



Presents:

## Podcast Episode 124:



By: Leslie Samuel



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## Introductions

*Intro: Hi, this is Kim Hall with [sidehustlehq.com](http://sidehustlehq.com) and you're listening to Learning with Leslie. 888-835-2414. This is Learning with Leslie... and Serena [intro music].*

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 into sleep. I'm not 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, another exciting episode for you today.

Today's episode is more of a conversation between two friends. We're going to be dealing with a very interesting topic. The question is, "*Is your blog ruining your life?*" My co-host for today is Serena Appiah from [ThriftDiving.com](http://ThriftDiving.com). She's from the Become a Blogger Community and we've become really good friends over the last few months. She's a married mother of three young sons with a passion to create, inspire and teach. She's a project manager by day and a blogger by night when she spends her time into the wee wee hours working on posts and projects.

We've both been at points where we felt like our blogs are consuming our lives. We're going to talk about that today.

**LESLIE:** Serena, how are you doing today?

**SERENA:** Hi Leslie, I'm good. How is everything going?

**LESLIE:** Everything is going well. We finally got the intro down.

**SERENA:** Yes.

**LESLIE:** Yes, we finally did. We had to take a few takes but that's all good.

**SERENA:** Yes, I'm new to this podcasting stuff. Give me a break.

**LESLIE:** It's all good. It's all good. We're going to have some fun. We're going to have some fun talking about, "*Is your blog ruining your life?*"

I just got to give a really quick plug right at the beginning of this episode, you heard a beautiful introduction by Kim Hall from [SideHustleHq.com](http://SideHustleHq.com). Thank you, Kim for sending that in.

If anyone is listening to this and they want to be featured in one of my podcast episodes, of course, I'll link back to you and do a little promo in the beginning, just send an email to [help@becomeablogger.com](mailto:help@becomeablogger.com) with that mp3 file attached and it will be in the show.

I like getting people in the community involved with that we're doing here in the podcast. Don't you think that's a good idea?

**SERENA:** Oh, it is. It is. It's all about connections.

## **BAB Quick Update**

**LESLIE:** Definitely. It's all about connections. Let me get a quick outline of what we're going to be talking about today. First, I'm going to give one quick update about Become a Blogger. We don't have any questions but, if you have a question and you want that question to be dealt with on this show, just in case you don't know what to do, you can call the hotline and that number is 888-835-2414.

Yes, indeed and then, we're going to get into the topic of, "*Is your blog ruining your life?*"

So, for a quick update, I want to let all of you know that the ten free videos that I've always been talking about that you go to [freebloggingvideos.com](http://freebloggingvideos.com) and you sign up and you get access to it, I've redone those videos. They are much better, not all of them have been redone but, I have added some new ones and removed some just to make it more relevant and more effective.

The first video is about starting with WHY and I think it's a powerful concept that a lot of people don't really think about when they get into blogging. I want you to check it out, [freebloggingvideos.com](http://freebloggingvideos.com). Now, it's free and you don't even have to sign up. You don't have to opt in.

So, if you haven't checked them out, you haven't started your blog, head on over to [freebloggingvideos.com](http://freebloggingvideos.com) and then, of course, right there, you can choose to sign up for **Blogging Business Simplified** where I kind of go into more advanced topics in terms of

building your online business with a blog where you can create content, inspire others and change the world.

So, make sure to check that out, [freebloggingvideos.com](http://freebloggingvideos.com).

Anyhow, Serena...

## Balancing Life when Things Get Crazy

**SERENA:** Yes!

**LESLIE:** We're talking about a very interesting topic today and this is because, we actually, a few weeks ago, was it a few weeks ago? I think so. We were having a conversation about just trying to balance everything that's going on in life and how crazy things can get.

Actually, just yesterday, Greg from [MobileMix.com](http://MobileMix.com), Greg Hickman tweeted at me and this was what he said, "Can you do a post on how to manage your full time job and your blog in the early stages so that, your wife doesn't hate you."

**SERENA:** *[Laughs]* That's the million-dollar question, Greg.

**LESLIE:** That is the million dollar question. I don't like it when my wife hates me. Upto now, she hasn't hated me yet so, hopefully we can keep that going.

**SERENA:** Yes, I agree. I agree. Let's talk about it.

**LESLIE:** Let's talk about it. Actually, let's talk a little background. How did we get to know each other? How did we become friends? When did that happen?

**SERENA:** Well, I can tell you that when I first started to blog, well, let's say, let's go back about six to eight months ago, I first found you when I was looking up some blogging how-to whatever and I found your blog. I was like, "Wow! This guy is cool. He's got some cool videos."

I think first, I looked you up on Facebook and then, it was right around that time when you were changing from Facebook, I think you were just starting your Google+ community and you were like asking people if it was going to be better to--

**LESLIE:** Ah, yes.

**SERENA:** I remember that--

**LESLIE:** I remember that.

**SERENA:** I remember, I was like, "Okay, let me go check out this Google+." So, that was really what sort of brought me to Google+ because I have not used it before then.

