



Ray Edwards Show Episode #270

How To Become A Blogger

Ray Edwards: Ray Edwards show, episode 270, how to become a blogger.

Announcer: The Ray Edward show, live your destiny by design. Start, run, and grow your own internet based business and create the life of your dreams, you can do it. This is the Ray Edward show.

Music: Let's change the world and watch your business grow, welcome to the Ray Edward show, Ray Edward show.

Ray: I know we just recently said that Sean would be on the podcast with me every time I did an interview from now on, and it turns out he's traveling this week while I am recording this episode, so Sean's not on the podcast. I'm sorry fans of Sean but he'll be back next week.

Well, it's time to get back down to the basics. Many of us have thought about starting a business online, starting to build a platform, maybe you have a cause or a charity that you'd like to build an online presence for, get an audience so you can influence those people to buy from you, to donate to your cause, to buy into your ideas, but it all starts in my opinion with a blog.

Yes, you got to start a blog. While it's easy to go push a button somewhere and get Word Press software up and running or sign up and get an account at Square Space, that's when things become a little more complicated because you got to figure out what goes on the blog. How do I do this in a way that helps people but also could be a business for me, or could serve my charity, or my cause, or my community, or my hobby if that's what you want to do? There's nobody better qualified that I know of to talk about this and share with us and teach us than my guest on today's podcast, Leslie Samuel.

We'll be talking to him momentarily and we will get the skinny for you on how to become a blogger.

Ad: Does anyone want to live a life that is long and prosperous? Spiritual foundations.

Ray: Do you believe it's wrong or at least tacky to want to get rich? I'm not even talking about getting rich quick, just wanting to get rich in general. Does that bother you at all? Do you feel a little pang of guilt or a little bit like you might be cheesy or you don't want people to know that, "I just like to be rich"? Well, of course being in love with riches is not a good idea because, as we know, the Bible says that the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. We won't take time to unpack that today. I've talked about it many times in the past. You can go listen to past podcasts and get

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my take on that. But, if you don't love riches, can you still want them and is that okay?

I think not only is it okay, it's a good idea because instead of focusing on how dishonest or scandalously business people behave, instead of focusing on the corporate criminals let's think about the people who work so hard to create products and services for us that we love, like Apple products, Uber, or the convenience of being able to stop and get a cup of coffee at Starbucks. All those examples are enterprises that have produced wealth not just from the people who started them but for many people in the business itself.

So as Dave Ramsey says, "There's a dignity to wealth creation through honorable business that is unlike anything else on Earth." I whole-heartedly want to commend that idea to you, that you think about how you can serve in a spiritual way through having a business. I'm not talking about starting a business so that you can give all the money to the church. I'm saying that being in business in it of itself is a spiritual activity where you are serving other people, because if you're not serving them and pleasing them they're not going to give you their money. They might give it to you once but they won't be back.

If you have a business that runs over the long term and profits over the long term, you're rendering I believe a spiritual service. That's really the secret of wealth creation, is you've got to create value. See, we were made in the image of our creator and that means we are creative and the most powerful way we're creative is of course through having children. The second most powerful way we're creative is by creating value for other people in the world.

I just would like you to think about how can you create more value and think about this question as you're considering how you can create more value whether you already have a business or you're thinking of starting one. Ask yourself this question, how would a wise person create more value?

The reason I like to pose that question is you could be not behaving in a wise manner and create value just for quick short term gain or you could - I hope you won't do this - but you could create value just in order to manipulate somebody into doing something you want them to do. But I would like you to think about how would a wise person create more value? Then when you have that answer, act on it. In wisdom, create value and you will in time create wealth.

Announcer: Now simple hacks that make life cheaper, easier and faster, Rays' tip of the week.

Ray: Time for the tip of the week, I want to talk with my friend Cliff Ravens Craft because if you are interested in having your own podcast you need to hear what Cliff has to say. So Cliff you've got another session of Podcasting A to Z coming up very soon and I have people ask me all the time about how did I start my podcast, how do they start a podcast, what's the right way to do it, and I always tell them, "Well, Cliff Ravens Craft is your guy." Why don't you tell us a little bit about what Podcasting A to Z is and how it can help people?

