



Presents:

Podcast Episode 119: Ten Things I Would've Done Differently If I Were Starting My Online Business Today



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 puts you in detention. 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, I have another exciting episode for you today. I'm so excited right now. I don't even know why.

In today's episode, I'm going to be talking about ten things I would have done differently if I were starting my online business today. I have been doing this online business stuff since January of 2008. I've done a lot right and also a lot of wrongs.

I've made decisions good and bad and to make the long story short I have learned a whole lot. If it were possible for me to go back in time and say to myself, "Self, let's do this." What would I say? Well, that's exactly what this episode is going to be about, and I hope that you can learn from my experiences so that you can help me on my mission of changing the world one blog at a time.

That's what we're going to talk about today.

I just noticed that my voice sounded like it's cracking. Am I tired or something? Nah, come on. I don't get tired. Who gets tired? Come on. We don't have time for that. Ain't nobody got time for that.

Anyhow, so hey! Welcome to another episode. Thank you so much for joining me. I am so glad that you are listening to this right now. Let me just kind of give you an idea what we are going to cover.

First, I'm going to give you two announcements. One is going to be an update on the progress of Become a Blogger. And, the second is actually going to be a very special thank you then, I'm going to take a question that was called in by Monty from cashflowstoyou.com. Actually, he called in three questions that were very much related about what made me become a blogger. So, I'm going to take those questions.

And then, I'm pretty much going to get into the content for today. So, I'm excited. I hope you're excited so, let's on.

Update on Become a Blogger

Announcement number one, update on the progress of Become a Blogger.

If you have been listening to this podcast recently, you know that I'm going through some changes with Become a Blogger. I'm going to be changing it into a multi-author blog, getting more contributors and providing more value.

That's the ultimate goal, providing you with more value so that, you can come to the blog on a regular basis and get great how-to articles, great instructional content teaching you how to build your blog and so that, we can all create content and inspire others and as a result of that, even change the world while we're building this online businesses.

So, it's going very well. I just got off a Skype meeting with my assistant, Noemi and she is getting things ready. She is going to be the one managing that aspect of the blog. She is ready. She is pretty much ready. And we are very excited.

We had a number of applicants come in and we're sending out now our approval letters and of course, denial letters also along with that because we want to make sure that the content is exactly what we're looking for.

I'm going to be updating you even more in the progress. AS we move forward, I'm going to update you even more on how that's going. But, just know that it's going well. I am excited. Noemi is excited. We are all excited. You guys, I know I have been getting feedback from some of you and you seemed like excited and so, I'm glad about all of these excitement that is happening in our lives right now.



One Special Thank You

The second announcement is a very special, special thank you because I was talking to my assistant and came to the realization that Noemi has been working with me for two, almost two and a half years and I went back in my records and I saw that she started working with me in February of 2011.

I hear about a bunch of people that start outsourcing and they get VA's and they have all these crazy experiences and it convinced them never to outsource again or never to outsource in the way that they outsource. So, whatever the case might be...



But, I have been extremely blessed and I know that she's listening to this now because she transcribes all of my episodes. She does so much. She checks my email and response to people and make sure that the members are well-taken care of. She posts content to my blog and find pictures and formats it in the way that it needs to be formatted. She transcribes all my episodes, all of my videos... She just does so much and I consider myself tremendously blessed to have her as my assistant. So, Noemi, thank you so much from the bottom of my heart. You mean so much to me and you've done so much for me and I am eternally grateful for every single thing that you have done.

The things that I have mentioned are just some of the things that you've done and I am just so grateful. So, thank you. Thank you. I look forward to working with you for many years to come. Hopefully, we're tied together forever! [Laughs]

Anyhow, I am just really grateful. So, thank you! Thank you! Thank you!

How I Became a Blogger

All right. Those are the announcements. Then, we have the listener questions. Monty called in with these three very related questions. Let's go ahead and take those questions right now. Take it away, Monty.

"How are you doing Leslie? This is Monty from CashFlowstoYou.com. I wanted to follow up with you and see, actually, I had a couple of questions. What I wanted to see, what was it that made you initially to become a blogger as well as, what has helped you to stay on the cutting edge of blogging."

