



Presents:

Podcast Episode 117: 117 My Vision for the Future of the Become A Blogger Community



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'm 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. As usual, another exciting episode for you today.

In today's episode, I'm going to be talking about my vision for the future of the [Become a Blogger Community](#), and where you fit into the whole equation. I don't know if you noticed that a few things have been happening around here, the slight things but, they are an indication of what's coming in the future, a future that looks bright, a future that we, as the Become a Blogger community get to really build something that is bigger than ourselves.

Why? Because it's about more than just blogging.

So, in today's episode, I'm going to let you see into my mind, to see exactly what I'm thinking about. That's what we're going to talk about today.

Your Questions Answered

All right, we got so much to cover in today's episode. Let me just kind of give you an idea what we're going to be doing. First, I'm going to be answering two questions from the hotline. One from Pete that has a question about increasing SEO on his site and creating a sense of community, getting traffic, that's a whole lot of stuff in one question and I'm going to try to tackle that.

Then, I had a question that was called in from Kathy Strahan from LeanBodyWorks.com and also the same question from Warren Gibbons SaltWaterAquariumsExplained.com. Pete's blog, I didn't mention that, his website is AllJeepsForSale.com.

I'm going to answer those two questions, I'm going to make a quick announcement and then, we're going to get into the content where I lay out for you in plain English my vision for the future of... Become a Blogger. I almost said [Interactive Biology](http://InteractiveBiology.com) there, which is my other blog. I had a brain freeze there, or a brain fart, or whatever you want to call it.

Let us get started with those two questions. The first question comes from Pete that has a question about his website, AllJeepsForSale.com. Take it away, Pete.

"Hi Leslie! This is Pete from Waynesburg, Virginia. I love the show. I got your email about the subject of 'Ask Me Anything.' I do have a question for you.

I just started a new classifieds website targeting jeep owners for jeeps for sale. The website is AllJeepsForSale.com and my question is, how can I increase SEO and create a sense of community and try to get some more postings and traffic and activity on the site.

Once again, enjoy the show. Thanks if you can answer this question. Keep up the great work! Thanks!"

Great question, Pete. Actually, great three questions in one but, they are all very much related. I want to answer that question in a way that's beneficial for everyone that's listening.

I went to your website at AllJeepsForSale.com and it's exactly what you would expect from a classifieds website. It has a bunch of listings and people can check out those listings. There's information about the different jeeps that are available and so on.

When I went to your website, I had a few questions. I think these are questions that you need to ask and answer and based on your answers, that's going to give you some things that you should do.

Question number one, and this applies to anyone that's starting a website.

Who is your target audience? Who are you really trying to engage with your website? Is it that you are trying to get people who are trying to buy jeeps? Is it people that love jeeps?

You need to figure that out. That is going to determine everything else. So, first, who is your target audience? Secondly, what gets them excited? What gets them pumped? What are they

thinking about? Once you can answer that question, then your answer to the question tells you what kind of content you need to be creating. You want to create that content.



For example, are they looking for stories about jeeps? Are they looking for a how-to do awesome things with your jeep like off-roading and all that kind of stuff?

You want to know what they are looking for so that, you can build a tribe around people who, in my opinion, based on what you are doing, people who love their jeeps. You are part of that audience. So, you should

know what they want. I'm guessing that you are a part of that audience because you created a website that's All Jeeps For Sale. It's all about jeeps. So, I'm guessing that you are a part of that audience. Once you can understand what they want, that is what you want to give them.

You want to create content, maybe some exciting stories about jeeps. I don't know much about jeeps but, some awesome things that you can do with your jeep and all that stuff. You want to create that content. Give it to them. Create it on a regular basis consistently and then, go out there and find them.

In order to do that, you need to know where they are.

Where are they? Are they on Facebook? Are they on Twitter? Are they on other blogs? Are there forums that you can interact with them?

You want to create the kind of content that they are going to love. Go out there. Connect with them. Build relationships with them and get them to come back to your website.

My advice is this, don't focus on the selling of the jeeps. Focus on the loving of the jeeps because those are the people that you want to be there and if you can get those people there, the people that love their jeeps, the people that love their guitar playing, if that's what your website is about, or their baking, you want to focus on the love of those things and create content that those people who are passionate about it, they want to read and then, go out there and let them know about it.

I hope that answers your question. In terms of traffic, I want to direct you to **Episode 99**. Just go to becomeablogger.com/episode99 where I talk about different things that I have done to get free traffic to my blog. I think that can help you or anyone that's looking for traffic. Go and check that out.