Cliff Ravens Craft: Sure, well Podcasting A to Z is a course that I've been doing since March 2011. Over 600 students have gone through this course where they've had me as their personal coach for four weeks. I'm literally there answering every single question, "Cliff, I wonder -- I've got my mixer hooked up and I'm getting audio to my recorder but I plug my headphones in and I can't hear anything." I've been through this so many times that I can instantly tell them, "Well, you need to press the main mix button down on your mixer." "It would have taken me days to figure out what was going on. I was about ready to send this thing back."

All of those things I'm able to help people with. I'm not only there just to help them pick the right equipment. By the way, I just recently had a student, paid \$2,000 to go through this course. She's like, "I desperately want to create a podcast but now that I've spent this, I don't necessarily want to spend a lot of money right now. What can I do on a very low budget?" I said, "Well, tell me what you want to do." She says, "I want to create interviews."

She just created her first podcast episode with a free iPhone application on her iPhone, set it down on the table. iPhone has a pretty decent microphone on it. It has automatic gain control built into it, and recorded a wonderful interview for her very first podcast. Now, she's so excited she's actually going out and buying some extra gear. But she wanted to actually prove to herself that this was exciting and it was exciting for her.

I also help people figure out what their message is and who their target audience is. A lot of people come to me and say, "Cliff, I've been wanting to do a podcast for a very long time but I just can't quite seem to pick a subject matter or a topic where I feel like I can create content every single week." It never fails, I would say that out of 20 students who are in each session of my course, there's usually seven or eight students that literally have no clue when they first start, what their podcast should be about. They just know that they want to create one.

Ray: Really?

Cliff: Yes, I'm not kidding. Every single class has those students. It takes them the entire first week of going back and forth with me. But by the end of the first week, they are absolutely rock solid confident and excited about the podcast that they're about ready to create. I literally walk through, I ask them a bunch of questions. Of course, there is tutorials that I've made over the last 10 years. Now, I give them all the tutorials, but I'm literally there answering every single question for a four-week period of time.

During those four weeks, my students of Podcasting A to Z get my full attention. They are the priority. I put my personal e-mail, business e-mail, everything else off. My assistant has to handle all of that stuff while I'm doing A to Z.

Here's the thing Ray, I don't know any other online course that can say this and I can say this without any embellishment or anything. Over 600 students have gone through this course, not one single person has ever requested a re-fund. I have a 100% satisfaction rating and if you go podcastingatoz.com, there are more than 60 testimonials on that page.

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Ray: Wow. I don't know of anybody else who can make that claim, 100%.

Cliff: A hundred percent satisfaction rating. The reason why Ray is because I will not allow anybody to sign up for this course that I don't believe I can fully blow away their expectations within the first week. My goal is by the end of the first week, you will write me a message saying, "I've already got more value out of this course than what I paid for it." That's my goal.

Ray: Okay. So I'm listening and thinking I want to have a podcast. This sounds like the guy. I don't know what I want to talk about but he can help me. Where do they go to sign up?

Cliff: Go to podcastingatoz.com.

Ray: Do it, you won't be sorry and I don't get any affiliate commission. Although, I don't feel there's anything wrong with getting affiliate commissions. I believe in them but in this case, I'm not getting anything other than the good will of my friend, Cliff. I think you should sign up for podcasting A-Z, if you want to start a podcast, or if you have a podcast and you want to improve it and make it an excellent podcast, this is the way to do it. That's the tip of the week.

Announcer: Now, our feature presentation.

Ray: Well, this is a delight to be able to bring you this week an interview with somebody that I actually only knew from having heard about him on other podcasts. I'm pretty sure that I heard this guy mentioned on Jason Van Orden's podcast, and it's been quite some time ago, but I heard about this blog that was different because it was not about making money online. It was not about starting an online business, it was about, of all things, Biology.

It was called Interactive Biology. The whole idea was making Biology fun, which I thought was very interesting because it was put together by a professor. I began to learn about this guy named Leslie Samuel, and he has been extraordinarily successful. I'll let him tell the story, but that blog allowed him to build a business and then he left the field of working in an actual academic institution.

He's still a teacher, and we'll get in to that, and we'll get into how you can take your skills and transfer them into some kind of online business. If you want to, if you're interested in that, that can actually supply you with a living and you do it with a blog. Yes, blogs are still alive. They still [chuckles] are the best way I believe, to build a platform, to build a business online. I am very excited to introduce you to my friend, Leslie Samuel.

Leslie Samuel: I am excited to be on here, talking with you man. This is exciting.