And then, apparently kind of directly related to it, how many sites do you currently manage as a podcaster and blogger? Thanks, bye!"

Thank you so much for calling that in, Monty. I met Monty in Vegas when we went to New Media Expo and we've been connecting with each other since then. He's a good guy. Thank you for calling that question.

To answer your questions, what made me initially become a blogger?

Well, back in 2008, I was what was called a "freebie trader" where those sites where it teaches you to how to make... Well, there's bunch of sites that claim that you can get free iPods and free TVs and all these different things, if you complete an offer and you refer friends to complete offers.

I figured out a way to make money with that. But, the problem that I was having was that I was working constantly to get people to sign up so, I was always going into forums and trying to talk to people and connecting with them that way and pulling them in, hopefully. It was just a lot involved and it was a very manual process.

Every email I would send out would be an email that I would have to craft individually. It took a lot of time.

Then, I heard about blogging. When I heard about blogging, I saw that there were some people and back then, I was looking specifically at [Yaro Starak](#) and I had learned a lot from him about how you can build a blog.

If you build it in a specific way, eventually as it grows, you don't have to be out there as much trying to get the traffic. But, you can build it in a way that people come and find you. That sounded very attractive to me.

I took his course. At the time, it was [Blog Mastermind](#). I learned a lot about blogging. I got excited about blogging. I started my blog and the rest is history.

Also, I wanted to teach and I saw that he was teaching me from his blog and that was fascinating to me. I wanted to do the same thing for my audience, or well, I didn't have a significant audience back then, but for the people that I was reaching out to, I wanted to be able to teach them from one place, and the blog seemed like a great place to do that from.

Lastly, I wanted to develop some passive income streams. That's a debatable word because I am working but, I could set certain systems up and have those systems run even when I am sleeping. I just love that. That's why I initially became a blogger.

Now, in terms of what has helped me to stay on the cutting edge, there's so much information out there and it's so hard to keep track of everything that's going on. So, what I have done is I have chosen a few select individuals that I know are very informed and I follow those people. I learn from those people.

I've taken courses to learn and to educate myself as the different techniques for doing different aspects of Social Media and



track of what's going on. I listen to podcasts regularly, tech podcasts, podcast about podcasting, podcast about blogging and about marketing and those kind of things.

That helps me to be informed.

However, I don't try to stay on the cutting edge of everything. I choose and I say, "This is what I'm going to focus on," and that is what I focus on because there is too much out there.

It can be overwhelming and I don't want all of that noise. I struggle with that, still. But, I try to limit what I'm trying to stay ahead with.

I hope that answers that question and in terms of how many sites I manage, that's a little difficult to answer but, I'll answer it this way. I have my main two main sites, my two main blogs, [Become a Blogger](#) and [Interactive Biology](#). Then, I have my personal blog which I don't update much but, that's [leslie-samuel.com](#) where I just share whatever is on my heart.

That's two main blogs and one blog on the side that I don't really do much with. I have one partner site, in other words, I partnered with one individual which is Cassandra Beccai from [cassandrabecca.com](#) and I helped her to start a natural hair blog. It's not my blog but, I am a partner on that. I help out with a number of things where that's concerned.

Beyond that, I have a bunch of domain names of a number of blogs that are out there that I'm not doing anything with at all so, they're not even worth mentioning. But, I also just get some things, some domains that I set up in case I want to do something with it in the future.

I'm one of those guys that gets a number of domain names. I probably have 30 or 40 domain names. But, yes. I hope that answers your question -- mainly, two sites. I have my one personal site and then, I have a partner site with someone else.

All right, let's get into the content for today. As I mentioned a little earlier... Actually, no, before I do that... Come on, Leslie. How can I forget to say this. You know that was actually the last question that was called in to the hotline and there are no others right now. So, if you have a question right now, this would be a good time to call it in because you would probably get in to the next episode.

If you have a question that you, or a comment, or anything that you would like me to cover on this podcast episode, just in case you don't know what to do, you can call the hotline and that number is 888-835-2414.

That's my beautiful my singing that for you. It's so awesome that I got to do it again. 888-835-2414. So, call the hotline. Leave your question, your comment, your message, whatever it is and I will deal with it on the show.

