



Presents:

Podcast Interview Episode 106 Start a Blog and Launch a Product - A Case Study with Moutassem Hammour



By: Leslie Samuel



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Introductions

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

LESLIE: 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 where we're changing the world one blog at a time. Today, I have another exciting interview for you today. I'm on the line with Moutassem Hammour, a chiropractor living in France who started a blog on meditation.

Get this, just six months ago, he had been doing a lot offline like speaking at conferences, writing for magazines and a number of other things, stumbled on to the world of blogging, decided it was time to start one of his own to potentially reach thousands of people all over the world.

He has recently launched his very first product and I brought him on here to talk a little bit about the process of starting his blog and how he went about creating that product and how other new bloggers can do the same. That's what we're going to talk about today.

Moutassem, how are you doing today?

MOUTASSEM: I'm doing great, Leslie.

LESLIE: All right, thank you so much for joining me. I am excited to talk about your story and to get into some of the things that you have been doing.

MOUTASSEM: Great! I'm excited to be here.

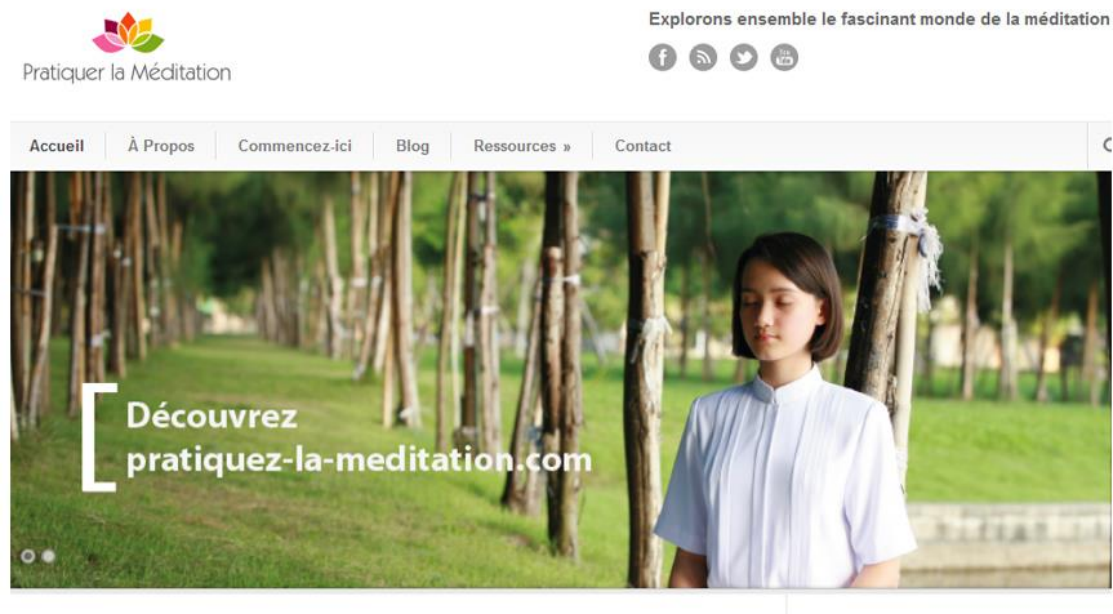
LESLIE: Awesome, awesome. So, you started your blog a few months ago. How is it going?

MOUTASSEM: It's going pretty well. Like you mentioned, I just launched a product so, it's starting to get to a new level. I'm loving it.

LESLIE: Awesome. What's the most fun part about this blogging process for you?

MOUTASSEM: I would say it's to be able to share my experience knowing that it can help people. Just the fact to be able to work on articles, to work on videos and knowing that there's an audience, that people are going to watch them and react to them, that's exciting. I've been doing that for the last six months and I enjoy it, I still enjoy it... Actually, I enjoy it even more as it's growing.

LESLIE: Awesome, awesome. What is your blog about?



MOUTASSEM: It's about meditation and mainly about how to improve your meditation through body exercises, how to increase your body awareness so it can help in your meditation.

LESLIE: Okay, so body exercises for meditation and all that stuff. And, it's in French, right?

MOUTASSEM: It's in French, yes.

LESLIE: Okay. How did you find it was blogging in French because a lot of people think, you know, if I want to blog, I need to blog in English because most people online speak English? Did you find that it was relatively easy to do it in French and get people actually interested in it?

