



## Broadcast Transcript

**Broadcast:** Up Close and Personal with Zig Ziglar – Part 1

**Guest(s):** Zig Ziglar

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**Dr. James Dobson:** Welcome everyone to Family Talk. It's a ministry of the James Dobson Family Institute supported by listeners just like you. I'm Dr. James Dobson and I'm thrilled that you've joined us.

**Roger Marsh:** Well, welcome to Family Talk, the broadcast division of the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute. I'm Roger Marsh, and today we're bringing you a very special conversation from our archives featuring one of Dr. Dobson's dearest friends and inspirational giants of the 20th century, the late Zig Ziglar. A gifted speaker, a best-selling author, and a devoted man of faith, Zig touched millions of lives through his powerful messages about success, faith and family. His wisdom continues to resonate even today, especially his belief that true success means finding balance across all areas of life. He was born Hilary Hinton Ziglar back in 1926, and his own story is a testament to perseverance and faith. At age 17, he met Jean, the woman who would become his wife of 65 years. Together they raised four children and were blessed with seven grandchildren as well before he went home to be with the Lord in 2012.

Over the decades, Dr. Dobson has featured Zig's recorded presentations multiple times on the broadcast, and he also welcomed him into the studio on two special occasions. So on this program and the next edition of Family Talk, we'll share what Dr. Dobson considers his favorite of those in-studio conversations, an intimate discussion that reveals both Zig Ziglar's incredible wisdom and his deep personal faith. Whether you're familiar with Zig Ziglar's legacy or you'll be hearing his story for the first time, you won't want to miss this powerful reminder that with faith, perseverance and the right priorities, anything is possible. And right now let's get into this special edition of Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk.

**Dr. James Dobson:** Well, I'm really excited to have my friend Zig back with us today. I met Zig at a speaking engagement when we were both one of the speakers, the plenary speakers back in 1975 in Snowmass, Colorado. But Zig, you're looking good. You're sounding strong, and I'm just delighted to have the chance to talk to you again.

**Zig Ziglar:** I'm delighted to be here, Jim, and I feel unusually well. I've enjoyed a wonderful lifespan already and God promised me that He was going to let me have a few more years or certainly a little more time, and I'm grateful for that.

Dr. James Dobson: And going strong.

Zig Ziglar: Absolutely. Stronger than ever.

Dr. James Dobson: Tell me about your very early life. It's my understanding your parents were fabulously rich and you were born with a silver spoon in your mouth and just everything went hunky-dory right from the beginning. Is that right?

Zig Ziglar: Truer words were never spoken, Jim. They weren't just spoken.

Dr. James Dobson: I guess I didn't read carefully enough. You started out with a rough road to hoe, didn't you?

Zig Ziglar: Yes, I did. I was the 10th of 12 children. I asked my mom one time, "Why so many?" And she said, "Well, son, where do you think I should have stopped?" I didn't think after number nine, now you can count on that. But actually according to the doctor when I was nine days old, I actually died. He didn't say the words per se, but the look on his face and the way he was shaking his head indicated that. My old grandmother took me in her arms and started praying and in a matter of seconds, God saw fit to breathe that breath back into my life. Christ is not named the great physician without really good reason. And he blessed my family. My mother obviously was deeply concerned and heartbroken, but it only lasted a few seconds apparently.

Dr. James Dobson: Now when you were six, your father died. Or one day short of being six.

Zig Ziglar: That's correct. I was just five years old when dad died. My baby sister died a few days later. So my mother really had an extraordinarily difficult time. The grief was intense, and yet she was the wisest woman, wisest person I think I've ever known. Had great faith. Only finished the fifth grade, but she was absolutely incredible in every way.

Dr. James Dobson: And she had great impact on you.

Zig Ziglar: Oh, huge impact.

Dr. James Dobson: And your work ethic and your worldview especially. I think I read that the Bible was really her only book. I hadn't written what she really needed. Is that the case?

