



Presents:

## Podcast Episode 104: How to Set a Firm Foundation for Your Blog



By: Leslie Samuel



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## Introductions

*[Intro by Guy Kawasaki, Gideon Shalwick, and Farnoosh Brock]*

Hello, hello, hello and welcome to another episode of [Learning with Leslie](#), the podcast where you learn, I learn, we all learn about how to build an online business with a blog. No, I'm not talking about one of those blogs that will fall by the wayside when Google has a mood swing. I am talking about one that will thrive no matter what gets thrown at it.

I'm your host, Leslie Samuel, from [becomeablogger.com](http://becomeablogger.com) where we're changing the world one blog at a time.

As usual, I have another exciting episode for you today... In today's episode, I will be talking about how to set a firm foundation for your blog. I'm seeing it way too often. People are starting blogs with a very weak foundation and they set out a goal to build a massive empire. This doesn't usually work because you end up working very hard to build something but, not much happens in terms of return on your investment.

So, there are certain things that you can do that I believe that you can do to strengthen that foundation. I believe there are and these are concepts that I'm using to strengthen my foundation even today. That's what I'm going to be talking about today.

All right, lots to get into today and I'm very excited about it. I'm also excited because I'm actually right now using a brand new microphone. I'm using the [Heil PR 40 microphone](#). It's a microphone that a lot of people talk about – Cliff Ravenscraft over at [PodcastAnswerMan.com](http://PodcastAnswerMan.com). He loves this mic and he preaches about it to the world. I tried it out at New Media Expo and I thought to myself, man, this is a nice mic.

So, I got myself one of these mics and I am going to... One of the things I want to do is I want to be starting to review products, things that I'm using whether it has to do with podcasting or video, all the equipment that I use, the software that I use and so on.

I'm working on something right now behind the scenes to be able to share that even better with you and I am excited about it. I'm stocking up on equipment so that, when it's time for me to do these reviews, video reviews, and all those types of things, I will have enough equipment to make it worthwhile.



I'm very excited about it, the Heil PR 40. I don't know if you're going to notice a big difference in the sound. If you do, let me know. If you don't, let me know in the comments. This is [Episode 104](#). Let me know what you think about the sound of this microphone.

So, in today's episode, first, I'm going to be taking a question from Bob Harper from [RoamingStartup.com](#). It's a question about pingbacks and then, I'm going to get into today's content.

But, before I do all of that, before I get into that, I need to let you know that this podcast episode and every other episode is brought to you by my ten free videos on how to get your blog up and running fast. That's over at [freebloggingvideos.com](#). You can sign up there and get access to these videos where I show you, first I talk about why you should even use Wordpress. What this Wordpress thing is all about, how to get your domain name, how to get your hosting account, how to install Wordpress, and plugins and all that good jazz so that, you can start creating content to inspire others and even change the world. So, that's over at [freebloggingvideos.com](#). The first word is "free" so, it is free. Check it out there.

## A Note on Pingbacks

All right, so let's go to a listener question from Bob Harper from [RoamingStartup.com](#). Take it away, Bob.

*"Hey Leslie, this is Bob Harper with [RoamingStartUp.com](#). I just listened to your podcast on dealing with haters. Great show as always. I have a question though.*

*We get a lot of pingback comments coming through our blog. I'm unfamiliar with these terms, would love to learn what the heck it is. It looks to me like it's nothing more than a link to a site often. I would love to hear your thoughts on it.*

*As always, Leslie, take care. Thanks for everything you do."*

All right, Bob, thank you so much for calling in that question. I don't think that's a question that I've dealt with on [Become a Blogger](#) or Learning with Leslie before so, I'm glad you asked that question.

A **pingback** is basically a system that was created to notify other bloggers that you are mentioning them. So, for example, let's say I write a blog post and in that blog post, I mention a blog post that you wrote, Bob. And, I say, "Hey, you need to check out this article that was written by Bob Harper at RoamingStartup.com," and I link to that article.

Now, if we have pingbacks enabled on our blog, and if you have pingbacks enabled on your blog, what's going to happen is it's going to send a notification to you on that blog post.

So, that particular blog post that I mentioned will receive a pingback. That basically notifies you that, "Hey, your blog post was mentioned." And, what usually happens is if you go in there and you see it and you say, "Okay, I'm going to approve this because it's relevant to what's going on, it's relevant to what I'm talking about and I don't mind linking back to that person."



Once you approve it, usually what happens is at the bottom of that blog post, you will see a section that's called pingbacks or trackbacks and that link back will appear in that section, right beneath the comments.