All right. The next question comes from both Kathy Strahan from **LeanBodyWorks.com** and Warren Gibbons from **SaltWaterAquariumsExplained.com**. I'm just going to play Kathy's because they are pretty much the same questions. Take it away Kathy.

"Hi Leslie! This is Kathy Strahan from Southern California at LeanBodyWorks.com. I have a question about your hotline.

Is this a service that costs money or is it free? Are there any free services that can set up a hotline for my business just like you have for yours?

In other words, I'd like to be able to tell the people who have questions for me to be able to call a special hotline just like you do, 888-whatever although, I wish I had someone to sing as pretty as your wife does.

Maybe you can deal with this on the blog. Is this hotline service that you offer, is this a free service and is there such a thing as a free service that you have or how much does it cost you if it is a service that you pay for?

I hope that makes sense. Thank you, Leslie. Bye now."

Thank you for calling in that question. I'll just give you a little bit of a hint right there. The reason I played Kathy's question and not Warren's is because she mentioned that my wife has a beautiful voice and you know, once you talk about my wife you got to be on the podcast.

Anyway, [*laughs*] anyhow, their questions were exactly the same. So, the service that I use, and just in case anyone is wondering what she's talking about and just so I can get an excuse to play my wife's voice again, if you want to leave a question for this podcast, you can simply call my hotline and the number is 888-835-2414.

When you call that, you leave a message. When you leave that message, I get an email with an MP3 file that is a recording of the actual message that you left. There are a number of services out there that do this. I use one that I haven't really heard any other podcasters talking about but, I really like it.

It's called [Line2](http://line2.com). That's the number "2." So, line, L-I-N-E. Two, number "2" dot com.



The reason I like it is because I actually have the Line2 App on my Smartphone which is an iPhone. They have it for iPhone and Android and I can use it as a second line.

I do pay for the service. I pay \$14.95 a month. There is a free version and with that free version, you get a local number. Someone can call you. They can leave a message and you get that via email but, I decided to pay for the \$14.95 version because I wanted to have a toll-free number.

I have an 888 number so, if you leave in the US, you can call that for free from any number, from any phone and I wanted to have that option.

It's not as big of a deal anymore in terms of 888 because everyone seems to have nationwide long distance and all that stuff.

So, I pay \$14.95. There is a \$9.95 version that allows you to call anywhere in the US and Canada. The free version only allows you to call other Line2 customers or people that have Line2.

However, even with the free version, people can call and leave a message. It works just like mine works. I think it's an awesome deal. You don't pay for anything but, you get a great service. The quality is pretty good if you compare it to something like Google Voice.

[Google Voice](#) is another alternative. It's not the best quality in terms of the audio but, it works. That's another one that can be used.



I want to mention one more service that is not a telephone number but, it's a service that you can add to your website where someone can come and click on a little banner to the side of your website and they can record it directly from their computer.

That is another great option. There's a free version and then, there's a paid version. The free version allows you to do up to 20 messages per month. Why I like [SpeakPipe](#) is because the quality is awesome.

If I were to call in on SpeakPipe to leave a message for you and I use my microphone that I have in my studio, it will be studio quality.

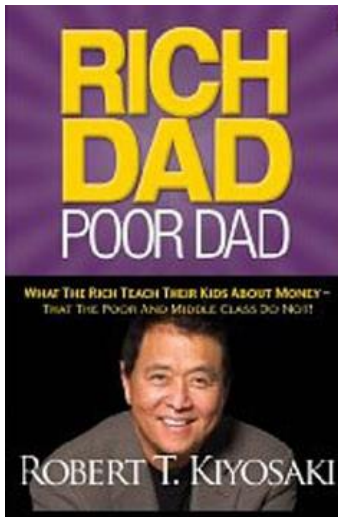


I don't get that with Line2 but, I like the fact that you can call a number. That's why I chose to go with that. That is the service I use. Those are some other options. SpeakPipe. That's S-P-E-

A-K-P-I-P-E. And then, there's also Google Voice and a number of other alternatives. But, that should be good enough.

I love Line2. There's a free version and a paid version. That's the one that I recommend.

The Story of How My Passion Grew



All right, let's get into the content for today. First, I need to tell you a story. When I was a college student, I remember reading a book that started all of these. The name of that book, I have told this story a few times I think on the podcast before but, it's a significant story for me, one that's dear to my heart. I read the book, "[Rich Dad, Poor Dad.](#)"

That is where my fire for entrepreneurship really was ignited. However, as much as I wanted to do stuff, things really got tough at a certain point. When I was doing my Master's Degree, I have a Master's Degree in Neurobiology and when I was doing that, I was actually sponsored by the department. They pretty much paid for my entire Master's Degree. I'm going to give you more details than you probably need here but, I just share me.