Zig Ziglar: It's absolutely the case. Every Sunday morning and every Sunday night and every Wednesday evening, Mrs. LS Jones from down the street would park her car in front of the house and blow that horn and we'd go out and get in that car and off to church we would go. I have heard my mother quilting and singing those songs that she loved so much. I've watched her churn that milk and she'd be singing while she was doing it. We had a big garden and three milk cows, and

that was the way we really survived during the depression. We ate lots of vegetables and had that fresh milk and butter.

Dr. James Dobson: Well, she was a single mother. I've talked quite a bit about that in my book *Bringing Up Boys*, and one of the points that I tried to make is that a mother is really not equipped to teach a boy how to be a man. She can teach him an awful lot. She can love him. She's very, very important to him, but he's got to learn masculinity someplace else because that's not her forte. And so I've talked about getting that influence from a coach or a teacher or an uncle or a grandfather or a neighbor or somebody. Your mom had to find that kind of help for you and for the other boys in your family. And she did. It's my understanding that you had a coach that had a great impact on you.

Zig Ziglar: Yes. But now that coach came along much later than those initial years. I went to work in a grocery store on Saturday before I entered the fifth grade on Monday. Mr. John R. Anderson was the owner, an outstanding Christian man. He and his wife treated me more like a son than an employee there.

Dr. James Dobson: You were nine at the time.

Zig Ziglar: I was nine years old at that time. And he had a huge impact on my life. I joined the Boy Scouts early on and that was a huge impact also on my life. But Dr. Dobson, I have what I call my wall of gratitude. There are 26 men and women on that wall, and it's loaded with men and women who all had a big impact on my life.

Dr. James Dobson: So you actually have that in your office?

Zig Ziglar: Absolutely. On my wall there.

Dr. James Dobson: Who's the earliest one on that list?

Zig Ziglar: My mama, of course. Yeah.

Dr. James Dobson: And after her?

Zig Ziglar: Well, my wife comes along as number two. My oldest daughter, we taught her how to live. She taught us how to die. She had a big impact on my life. And the other one we got the top four was Sister Jesse, the elderly lady who led me to Christ. Now, I'd been baptized when I was 12, gone to church probably 1500 to 2000 times, but I was not a Christian. She spent that July 4th weekend, 1972 at our home. She walked in talking about Christ. She walked out talking about Christ. For three days that's all she talked about was Christ. I think that is the only subject she knew, but she sure knew that one.

Dr. James Dobson: And she got it across to you.

Zig Ziglar: She sure did.

Dr. James Dobson: So you've been walking with the Lord all these years, haven't you?

Zig Ziglar: Absolutely. Made a radical, instantaneous dramatic change. One of the huge benefits ... Now, I've always loved my wife. When I talk about her I call her the redhead.

Dr. James Dobson: Her name is Jean.

Zig Ziglar: That's right. When I'm talking to her, I always call her sugar baby and that's exactly what she is. I'd always loved her, always have. Never loved another woman. But I loved her as much as a man can love a woman. But when I learned to love her through Christ, that's when I fell in love. And the romance is stronger today. She's more fun than ever. We talk more than ever. As the kids say, we hang out more, we do more things together. She is just a fun person to have around.

Dr. James Dobson: Well, you got to bring her here sometime.

Zig Ziglar: I will.

Dr. James Dobson: I have not had the opportunity to meet her, and it would really be a pleasure to have her here. What kind of student were you in the early years?

Zig Ziglar: I was a very average student Jim. I was very, very busy working in the grocery store every afternoon after school, milking the cows in all before I left to go to school and then milking them when I came back in that evening. And then two nights a week I worked delivering the Yazoo City Herald Tuesday night and Friday night and another night I collected. So I used the excuse that I was very, very busy. Now I will say that being just an average student, but today and for the last 30 years, I've been a good student. I read an average of three hours a day for the last 30 years.

Dr. James Dobson: Have you really?

Zig Ziglar: Yeah. I read the newspaper every day. I read my Bible every day, and that way I know what both sides are up to.

Dr. James Dobson: Tell me about Coach Harris and his role in your life.