Ray: This has been too long in coming.

Leslie: It has. I thought you would have invited me earlier. No, I'm just joking. We've been talking about this for awhile and I'm just happy to be on here, man.

Ray: Thank you so much for coming on board and I just want to chat a little bit. I know you probably get tired of telling this story, but maybe you don't, maybe you could tell the story about what inspired you to build the Biology blog, and then how did all that unfold and you end being a blogger as a business. How did that all happen?

Leslie: Yes, I actually never get tired of telling that story because to me it illustrates what's possible. I did my Bachelor's and Master's degree with the intention on going on for a PhD and becoming a university professor, because that was my dream job. While I was doing my Masters, I realized that I absolutely hated research, at least the kind of research that was required of me to go on for a PhD in the field that I wanted to go on. I just said, "You know what, forget this PhD stuff, forget being a university professor. I'm just going to teach at a high school."

That's what I did. I taught at a high school and I enjoyed it to a certain extent, but I still felt like something was missing because I wanted to teach more advanced concepts in Biology and Physiology, Neuroscience, those were the kinds of things that get me really excited. I had been learning about blogging. I started a blog and I was teaching people about different things and online business and marketing and so on, and I said, "You know what, what if I were to take those principles and apply it to Biology? How would that go?" [Laughs]

I did it kind of with an experiment but also because I wanted to teach that advanced stuff that I wasn't getting to teach at my high school job. I just started the blog to teach high-level Biology and that took off. You fast forward a year or two, and I actually landed a job as a university professor, not because I had this awesome PhD, but it was because I was demonstrating my ability on my blog. That really opened up the way for me to be chosen as a university professor in a doctoral program over 20-something other applicants that had PhDs and advanced degrees, but my blog was what got me in.

Ray: That is a fascinating point that I want to highlight, because technically, all those other people were more qualified than you.

Leslie: Definitely.

Ray: But because you demonstrated your expertise and your abilities and your talent and your personality - I think that's a huge part of it - you got the job.

Leslie: Definitely. A lot of people apply for jobs and they hear this famous phrase that, "You don't have the experience," and in my mind you could say, "Okay. I don't have the experience. Let me try to gain that experience," and all. I think there is another way that you can go about it because a lot of us have knowledge about whatever field it is we are trying to get into.

Instead of waiting for someone else to give you that experience, why not create that experience. Why not just start doing what you want to be doing and then by the time you've demonstrated what you're good at, you'd be surprised at where that can get you.

Ray: I like to point to your blog as an example to people who I run into at conferences and when I'm on the road or speaking somewhere. Because I have a lot of people who ask me, "Well, this works for you, Ray, because you are in the marketing business and you're a copywriter and people know who you are. But nobody knows me and the only thing I have interest in is some weird hobby."

They'll tell me it's Ham Radio or raising chinchillas or whatever the thing is. I always point to your blog and I say, "Look, if this guy can create a blog about Biology, and use it to build a business and leave his job and start building a life that he's dreamed of, you can certainly take whatever your area of interest is and build something online." Do you agree with that?

Leslie: I definitely agree with that. Some of the most successful bloggers I know are people that aren't talking about building a business or making money on the internet. I have a number of clients -- I have a few clients that talk about home schooling and what they do with their kids, and they have tremendously successful businesses as a result of that.

I have another client that talks about how to dress, how women in their 40s can really look the best that they can in terms of the clothes they wear and finding the right styles to fit your body shape, and all kinds of stuff.

I can give you countless examples of people that are building successful businesses with blogs and they are not even talking about business.

Ray: That's very inspiring. We may circle back to that in just a few minutes, but I want to dig a little deeper now. As you came out of the job and you've got the interactive Biology blog up and running, it's doing well, when did you decide to start teaching people how to do what you had done?

Leslie: I started my online business in 2008. Back then, it was completely different. It was about freebie trading, and whether you're familiar with it or not, it's those sites where you sign up and complete an offer, get other people to complete offers, and then you get a free iPod or something. Back then it was iPod or a free TV. I found a way to make money with those sites. I actually started my blog in August of 2008 to teach people about how to do that.

Then, in 2009 to 2010, I realized that I really didn't care about freebie stuff but I was enjoying the blogging stuff so much more. I was teaching people what I was learning with my blog, with how to start a blog and how to build a blog. First, I was teaching people how to build a blog for freebie trading, and then I just evolved in just how to build a blog in whatever you are passionate about.