When someone comes to your blog and they read this amazing blog post, they can also see that this blog post is so amazing that it was mentioned by ten people and you have all the pingbacks there and they can go ahead and follow up by clicking on those links and going to those blogs. That's the concept, notifying you that your post was

mentioned and allowing you to include a link to the post that mentioned your post at the bottom of that post.

Here's the thing though. A lot of people have caught on to this and start to use this as a way of spamming other blogs. They're trying to get a link back so, they just randomly send out a bunch of pingbacks to blogs with the hope that that individual will approve the pingback and that will result in someone clicking on the link and getting some traffic to their blog.

I get a lot of pingbacks. I hardly ever approve any of them because a lot of them are that way where it's just someone trying to get a link back to their blog. But, when I do find something that someone really did link to me in an authentic way and it is something that I believe adds value then, I will approve that pingback.

I hope that answers your question, Bob. Thank you so much for calling it in and I just want to remind anyone else that if you have a question that you would like me to address on the podcast, you can go ahead and call the hotline, and just in case you don't know what that number is, that number is 888-835-2414.

And, that's my beautiful wife singing that number for you. Let's hear it again, 888-835-2414. You can call that number and leave a message any time of the day, any time of the night. It doesn't matter. I will check it out and I will play it on the show and answer your question or just play your comment if you have something to add to the discussion.

All right so, I'm talking today about *How to Set a Firm Foundation For Your Blog* and I want to right up front let you know that as I get into this content, what I'm doing is I am talking about what I believe is the best way to go about doing things. It's what's work for me but, it is not the only way to do things. So, I just want to emphasize that because you get a lot of people that preach the best way and this is the only way.

For me, it's not the only way. It's me sharing what I've learned in terms of what has been effective for me with the hope that you get some value out of it and you can apply, maybe not everything but, some of the things that I talk about, may influence you in a way that can help you to accomplish your goals.

I just want to say that because I don't think podcasters say that enough. This is not the only way but, it's what I found that's worked. And, if it works for you, please feel free to use these ideas.

## Five Tips on Setting Up a Blog with a Firm Foundation

Okay, so I want to share with you five tips on how you can set your blog up in a way that you have a firm foundation.

### #1: Blog about Something You're Passionate About

Tip number one, and this is something that you probably heard me say over and over. If you've been following me for a while, you've heard this and that is to blog about something that you are passionate about or you can be passionate about it.

I want to tell you a little bit of a story. When I first started in Internet marketing, or at least when I first started doing it and actually seeing some results, I was in what was called [freebie trading](#). If you don't know what freebie trading is, this was back in 2008. I started on January 18, 2008. Freebie trading is basically those websites that you see out there that claim you can get a free iPad, a free TV, a free this, a free that. If you complete some offers and then, refer some others to complete those offers and eventually, if you get enough referrals, you will make some money.

Now, I found a way to make this work for me and I was extremely successful with it. In the first year, I made about \$28,000 doing this because I found out about forums that were available at the time where people were looking to complete these offers and then, I linked those individuals with the companies and was able to make a significant amount of money, get a free iPad, a free TV, and all that kind of stuff.

That was what I was first into.

Then, I found out about [blogging](#) and I started to blog about this. For me, it was kind of exciting, this new thing that's going on. I'm learning about this and I'm sharing it with the world and I'm blogging about it but, there was one problem. I was not passionate about it and because I was not passionate about it, I started to get tired of it. There came a



time where it became much harder to do what I was doing with freebie trading and I just did not have the passion to continue. That drive was not there.

Eventually, I started to think to myself, "Man, what can I blog about that I am really passionate about." I knew that I was passionate about Biology. So, I started my [Biology blog](#) and I've been building that blog since and it's much easier to blog about Biology than it is to blog about freebie trading. And then, I started to fall in love with blogging itself, the concept of blogging and how to build a blog and the strategies that you use.

You know what? This is something that I talk about even when I'm not blogging. Sometimes, I don't know if my friends get what I say about blogging because I talk about it so much. But, as you can see, it's something that I'm passionate about and what that does for me is when I am tired, when I don't have the energy to do all these stuff, because I am so passionate about it, I can't help but blog about it.

So, if you can find something that you are passionate about, that will go a long way in helping you to build something that is successful because when things don't look the greatest, when you're not making money, when you're working so hard and you don't see the end as yet, and when you're just in that process of building, that passion will help you to continue on to where you can reach to the point of having some success with your blog.

That's point number one, blog about something that you're passionate about.

## #2: Be Very Specific with Your Chosen Niche

Then, point number two, this is something that I see people doing way too often or not doing way too often. Choose a specific niche and then, niche it down. Get very, very specific.