**LESLIE:** I brought you to Google+?

**SERENA:** Yes, you did!

**LESLIE:** Oh!

**SERENA:** I never told you that?

**LESLIE:** No, you didn't tell me that.

**SERENA:** Yes, you did. You're my Google+ maker.

**LESLIE:** That's kind of cool. Sweet!

**SERENA:** Yes.

**LESLIE:** Okay, continue with the story, I'm sorry.

**SERENA:** Yes, so... I don't know. At that time, I think we didn't have quite as many people as part of the community and I just had tons of questions so, I just started posting question after question and you were responding. Bob Harper, he was responding and I was just getting tons of feedback and all my questions are being answered. So, that's how we started becoming friends.

**LESLIE:** Awesome. And then, we met up in person.

**SERENA:** Yes, we did.

**LESLIE:** I drove up all the way to Chicago just to see you. This is crazy. I don't... How did you do that?

**SERENA:** I don't know. It was a lot of persuasion.

**LESLIE:** Oh man.

**SERENA:** Honestly, I really thought that, you said that, "Well, let me see. I don't know. Let me see if I can pull a group of people together and..." The way you were talking, I was like, "Oh, it's not going to happen " so I sort of kind of put it out of my mind. I'm like, "You know, he's not going to come."

Then, I get this message from you saying, "So, what's your schedule like on Saturday?" I'm like, "What? This might happen? Awesome!"

And then, of course, I tried to act like, "Oh yes, of course, I knew you were going to come. Yes." But, no. I was like, "No, it's not..."

**LESLIE:** Now, we're getting the behind-the-scenes information. I see. But, we had a great dinner, you, me and Toni, one of the organizers of the Savvy Blogging Conference that I went to earlier.

**SERENA:** [TheHappyHousewife.com](http://TheHappyHousewife.com), right?

**LESLIE:** Yes, indeed and we just had a great time just talking about business and blogging... well, not only that. Just hanging out, just chilling. That's always good to do from time to time, just connecting with people, face to face.

**SERENA:** Oh yes.

**LESLIE:** I can say that I actually saw the real Serena. That's amazing.

**SERENA:** You didn't see the real Serena online? You can't see between the lines?

**LESLIE:** Well, I don't know. I couldn't tell fully but now, we know this is the real Serena. But anyhow, it was great to connect and now, we're connecting on this podcast and we're going to be talking about this thing.

Now, you've been blogging for how long?

**SERENA:** Well, technically, I have been blogging since 2005 but--

**LESLIE:** 2005?

**SERENA:** Yes, 2005 but, I didn't realize that people were actually doing this as careers. To me, it was just a mommy blog that is password protected. It was my journal. I was writing about my pregnancy with my first son and it was just a way to document my life, my thoughts about parenting.

It was 2010, mid-2010 when we actually bought a house and it needed a lot of work. It still needs a lot of work. I'm working on it. But, I started researching how to do things in the house and I just stumbled upon some home improvement DIY blogs and I'm like, "Wow! People are blogging about their house? Hmm, maybe I should blog about my house."



So, it was early 2012 when I decided I was going to start a home blog and again, I had a few readers. It was just like some friends and things like that that would comment and again, it was more, at that time, it was more of a journal. And, it was probably about, I'm not going to lie, it was probably earlier this year that I really got serious about blogging when I decided I really wanted this to become my career.

And, I was treating this as a hobby but, once I decided that I wanted this to be my career, I went full steam ahead and it's not been easy because I have a day job. I got three kids. I got a husband and trying to grow a successful blog is tough when you got all those components that you got to manage.

**LESLIE:** Definitely. I've been blogging since 2008 and along my journey, it's just been interesting because there have been times when I felt so overwhelmed with what I am doing. It's just hard to find that balance and to know what to do, what not to do, how much of what not to do.

**SERENA:** Right.

**LESLIE:** It's just, it can be a challenge. Were there any particular times where you felt that your blog was consuming your life maybe?

**SERENA:** I still feel like it's consuming my life. We were talking about the Haven Conference that I went to this weekend and now, I have a little bit more focus, a little bit more direction but, I can see it really getting even "worse" because I just know that I got to put out amazing content and that means I got to work my tail off to do that.

It's funny because tonight I had said to my husband, I just kind of pulled him aside and said, "Look, I really want this to become my career and I need you to support me." And he's like, "I'm not supporting you?"

I'm like, "You are. You're helping with the kids, letting me go to these conferences and not really complaining but, I need you to really kind of be my cheerleader because if you're not on my side, we're going to be head-to-head on this and in the end, it's going to benefit you, too. But, it's a lot of work that has to go into it. I just need for you to understand. There's going to be times when I'm going to be away or I'm going to have to work late."