Around that same time, that's when I decided, I'm going to build my Biology blog, so that you can see this as a case study on how to do it with something that's even unrelated to any of these things that I've been talking about so far. That's how that progressed over time.

Ray: Fascinating. I would just say, because some people ask, "Well, why another blog or podcast about building an online business," and I would say to people who

have that thought in their head, I would say, "Listen, the guy is a professor. Of course, he's going to teach you how he did it."

Leslie: Exactly. Part of it, for me personally is I can create my blog, I can put it up there and my biology blog could get up to 100,000 people in one month, which I think is huge. I remember when I got my first 400, I was like, "What? 400 people showed up to hear what I have to say?" I can do that or -- I continue to have that blog. But, if I can help other people who can then go out and then have their own impact. In my mind, it goes along with the tagline of my blog, "Changing the world one blog at a time," because yes, I can have a positive impact, but you who are listening to this right now, you also can have a positive impact. If I can help you do that it just energizes me even more.

Ray: That's extraordinarily exciting to me, because I just started re-reading a book called *Thou Shall Prosper*, which is by Rabbi Daniel Lapin. It's about the spiritual aspects of making money. One of the things that he brought up was that occasionally people will ask him, "Well, Rabbi Lapin if you're the guy who knows all this stuff about making money, why don't you just make money instead of trying to sell me a book about it?"

His answer was fascinating to me, Leslie, he said, "Because the more people in the world who understand that it's okay to want to make money and who understand that by serving people is how we end up making money, that will come back to me because you'll create more goods and services that I want to buy. It makes the world a better place for everybody. It doesn't it's not that I make money and you don't. It's that we can all learn how to create value in the world." I think that's something that you do extraordinarily well in your podcast and on your blog.

Leslie: Well, thank you very much. I appreciate that and that book sounds awesome. I literally just bought it while you were talking about it but.

Ray: [laughs] You sound like me. My wife is just -- she's kind of resigned herself to she doesn't even ask what the books are anymore. She sees the Kindle charge come through and she knows what category to put it in QuickBooks and that's the end of that.

Leslie: Exactly [laughs].

Ray: Tell me a little bit about the *Learning with Leslie* podcast?

Leslie: Yes. The *Learning with Leslie* podcast is where I just share what I am learning as I build my blog, as I am experimenting. What I like to do, because a lot of people look to me for blogging information, I like to go out there and learn as much as possible about all of the different aspects of blogging. For example, one of the things that I'm doing right now is actually migrating my email list. But instead of just going with a service, what I'm doing is I am going out there and doing an intense amount of research on all of these different platforms, not just for me to make a decision, but for me to be able to share with you why this one is going to work for you in that particular situation and why you should choose this other one.

A lot of it is me just sharing from my experience and what I am learning while doing this whole blogging thing. Then I also interview other bloggers. What's different about my podcast is I don't necessarily look for the people that are teaching about blogging or teaching about business. I look for people that, you know, this one has a homeschooling blog, this one has a blog about their local area, this one has blogs and all different niches. They're doing something very well.

I want to extract as much practical actionable information from them as possible, so that the listeners can learn from it. For me, I like to keep it fun and engaging. There's some excitement to the podcast. I just have a lot of fun doing it because it provides so much value to the people that are listening.

Ray: Well, I said we would circle back to the different people that you work with and who are your students, who are not in the how to make money online business, but there they have all these fascinating little niche blogs on different topics. That's one of the things I love about your podcast about your blog.

I also feel that on both the podcast and on become a blogger.com, you and I -- I know this because I look at other people's business is very closely because I'm in the industry so to speak. You provide content for free that is in my opinion, better than the content other people charge for. I'm wondering if there's a philosophy behind that.

Leslie: There's definitely a philosophy behind that. When you come to someone's blog, yes, you can get basic generic information that everyone else has. That doesn't stand out. In my mind, in order for your blog to really connect with your potential audience, it has to have something unique about it. It also has to provide a lot of value. Information is not something that we are starved, lacking in 2017.

There's information everywhere. You can find all kinds of tutorials and how to do all stuff on YouTube, on internet everywhere. For me, if I can do a really good job at providing you with value for free what that does is it helps you to trust me. You get to know, like and trust me. You know that when information is coming from Leslie, it's going to not just be good information, not just be entertaining or anything of that sort, but it will give you information, tips that you can take action on right now and see results.