For example, I am not just blogging about Biology because Biology is such a vague topic. No, I am taking very specific aspects of Biology. I've decided to focus on advanced biological topics, things like Neuroscience and Physiology. These are upper level Biology classes that I took when I was in college and those are things that excite



me so, I decided to go a little higher up. The higher up you get, the more specific you get, and the more people you exclude.

I see a lot of people trying to start blogs talking about Biology and not only Biology but, making money. And, not only making money but, taking trips on vacations and how you can find the best deals and all these different types of things. That is one of the biggest mistakes you can make because if you try to cater to everyone, you end up catering to no one.

So, as specific as you can get, that is what I want you to do. Think about your niche. Are you very specific about what you are talking about. If you're not, can you get more specific?

A lot of people think about this and they think, "You know what? I don't like that concept." I've had conversations with people that say, "You know what? I am interested in so many things. I can't just talk about one specific niche."

What I tell them is what I'm going to tell you right now. Even though your niche is very specific, that does not mean that you can't bring the other aspects of your life or the other things that you are interested into that specific niche.

It just means that when you bring those things in, you are bringing it within the context of your niche. So, even though Learning with Leslie is about teaching people to blog in a way that can create content, inspire others and change the world and it has that vision, I have that vision in mind, I can still talk about my family. I can still talk about my vacations. I can still talk about all these different things that I do but, I keep bringing it back to that specific niche.

I want to give you a more specific example, Learning with Leslie is about blogging and it's about what I just spoke about in terms of creating content, inspiring others and changing the world. I am also a teacher and as a teacher, there are certain experiences that I'm going to have as a teacher that apply to blogging and I can bring those in and use those as lessons. Real stories from the different aspects of my life but, I still bring it





back to the concept of blogging in a way where you can create content, inspire others and change the world.

Just because you have a very specific niche doesn't mean that you can't bring the other aspects of your life into it. So, start very specific and then, from there, you can grow and expand from there.

That's number two. Number one was blog about something you're passionate about. Number two is choose a very specific niche and niche it down even more.

### #3: Have a Unique Selling Proposition

Number three, you want to make sure that you have a unique selling proposition. Why should I come to your blog? Why should I care about your blog? Okay, my blog is about Biology but, there are many blogs and many websites about Biology. Why should you care?

Well, I decided, with my Biology blog, I was going to focus on creating short, very concise videos on these advanced topics in a very simple way. That made my blog different from any of the others that I have seen.

There are many blogs out there that deal with Biology but, mine focuses on those short videos where instead of talking about what happens in a neuron, for example, I am just going to talk about, and this might sound like a different language but, I am going to talk about one specific phase of an action potential and it's called *depolarization*. It doesn't matter what that is if you have no idea but, I will make one entire video, short video that just focuses on depolarization.

As opposed to when you go to classes and there's an hour-long lecture where you're talking about the entire action potential and all the phases – depolarization, repolarization, hyperpolarization and the refractory periods and all these different types of things, like I said, it doesn't matter if that's a different language. But, you get the point. I came at it from a different angle.



What is your different angle? And, that's sometimes a very hard question to answer but, if you can take the time to think about that beforehand, your blog will be different. And, if your blog is different, that gives me a reason to come to it.

## #4: "Write Down your Customer Avatars"

That's number three. Let's go on to number four and this, you'll notice that I'm starting very broad from blogging about your passion then, to coming down to a different niche, specific niche and then, what's your unique angle on that niche and now, we're going to go even more specific to your target audience.

Now, I'm going to call this specifically writing down your customer avatars. It's not a concept that I came up with. It's a concept that I've read from a number of different bloggers and it is something that, I am going through a course right now that I haven't spoken about because I'm actually still going through it and I want to fully evaluate it before I tell anyone about it because I think it's a really powerful thing but, I want to make sure to do justice to it when I do talk about it.

One of the things that the course had me do is come up with my customer avatar. It had me to define that in a very specific way and write a story about that customer avatar so that, I know who that person is that I am targeting, not just generally speaking but, that specific individual.



I want to read to you my customer avatar to show you how specific I have gotten with this and this has really helped me in defining my [target audience](#) specifically when it comes to Become a Blogger.

So, the name of my customer avatar is Cristina Simmons. Yes, she has a name and I'm going to read to you about this lady that I made up but, it gives me a very good idea of who my target audience is. So, here we go.