Zig Ziglar: I went to Hinds Junior College then, it's Hinds Community College now. When I was 16 years old because I wanted to take extra math and science so I could get in the Naval Air Corps. Well, when I got there, they said, "You got to take a course in history." Well, I took a course in American History under great stress. I did not want to. What possible good is it going to do me? And in the first lesson, Coach Harris spent the whole time selling me on why I had to know my history. I

became a history major as a result of it. Love history to this day. But he said something else that had a huge impact on my life. He said, "If you have the ability to provide for more than your own needs, then you have a responsibility to reach down and lift up those who do not have that ability. Because if you don't, the day will come when they will by force of numbers reach up and pull you down." Well, that had a huge impact on my thinking in the work we've done in schools and prisons and the drug rehabs and places like that are results of that.

But the rest of the story is simply this. When Coach Harris was a youngster, he was a boy scout And had a scout master named Thomas B. Abernathy. Now, Mr. Abernathy took an unusual interest in Joby. He taught him scouting, but he also became a mentor to him, had a huge impact on Joby's life. Now, Mr. Abernathy had three daughters and a son. His youngest daughter is a girl named Jean who has been Mrs. Zig Ziglar for the last 55 years.

Dr. James Dobson: Isn't that incredible? I could see that coming.

Zig Ziglar: There is no way Mr. Abernathy could ever have known that the impact he was going to have on little Joby Harris would result in Coach Harris someday having such a big and positive influence on my life, making me a better man, a better husband, a better father.

Roger Marsh: Well, you're listening to Family Talk and a remarkable conversation featuring our own Dr. James Dobson and his dear friend, the late Zig Ziglar. I'm Roger Marsh, and we have reached the midpoint of today's broadcast and what a wonderful experience it's been to revisit this classic program. So far. We've heard Zig share more moving stories about his early years from growing up as one of 12 children to losing his father at the tender age of six. He also talked about working at a grocery store at just nine years of age to help support his family. Powerful story indeed. We also heard how his mother's profound influence and unwavering faith shaped not only his character but his entire worldview as well. In the second half of today's broadcast, we're going to hear Zig reveal the turning point that launched his legendary career in sales and speaking. He'll also share the core principles that guided his success. Principles rooted in integrity, conviction, and most importantly, faith in God. So let's continue now with the conclusion of today's edition of Dr. James Dobson and Zig Ziglar's conversation right here on Family Talk.

Dr. James Dobson: Well, let me take you back to where we were now. You were nine years old. Tell me why you were working that young. That's too young to be going off to Piggly Wiggly, which is where you worked. Did you have to do that to help with the finances of the family or did you do it for spending money?

Zig Ziglar: Jim, all of us children contributed financially. The money I brought home was imported. It helped put food on the table, particularly the staples. I'm talking about the sugar and the coffee and the bread and the things that you have to have to keep living. But the cows in our garden were tremendously helpful to

us. But each one of the children made their contributions financially. We always took our money home. Our mother rationed it very carefully. She was meticulously honest and thorough. I can still see the little cloth sack. It was a small sack that she'd picked up. It formally had tobacco in it. She would put the change, the money in that little sack and tie it to her apron strings. That's the way she kept up with it.

Dr. James Dobson: What did she teach you that's been so useful to you? One of your cows ate the turnips. A lady next door had planted these turnips and your cow ate them and your mom made you pay for that.

Zig Ziglar: That's absolutely right. And it taught me a big lesson too. In those days, we would stake the cows out by the railroad where they would eat the grass adjoining the railroad. Well, one day I was in a big hurry when I'd come home for lunch, I'd move the cows. I was in a big hurry to go back and play a game of tennis, so I didn't do a good of staking. One of the cows got loose and ate the turnip greens in the lady's yard. Well, when I got there, I apologized profusely and I went on home for as I was concerned, it was all over. When I got home, I'd been there a few minutes when the lady came and confronted me and my mama and told my mother what the cow had done. And so my mother asked her to estimate how many turnip greens she had eaten, how many bunches? And it I believe was eight bunches. That would've been at a nickel of bunch 40 cents. Now I made 20 cents working every afternoon after school. So there was two-

Dr. James Dobson: Two days work.

Zig Ziglar: Two days work, then went down the drain.

