

EDUCATION  
WORKSHOP

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Raising the  
Volume  
Episode XXXI

*Tessa Spencer  
explores the world  
of news from her  
perspective*

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**Middle School and Up**

# RAISING THE VOLUME

with Tessa Spencer



# CORE SUBJECTS AND 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY THEMES

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Mastery of core subjects and twenty-first century themes is essential for all students in the twenty-first century. Core subjects include English, reading or language arts; world languages; arts; mathematics; economics; science; geography; history; and government and civics. In addition to these subjects, schools must move forward to include not only a focus on mastery of core subjects, but also an understanding of academic content at much higher levels by weaving twenty-first century interdisciplinary themes into core subjects.

## **Global Awareness**

1. Use twenty-first century skills to understand and address global issues.
2. Learn from and work collaboratively with individuals representing diverse cultures, religions, and lifestyles in a spirit of mutual respect and open dialogue in personal, work, and community contexts.

## **Civic Literacy**

1. Participate effectively in civic life through knowing how to stay informed and understanding governmental processes.
2. Exercise the rights and obligations of citizenship at local, state, national, and global levels.
3. Understand the local and global implications of civic decisions.

## **Work Creatively with Others**

1. Develop, implement, and communicate new ideas to others effectively.
2. Be open and responsive to new and diverse perspectives; incorporate group input and feedback into the work.
3. Demonstrate originality and inventiveness in work; understand the real world limits to adopting new ideas.
4. View failure as an opportunity to learn; understand that creativity and innovation is a long-term, cyclical process of small successes and frequent mistakes.
5. Implement innovations.
6. Act on creative ideas to make a tangible and useful contribution to the field in which the innovation will occur.

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## OVERVIEW

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**Everyone has a story. It's our place to take a moment to listen.** Once you listen, your eyes open. You can put yourself in someone else's shoes and try to comprehend their experiences. You may be inspired, you may come away with more knowledge, or you may find a bit of yourself in someone else.

"Raising the Volume" is a series of Black stories. These are stories about Black entrepreneurs, judges, authors, artists, and leaders in our community. These are stories that need to be heard. Led by the Gaillard's Artists-in-Residence Charlton Singleton and Marcus Amaker, "Raising the Volume" gives a platform to Black community members whose lives matter.

As you introduce this series to your students, follow the bullet points below for discussion. Your students will find that they are challenged to think about uncomfortable things. Those conversations are what will help us change our world. In the words of Judge McFarland, "To break down racial barriers, start where you are." So, let's start where we are and see what change we can bring to our community.

For each lesson, split your class into small groups for discussion or discuss as a whole. Choose the model that is the most comfortable for your students so they feel free to discuss opinions openly.

***Teachers, if you are interested in scheduling a cross-school discussion on Raising the Volume Episode XXXI, please email Sterling deVries at [sdevries@gaillardcenter.org](mailto:sdevries@gaillardcenter.org). Through cross-school Zoom calls, we can offer students from one school a different perspective on the video with students from a second school. We will schedule class-to-class meetings where whole groups can discuss various topics covered in Episode XXXI.***

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## EPISODE XXXI

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(CLICK THE IMAGE TO WATCH EPISODE XXXI)

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# LESSONS

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Tessa Spencer begins her interview talking about the day she was born and how she and her husband enjoy looking up the history of what was happening on their birthdays.

**Research your birthday and record two interesting facts about the day that you were born. What was happening in the world? What was happening locally?**

Tessa Spencer discusses differences of radio from the past and current times. In the past, most radio stations were family-owned and allowed for more freedom of expression. Since today's radio stations are mostly owned by corporations, you are not allowed to have as much of a voice for fear that your opinions will reflect negatively on the corporation. **Reflect on the statement above. Do you agree? Are you able to relate this idea to a different subject or current event?**

According to Tessa Spencer, "You can find people's stories wherever you go; you just have to listen, and it all starts with a conversation."

**What are the benefits of listening to and understanding other people's stories? How do cell phones add to or take away from this? What does Tessa Spencer mean by her statement, "We're all family at the end of the day"? Why is this message so important?**

Follow Tessa Spencer on [Twitter](#)  
Listen to Tessa Spencer's [podcast](#)

Tessa and Charlton discuss Joan Mack, the first female Black news anchor in Charleston, S.C. Considered a trailblazer, Joan Mack hosted the evening news beginning in 1972, breaking barriers for Black news anchors. Joan Mack served as a role model for many Black females, including Tessa. **What makes someone a trailblazer? How do they open the doors to those that come after them?**

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## ABOUT TESSA SPENCER

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A Charleston native, Tessa Spencer graduated from Bishop England High School and received her B.A. degree in Mass Communications from Baptist College of Charleston (now Charleston Southern University). Following college, she served in the U.S. Army Reserves and is a veteran of the first Gulf War.

Her broadcasting career spans over thirty years with stops in Greenville, South Carolina; Providence, Rhode Island; and Nashville, Tennessee, where she also earned a spot as a cheerleader for the NFL's Tennessee Titans in 1999.

Spencer returned home to Charleston in 1999 and worked as one-half of Z93's Breakfuss Club until 2011. Spencer and her co-host earned numerous awards, state recognitions, and local honors including a proclamation from Charleston Mayor Joe Riley naming June 21st as "Tessa and Baby J Day."

Spencer's personal honors highlight her community service, the empowerment of women, and leadership. She is an EMMY-nominated anchor and RTDNAC winner for her work on ABC News 4.

As a television voice-over artist, she can be heard nationally as the announcer for the syndicated Gospel Stellar Awards, Mentoring Kings, and America's Black Forum.

Spencer began a television career in 2010 and joined the ABC News 4 team full-time as a reporter in 2011. She rose through the ranks and is now the main evening anchor.

She can also be heard weekdays (10:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.) on Cumulus Broadcasting radio station Magic 107.3 FM.

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## ABOUT CHARLTON SINGLETON

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A native of Awendaw, SC, Charlton Singleton began his musical studies at the age of three on the piano. He would then go on to study the organ, violin, cello, and the trumpet throughout elementary, middle, and high school. In 1994, he received a Bachelor of Arts in Music Performance from South Carolina State University. Since that time, he has taught music at the elementary, middle, and high school levels, as well as being an adjunct faculty member at the College of Charleston. In 2008 he co-founded and became the Artistic Director and Conductor of the Charleston Jazz Orchestra; an 18-piece jazz ensemble of some of the finest professional musicians in the Southeast and the resident big band in Charleston, SC. Mr. Singleton is also the organist and choir director at St. Patrick Catholic Church in Charleston, SC. In November of 2016 he was named the inaugural Artist in Residence at the recently renovated Gaillard Center in downtown Charleston. He remained in this position until July 2019; at that point he was named Artist in Residence Emeritus. In this position he continues to lead the Summer Youth Jazz Orchestra Camp as well as lead the “Jazz Through the Ages” assembly, which attracts a capacity crowd of students at the Gaillard Center.

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