But still, even doing that, working hard, you still have to maintain that balance because you have a marriage, you have kids, you got health that you have to take care of. You can work hard but, you just have to work smart. You got to work smart. That's what I'm trying to figure

out is how to work smarter and of course, still working hard but to really become more efficient with how I use my time.

**LESLIE:** And you know, there's something that you mentioned there that's very significant about the conversation that you had with your husband and talking about the support that you need in order to accomplish what it is you're trying to accomplish because it's not just for you. It's for your family. This is serious stuff.

Blogging isn't what it used to be when things were just a hobby. You're kind of like a diary type of thing. It's not that anymore. It can still be that but, if you're trying to build something that's significant, something that can impact people, it takes a lot of work and having a spouse, I know for me, personally, having a spouse that has been very supportive, actually, right now, I'm wearing a t-shirt that my wife bought me that has the logo of my website and that to me, was just another indication that she supports what I'm doing and to have that is extremely significant.

**SERENA:** Right.

**LESLIE:** So, you have three kids. You work a full time job. You work... Is it nine to five? What is it?

**SERENA:** Yes, it is nine to five, five times a week. Got to include the time to get there and drive home so, it's more than forty hours.

**LESLIE:** So, include that. When do you leave in the morning and when do you come back?

**SERENA:** I usually leave at about 7:30. If I don't take a lunch break, I work until, I get there about 8 or 8:30, depending on traffic and I leave anywhere between four and 4:30.

**LESLIE:** Okay, and you're home at what time?

**SERENA:** Well, if I stop at the grocery store, I'm usually home about 5:30 or 6:00 is a good time that I would say, I walk through the door.

**LESLIE:** All right so, you're gone all day.

**SERENA:** Yes.





**LESLIE:** I'm also working a full time job. You have three kids and a husband. I have one little Noah and a wife and there's so many other things that needs to get done between, and for you, I guess, that will be starting at six and ending at who knows when and for me, just at random times, sometimes during the day and I try to schedule it actually so that, I am doing a lot of work way early in the morning.

## #1: Keep Life in Perspective

**LESLIE:** Let's get into how do we have balance? How do we keep things in perspective? Well, actually that's part of it, keeping things in perspective. You actually wrote a post on your other blog. You have another blog, what's that other blog about?

**SERENA:** Well, the other blog is [GetYourLifeStraight.com](http://GetYourLifeStraight.com).

**LESLIE:** GetYourLieStraight.com.

**SERENA:** Yes. I'll give you just a little back history on that. It's really sort of, it's not a blog that I spent a lot of time on but, it started early January of this year, 2013 just because I really love that time of the year when you set these goals for yourself and I just decided I wanted to kind of blog about the things that I want to hopefully improve in my life.

What I am finding is that I'm mostly writing about money and health and of course, some things in there about blogging. But yes, I wrote this post back, a couple of months ago, actually in February, "[When passion ruined your life.](#)"

It's funny how it came to me because this one particular night, I was paying the bills. I'm usually sitting at the computer blogging but, that night, I was paying the bills and my husband comes downstairs and he was sort of irritated with me and he said, "Just please, come to bed. I just want you in my bed."

Instead of, a good wife, well, I'm not going to say a good wife but, a lot of people would probably say, "Oh, I know baby. I'm sorry, I'm just trying to pay bills. I'm going to be there soon."

Me, I got very defensive. I looked at him. I was like, "What are you talking about? I'm not blogging. I'm paying the bills. If you want the mortgage paid, you better let me get this done." I was upset. It just got me thinking. I'm like, I felt like he was attacking my blogging. It was like my blogging was my baby and he was attacking it.

It just made me start to think about, "Is this ruining my life? Am I just spending way too much time doing this thing that is causing a rift in the marriage because I'm not spending time in the evening with him or I'm not getting sleep so I'm a little bit extra just irritable."

That's sort of how the post had come to be to talk about balance and blogging and not even just blogging. Just your passion, whatever your passion is. Is that ruining your life? Is it getting in the way of your other things that are important? Your family? Your wife? Your husband?

**LESLIE:** When I think about my journey as a blogger, I remember back in 2009, so this is a few months after, I started my blog, things got so hectic. I was doing it as a business. It was all business. It wasn't exactly what it is today. It was I wanted to make money and I was working so hard on my blog where I'd go to work and when I have a little break at work, I'd work on my blog and then, I'd come home and I'd work on my blog and I'd continue working and working.



Taking a break to eat seemed like inconvenience, to go to the restroom, it was like, "Man, I don't have time for that. I need to be working on this stuff because if I'm not working, it's not going to make me money."

But, it came to a point where I realize, "Man, this is too much. I'm not spending time with my wife. I'm not doing the things that I need to do for my health. I give up."

I literally just gave up on blogging and online business completely and I stop for a few months. Then, when I decided, "You know what, I'm going to get back into it." One of the main things I told myself was, if I'm going to get back into it, I have to do things way different than I was doing it before. I want to talk about this balanced thing.

