

# Tamer Amin

(Host • El-Beit Beitak)

By Marwa Helal

WHEN OUR KIP \$ I WUD KLV KRXVH is our house. Tamer Amin, host and anchor of El-Beit Beitak, state-owned Channel 2's smash-hit evening talkshow, took some time out of his schedule right before air time (he goes on live each night) to tell us how he works and what keeps him going in the fast-paced world of television journalism. Edited excerpts:

My day starts a little bit late — at around noon or 1pm. I spend those first three or four hours with my daughters till around 5pm. These few hours are sacred for me. I never try to do anything else during these hours; they are completely for my daughters and my wife. Then, around 4pm we have lunch together and afterward I begin preparing for my program.

From 4:30pm until about 8pm, I'm reading and studying the material and scripts for the show, making phone calls and generally preparing for that night's episode. Then I head to the TV building [the ERTU headquarters in Maspero] and the program runs from 9 to 11pm or midnight.

After midnight, I insist on going to sit with some of my friends. It's not just about having dinner or hanging out at the café — it turns into more of a focus group. I listen to them, see what their problems are, what's going on, we talk about the latest news and I get feedback about the program. I trust their opinions the most.

I get home around 2am and spend my time reading anything in the news that will help me prepare for the show or just general reading for my own personal growth. If I feel there's something I should brush up on or something I'm missing — like science or sports — this is my time to catch up. My favorite things to read are whatever's new. What I don't know is interesting to me, no matter what the subject is. Spotting a good news item requires an internal thermometer. If I feel it rising, then I know it's a good topic. Then, I pray fajr (the dawn prayer) and go to bed. That's my overall day. I don't make a to-do list. I never know what the day next will look like until it begins — and then I just go with it.

If you weren't here, I would be sitting with the director and the rest of the team and we would be discussing how we would approach the guests and start strategizing for the episode. I could also be reviewing the key points of the script. The show isn't done "parrot-style," so I cover the key points and then it's between the guest and I. I play it like a game of chess and the winner is neither the guest nor me, but the audience. The audience, the people on the street — they're what keep me motivated. When I see an admirer's smile when he or she's pleased by some information we've provided through the show, that's how I charge my batteries.

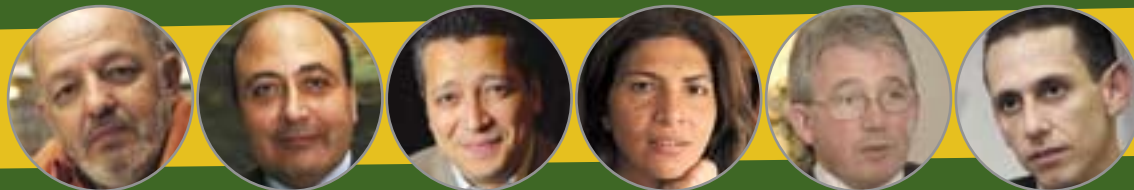
I have to be neutral in dealing with any guest — I always have to keep the audience in my mind and I always seek the truth. The target is the truth and conveying the full story to the audience. I enjoy the difficult guests because they're clever chess opponents and make me use all my talents and cleverness in order to win the game.

I depend on electronic devices about 30% of the time to get my work done. Electronic devices tend to lack the intimacy I like. Rather than respond to email, I would rather pick up a phone. That goes for resources too, I would prefer to pick up a hard copy — papers, encyclopedias, books and so on. I use the internet as a last resource.

The key to the success of this program is our teamwork style. We all work for the sake of the program and that's the chemistry behind the success of the show. There are no hard feelings or sensitivities among the team members here. The program gives us [all something], so we have to give back.

The advantages of having the show at night are too many to list. To begin with, though, this is when I am most alert and focused. I get to start my day late, sleep in, and I never have to work during the hot hours of the day. Plus, it's a nice way to wrap up any day.

My philosophy is that a person who meets fame, shouldn't let fame affect them — they must affect fame. I'm a pretty care-less person when it comes to taking care of my health, voice and appearance — I just take it day by day. **bt**



## How We Work



Mohsen Aliam