MOUTASSEM: Yes, French is my stronger language. From that point of view, it's a lot easier for me to write in French and then, even to be able to get well-positioned with Google, let's say, I thought it was much easier with a French audience, with a French community than with the English ones which is much wider.

LESLIE: Got you because that's something that I've thought about a lot because I do get people from all over the world. A lot of people try to do it in English because they think it'll be easier because more people are online in English. However, it also means that there is most likely less competition. So, that seems like it would make it somewhat easier to get into blogging in some of these other languages. So, I'm glad to hear that you found that work for you.

MOUTASSEM: Yes, and even blogging is younger in France than in the US so, there's less competition, less people doing it, so that also makes it easier. And, it's also more exciting because you feel that you're innovating in a way.

LESLIE: Got you, awesome stuff. So, tell us a little bit about your background. What were you doing before you decided to start this blog?

MOUTASSEM: How far do you want me to go? [*Laughs*]

LESLIE: Well, let's talk about what you were doing right before blogging.

MOUTASSEM: Okay, 2 or 3 years ago, I was in France then, I decided to send my clinic in France to go back to Lebanon, in the Middle East where I'm originally from because I wanted to experience living there and also open a clinic over there.

So, I started my clinic and after about a year of working there, I'm sure you've heard of all the crises article and economic crises going on in the region with Syria and all these disturbances, so the clinic got very slow and it got very hard to do anything over there.

Because I had all these free time, I started to spend more time writing and I started writing for magazines and then, one thing leading to another. I discovered blogging and that's how I started to see how I could actually create blog and write about something that I could write about and that I wanted to share with people.

LESLIE: Okay, so you started your blog. This was six months ago that you started this blog?

Starting the Blog – Struggles Encountered and Decisions Made

MOUTASSEM: I started this blog when I came back to France so, before that, I was just playing around, trying different things, learning how to use Wordpress, just reading about how to blog and how the whole thing worked.

LESLIE: And, how long ago was that? How long before starting this blog that you just start to dabble into it?

MOUTASSEM: About two or three months.

LESLIE: Two or three months, okay. So, you started figuring out this Wordpress thing and trying to deal with the technology and then, you decided to start this blog about meditation. Why specifically meditation?

MOUTASSEM: I think one of the big reasons was that I wanted to meditate more and also working with patients for the last twelve years, I noticed that when people really got to let go, to relax their mind, to focus on the present moment, most of their symptoms will drastically decrease. I find that it was great help for people and that was the topic I

wanted to explore even more. That was a combination of these two factors that got me to go into mediation.

LESLIE: Okay, so you were interested in the topic and you think that it's something that can help people.

MOUTASSEM: Yes, I was interested and I have seen it with many patients how it did help people, yes.

LESLIE: Great, great, great. Now, when you started your blog, a lot of people start blogs. They have a lot of struggles in the beginning or they have a lot of struggles all throughout their experiences, did you have any struggles when you started your blog or was it just easy? You just automatically got a ton of people to come there?

MOUTASSEM: I think the biggest struggle, like the first few weeks or the first month was to know where to spend my time and energy. Sometimes, I would spend hours on some little details that wasn't delivering much results.

So, once I got over that, and just realize what was important, that made it easier and I quickly got to 20 unique visitors per day. From then on, it seems to go in a smoother way.

LESLIE: Well, what did you decide? You said you were doing a bunch of things and not focusing on the most important. But, how did you decide what the most important thing was and what is that most important thing for you?

MOUTASSEM: I think what helped me was just go over forums, blogs like yours, and just reading around what people were saying, the importance of building a list, the importance of having regular posts going out very week... That was some of the things I just got to be more disciplined about and to work on that and I would spend much less time on the design aspect and trying to understand every technical things and different tools.

So, to build a list, to get posts out and also the third thing that got me going and seems to be helpful was to try to be as authentic as possible in the information I was giving out, not trying to make it nice or to impress people but just try to be as sincere as possible.

When I started to do that, people were pressing likes more often and I was getting more comments, more feedback. I would say that was the three factors.

LESLIE: Okay, very, very interesting. So, focusing on great content and putting it out regularly, being authentic, and also building your list.

MOUTASSEM: Yes.

Utilizing Facebook to Build a Blog

LESLIE: Awesome. Now, I see that one of the things that you decided to do for building your blog is using Facebook. You started your blog six months ago and I see here on your site right now at [Pratiquer la Meditation](#), (practicing my French there, [*laughs*]). I see you have 3,940 people that are liking your [Facebook page](#) which is a significant amount of people in such a short time.