In your post, one of the first things you say is, "you need to make sure you're keeping life in perspective. What do you mean by that?"

**SERENA:** Okay, if you ask someone, "What are the most important things in your life?" Nine times out of ten, people are going to say, their family.

It's just true. Our family is so important to us. They are going to tell you, probably number two, their health. Number three, that's a toss-up. That could be anything. I think you were, when we had talked about this before, you had mentioned similar things and we both commented that our family and our health is important to us.

But, when we look at what we spend the majority of our time doing, it's not in line with what we say is important to us. My family is important to us but, if I'm spending all of my extra time in front of the computer and I'm ignoring my husband because I have a post to do, I have things that have to get done, I've got this to do then, that's not really telling my husband or anybody that my family is important. It says, "My blog is important."

Yes, my blog is important but, like I said in my post, one day, and I know this is morbid but, one day, we're going to die. We're all going to die and it sounds very morbid but, when you're at the end of your life, you're going to look back and think, 'How did I spend the time with my family? Is my family going to be taken care of? Did I make their lives better?'

You're not going to say, "Wow, I'm glad I really spend 100 hours a week on that blog."

**LESLIE:** I got that blog post up.

**SERENA:** What's that?

**LESLIE:** I got that blog post up.

**SERENA:** Yes, I got that blog post up showing me on my death bed. No. You're just going to do it, not going to do it. You have to have that balance. I have to have that balance. And, our family and our health is important. Health, I stay up, and you know this Leslie but, I will stay up until two or three in the morning working on a project, working on a post and it's because I'm passionate about it. I'm not sitting there thinking, "Oh my God. I just want to go to sleep. I hate this."

No, I'm like, "Oh my God, this is exciting. I'm working on this project. I love this." But, what is that doing to my health when I'm getting three, three and a half hours of sleep because I'm getting up at 6:30, what is that doing to my brain? What is that doing to all the other systems in my body? I'm off, my body is off-kilter and even if I can just wake up and shake off the sleep and keep on going, there is some effect that that is having on my life, on my health.

So, if you ask me what's important to you and I tell you my health, well, my actions are not telling you that.

What I mean by keeping things in perspective, if you say that those things are important to you, prove it. Put yourself into your passion, into your blog, into whatever it is you're passionate about but, keep in mind that your family and your health are the most important.

When it's time to take a step back from that blog, not necessarily totally remove yourself but, maybe instead of working until two or three maybe, I can work until one [*laughs*]. Some people

are thinking, "What a clock! Oh my God!" But, for me that would be in perspective. Maybe even twelve o'clock. I can do twelve.

**LESLIE:** It's kind of difficult because when you're starting a business, sometimes, it takes, well, I'm hearing a lot of echo on myself there. Did something change? Did you turn up the volume?

**SERENA:** No, I didn't.

**LESLIE:** Okay, it's gone.

Sometimes, it takes a significant amount, no not sometimes, it takes a significant amount of work. It takes a significant amount of sacrifice. It takes a lot sticktoitiveness. It's hard stuff to build something significant and you're working nine to five. Most of the day you're gone. That's not time that you can spend with your family. So, when you look at just the numbers, I'm gone for most of the day, that does not tell you that your family, you're not spending that time necessarily with your family but, you're doing it for your family.

It's kind of hard sometimes, to find that balance of, I need to put in the work that I need to do and sometimes, it's going to take an extra sacrifice at least, for a period of time, to kind of get things going.

I know that's the way it has been for me. There have been some times where, you know, I speak to my wife and I say, "Hey, you know, over the next three weeks, I am working on launching a product and because of that, I am going to be spending a significant amount of time doing that." We kind of have a discussion about it and she's involved in the decision so, she knows that she is a priority in my life but, this is just something that I have to do for a period of time.

So, sometimes, it's just that balancing thing that you have to do even though you are keeping life in perspective for certain periods in your life. It might be more focused on a project. It might be more focused on your blog or whatever the case might be, But, it is definitely important to keep that in perspective.

## **#2: Understand why you're doing what you're doing.**

**LESLIE:** I think a big part of that is also [understanding why](#) you're doing what you are doing. Let me ask you that question, "Why are you doing what you're doing when it comes to your blog? What's the main motivating factor behind you building this blog that you're building?"

**SERENA:** I think my main motivation is that I love its... well, two things... It's what I love. I think about what I enjoyed when I was a kid. That's one thing I always tell people or ask

people, "What did you enjoy when you were a kid? What was it that you were passionate about as a kid?"

For me, I wanted to be a cartoon artist and I wanted to be a writer. I wanted to create and I wanted to write. When I stumbled upon blogging and then, realized that people are making money from this and actually have full time jobs at this, I just realized I can take what I'm passionate about and actually turn this into a career.