For me, it's all about building that trust because once people trust you, they're going to be more likely to go to that next level, whether that's buying your products or services whatever it is you have to offer. For me, that's always been the model. With my biology blog, a lot of people were saying, "Man, this is great information. Why aren't you charging for it?" I'm saying I want this to be freely available to the people that want to access it but I also want to build that trust equity. So that, when I do have something to promote, the people that are following me are going to be way more willing to purchase.

Ray: I think it's a philosophy that a lot of people talk about but very few people actually do it. The reason I think that is because to do what you do is hard. It's hard work. Am I right?

Leslie: It looks way easier than it is. [laughs] It is any hard indeed.

Ray: I mean it takes effort and care and meticulousness and I think that some people might look at -- I don't know how this is possible but they might come to your blog and think, "Well, it's another blog about blogging." But, if you just spend a few minutes and read an article or two or listen to an episode of the podcast or grab one of the downloads that you have available, then what I believe happens is people begin to see, "Oh, this is different. This has a depth to it that other people are just disseminating the same old rehashed information."

This is what I love about what you do. You said it earlier. You are sharing as you're learning. I don't feel -- when I come to your site, I don't feel intimidated like, "Oh, it's super blogger." Although, you are a super blogger but I don't feel intimidated like you're at some impossible level that I could never reach because you're so approachable. You're sharing what you're doing as you're doing it and I think that's a beautiful strategy and it also serves people.

Leslie: Oh, definitely. First of all, thanks for all the kind words. I appreciate it, but yes. The reason I got into teaching was because there's something that I get out of teaching. When I stand in front of a class and I share information with students that maybe we're struggling to understand, all of a sudden there's this light bulb moment. For me, that like energizes me. The act of seeing you reach to a point where, "Man, now you get it and now you go out there and now you do it." There's something about that that does something to me.

That's why I invest so much in what I do because that recharges me. It energizes me. When someone comes to me and says, "I did this and it worked," and am like, "Yes, let's keep doing this forever." Yes, I enjoy that process.

Ray: Now, how hard would you say it is for somebody who's not technically inclined to start a blog today?

Leslie: Well, quite frankly, I think it's hard for anyone to start a blog. I know that doesn't sound very appealing, very attractive but I like to say that up front because I want people to realize that blogging is in this thing, where you throw something out there and all of a sudden you just got tons of people coming in and buying your stuff because of how awesome you are.

This is it's a business I haven't really ran into any easy businesses and most businesses fail. It's something that you need to set in your mind that this is going to be challenging but I'm going to do it. Now, in terms of the technical aspect, I'm always amazed by there's -- some of my clients that are very successful and some of the people that I interact with online that are very successful, it amazes me how little they know in some cases about technology [laughs] but they have the passion. They have the knowledge. They have the expertise.

Maybe they get people to help them out with the things that they are not strong at. In some cases, they are the ones that are doing even better than the people who are trying to figure out all the little details in WordPress and which plug-ins to use with this and which plug-ins to use for that.

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I have some clients that are making a significant amount of money and you ask them about a basic thing regarding the technology that they use. They throw their hands up in the air like, "I don't know. Ask this person. He does that or she does this." It's something where if you are willing to put in the time and the effort that it takes in order to build this business, you can make it happen.

Ray: That's absolutely true. When I started my blog, I did everything myself and I made all the mistakes you could possibly make. I tinkered with it. I would break the blog about once a week. Then as I became more successful online, I started paying other people to do that stuff. Now, I don't touch it because I know I'll get in trouble. My team will come to me and say, "What are you doing? I thought we talked about this?"

Leslie: I will be a little-- I'm more guilty of the exact thing you are talking about, tinkering and all that good stuff and spending too much time on the little things. I wish I did way more outsourcing from the very beginning or building my team from the very beginning. I'm doing much more of that now, but I'm seeing how there's so many people that have been able to accelerate their impact by getting the people that are good at what they do to do those things, and they, focusing on what they are really good at.

Ray: It doesn't really cost a fortune if you need to get-

Leslie: No, it doesn't.

Ray: - a little bit of help.

Leslie: It doesn't. You'd be surprised. You can get people to do really great jobs at a relatively affordable price.