How did you go about getting that many people to like your page?

MOUTASSEM: Prior to that, I had a page for my clinical practice and it took about maybe a year to go to 400 or 500. So then, I thought maybe I'd do a new page for this

new blog and I decided to invest into **Facebook advertisement** so, I took the minimal amount first like \$1 per day and that somehow brought about 20 new likes everyday.

LESLIE: Nice.

MOUTASSEM: And, after that, I just tried to also put a new comment or Facebook news about every day, every weekday and people were starting to share the Facebook news. And, in about two or three months, we go to 30 new likes per day and now, I'm reaching 40-45 new likes per day.

LESLIE: That's great.

MOUTASSEM: And, if I can add something, what I also try to do is that's when I started to build up the audience in Facebook. I've looked at the stats who were liking the page and then, I adapted the ad to the stats like it would be like mainly woman aged 25 to 36 or 37, women who liked the Yoga pages who were living in the main cities, that seemed to help also, to grow the Facebook page.

LESLIE: Okay, so, let's break that down a little bit. First, you started your ads on Facebook. This is **paid traffic** which is different than I have done. Well, I think I tested it out for like a day or two but, I never really got into paid traffic.

You started with doing ads. You were spending as little as \$1 per day and you were getting about 20 new likes per day from doing that. Now, what kind of things were you saying in those ads to convince people to come over to your page?

MOUTASSEM: I use the same one. I'm actually using the same one. It's a very basic thing. I can't even remember. Let me take a look at it... I put a nice picture and just let's explore together the fascinating world of meditation.

LESLIE: What kind of picture do you have there?

MOUTASSEM: It's a picture of a nice lady with her eyes closed which looks like she's meditating.

LESLIE: Okay, so it's something that's very relevant to your target audience and you're inviting them to explore this world of meditation.

MOUTASSEM: Yes.

LESLIE: And, that's the same ad that you're running today?

MOUTASSEM: Yes, it is.

LESLIE: Okay, so then you said, what you did was you looked at the statistics to see what kind of people were coming over to your page and liking your page, right?

MOUTASSEM: Yes, that's right.

LESLIE: And then, based on that, because Facebook has a targeting feature where you can say, I only want women between the ages of a and b, whatever that is for you, who have liked Yoga pages. So, you specified the type of people, the type of person, the target audience that you want to be exposed to your ad.

MOUTASSEM: That's right.

LESLIE: And, that increased the chances of people actually coming over and liking your page. And now, it's up to about 40 per day.

MOUTASSEM: Yes, that's right.

LESLIE: And, you also mentioned that you're posting regularly on that Facebook page so, that's another element. And, I found that when I post regularly on my Facebook page, I get significantly more interaction and that interaction helps to expand your exposure and so on.

Those are some solid tips. I wanted to just emphasize that because a lot of people are wondering, "how do I get people to like my Facebook page?" And, this is one way where you're kind of giving yourself a jumpstart. It's not just organic. You're paying for it but, you're not even paying that much and you're getting a significant return on your investment.

MOUTASSEM: Yes. One more thing that I noticed was also much more shared is when I use the text and pictures. I would post a nice picture or nice graphics, put the text I

wanted to share, it could be a quote or an idea or a new post and whenever I started doing that, the shares, they almost doubled. People are more likely to share a nice picture with a text on it than just text by itself. That, I noticed, made a big difference in the number of sharings.

LESLIE: Definitely. That's awesome. I've noticed the same thing and I've heard a lot of people say that that is something that has worked for them because pictures do very well on Facebook.

Creating a Product to Drive More Traffic and Generate Income

LESLIE: Awesome. You decided, "you know what? Now it's time for me to create a product." Why did you decide that this was the direction that you wanted to go with?

MOUTASSEM: Because eventually, I was hoping to generate some income for my blog. I also was studying your blog and different blogs. I noticed that to make money out of advertisements, like Google Ads, AdSense would drive you big, significant amount of traffic.

If I wanted to do that, I knew it would take much longer so, I decided to go with the product creation that was also on your advice and on different blogs' advices and also because I wanted to share more information with my audience, with the people who were coming to my blogs. That would answer both desires – one to make money and two, to be able to share more in-depth information with my audience.

LESLIE: Got you, and you actually took my [Product Creation Simplified Course](#), right?