And so, that's why I've done it. I want to be able to wake up everyday and know that I'm doing exactly what I was meant to do, to create, to inspire, to teach other people and that, I am able to take care of my family and be able to fulfill my passion.



That's why I'm doing it. And, honestly, well, I know I'm going to succeed. It's just going to take a lot of hard work and it's going to take a lot of working smart and that's why I'm doing it for my family and for my passion.

**LESLIE:** Got you. For me, when I think about why I'm doing it, part of it, if you ask me what I wanted to do when I was younger, I would tell you I have no idea [*laughs*] but, I knew that I just loved being with people and I loved helping people. That's a big motivation behind why I'm doing what I'm doing because I want to help people to realize their dreams and to accomplish the things that they are trying to accomplish. That's one.

For me, also my family, that's huge.

**SERENA:** [*Computer alarms*] Sorry, my computer is telling me it's 10:00.

**LESLIE:** Oh man, it's 10:00. This podcast is supposed to be over by 10:00 actually.

**SERENA:** [*Laughs*]

**LESLIE:** But, I guess, we'll go a little longer.

**SERENA:** Yes, let's keep it going. It's a good conversation.

**LESLIE:** It is. It is definitely.

So, my family is also a big part of why I'm doing what I'm doing. I want to be able to provide for my family. My wife isn't working. She's a stay-at-home mom, no, I'm not going to say she's not

working. She's not working outside at a job but, she's working extremely hard at home as a stay-at-home mom.

**SERENA:** Yes.

**LESLIE:** So, I have to be able to provide and doing what I'm doing is helping me to provide. And then, of course, I have this vision of changing the world with our blogs, changing the world one blog at a time and to be able to inspire others to be able to do that to create content, inspire others and change the world. That to me is what it's all about.

So, when you understand what your WHY is, it helps you to keep things in perspective.

**SERENA:** Oh, I totally agree, I totally agree. And, I just want to add, you have definitely inspired me. I feel that just knowing you from the last six to eight months and whatever time it's been, I have done things to my blog. I have been more focused. It's been really helpful knowing you.

Just being able to post a question to you, to your community and say, "Hey guys! I just have a question about this."

This is firsthand account to tell you that you have definitely helped me so, I appreciate it, I really do.

**LESLIE:** Thank you, I appreciate that. It's good to know when what you're doing is having an impact. So, I appreciate you saying that.

**SERENA:** Yes, definitely.

### **#3: Decide what doesn't need to be done by you.**

**LESLIE:** Okay, so another thing for me that's huge, I think this is probably one of the most important things is deciding what does not need to be done, what don't you need to be doing like, a lot of times, we're building our businesses and especially online because there are so many different things.

There's Facebook, there's Twitter, there's creating content, there's networking, there's building your email list, creating products, affiliate marketing, all these different things. You try to take on the world. You try to do so many different things that you don't necessarily need to be doing.



So, I think deciding what doesn't need to be done is vital in terms of saving you time. Time is valuable. I mean, that's time you could be spending with your family. That's time you could be doing all kinds of things that are important to you depending on your "why" and I think that's extremely important.

And, not just what does not need to be done but, what needs to be reduced. Are you spending a lot of time watching TV for example?

**SERENA:** Right.

**LESLIE:** I was going to say there's nothing wrong with TV. There's a lot wrong with TV and there's a lot right with TV but, are you spending more time there than you should be? Is it really important for you to know everything that's going on with American Idol and all the different shows that are happening or can you reduce that or eliminate that from your time so that, you can spend more time on the things that are making an impact and helping you accomplish your goal.

**SERENA:** I want to speak to that. That's one thing that really has been powerful that you had said. We were talking, this was maybe even... This was about a month ago, actually, a little bit more than a month ago. You, myself, we were having a Google chat, a hangout. I remember you asking me that question, "What do you not have to do?"

Remember, I just sort of factitiously said, "Well, I don't have to clean. I don't have to clean my house." I was actually joking with you when I said that but, when we got off the chat I started thinking about that. I was like, "You know what? If there is a way if I could..." First of all, I don't have the money to pay someone to... I'm just not going to pay someone to come in and clean. That's an option.

If you got money to pay someone to come in and clean your house, by all means, do it. In fact, I was telling you about a blogger that I was talking to just coming back from Atlanta from that Haven Conference that I gone to, and I was asking her, what did you do in order to grow your successful blog?

She said, "To be honest with you, I hired a housekeeper." Seriously, if anybody is listening to this, if you've got some extra cash and you can pay someone to come in and clean your house, by all means, do it.

I wasn't going to do that but, here's what I did Leslie that was so important.

I said to myself, if I could remove that aspect of my evening, just to kind of step back a little bit, you asked me about my schedule, what time do I get home, what do I do in the evening? Well, from six to nine, that's pretty much take care of the kids, do dinner and then, I find myself in this little bit of time trying to squeeze everything in.

So, you have to do the house cleaning, you have to do the blog post. What I did was, I made a choice. I said, from here on out, this has been about seven weeks now, from here on out, everything has a place and everything will go back in its place.