Now, let's get into the content.

Ten Things I Would Have Done Differently if I Started my Online Business Today

As I mentioned, I started Internet Marketing, my online business and all that fun stuff on January 18, that's the specific day, in 2008. Then, since then, I have gone through so many different changes, so much different iteration.

I started, at that time, it was the FreebieGuy.net and then, it changed to LearningwithLeslie.com and now, it's BecomeABlogger.com. Along the way, I started Interactive Biology at Interactive-Biology.com.

In this process, I have learned so much. Much of what I've learned, I share right here on the podcast, I share on the blog, I share in the Become a Blogger course because I want to help others so that, you can be able to create content, inspire others and even change the world while building your online business.

In that process, there are a number of things that... I don't want to say I did wrong. No, actually, I will say that, a number of things that I did wrong. And, not just that. There are a number of things that I would have done differently.

It's not that everything was wrong but, if I were to go back to that person on January 18, 2008, there are certain things I would tell that individual. So, I'm going to tell you those things right now and there are ten of those things.

#1: I would have focused on my passion from day 1.



Thing number one, or... Yes, let's call it thing number one. I would have focused on my [passion](#) from day one. As I mentioned, when I started, I started with something called, "freebie trading."

I don't care about freebie trading. I don't care about getting free st—well, no. I won't say that. I like getting free stuff but, that's not what I'm passionate about. It used to make me money and that's why I started the blog when I did start the blog because I saw it as a way to make money. I started making money and you know? That was fine. But, I wasn't passionate about it and because of that, I ended up switching and switching and not being sure about what I want to do with eventually starting this and then, starting something else.

If I had focused on my passion from day one, I would have been so much farther than I am today. Now, I am not complaining of who I am today. I am glad about where I am today but, I can only imagine what it would have been like if I started from day one with that passion.

So, that's number one. I would have focused on my passion from day one.

#2: I would have focused on my WHY from the VERY BEGINNING!

Number two, and this is very much related to that. I would have also focused on my "why" from the very beginning because even when I figured out what I was passionate about, I didn't really fully figure out why I was doing what I was doing.



When I actually started to figure out that "why" is when things really started to come together when I have even motivation and inspiration to do what I'm doing because I know why I'm doing it. I know that I'm doing my Biology blog because I want to help make my Biology fun for students that are having such a hard time.

I know that I'm doing Become a Blogger because I believe that bloggers have the ability to create content, inspire others and change the world. That is a part of my mission.

If I knew that from back then, I would have had much more enthusiasm, much more energy and all of that to keep moving forward and to keep building something very significant.

That's number two. Number one, I would have focused on my passion from day one. Number two, I would have figured out what my WHY was from the beginning or go through that process of figuring out my WHY.

That's one of the reasons why I'm re-doing Become a Blogger Premium, even the Ten Free Videos because I want it to start with people trying to figure out that WHY, not just trying but, actually figuring out that WHY.

#3: I would have started with a blog.

Okay, number three, what I would have done differently is I would have started a blog from the very beginning. I would have started with a blog.

When I first started out, I was all over the place. I was in forums trying to get exposure. I was trying to connect with people in so many different ways and I did not have a home base.

I wish that, of course, I started with my passion, number two, I focused on my WHY, but I started a blog from the very beginning. Once again, I believe I would have been much farther along than I am right now.

So, that's number three.

#4: I would have built my list from the beginning.

Number four, I would have also, along with that starting of the blog from the very beginning, I would have built my list, my email list from the very beginning. I have said this a number of times in a number of places. In fact, I just recorded a video for the Become a Blogger Members Area on this very topic, having a list is probably... No, I'm not even going to say, "probably."

Your list is your most important asset when it comes to building your online business, your brand, your blog, whatever the case might be. I even think it's more valuable than your blog because what you have there is people saying, "I want you to send me content on whatever regular basis you've decided that was going to be."

That allows you to connect with people in such a significant way. If I had started my list from the very beginning, my list would have been much larger than it is now especially if I had focused on my passion, if I had focused on my WHY, and if I had started my blog from the very beginning.

So, number four, I would have built my list from the very beginning.