Ray: Now, you mentioned a couple of people already that are clients or students of yours. I'm wondering if you'd share one or two just specific examples of people who have what other folks might consider mundane or unusual or unexpected blogs and just tell us a little bit about their story, so we get a flavor for something other than how to build a blog market.

Leslie: Yes, so okay. If I just think about the clients that I have right now. I have one lady who has a blog about slow cooking. So, how do you freeze food and then put it in the slow cooker. I don't even know all the nuances of it, but she has a pretty successful blog teaching people how to save time by not spending a lot of time in the kitchen essentially.

Ray: Now, I just want to jump in there for a second because this is something that I hear from people a lot. They say, "All I know how to do is use the slow cooker really well, and there's a hundred books at the bookstore about how to slow cook. So, clearly I can't build a blog about that, and yet, you just dispelled that myth." Why is that?

Leslie: Well, is it solving a problem? It is solving a problem because if you think about it, people are busy. You ask mothers all across the US, all across the world, if

they wish they had more time. Of course, they wish they had more time, and she has one part of the solution to getting you more time. You spend a little bit of time at the beginning of the week, and you have a bunch of things that you can do quickly throughout the week.

So, she is actually solving a problem out there. When you think about what you are good at, does it actually really solve a problem? Because in many cases, you will find that it does, and if you can get in front of that audience that has that problem, you can build a business.

Ray: Okay. Just one more example.

Leslie: Okay. Another example. Let me look here through my folder here at current clients. So, I have another client. This one just came on. She lives in Cincinnati. She started a blog because she wanted to get out there and learn more things about the area that she's in. She started this blog, 365 Cincinnati, where everyday for a year, she actually went out and just checked out different things that are in Cincinnati and then wrote a blog post about it.

Now, she is doing well. She is a top blogger in Cincinnati about her blog, about any local things that's happening in the area, and it's opened up a lot of opportunity for her, and now, she has a business that is making a good amount of money. You think, "Hey, what can I do it about?" She's doing it just about the place that she lives and that's able to be a success.

I have another one about frugal living in the northwest, and she just talks about frugal living in the northwest, how do you find good deals in the northwest and so on and so forth. There are so many different examples of people that are doing really interesting things outside of the business aspect, and I can go on. Homeschooling. I have a number of bloggers that are in the homeschooling nature, just teaching people what they are doing at home with their kids.

Ray: Wow.

Leslie: They're making -- Quite frankly, some of them make more in a month than some people make in a year. So, it is possible to take that passion and build a blog, provide content that provides value that solves a problem and build a business around that.

Ray: That's so encouraging and inspiring. Thank you so much.

Leslie: You're welcome.

Ray: I'm going to ask some quick questions now. Just fire them at you.

Leslie: Sure.

Ray: I think the term on everybody's podcast today seems to be rapid fire or lightning round.

Leslie: [laughs]

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Ray: I'm not going to say though, I did say it just now but-

Leslie: You just did. It's [crosstalk].

Ray: - I just got a bunch of questions I want to ask you.

Leslie: Let's go.

Ray: Mainly because I'm curious. I'm really asking for me. What would you say that are the three top mistakes you see people make with their blog might be?

Leslie: Three top mistakes, number one -- Okay. This is one that has worked very well for me. You mentioned it a little earlier. Not putting their personality in their content, in everything they do, really. You go to so many blogs and it's generic information. It is the five steps to start a blog. No, I could find five steps to starting a blog anywhere, but if you tell me your story and if you infuse your personality in that, it will make you stand out from the crowd.

So, that's number one. Number two, not focusing on building their email list and this is something that I've struggled with as well. The email list is such a valuable asset, and what so many bloggers do is they try to build every other platform like my Facebook page, follow me on Twitter, pin my pins or whatever the case might be.

Ray: Yes [laughs].

Leslie: They're not focusing on building their own email list, something that they own, that they control, that Facebook's algorithm will not affect. We all know how that has been more of a challenge recently. So, not building your email list is number two. Number three, if you're doing this as a business, you got to have some kind of a business model. There has to be some way for you to make money. If you're not making money, you're not building a business. So, really thinking through how am I going to monetize this blog? What value am I going to provide that's beyond the free stuff that I have?

Ray: That is very wise advice, and it's okay if you don't want to build a business, you just want to have a hobby. That's totally cool, but you should know that.

Leslie: Exactly.

Ray: Okay. So, next question and this is going to go off on a totally different direction. What's the best book you've read recently?