They paid for my education and then, they gave me, on top of that, a stipend of \$1000 a month which was great as a University student. I'm getting paid for studying and doing a number of things in the department. I could pay my rent. I could buy food and all that stuff that college students like to do like eat.

But, at a certain point, the department ran out of money. They ran out of money and of course, if you run out of money, you can't pay what you used to pay. So, I was "PO". I say "PO" because I was so "PO" I couldn't afford the "O" and the "R." It was just "PO."

I was doing research and actually, as a part of my research, they sent me to Germany to do the research and while in Germany, I wasn't getting paid from the Department, at least the second time that I went to Germany.

I'm out in this foreign country. I'm doing research. I'm not getting paid. At this point, I couldn't get help from my parents. They were going through some financial difficulties.

Fortunately, I found a place in Germany to stay. The cost was next to nothing. I think it was something like, it was less than \$200 a month. It was in a German fraternity house. Now, sounds crazy? It wasn't as crazy as it sounds. It was a tremendous blessing. It was a really big mansion.

On Tuesdays, they would have a chef that came in to cook for us and this chef came from some restaurant in town and the food was awesome. However, outside of that day, we had to fend for ourselves.

There were days when I couldn't afford to buy any food to eat. The way I really survived is I started to build websites. I had taken a Computer Tools class when I was in college and I learned to do some HTML code. That's something that really changed a lot of things about my life and the way I look at technology and the Internet and all that.

But, I started realizing that I could put together code and have it turn into something. I could create stuff using the Internet. What I did is I decided I need some money. I'm going to start building websites for people. I set up a business website. It was called CWebAlternative.com and that stood for ChristianWebAlternative.com. I started offering website design and set up for for exactly \$500 a website.

This was the first time I started making money on the Internet. I didn't get a lot of business but, I remember landing one big client. It was for a classical radio station. I had a friend that worked for the station. She knew that I did design and she got me a deal where they would pay me \$1300 to design a website.

For me, that was huge. I was going to get paid \$1300 to design a website. I had a few little projects in addition to that that really allowed me to survive, pay my rent. It didn't always reach to the end of the month and that's when I would really struggle to try to find some food.

I don't know how I would have had survived without it. It made a way. It made it possible. Now, money was not a luxury. Money still isn't a luxury for me to be perfectly honest. I have bills that I'm paying and all that stuff.

I didn't have the money but, **I was passionate about entrepreneurship** and I wanted to build something. I wanted to build something significant and as I look back, I wish I had a community that I could be a part of where I could connect with people who could help me along my journey.

I didn't know any entrepreneurs. I didn't know anyone that was doing big things online. I did not have any entrepreneurial training. And, you know what? If someone offered me a great program to take part in, I could not afford it. I didn't have the money to do it.

I think about all the people out there who want to build something awesome, who are passionate about whatever it is they are passionate about and they want to share that with the world. They would love to get that training, love to be able to connect with other entrepreneurs, more specifically, love to connect with bloggers that are out there doing big things. They would love to purchase programs to learn how to build something significant.

But, maybe they don't have the money. They want to create a blog where they can create content, inspire others and change the world but, they just can't afford it.

I don't know if you can tell but, I'm really passionate about this because of the experiences that I have had when I had my struggles, trying to do something significant and even trying to eat, trying to get some food, some money so that, I can pay the bills and just get food.

Growing Become a Blogger with a Passion to Help Others

Anyhow, last week, I had an [interview with Michael Stelzner](#) from [SocialMediaExaminer.com](#). It was part of something significant. It was not just an interview that I just tried to do and get someone who is out there doing stuff.

I'm in a mastermind group with Mike and a few other people like [Pat Flynn](#) and [Cliff Ravenscraft](#) and Mark Mason. As a part of this mastermind group, I have been personally challenged and inspired to do big things.

When I look at what Mike was able to accomplish with SocialMediaExaminer.com, building it into the largest online magazine for social media, I was inspired. Why? Because it's huge. It's huge. Over 800,000 monthly readers. It's a massive community that he has over there. There are a bunch of people that are involved and they give more information away for free than most people charge for.

It is bigger than just him. He set a vision. He got a team together and the rest is history.



When I think about Become a Blogger and what I want to do at Become a Blogger, I want to build something bigger. I want to build something huge. I want to build a massive community. I want a bunch of people to get involved, to be involved.

I want to give away more information for free than most people charge for. I want to build something that's bigger than just me. I want to set the vision. Get the team together and create history. Why?

Because there's somebody out there just like me, just like I was when I couldn't afford to do all the things that I'm doing now. I don't want that person to not be able to do it because they don't have access to the resources and to the different things that they need to the entrepreneurs, to the bloggers, to the people that are out there, hold on one second...