#5: I would have built only 1 blog.

Number five... This is hard to say. This is a tough one. Some of you guys are not going to like this. I'm thinking of some of you in particular, Serena. I would have only built one blog.

Yes, I have two successful blogs – my Biology blog and I have Become a Blogger. If I were to start from the very beginning, I would have only built one blog. Why? Because I can focus now on only one blog.

If you have multiple blogs, they're going to suffer unless you have a very strong team and right now, I am so blessed to have a team and that is why I am able to still do multiple blogs and have them be successful because I have a great team that's helping me, that's helping me in so many different ways that I could not do on my own.

But, if I were to start over from the beginning, I would have started with one blog and I would have stuck with that one blog and built it into a massive resource, much more massive than either of them are today.

I would have only built one blog and focus on that blog.

#6: I would have started on video sooner.

Number six, what would I do different? I would have started with video much sooner. Oh man! Video is obviously very hot with [YouTube](#) being the number two search engine in the world and over a billion people on YouTube. That's a lot of people.

But, not only that, not only is it great because there are a lot of people and it can expand your audience but, it helps you to become comfortable on video. That goes a long way when it comes to video.

I can record a video now in significantly less time than I ever could have done it before especially when I first started. But, if I started sooner, I would have been at this point a long time ago and today, I would have been even further along.

#7: I would have started my podcast sooner.

Number seven, I would have started [podcasting](#) sooner. These two kind of go hand in hand. Of course, they open up a new audience for you because yes, there's YouTube and with podcasting, there's the [iTunes](#) podcast directory and other podcast directories.

So, yes. It helps for finding an audience and growing your audience faster. But, take these two together. It really helps you to find your voice. Just talking into this microphone, if you were to go back and listen to my first episode and then, you listen to these episodes that I am recording today, and even the videos that I am recording today, I recorded a few videos today, three videos so far for the Become a Blogger Members Area.



There's a huge difference. That's because I'm becoming more comfortable with my voice, not just audibly but in terms of what I stand for, in terms of the message that I am trying to portray or to relay, or to teach or to... whatever it is I am doing here.

Video and podcast, in the beginning, it can be very uncomfortable but, getting through that uncomfortable stage really goes a long way to help you to find your voice, to help you to clarify your thoughts and to help you to relay your message to your audience.

So, if I were to start over, I would have started with these much sooner.

#8: I would have started creating products earlier.

Number eight, I would have also started creating products earlier. There's kind of a trend here. It's all about what I would have done earlier. It's not that I never got in to those things but, I would have started sooner with these things because they kind of opened up the door to other things.

Now, if I started creating products earlier, I would have had more products, number one. I would have gotten proficient at creating products much sooner and as a result of that, I believe I would have made significantly more money. I would have had a bigger business than I do today.

So, creating products earlier, that is definitely something that I would have done.

#9: I would have outsourced earlier.

I would have also [outsourced](#) much earlier. I get so much done today not just because I'm taking action but, because I have great help. And, when I first started my blog, when I first started my online business, I was doing absolutely everything. I was doing the website design. The website design was not... *[laughs]* it wasn't anything to ride home about.

I used to find templates online and then, modify those templates as well as I could which was not very well and my blogs just did not look anywhere close to what it looks like today.

Not only that but, I use to do everything. I used to post all the content 100% myself. I still create all my content. That is something I still do but, in terms of everything that surrounds that, I have great help.

All the technical support for my blog, I have another assistant that works with me on that. You know, a lot of people think I can't outsource because I don't have the money to outsource.

In some cases, that is the case. You don't have money to outsource and if you don't have money to outsource, yes, you're going to have to start doing things on your own until you can afford to outsource.

But, I did that too long because when I started my online business, I had a job and because I had a job, I had an income and I could have started outsourcing significantly eaerlier than I actually did. It would have spared me a lot of stress, a lot of headache. It would have given me more time to spend with my family and I would have just accomplished a lot more, a lot faster.

So, yes. I would have outsourced much earlier.

#10: I would have started or joined a Mastermind group sooner.