Leslie: Oh, man. The best book I've read recently is *The Greatest Salesman in the World*.

Ray: Og Mandino.

Leslie: Oh, man. That book. I'm going through it right now. When I got the book, the book has an interesting structure. You have to read one scroll which is basically one chapter everyday for 30 days. Then you move on to the next, and it goes through some principles of successful salesmanship, but it comes from a perspective that I

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haven't seen in any other books. It's very creative and it draws you in. I cheated a little bit. When I got the book, I read it from beginning to end just to make sure it didn't have any weird things in it, so that I could feel confident about recommending it to other people. I can wholeheartedly say that this book is one of the greatest books I've read to date.

Ray: Fantastic. When I read it, I cheated also. I could not help myself.

Leslie: [laughs].

Ray: Then I went back and did it the correct way.

Leslie: Exactly.

Ray: So, just a question. Did you read that book because you just love reading sales books and you're like super sales guy?

Leslie: No. Actually, I read that book because I went to Amazon and it was one of the recommended books, and I read the title, I was like, "*The Greatest Salesman in the World?*" Then, I started looking at the reviews and people were just talking about how it transformed. It's a really short book and it's transformed their life in so many ways. It sounded a bit too good to be true. I wanted to know what it was all about. Also, part of it is I have struggled with being that salesman kind of person. It's an area that I'm exploring more, that's teaching me more about myself than anything else.

Ray: Yes. That's what I was really looking for. I know you, we're friends, and I just know that a lot of people online, their struggle is they can't stop pitching and selling all the time. It's like, "Lay off dude. Give me a break." You're a guy who can't stop giving things away.

Leslie: [laughs] Yes, and I think that's something that so many of us struggle with because we see the exact opposite where people are just, there's a hard sell constantly and one sell after another sell, one page after the next page, and we get turned off by the idea of selling. There's something about embracing the concept of selling but doing it in an ethical way that really changes the game.

Ray: Yes. It's so easy to overreact to something in a way that --

Leslie: Exactly.

Ray: There's a pastor named Bill Johnson who says, "Overreaction to an error can quickly produce the opposite error."

Leslie: I like that.

Ray: Yes, he is a pretty smart guy.

Leslie: Yes, I think so.

Ray: What does Leslie do for fun when he is not thinking about blogging and social media?

Leslie: Number one, hang out with my family. I love my family. My family is the reason why I do so much of what I do. I love music. I play the piano. My wife sings and we used to do whole bunch of music together. We used to do concerts and that kind of stuff at different churches and events. Now, we do it online, on Facebook Live, and we have fun with that. Anything related to music, family, and really just hanging out with people that I care about. I'm all about being with the people that I love. We could just be in a room, just chilling. I'm good with that.

Ray: Is there a chance we're going to hear you play the piano at Social Media Marketing World?

Leslie: There is a slight chance indeed [laughs].

Ray: I'm excited. That's going to be fun.

Leslie: [laughs] Yes. We're going to have fun.

Ray: I'm going to give you a chance to talk about your website and where people can contact you in just a minute, but before we do that I just wonder -- I'm going to spring this on you. Is there any final words of wisdom you would give to somebody who's thinking about starting a blog but they're scared to do it, or somebody who tried it and it didn't work?

Leslie: Thinking about starting a blog, but maybe they're afraid or whatever the case might be, I would say this. If you have knowledge that you can share that can help somebody else, and you are holding that back, you are doing them and yourself a disservice. The whole idea that I'm here in my basement, I can create a biology video and I can put it out there. It can help someone across the world that is struggling to understand that concept, and that can open doors for them. Why in the world would I hold that back? I think in the world that we live in today, your content can have such an impact. Don't hold that back.

Then if you look at it from another perspective. If you can build a platform, if you can build a business where, now, you're in control of your time. You're in control of your vacations. I just spent a month and two days in St. Martin with my family and it was fine because I could just go. I didn't have to ask permission or anything of that sort. I could continue doing my business there.

Ray: Amazing.

Leslie: It is amazing. When I compare what my current state to where I was before, when I was doing the job that I loved -- I loved teaching in a classroom and I still love doing it today. When I compare the freedom and flexibility that I have today with the direction I was going before, it's like, why not take the risk? What's the worst that could happen? That's the way I look at it, but then, what's the best that can happen?

Ray: There it is.