There's no toys on the floor. There's no putting a cup down on the counter. There's no putting dishes in the sink until it piles up and then, you just don't want to look at it and you turn your head.

I made a decision on that weekend. I said, I am going to put everything back in its place and you know what? When I did that, I did not have any cleaning for like a month and I'm not kidding.

When I put the kids in bed, there was no cleaning. There was no picking up toys. There was no putting laundry in the laundry room. Everything was done. So, it's almost like I freed up my evening because I didn't have to take care of all of these cleaning that I just let it go throughout the whole day or whatever.

That's one thing that I was able to reduce and it's actually kind of reduced my stress a little bit, too.

**LESLIE:** Oh definitely.

**SERENA:** Yes, it's been awesome.

**LESLIE:** Awesome.

**SERENA:** I'm like, all this time, my mess has been stressing me out. Interfering with my blog post, it was time for dishes. I got a blog.

**LESLIE:** Exactly.

**SERENA:** But, I don't do that anymore. I put everything away, everything gets cleaned up, counter gets wiped down as we go and there is no more.

**LESLIE:** And, that's a very practical thing that I think makes such a big difference.



**SERENA:** Yes.

#### **#4: Create a schedule.**

**LESLIE:** Let's talk about schedule because creating a schedule is also very important when it comes to getting stuff done and especially maintaining balance. For me, that comes down to setting out specific time for specific tasks.

So, for example, I wake up generally speaking, at five o'clock in the morning. I like to wake up early because that's when there's not a lot of people awake, well, there's no one awake in my house and I can focus on the things that I need to get done with my business.

I wake up first thing in the morning, sometime I go for a run, I have my devotions then, I come back. I kind of get ready for the day and then, I spend some time working on my business. That is my business time.

Then, I go to work and I do my work thing and then, I come home and then, I spend some time with my family and then, I get back to spending some time with my business and then, I go to bed.

That for me has really helped. Now, I'm not perfect when it comes to scheduling. I never used to live according to a schedule but, I started to see how it's beneficial so, I moved myself more towards that. So, sometimes, I get it done well. Sometimes, I don't get it done as well but, I keep that standard in my mind so that, I can know what I'm aiming for.

What about you?

**SERENA:** Well, I'm not really good at scheduling, I'm really not but, just in some conversations that I've had with you, one tip that you have me that was really so helpful was you told me, "Make a list of 50 posts, 50 things that could be a post." I think I've got about 58 right now and—

**LESLIE:** How long did that take you?

**SERENA:** Honestly, it took me one plane ride.

**LESLIE:** So, that's about what, two hours?

**SERENA:** Yes, it took me two hours.

**LESLIE:** And, how did that help you?

**SERENA:** I'm sorry.

**LESLIE:** How did that help you?

**SERENA:** It helped me tremendously because I started thinking about all the things that I wanted to, all the content that I want to put on my blog, all the projects and things.

The next step in the process is I'm going to actually put that on the schedule and schedule out my posts whether it's two or three times a week. I'm going to pick the posts and just pre-plug them in there and start plugging away.

I think, if I do that and really hold myself accountable for just sticking to a schedule, it would really help me just become a little bit more balanced instead of, you know, suddenly, oh my God, I have to do a post and I'm staying up until three at night trying to draft something. It's not a good way to work.

So, I definitely think the schedule, you need a schedule.

**LESLIE:** And, it eliminates a lot of stress. You don't have to always... I used to do this a whole lot, "I got to record an episode..." And, sometimes, I still do it. "I got to record a podcast episode for tomorrow. What in the world is that going to be about?" So then, I start thinking, I call a friend then, we dialogue back and forth. That's time wasted.

**SERENA:** Right.

**LESLIE:** If I took that two hours and just outline a bunch of topics that I can talk about for the next few months then, I don't have to worry about that. I can just get to creating that content and I think that's very important. It's important to do those types of things.

## **#5: Get disciplined.**

**LESLIE:** And then, get disciplined which is another thing in the list that you had in that post. We're going to link to the post in the show notes for this episode, Episode 124. So, [becomeablogger.com/episod124](http://becomeablogger.com/episod124) and you'll get all the links.

Get disciplined. Is that something that you struggle with? Is that something that you do well? How does that go for you?

**SERENA:** It's actually going a little bit better for me, just in reference to the example that I have just given to you about keeping my house clean. That takes discipline. It's easy to walk by a sock on the floor and think, "Oh, I'll just pick it up on my way back."

I don't do that anymore. I discipline myself to make sure that everything goes back in its place because I don't have time to clean large messes. I'm just not going to do it.

So, that's one area of my life that I've gotten disciplined. I think, the way that I'm trying to organize my life is that I pick on thing and that was my one thing for the last couple of months, pick one thing and just be very disciplined about that and then, once I sort of got that under my belt and it becomes a habit, which it is now, then, I move on to the next thing.