And, I guess, this brings me to number ten. Wow, we're at ten already. Number ten is I would have started or joined a mastermind group much sooner. I just stared joining, I just started with a mastermind group this year, actually, over the last few months, officially, and man, it has made the world of difference because now I have people to hold me accountable. I have other people that are at different points in this journey of building an online empire. Some are much farther along than I am and it's just great to be able to get feedback and to get insight and to collaborate on coming up with ideas and strategically outlining, *where do we go from here?*



It has been so beneficial that I wish I would have started or joined a mastermind group much sooner.

So, yes, if I were to go back to that guy, back then, those are the things I would tell myself. I'm going to throw in a bonus... Let's see, what's the bonus.

I would have done much more keyword research [*laughs*]. No, I'm just joking. I would not have done much more keyword research. This keyword research thing, I don't, I'm not trying to say

that it's not valuable because you know what? Because if I have spent more time doing keyword research, I probably would have had more traffic.

However, I also know that it's not my personality. I am passionate about the content I create so, I create the content for the target audience that I have specified. As a result of that, I believe a lot of the keyword stuff is just going to be naturally taken care of.

Yes, I could have spent a bunch more time doing keyword research but, it's just not me. If that's what you do, hey, great! But, it's not for me.

I do want to mention that I have done keyword research and when I have done keyword research, I have seen great effects from it but, prioritizing. I don't have as much time so, I don't focus on that.

Bonus tip #11: Attend conferences.

But, I do want to give you one bonus tip that I really do find valuable and that is, I would have started attending conferences sooner.

Last year was the first time I went to a conference. That was [Blog World and New Media Expo](#). Then, I went to New Media Expo again in January and [Savvy Blogging Summit](#) just a few weeks ago. They have been invaluable in terms of connecting with people, in terms of being in a place where there are like-minded individuals that are going down in the same path and seeing that you're not alone and being able to collaborate with people and network with people in a way that you're establishing relationships that's going to be mutually beneficial in the future. Extremely valuable, extremely valuable and I want to emphasize that because it has played a big part in my online business.

So, to recap...

Number one, I would have focused on my passion from day one. Number two, I would have focused on my WHY from day one, or at least I would have tried to figure out that WHY from the beginning. Number three, I would have started with a blog. Number four, I would have built my list from the beginning. Number five, I would have only built one blog. Number six, I would have started on video sooner. Number seven, I would have started my podcast sooner. These things would have helped me to find my inner voice. Number eight, I would have started creating product earlier. Number nine, I would have outsourced earlier. Number ten, I would have started or joined a mastermind group sooner. And, my bonus one is I would have started attending conferences sooner.

So, I tell you all of these things. What does these mean for you?

It doesn't mean that you have to do everything that I outlined, all of these eleven things and maybe even the twelve keyword research if you want to focus on that. No, that's not what it means.

Maybe, you heard something here that really resonated with you like, "Man, I should start video because I have been uncomfortable with this concept of videos but, you know what? I am going to step outside my comfort zone and do that."

That is taking action and that is exactly what I want you to do and do that. You don't have to take action in all. You can choose one. You can choose two. You can choose ten whatever it is, take my advice and start doing some of these things if you're not doing them.

So, I want to end with a question and my question for you is:

"What would you have done differently if you were to start over from the very beginning?"

This is going to be episode 119 so, come back to the blog at BecomeaBlogger.com/episode119 and leave your answer to that question. I want to know what you would have done differently because maybe, in your comments, I might see something that I should be doing differently today and that can help me to grow with what I am doing.

So, I hope you got a lot of value from this. If you are enjoying this podcast, I would appreciate if you would hop over to iTunes and leave me an honest review. It helps me to get extra visibility in the iTunes podcast directory so that, people can find it easier and they can get the same value that you're getting. That's always good stuff, right?

If you're trying to get your blog started so that, you can create content, inspire others and change the world while you're building your online business, head on over to Free Blogging Course at freebloggingvideos.com where you get to follow me as I show you how I built my blogs into successful online businesses and how many others have done the same and most of all, how you can do the same.

So, head on over to freebloggingvideos.com. It's free, it's actionable and it's awesome. I am revamping it right now. I can't wait to share that with you. It's just going to be awesome. I'm just having so much fun.

That's pretty much it for this episode. Until next time, take care, God bless!