MOUTASSEM: Yes, I took the Product Creation and the **Product Launch Course**.



LESLIE: What did you learn from it? Let me ask this question, if there were one lesson that you would say that you took away from it, what would that one lesson be?

MOUTASSEM: One lesson? Actually, there are a few lessons but, I would say it gave me many specific directions that was very helpful on which tools to use and how to use them and then, the other thing that was also helpful was to simplify. That was one advice you gave, to simplify and just make it more palpable. It made me realize that I could do it by going through the course.

Just after that, I decided to take the action steps to put into action. So, if it was one thing, it was to motivate me to take action and actually do it.

LESLIE: Awesome. So, let's talk about the process. Now, you've gone through the course and you've decided I'm going to create this product, what do you do?

Actually, what type of a course is it? What is it? Is it an eBook? Is it a video course? What does it involve?

MOUTASSEM: It is an eBook. There are audios like a guided meditation and there are videos for the exercises.

LESLIE: Okay, so it's pretty comprehensive. It uses the different types of media – video, audio, and written. So, let's start with the most simple. Let's start with the eBook. How did you go about creating that eBook?

MOUTASSEM: Before the content, I created a questionnaire--

LESLIE: Oh yes, good point.

MOUTASSEM: --that I put on the blog and every people who would opt in to the newsletter, they would automatically be sent to a page where they were asked to fill a questionnaire and then, I tried to see where their focus, their concerns, their hopes, their struggles. I asked them if they would be interested in a product, which type of product. I did that for about three weeks. I got about 100 answers and from there, I--

LESLIE: Wait, before you move on from there, why did you do that?

MOUTASSEM: I think it was either after reading a post of yours or because that made sense to be able to know what exactly they wanted and to know which language they were using also.

LESLIE: Okay, and that's an important point because a lot of us, what we do, we just create a product because we think it's a good idea but, it's not necessarily what our audience wants.

So, before even creating this product, you went and asked them, "Hey, what do you want by doing this survey?" And, what were the responses like?

MOUTASSEM: People wanted to have less stress, to be able to better cope with stress. People wanted to have more serenity in their lives. They were having struggles with their mind just like with internal dialogue where it's hard to stop thinking.

They knew that by learning to relax, they would feel better, they would feel happier but, they didn't know how to do it... What else?

LESLIE: That right there, that is a lot of information. That gives you information as to what they are struggling with and then, you can go about creating that product. So, you have this information now and it's time for you to create the eBook.

How do you create the eBook?

MOUTASSEM: I started by creating the videos, the series of videos where I was sharing what I thought they were experiencing. Then, I explained why they were experiencing that and then, I gave them different solutions on how meditation could help them.

The eBook, I took the whole content of these videos and just expanded on it and putting more research, more facts and that's how I created the eBook.

LESLIE: Okay, so first you started with the videos. These videos are the videos that people are paying for, right?

MOUTASSEM: No, actually, it's the launch videos.

LESLIE: The launch videos. Man, you went through this entire process! I love it. So, you started with a series of launch videos and in those series of launch videos, you're addressing some of those major concerns, those major issues that your target audience told you that they are dealing with, right?

MOUTASSEM: Exactly, yes.

LESLIE: And, these videos you gave away for free as a part of the launch process.

MOUTASSEM: Yes, that's right.

LESLIE: And, were these videos, videos of you or where they screencast? What were they exactly?

MOUTASSEM: I would do a short introduction where you could see me. It was like a one minute introduction and then, I would go on and do a screencast with text going as I talk and I used the [ScreenFlow](#) to do that.

LESLIE: So, you're on a Mac. You use ScreenFlow. Did you use Powerpoint or [Keynote](#), or anything like that?

MOUTASSEM: Yes, for some of them yes. For the others, I just use the text in ScreenFlow.

LESLIE: Oh, okay, so you just made the video itself, like you added the text within ScreenFlow and you kind of walk through the process and spoke through the process.

MOUTASSEM: Exactly, yes.

LESLIE: Okay, so very simple. You have your videos now as a part of the launch process. What do you do with those videos? Do you email it to a list? Do you advertise it on your blog? What do you do?

MOUTASSEM: Yes, so it was three videos. The last video was the sales video, the video that introduced the teaching, the formation, the training, and first, I sent it to my list. So, the first thing to do, I sent an email, "Okay, here's a new video I did about the different symptoms we all share and I wanted to share it with you."