Dr. James Dobson: Was that characteristic of her to hold you to a standard?

Zig Ziglar: Absolutely. Yeah.

Dr. James Dobson: How did she handle that with 12 kids?

Zig Ziglar: Well, she handled it with a lot of prayer. She taught us with sonnets, sermonettes. Tell the truth and tell it ever costeth what it will, for he who hides the wrong he did, does the wrong thing still. And when a task is once begun, you leave it not until it's done and be a matter of great or small, you do it well or not at all. She knew dozens of those little things and she-

Dr. James Dobson: Did that come out of your childhood?

Zig Ziglar: That came out of my childhood. Absolutely. From the very beginning my mother always told us, you do the right thing. You trust the Lord, you become dependable. Jim, I had one of the great advantages of any child I've ever known to have a mother like that. I have awakened many mornings into the smelling of

bacon or salt meat and biscuits cooking. She had had to have been up at least an hour earlier than we got up to fire up that wood stove. Many nights when I'd get up to go to the bathroom across the back porch to get there, I'd look down the hallway, my mama would be quilting there at all hours of the night. I have no idea what time it was, but she was up late and she was up early.

Dr. James Dobson: Boy, she is a role model for all the single mothers out there who feel like they simply can't do this usually with many fewer kids. But they can and they can do it well.

Zig Ziglar: Yeah. Our mother taught us early on also that we didn't have to have everything that other kids had. Today everybody wants stuff. And you see literally millions of feet of storage place in these little storage units all over the country. People put them there, they'll never see them again. They'll never even visit their possessions, but they work real hard to get them and put them there.

Dr. James Dobson: Did you feel poor?

Zig Ziglar: I never thought about it in that light. I knew others had more than we did, but we had food to eat, we had shelter over our heads, we had clothes to wear. We never felt underprivileged. Never.

Dr. James Dobson: Well, when did success begin to break in on you? Because you've had a lot of it, and those beginnings obviously represented some struggle there in the early days. When did it hit?

Zig Ziglar: Jim, when I first got in sales, I was intrigued with it, but I was not very successful initially. For two and a half years I struggled. Then a man named P.C. Merrill, one of the men who had a big impact on my life, persuaded me that I could be the national champion. Well, I didn't quite make it, but that year I finished number two out of 7,000 salespeople. Had a wonderful promotion. Next year was the highest paid field manager in the United States. Two years later, the youngest divisional supervisor in the 66-year history of the company. And that came about because I was able to train and impart what I'd learned to other people.

Dr. James Dobson: You have been speaking about those principles that you learned ever since Zig. Give me in a single sentence the message that you've been conveying all these years. What more than anything else is what you set out to say to people both in your writings and in speaking?

Zig Ziglar: Well, number one, I say to them, you've got to build everything you do on integrity. Because integrity, with integrity, you do the right thing. And that means you have no guilt attached. With integrity, you have nothing to fear because you have nothing to hide. When you take guilt and fear off your shoulders, you can go further faster. Then I say to them, you've got to believe in what you're doing because conviction comes only from that belief. And since

selling is a transference of feeling, you've got to have the right feeling about what you're doing before you can transfer it to someone else.

Dr. James Dobson: If you don't believe it, they're not going to believe it.

Zig Ziglar: Absolutely.

Dr. James Dobson: Well, that's true of nearly everything, isn't it?

Zig Ziglar: That's right. It certainly is.

Dr. James Dobson: In a tennis match, you see the ebb and flow of confidence in the course of that match. One wins the first set by a score of six-one, the next set he loses by a score of six-one. What's the difference? Same people, same atmosphere, same court, same ball, same racket. What's the difference between totally winning and totally losing? It's the ebb and flow of confidence.

Zig Ziglar: And I believe a lot of times when the person wins the first set, six-one, they become a little overconfident and arrogant. And when you get to be arrogant, that's when Buster Douglas knocks out Mike Tyson. That's when the underdog wins the war.