The next thing is being disciplined about my post being on schedule. I think if you just get into your mind, if at any time you find yourself about to revert to your old ways, just tell yourself, I don't do that anymore. That actually helped me. I would walk by a cup and I'd be like, "Oh, I'll get it next time." And then, I say, "No, Serena. You don't do that anymore. Go get that cup and then, wash it and put it away."



**LESLIE:** I kind of like that because the focusing on one thing especially, because we think about all these different things that we want to do to get our life in check and we say, "Okay, I need to come up with a schedule. I need to decide what needs to be done. I need to do all these different things, get disciplined about this, get disciplined about that."

Then, we get so overwhelmed that we kind of get stuck and not actually do anything but focusing on that one thing, I think that is something that can help significantly.

## #6: Drop the attitude.

**LESLIE:** Drop the attitude. That's the next attitude. That's the next one in your list. What does that mean? Ms. Attitude, tell me about that.

**SERENA:** Drop the attitude.

Well, you know, with the others examples that I have given to you, you know, when my husband came down and said, "You know, I just want you in my bed." I didn't have to respond to him the way that I did. I mean, it was mean. It was full of attitude and I think you just have to, you know, when your life is becoming unbalanced and you've got a husband or a wife like the gentleman you mentioned before, Greg, when his wife is hating him...

**LESLIE:** No, no, his wife isn't hating him. Let's not start that rumor.

**SERENA:** If his wife is hating him, okay, our natural instinct, I think it to get very defensive and I think, if we turn that around and instead of saying, you know, look, I'm sorry, I know that you really miss spending the evenings with me. I know I'm just working on this project. I just need some extra time, or just putting that aside and say, okay let's go spend a little bit of time together.

If you drop the attitude, I think it just makes things a little bit more harmonious in all parts of your life.

## **#7: Get some help with outsourcing and so on.**

**LESLIE:** Most definitely. The next point is one that I added in here, get so—No, this is one that you spoke about, too. Get some help and for me that has a lot to do with outsourcing because I don't know how in the world I'd be able to get half the amount of stuff that I'm doing right now to get all that done without having good help.

Sometimes, especially when I first started, I wanted to do everything. I wanted to make sure my design was well. I used to design my stuff and it did not look good but, I felt proud of that design. I used to manage all the tech stuff. I used to respond to all my emails and so on and it got so overwhelming.

When I came back and said, you know what? If I'm going to get back into blogging, I have to do things differently. One of those things for me was I needed to outsource. That has helped me tremendously. It's not as expensive as a lot of people think especially to get some of the little things done that would save you a lot of time but, not take a lot of time for someone that's good at it to do like designing a logo.

What do I know about doing that, you know? I would spend 20 hours doing that and somebody else could spend two and have a much better looking logo than I could ever design. So, just making that decision to get some help. It's been very essential for me.

**SERENA:** Well, I just want to say this is an area that I really have struggled with. I'm the kind of person that I love everything. I just love to learn about everything. It sounds ridiculous but, it's true. So, I would spend hours and hours working on my blog design and then, I decided, "Oh, I need a logo so, I'm going to spend time or hours working on a logo."

Then, what you find is that it's pulling you away from what's really important, well, your family but, it's pulling you away from your content. You're doing all these technical things that really, if you just paid somebody, I went to [Fiverr](https://www.fiverr.com), I don't know if you've heard of Fiverr. I've gone to



Fiverr and I actually paid somebody like \$20 because I paid for some upgrades and things, pay someone \$20 to design a logo.

He had it in one day and it looked ten times better than what I ever could have. I remember saying to myself, "Why didn't I do this sooner?"

I decided after talking to you and Toni last week and after going to the conference that I went to this weekend, I decided, I'm not going to spend my time on these things that don't matter. I'm going to pay someone to re-design my blog and really just focus on the things that are important like my content and maybe have a little bit of extra time in the evening to watch a movie with my husband.

But, here's the question. Maybe you can answer this Leslie because I always want to know this, when you're a new blogger, at what point do you decide that you need to outsource like, I know when your life gets unbalanced and all that but, do you think that outsourcing may be a little sooner than kind of waiting until you're so bogged down.

**LESLIE:** I'll answer that question this way, outsource now.

**SERENA:** Okay.

**LESLIE:** As soon as you can afford to spend a little and get some help, I think that's a good time to do it. Now, in terms of how to do it, you want to be very strategic about how you're doing it because you don't want to just be spending your money to say, outsourcing. I actually recorded an entire episode dealing with outsourcing. It's [Episode 049](#). So, [becomeablogger.com/episode49](http://becomeablogger.com/episode49). It will be linked to in the Show Notes.

But, you want to make sure you're doing the right things, that you're not wasting time and wasting money in your outsourcing. I would recommend for anyone to check that out.