All right, I'm back. I had to pause there for a second. Obviously, I'm really passionate about this.

Anyhow, I have a Biology blog and that Biology blog reaches a lot of people. On a good month, it reaches as many as fifty five thousand people. To be able to sit in my little office here in my apartment and create something like that that is having that impact, to me is amazing. I want more people to have that experience.

I don't want the lack of funding to be a reason why that person, why you aren't able to accomplish your goals and your big dreams.

All right, let me get back on script here, or I don't even know what I'm going to get back on.

Taking Everything to the Next Level

I want to talk to you a little bit about the plan. I want to take things to the next level. The plan is in effect and it will take a lot of work in order to get it done but, I think it's so worth it.

The first step for me was to actually do that interview with Mike and to get an idea of the ins and out. What does it take to build something that big? Not necessarily to copy everything that he is doing but, to give myself not only inspiration but, some kind of direction as to how to reach to that point for what I'm trying to do and maybe even more.

I'm going to be turning Become a Blogger, this is part of the plan, I'm going to be turning Become a Blogger into a multi-author blog that will be guided by some extensive editorial guidelines.

I have seen a lot of people start multi-author blogs in the past, many of which have been successful, many of which have been unsuccessful. For me, when I think about why I want to do this, it's really simple. I don't know everything. I don't know everything. I can say that again and I can say that proud. I am still learning and there are many people that I interact with on a regular basis that know so much about specific aspects of blogging that we don't always get access to.

I want them to be able to contribute to the wealth of knowledge, the content that we are creating at Become a Blogger. The goal, and I'm going through in creating some extensive editorial guidelines. I'm consulting with Michael Stelzner on this and he's helping me through the process. My goal is to create awesome actionable content.

I want for when you come to Become a Blogger, not that it hasn't been this way in the past but, I want much more content. I want you to be able to get a full education for free at Become a Blogger. I want it to be very step by step.

That word, "actionable" is very important to me and it's very important to the direction that I want to go. The main goal is to facilitate the formation of a community of action takers.

I want people in this community that are taking action because they are learning the things that they need to learn at the right time to do the right things and as things evolve, we evolve with the things that are evolving as Google has mood swings, we build something significant that's not affected by those mood swings.

There's going to be a very strong community aspect to it. In order for a community to thrive, it needs a few things.

Number one, it needs a leader. For that, I'm going to volunteer [*laughs*] since you know, this is Become a Blogger and all. But, I am passionate about this as you can see and I want to help guide this community in that direction.

It also needs a clear vision and that's something that I'm constructing. I have a good idea of what that vision is but, I want to clarify it even more so that, I can clearly share it with you so that, you can know and hopefully, if it aligns with what you want to accomplish, you can come along on the ride.

It also needs for the community to be successful in the way that I want it to be successful. I need a strong team. I'm going to be working on building that team, a team of writers, a team of



people that are creating content and I want to have editors ultimately and all of these different aspects to build this team so that, things are moving regardless of if I'm busy or not, regardless of what the situation is, things are moving in a direction and meet with the team to plan things out and structure things out because two heads are better than one. Four heads are better than two if they are all aligned with the same clear vision.

I'm going to be setting a clear goal and a road map to get there. A big part of it is going to be ultimately building a way for the community members, you guys, you that are listening to this podcast right now, to not only interact with me but, to interact with each other. I would love to be the facilitator of that type of interaction.

So, if you have a food blog and someone else has a food blog and you're both members of the Become a Blogger community, you guys can connect with each other, help each other along the journey, maybe do some guest posting and all these different things so, we're working together to accomplish that big goal of creating content to inspire others and change the world.

Now, when it comes to a community, at least the way that I look at this community, there are so many different aspects. It's a multi-faceted concept because there are many blogs and communities out there that's focused on one thing.

If it's about blogging, that's what they are focused on. If it's about doing hair, or whatever the case might be like a natural hair blog or something of that sort, that is everything that it's about.

But, in my opinion, we are more than just bloggers. We want to change the world. That's much more than just blogging. It's about nurturing habits, the types of habits that are going to make you a more successful person, the type of habit that's going to make you a healthier person because if you're unhealthy, you're not going to be able to function to the fullest and you're not going to be able to accomplish the big things that you want to accomplish.

I'm going to be sharing more about this in the future but, I just want to let you know that this is something that I'm strongly thinking about so that, we can make it not just about blogging but, about people that want to do big things.

