dr. Dobson: You did. Yes sir. I do remember that. Yeah. That's the worst thing you can do for me.

Chris Fabry: I felt so bad. I felt so bad about that.

All right, so in your 40 years of radio, do you have a most emotional moment? Did you ever have to stop the recording, or did you always just keep going with the recording when you had emotion happen?

Dr. Dobson: Oh No. Emotion is very important, and it's not only important to radio, but it's important to let it happen when it occurs. You can't manufacture it, and that becomes phony, and people can smell that. And that's not what I'm talking about though. When there is a moment, you let it go.

Let me tell you an example of that. We had a guest on Focus on the Family in 1983, and she was pregnant and didn't know it. And she suddenly realized that she had been carrying this baby and had not welcomed him into her life. And she began crying. And I'm telling you, it was right at the start of the abortion movement and how people felt about bringing their babies into the world, and both of us began weeping. I'm telling you, I could not stop, and she was also weeping. We still have that tape, and she was trying to tell us that she was afraid that baby would not feel welcomed and secure and brought into the life of that family.

I've had a lot of moments like that, but what I was going to tell you is that the editor cut that entire sequence out, and it fell on the floor and was lost, and he thought, "Well, you know, so you're crying. I mean you don't need that. You're just wasting time. You're not even talking." And I teased him for years about that because I considered that one of the most important moments in the year

because we were really experiencing something that I felt like the audience not only identified with but also wept with us.

Chris Fabry: Yes. And right there is part of the reason why, again, your voice, the content, but also, you're not afraid of emotion. And if you shrink back from that, you're also not afraid to laugh. And, that's the other thing that you told them not to cut out. If we're laughing, and if we're going that way, don't cut that out because that's what will draw people in, right?

Dr. Dobson: People like to feel. You know, they like the feel. So much of what they hear, maybe some time in church or in other radio programs or what have you, and there's nothing to feel there that people don't cry, but they don't laugh either. And I think we all need to laugh. We need to enjoy the experience as we go through life. And so when something really funny happens, don't you dare cut that out, but don't try to laugh over something that's not funny because that will turn people off big time.

Roger Marsh: You've been listening to a special edition of Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk. I'm Roger Marsh. We've been listening to part one of Chris Fabry's interview with Dr. Dobson on Chris's radio program for the Moody Network. Now, if you happened to jump in late on this interview, I want to remind you that you can listen to the full show when you go to our website at [drjamesdobson.org](http://drjamesdobson.org). Simply click on the broadcast tab on the top of the page, and you'll be directed to the interview to listen at your leisure.

If you enjoyed today's program, please let us know by calling our listener feedback line. The toll free number is (844) 823-2669. Now once you call, you'll have two minutes to leave your message there. All feedback, comments and testimonies are appreciated. Again, the toll free number is (844) 823-2669.

Roger Marsh: I'm Roger Marsh. Thanks for listening to today's broadcast. Make sure to listen again tomorrow as we bring you part two of Chris Fabry's interview with Dr. James Dobson, right here on Family Talk.

Announcer: Family talk is not associated with Focus on the Family.

Dr. Tim Clinton: Hi, this is doctor Tim Clinton. Thanks for listening to Family Talk. You're going through a tough time right now? Deep waters, financial trouble, relationship issues, and more? We're here to help you. We'd love to talk with you. You can call us right now, toll free, (877) 732-6825. Again, you can call us right now, toll free, (877) 732-6825, or you can connect with us on our website at [drjamesdobson.org](http://drjamesdobson.org). There's always hope, and we're here for you. Call us right now. (877) 732-6825

Roger Marsh: Where can you go to receive support and advice for you and your family? Family Talk interacts with millions of people every day with inspiring advice and tips from Dr. James Dobson on what matters to you the most. Whether it's marriage

or parenting, you can be sure our Facebook page will keep you updated with how your family can succeed. Join us each day for the latest broadcast, resources and inspiration. Nowhere else can you hear a thought of the day from Dr. Dobson as well as a special message before you say good night. Now, you can be sure that every post on our page is created with you and your family in mind. So, please take the time to visit us and become part of our online community at [facebook.com/DrJamesDobsonsFamilyTalk](https://facebook.com/DrJamesDobsonsFamilyTalk). That's [facebook.com/DrJamesDobsonsFamilyTalk](https://facebook.com/DrJamesDobsonsFamilyTalk).