Dr. James Dobson: My dad used to say to me, "You know what the mother whale said to the baby whale? She said, 'When you get to the surface and start to blow, that's when you get harpooned.'" You had your own aphorisms from your mother. I had a few from my dad as well. Zig do you still get an excitement, a rush when you stand in front of a crowd and you have a chance to influence those folks out there?

Zig Ziglar: A rush like nothing else, Jim. And here's something that I think people listening might tune into. And that is, even if I've made the talk ... I made a talk today I've made hundreds of times. I spent four hours last night getting ready for today. See, I think it's arrogance when you think you can stand up and spit it out again just because you've done it so many times.

Dr. James Dobson: I agree completely.

Zig Ziglar: And when you prepare, you step up with a different confidence. And obviously I do a lot of praying before I do it, and I ask for guidance and directions and God opened my eyes to give me special supernatural persuasion ability, and energy that I might deliver it in a way that can be received in all.

Dr. James Dobson: You often speak to what, 15,000 people or more these days?

Zig Ziglar: I've spoken to as many as 75,000, but that's the biggest. There was a rumor out that the folks that really come to hear President Bush, but I know.



Dr. James Dobson: You've spoken on the same platform with three presidents as I understand it.

Zig Ziglar: Yes I have. Yeah. I make every talk like it's going to be the last one I will ever make because one day I will make that last one. I go prepared. I go grateful for that privilege that I have of doing it. And today, because I do have that attachment to the creator of the universe, I can speak with authority.

Roger Marsh: Zig Ziglar's remarkable journey shows us what can happen when godly principles shape not just our success, but our entire approach to life as well. You've been listening to Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk and a conversation Dr. Dobson had with the late Zig Ziglar. Zig went home to be with the Lord in 2012, but his remarkable journey from humble beginnings to becoming one of America's most influential speakers reminds us even today that success is not just about achievement, it's about building a life of integrity, faith, and purpose.

Now, if you missed any portion of today's broadcast or if you'd like to share Zig Ziglar's timeless wisdom with a friend or a relative who needs this encouragement, go to [drjamesdobson.org/familytalk](http://drjamesdobson.org/familytalk). You can also access this audio on the Family Talk app as well. And keep in mind, part two is coming up next time, so please make an appointment to join us for that. You will not want to miss it.

Well, with Valentine's Day just a few days away, I want to share with you how you could receive five days of help and encouragement to improve the quality of your marriage. The New Love Must Be Tough email series offers practical wisdom for couples facing challenges or simply wanting to strengthen their relationship. Now the series provides five days of Biblical insights based on Dr. Dobson's classic book, *Love Must Be Tough*, and these principles will help you navigate both the joys as well as the difficulties of marriage. To sign up for this free resource, simply go to [drjamesdobson.org](http://drjamesdobson.org) and then enter your email address. That's [drjamesdobson.org](http://drjamesdobson.org).

Well, these broadcasts are made possible each and every day because of the support of friends like you who understand that your prayers and your faithful financial support will definitely have an impact on those around us. As a matter of fact, drafting off one of the principles that Zig Ziglar has been sharing with us, our greatest impact comes when we invest in others. Your partnership helps us continue to share biblical truth with families who need encouragement and hope. And if you've been touched by today's program, please consider partnering with us. Your donation of any amount helps us reach countless families with messages that strengthen and transform. By the way, to make a secure donation online, go to [drjamesdobson.org](http://drjamesdobson.org). You can also give a gift over the phone when you call 877-732-6825, or you can send your tax-deductible contribution through the U.S. Postal Service. Our ministry mailing address is Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk, P.O. Box 39000, Colorado Springs, Colorado, the zip code 80949.

Well, I'm Roger Marsh inviting you to join us again for part two of this retrospective on the life of Zig Ziglar. We'll hear from two of Zig's daughters, Julie and Cindy as they reflect on the impact their father's life had on them as well, as well as the rest of the world. That's coming up here next time, right here on Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk, the voice you trust for the family you love.

Announcer: This has been a presentation of the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute.

Dr. James Dobson: Well, thank you everyone for tuning into our program today. You may know that Family Talk is a listener supported program and we remain on the air by your generosity literally. If you can help us financially, we would certainly appreciate it. God's blessings to you all.