Yes, the main thing we are using is blogging. But, that's not all that it's about. In order to do this effectively, I want you to connect with me. I want to connect with you. I want us to connect with each other and I'm going to talk about this more in the future but, for now, I would like for you to connect with me on Facebook.

I'm not talking about the [Become a Blogger Facebook page](#). I'm talking about my [personal profile](#). If you come back to this episode, it's Episode 117. Go to

becomeablogger.com/episode117. I'm going to have a button there where you can follow me on my Facebook profile. Follow me there to stay tuned and to find out how, over time, I'm going to be showing you some more things on how we can all get involved in the community. I want to facilitate the growth of this community.

Don't, DO NOT come over there to spam me or anything of that sort. If you're not there for relationship, if you're not there to connect with me as an individual, please do not connect.

This is not a marketing ploy. This is a connecting ploy. This is a relationship building venture so that, we can connect with each other and share different aspects of our lives. You don't have to share everything with everybody. You don't have to share anything with me, really.



But, if you want to connect with me, I do share a lot over there about my personal life and just the different things that I'm working on on Facebook.

Connect with me. Come to this episode, becomeablogger.com/episode117.

Now, it's not all fully planned out yet. I want that to be clear. But, over the next, about approximately six weeks, I'll be filling in those blanks. The goal is to re-launch, I don't even want to call it re-launch but, the goal is to have all of these in place for August 1.

That gives me a little more than six weeks and I'm going to be sharing things along these six weeks with you. Now, I want to fully acknowledge that I'm not perfect. I want to let you know that from right here. I do not have all the answers. I don't know if it will turn out exactly the way I want it to be.

It may be much bigger and it may be somewhat different. I've gone through a few changes and you will see more changes in the future because my journey is not a static journey. It's a dynamic journey.

A few months ago, I spoke about changing the direction about what I'm doing at Become a Blogger and I spoke about the stronger emphasis that I'm going to spend on Interactive Biology. That has actually been modified a little bit.

I'm still going to be focusing on trying to build that and using that as a case study. With all these changes that I have been making, I have actually been advised not to speak about them because it might seem a bit wishy-washy but, here's the fact.

I share myself. I share exactly like it is. Why? Because that is my reality. This is who I am. You like it? Great. You don't like it? Great. But, this is me [*laughs*].

Man, I feel like I'm just going on and on but, anyhow, this week, I want to let you know what I'm going to be working on. I'm going to be working on the application form for writers because I want writers to be able to apply. It's going to be a serious process to be able to write for Become a Blogger because of the standards that I'm going to set, because I want to make sure that when you read an article on Become a Blogger, it is high quality and it is accomplishing the goal of the vision that I'm setting up, okay?

So, number one, working on the application form. Number two, working on the editorial guidelines. These are going to be extensive. These are the things that are going to specify in grave detail, in great detail what each article should look like.

Then, number three, this is the third thing that I'm going to be working on this week, I'm going to be working on the plan for the next six weeks. I'm most likely going to be making an update video every week at the end of the week.

I'll post it to the blog on Fridays and you can keep up to date as to where I am in the process, how things are going, how you can get involved and all that stuff.

In summary, Become a Blogger is bigger than just me. I'm speaking that into existence because it really is. It's going to be and it is bigger than just me.

Number two, I want you, you that's listening to this right now to be involved. Number three, we will nurture relationships between the members of the community. Number four, together we will create content, inspire others and change the world.

Lastly, I just want to remind you, if you want to connect with me, you can connect with me on Facebook. Come over to BecomeaBlogger.com/episode117 and you'll see a follow button to be able to follow me on Facebook.

I prefer for you to follow me than to necessarily add me as a friend because that allows me to keep certain things separate. I would appreciate that.

[*Sighs*] Okay, wow, I didn't know this episode was going to the way it was. I got a little emotional in the middle of there but, you know what? I'm not editing that out. That's reality based on my experience.

I have a question for you, what shall we call members of the Become a Blogger community? I thought about things like TeamBAB. I want something that I can use, that WE can use. I want to be able to create a #hashtag and keep track of everything that's going on.

Anyhow, if you're enjoying this podcast, I would appreciate it if you would hop over to iTunes and leave an honest review, it helps me to get additional visibility in the podcast directory over in iTunes so that, other people can find this content that I am producing.

Head on over to BecomeaBlogger.com/iTunes and if you're trying to get a blog started so that you can create content, inspire others and change the world, head on over to freebloggingvideos.com where you get to follow me as I show you how I build my blog into successful online businesses and how many others are doing the same.

So, freebloggingvideos.com. It's free, actionable and awesome. That's all for this episode. This is Leslie Samuel from becomeablogger.com where we're changing the world one blog at a time. Until next time, take care and God bless!