Then, two or three days later, I send the second videos explaining why we have these symptoms. I went through the whole process like I did a launch, like I learned in your training and that was the first launch and now, I put it on automatic in a way that every person that signs up to the newsletter, they go through the whole sequence.

LESLIE: Okay, and how many people did you have on your list at this point?

MOUTASSEM: I had 350 people.

LESLIE: Okay, 350 people on the list. It's not a huge list but, it's growing and it's a good list for someone that just started a blog a few months ago. And, you send them the first video, the entire video series then, you have a sales video that you send them to and you cross your fingers and hope they are going to buy.

Did anyone buy?

MOUTASSEM: What happened was that as I sent the last video, I realized that the offer I was making was maybe too ambitious, like ten modules and like in a sequence of over six months and so, at the last minute, I was like, "Woah, that's too much. Maybe I can use what I have now and just offer it as a course that they can download and use it. They can have full access as soon as they pay for it." So, I kind of pulled the break and stopped the launch which was wasn't a very good idea for like 12 hours, just telling them, hold a second, I'm going to send you the last video.

So then, I re-did the video with the new offer. I simply offered a cheaper offer and I had a few sales. The first one came like maybe 2 hours after I opened the sale then, I had another one about a few hours later. So, so far I sold about ten classes.

LESLIE: Oh nice! And, what's the price of the course?

MOUTASSEM: It's \$50.

LESLIE: So, a list of 300 people.

MOUTASSEM: 350.

LESLIE: 350, sorry. You sent the information to them. You hoped to get some sales and since you launched it, you had ten sales.

MOUTASSEM: Yes, that's right.

LESLIE: Which is \$500.

MOUTASSEM: Yes, which is pretty cool.

LESLIE: No, no, that's not just pretty cool. I think that's awesome because it's a relatively new blog. You decided, you know what? I'm going to go out there. I'm going to try to provide value to people that I care about. I want them to have this value because it can enhance their lives.

But, not only that, you know the fact that a blog doesn't just make money. You decide to make a product from it. You go through all these steps to make the product and then, you start making sales. To me, that's like very exciting.

MOUTASSEM: Yes, it's exciting to be able to start earning money from something you love doing and then, it's also exciting because you have like wide perspectives. You're like, "Woah, if it works for 350 people, maybe as the list will grow, more people will be interested. Maybe I can offer more products."

LESLIE: Awesome. That's exactly it.

So, let's deal a little more with some of the technology behind. You said you had some audios. How did you record those audios? What did you use?

MOUTASSEM: I work on a Mac so, I use the [GarageBand](#). I also use microphone. That was also a good thing I did because prior to that, the quality of the sound would always be a little problematic so, I use the [Snowball Blue](#).

LESLIE: Yes, the Blue Snowball Mic. That's a USB mic that you plug in to your computer and then, you can just talk into it.

MOUTASSEM: Yes, and it's about like \$90. So, that was a good investment and yes, just recorded, and then, did some editing with some music with GarageBand.

LESLIE: Okay, so GarageBand and your Blue Snowball mic. If someone is listening to this and they want to do something like that, you can actually get this relatively new mic the [Audio Technica ATR 2100 USB](#), very long name. Right now, it's \$38 on Amazon. It does a really good quality.

So, microphone into GarageBand. You can use [Audacity](#) which is free on the Mac and on the PC. For your videos, you did a combination of you talking on a video camera and some kind of a screencast.

For your eBook, you wrote that eBook in... what program did you write that eBook in?

MOUTASSEM: Word, **Microsoft Word**.

LESLIE: Okay, so Microsoft Word, and then, you exported it as a PDF?

MOUTASSEM: Yes.

LESLIE: All right and then, you put all of these together on your website. In terms of delivering the content, in terms of how you presented the content, what Wordpress theme were you using?

MOUTASSEM: Like my blog, I use...

LESLIE: Well, for the product that you created.

MOUTASSEM: [OptimizePress](#).

LESLIE: OptimizePress. And why did you use it?

MOUTASSEM: Actually, no. It's for the sales process. On the launch process, I used Optimize Press but then, for the product, I used my regular blog.

LESLIE: And, why did you use Optimize Press?

MOUTASSEM: Because it was, after taking the launch class with you, that was what you advised and then, it was affordable to buy it and very easy to use especially if you want to do launches, it does everything for you.