So, as soon as possible because it depends on what you're doing. If you're just blogging for fun, it's a hobby, no big deal, you're not trying to make money, hey, it's fine. Do that. But, if you're trying to build a business, you want to get people on your team that can help you to build something substantial and even if it's just outsourcing little things like going to Fiverr and getting a logo for \$5 which is very possible. I know people who have done it personally and came with some really nice looking logos that surprise me.

It's very possible to get things done at an inexpensive price. That's Fiverr.com.

**SERENA:** Yes.

## #8: Embrace imperfections.

**LESLIE:** Last point, **embrace imperfections**. I think that's one of the biggest things that people like you and I struggle with because you want to do things well. You want to things to be perfect but, they never will be perfect.

**SERENA:** Right.

**LESLIE:** How do you embrace imperfections?

**SERENA:** Well, I don't do that very well. I can't really say how I do it. I just know that I need to. Well, I think for me, I'll spend hours, and I'm serious about this, I'll spend hours crafting a post because I want it to be just right. The pictures have to be placed just perfect, What I say has to be just right so as to not turn someone off or disengage someone or maybe, it's too short or maybe it's too long and I over think my post. That's why I spend too much time on my post because I overthink them whereas I should just write, just get it all down.

If it's not perfect, I can improve on the next one. Just letting it go. It doesn't have to be perfect.

**LESLIE:** That's a realization that I came to relatively early especially when I started to build my Biology blog. In my Biology blog, I'm making like five-minute videos and I was making them three to five times a week while I was working full time. I didn't have much time.

So, what I would just do is just make the videos. There are mistakes in my videos and I put them out there and I just didn't have the time to care because the time wasn't there. So, it was kind of out of necessity.

I knew I wanted to create this content so, I just created a content, put it out there and it grew so quickly to where I'm getting 50,000 people in one month checking out my blog. I'm like, you know what? If I had taken the time to make sure every video was perfect, I probably would have gotten out one tenth of the content and the blog would not be where it is today. But, because I just said, "You know what? I'm going to make it and put it out there." It's out there and it's doing great things. It's helping so many people and we get so bogged down with that perfectionist mentality that we get nothing done.

**Just do it and get it out there.** If it has mistakes in it, who cares? I don't even edit podcast episodes and I have mistakes all throughout them. People don't even know what to say anymore because for whatever reason.

But, just put it out there. Get it out there and it's much better than having... getting something imperfect out is much better than having something perfect in your mind.

**SERENA:** That's so important. That's one thing that you've said that I've always remembered, is that, you're like, "I don't have time to edit my podcast. I don't have time to edit my videos," well, not your videos but, you do a short little video. You're like, "I don't have time to edit that."

Whereas me, you got to see the hours that I'm spending on like just editing videos because it's got to be perfect.

I've come to the realization, I'm just not going to do that anymore and I think that when you do leave those imperfections in there, it almost gives you a little bit more authenticity. People can identify with you because people are like, "Oh, you just made a mistake. Ha ha!"

It just kind of keeps you real and grounded.

**LESLIE:** Definitely. I want to emphasize that. Guys, if you're struggling with this perfectionist attitude, just stop it. Just put crap out there and spray some perfume on it, I don't know. Just put it out there and you'd be surprised at what it can do.

In the beginning, I used to be the same. I do so many takes of my videos. Now, I do one take. If I mess up, I just continue because you know what? When I'm talking to you in real life, I mess up with what I'm saying and I continue.

You don't think, "Oh wait, you just messed up. You need to edit that." You don't think that. And, it's the same when it comes to video. Once you get comfortable, just do it and put it out there.

So, to recap on the points:

- Keep life in perspective.
- Understand why you're doing what you're doing.
- Decide what doesn't need to be done or what you don't need to be doing, what can be reduced.
- Create a schedule.
- Get disciplined.
- Drop the attitude.
- Get some help with outsourcing and so on.
- Embrace imperfections.

Anything else you think we need to add to that?

**SERENA:** No, I think that covers it all.

**LESLIE:** I think that covers it all. Serena, thank you so much for joining me. I mean, this was great. It was a nice conversation.

If people want to check you out and see what you're about, where should we send them?

**SERENA:** Well, if they want to check me out, they can find me at [thriftdiving.com](http://thriftdiving.com).

**LESLIE:** Thriftdiving.com. You can go and check out some of the awesome DIY things that she's been doing, spending countless hours until three in the morning but putting together some really great stuff.

Thank you, Serena for joining me.

**SERENA:** Thank you, Leslie.

**LESLIE:** Yes, you're very much welcome. I hope you guys got a lot of value from that.

Hey, if you're enjoying this podcast, you know I'd appreciate it if you can hop over to iTunes and leave an honest review. I've seen a number of reviews come in this month and it just makes me smile.

You like to make me smile. Just make me smile, come on. It helps to get additional visibility in iTunes and get more people exposed to this stuff so that, they can start creating content, inspiring others and changing the world.

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