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Leslie: If you focus on that best and just keep going in that direction, there is so much awesome that can come from that.

Ray: I like what Tim Ferriss -- he has an exercise, he calls fear setting, and I'll probably get part of this wrong. The part that really stuck with me was, he would ask that question, "What's the worst that could happen?" Then once he had imagined the worst that could happen, he would imagine, "What could I do to mitigate the damage that might do to me?" Then once you have that figured out, then you start thinking about what's the best that could happen. Knowing that you built this safety net gives you all kinds of freedom.

Leslie: Exactly. I actually went through that exact activity that you're talking about right there. I was leaving my job in June, and May, I remember leaving my anatomy lab. Out of nowhere, I just started freaking out. What in the world was I doing leaving a secure job to do this whole risky thing? I'm driving home. I'm literally shaking like, "Man, I'm crazy. What if the business fails, and all that good stuff?" I had to go home and pull out a pen and paper and start answering those exact questions. What's the worst that could happen? What could I do to mitigate it if that were to happen? What's the best that could happen?

When I compared the two, it was like, "Man, this is the only decision for me to make." That's exactly it.

Ray: That's so encouraging. If people want to find out more about what you have to offer, your free information, I mean you've got a ton of great free stuff that people should take a look at. They should listen to your podcasts. Where's the best place to find you online?

Leslie: Best place to find me online is becomeablogger.com. That is my home. That's where I do everything. If you're a blogger or thinking about becoming a blogger, you're definitely going to have to be thinking about your content and how you're going to plan that out. I put together a resource that I just released on my blog last week. That is my 2017 content calendar spreadsheet. I would highly encourage you to get access to that spreadsheet. It walks you through, planning out your year content and all that good stuff. It takes you through a few steps to make that a reality. They can check that out at becomeablogger.com/spreadsheet.

Ray: I have to say, I downloaded the spreadsheet because I've been thinking about my content for the rest of this year. I decided this is the year, Leslie, that I'm going to stop winging it every week.

Leslie: [laughs] Yes.

Ray: I'm going to have a plan. Pat Flynn inspired me when he said he had all of his blog posts planned for the year. I'm like, "What? That's crazy." I downloaded your calendar, the spreadsheet. It's amazing.

Leslie: Why, thank you.

Ray: It's not just handy or good. It's beautiful. It's very strategic. I feel like it's one of those tools that it has baked into it, lessons that you need to learn. You're just teaching by having people do it, like picking a theme for each quarter, then deciding on your content. I won't spoil it for everybody, but if you do nothing else, you must go get this content planning calendar because it's changing my life because we're actually going to have a plan. There's not going to be this panic mode of, "Oh my gosh. What am I going to talk about Monday?"

Leslie: It's interesting that you say that because that's exactly why I created it. Because up until this point, it's like, "What are we going create this week? Sweet, let's come up with some ideas and pick one and move forward. I came to the point where I realized that, "Man, I got to do something better than that." I created this spreadsheet to help myself. As I was creating it, I was thinking to myself, "Man, this could help so many other people." That's why it's out there right now.

Ray: I want to say for folks who are not into spreadsheets and who get intimidated by them. This is one of those spreadsheets that you open it up, and it acts like an app. You don't really have to know Excel to make this thing work.

Leslie: Exactly. It'll walk you through everything you need to know.

Ray: All right. Again, that's at becomeablogger.com/spreadsheet.

Leslie: Correct.

Ray: We'll put a link to that in the show notes and a link to your podcast and the other things that we've mentioned. Leslie, thank you so much. I can't believe I waited so long to have you on the show.

Leslie: [laughs] Thank you so much for having me on this show. This was fun. I hope your audience got a lot of value from it.

Ray: I'm sure they did. I know I did. God bless you, my friend.

[music]

Leslie: Same to you, man.

Ray: There you have it. There's how you become a blogger. You can find no better teacher of that subject than Leslie Samuel. Check out the spreadsheet. Check out his blog, his podcast. You will not be disappointed. Hey, if you found value in this week's show, we'd love it if you would subscribe to the show through iTunes. If you're willing to give a little bit of extra effort to help us out, give us a rating and a review because that helps keep the podcast more visible and new people can discover it. You see how that works.

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You can get the transcript for this episode by going to rayedwards.com/270. Until next week, I pray that God continues to bless you and that He does more for you than you could ask or even possibly imagine. Peace to your house.

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