Just go through the steps to set up your pages, put on your videos and then, it works by itself. And, the good thing also with OptimizePress is that now I can use it as evergreen launch, just like perpetual launch. It just been working great.

LESLIE: And, just to define that for anyone, an **evergreen launch** is an ongoing launch. So, basically, someone can come in to your funnel or sign up for your free course. In five months and they still go through that launch sequence so that, they get that full experience and that helps to increase the chances that they are going to actually buy the products.

Now, for your videos, where do you host your videos? We're just giving away all these information because I think, it's something that someone can listen to and they can get value and without to go out there and buying a product, they can actually just go through these steps like you did and to see some of the same effects and be able to sell products like you did. So, where did you host your videos?

MOUTASSEM: I used [Vimeo Pro](#).

LESLIE: Do you like using Vimeo Pro?

MOUTASSEM: Yes. I looked into Amazon. I know that they could host your videos. But, the problem with that was that I think you cannot view them on iPads and on telephones. I know that if I can show videos, I like to do it on my iPad so, I wanted to give the audience the chance to be able to do so also.

So, Vimeo, you can watch it on your iPads. Cool thing about it, you can also, they give you a link where people can go and download the video. That was a big plus because when I did my offer, people were asking me if the video was yours, if they could have it in their computer so in that way, they can just go and download it.

Then, you can also restrict where the video plays. You can just limit it to your blog. So, that was also a way to make it more private. So, it offered many convenient aspects for an online course.

LESLIE: Great, great. I love Vimeo Pro. That's what I use for Become a Blogger, too and I think it's great especially for those features that you mentioned. You can say that, "I only want this to be displayed on my URL." So, even if someone steals the code and try to embed it on their blog, it just won't work. That's pretty cool.

This is exciting to me because you get a lot of people coming through your course and you get some of the people that actually take action and you are taking action and it's just awesome to see. I am so excited for you and I am looking forward to getting another email in a few months telling me how things are going.

What Happens Next? More Plans for the Blog

LESLIE: So, my next question then is what are your future plans for this blog and for all the things that you are trying to do online?

MOUTASSEM: I think first of all, to just try to make it roll, to build a larger audience and to have more interaction with people. Then, it would be to have other people participating.

Now, I am starting to connect with the Yoga teachers, with meditation teachers, with the authors. The cool thing is when you start to have a little bit of an audience like a nice Facebook page and some comments and traffic, people, they're interested with working with you. They get excited by it.

So, yes, the next step would be also to share the experience of others and to have the audience or the people find the blog, to have them take advantage of that.

The third thing would maybe to expand on the products maybe to work on the new product. That could be the follow up of this first product.

LESLIE: All right, awesome stuff.

It's More than Just Earning Money

LESLIE: So, someone is listening to this right now, relatively new or maybe they haven't even started a blog. They are thinking about this blogging thing and doing it in a way that can help them to make some money online and all that kind of stuff. But, they have doubts in their mind as to whether they can do it, whether they should do it, or anything of that sort. What would you tell that person today?

MOUTASSEM: I think, when you do that, we need to focus. We need to get our drive from the feeling that we are helping others, that we are sharing something useful and not so much about the external results because I know, like in my case, it took six months to start to generate money so, it's very easy to get discouraged or disappointed. So, just focus on the feeling that you are sharing something with authenticity and from your heart and you know that it's going to help others. Keep focusing on that and just go through the steps, learn from others, and eventually, you'll see that you'll start to build something. That would be my advice.

LESLIE: Awesome, awesome. Thank you so much. I am just inspired by what you have done and I look forward to see how things go in the future. So, thank you so much Moutassem for joining me on this interview.

MOUTASSEM: Thank you.

LESLIE: All right, guys. That's it for this episode. I hope, I know, I feel that you've gotten a ton of value from it and I hope that you are inspired to get out there and not only blog but, also create your very own product so that, you can start to see some of the results that Moutassem saw.

As usual, this episode is brought to you by my ten free videos on how to become a blogger over at freebloggingvideos.com where you get to avoid the hassle and stress of not knowing how to get your blog up and running.

I have personally seen that one of the biggest things holding people back from starting their own blogs is that they are not sure about how to do it especially when it comes to the technology and that's where my ten free videos come in where I show you step by step how to get your blog up and running fast over at freebloggingvideos.com. Check them out today.

This is Leslie Samuel from Become a Blogger where we are changing the world one blog at a time. That's it for this episode. Until next time, take care and God bless!