*Cristina is 35. She is married to Tom with two kids, a six-year-old, Richie and a four-year-old, Annie. When Richie was born, she gave up her job as a receptionist without hesitation. She never really wanted to be a receptionist but, when her Psychology degree didn't land her a job, it was the only available gig.*

*In about a year, both of the kids will be in school and Cristina is starting to think about what she will be doing during the day. Yes, she could get that receptionist job again but, she wants something more.*

*She always felt as if she was meant for something special. It is important for Cristina to leave her mark on the world but she has never been able to figure out exactly what that is.*

*For the last year, she's been reading blogs and have been impressed at how individuals have been using blogs to build an audience, demonstrate their expertise and impact the lives of many people all over the world. Not only that, she has seen how some of these bloggers have turned what they do online into a thriving online business.*

*So, she started doing research on how to build a business with a blog but has been getting overwhelmed. There are so much information out there and she is not really familiar with the technology. She considers herself to be a relatively smart person but, is uncertain as to whether this could be it.*

*The following thoughts plague her mind:*

*What should she write about? She's passionate about so many things that it's hard for her to narrow it down. If she were to narrow it down, what if she invest a lot of time into building it and no one comes to her blog? What if she fails?*

*But, despite her fears, she decides that she was going to give it her absolute best shot. She is determined to succeed and she will.*

That is my customer avatar. Now, as I read that, you probably resonated with certain aspects of this customer avatar. You probably thought to yourself, "You know what? That's me." Not that you're necessarily Cristina or you have two kids or anything of that sort. But, there were certain aspects of what I read that probably resonated with you if you are a part of my target audience.

Maybe, it's the passion for wanting to do something special in the world. Maybe it's that fear of failure. Maybe, it's that, what if I built it and no one comes? Maybe, it's all these different aspects of who Cristina is?

Doing that, for me has really helped me to identify who I'm targeting and as a result of that, it helps me to tailor my content to that individual, tailor my content to you. How do you come to this customer avatar?

There are a number of ways you can do this. Number one, you may be that target audience. You can draw from your own experiences. Number two, you can do a survey. I send out surveys regularly where I ask people, what are they struggling with? What are some of their pain points? What are some of the experiences that they have had that they would like me to address?

I went through that survey and I pulled out things that I got from that survey and as a result of it, I was able to come up with this very, very specific customer avatar. This has been tremendously valuable for me. It's made so many things very clear for me.

So, that's point number four. Come up with your customer avatar. If you can, write it down. Be very specific.

## #5: Focus Everything on the First Four Tips

Then, tip number five, everything you do should focus on the above. It should focus on your passion. It should focus on your specific niche. It should focus on your unique selling proposition. It should focus on your target audience, your customer avatar, whether you're writing a blog post, you're marketing your blog post, your sales pages,

the content that's on your sales pages, the content that's on your squeeze pages, these should all be tailored to those four things that we went over above.

This is something that I am working on right now. I've actually hired a copywriter that's working on writing sales copy for me for my sales page for [Become a Blogger Premium](#) with these things in mind. Of course, I'm going to take that. I'm going to modify it to make sure that it is exactly the way that I want it. I'm also working on my follow up sequence because I want to make sure that my follow up sequence reaches that person.

Yes, I am excluding a lot of people and I don't mind doing that because by doing that, I am focusing even better on my specific target audience and I am giving them exactly what they need and what they want, even more importantly, what they want because what they need may not be exactly what they want.

So, by going through these exercises, it has helped me very much identify who my target audience is. It has helped me to set a firm foundation for what I'm trying to build and I'm still working on that foundation and I hope that is of value to you also.

So, to recap, number one, blog about something that you're passionate about or that you can be passionate about. Number two, choose a specific niche, and niche it down even more. Number three, make sure you have a unique selling proposition. Number four, write down your customer avatar, and number five, everything you do should focus on those above-mentioned four points.

So, my question for you today, and it's just one question, what is your unique selling proposition? If you know, let me know. This is Episode 104 so, come back to the blog at [becomeablogger.com/episode104](http://becomeablogger.com/episode104) and let me know in the comments.

That's pretty much it for this episode. I hope you got a ton of value from that. I hope you can take this concept and use that to help build a strong foundation for your blog, one that will survive anything that Google throws at it, or anyone else throws at it.

As usual, this episode was brought to you by my ten free videos on how to start your blog and get it up and running fast at [freebloggingvideos.com](http://freebloggingvideos.com) where you get to watch me, you watch my screen as I show you step by step how to get your domain name, your web host, how to install Wordpress, optimize your settings, install plugins, setup

Feedburner, and start creating content that can inspire others and even change the world. And, while you're at it, you can set the foundation for a successful online business especially if you use the tips that I mentioned in this episode today.

So, get started at [freebloggingvideos.com](http://freebloggingvideos.com) and if you have any blogging questions or any questions related to the concepts that I talk about, you can ask them right there in the free member's area and you will get an answer directly from me not from someone else, or maybe from someone else but, you will definitely get my input and my feedback.

So, this is Leslie Samuel from [becomeablogger.com](http://becomeablogger.com) where we're changing the world one blog at a time. Until next time, take care and God bless!