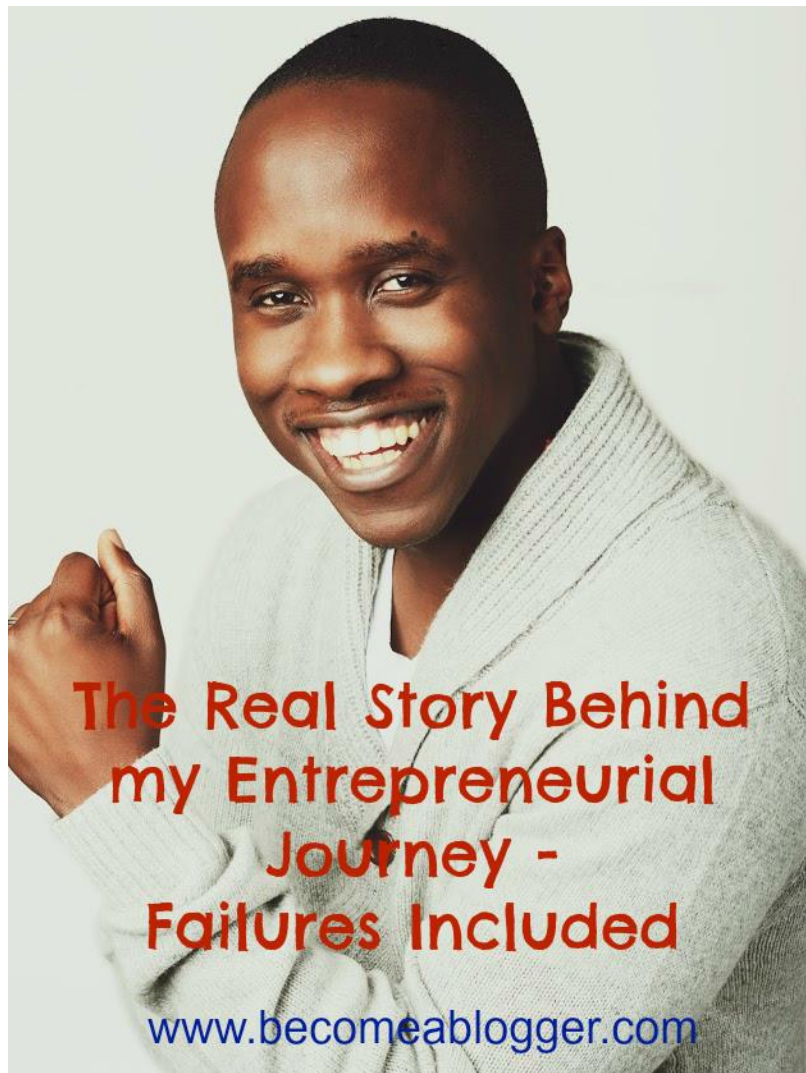




Presents:

Podcast Episode 138



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, I have another exciting episode for you today. In today's episode, I'm actually going to be sharing the real story behind my entrepreneurial journey, failures included.

When we see people out there doing big things, we tend to think that they've always had it together, they came out of nowhere and had near - instant success. However, there's usually a whole lot of experiences that go behind that and yes, even a bunch of failures, we learn from our failures and become better at what we do.

Well, hopefully we do. Today, I'm going to be taking a look back at where I came from because if you forget where you came from, it will be hard to explain what you're made of. So, we're going to go back in time. We're going to talk about my story and I hope you get a lot of value from it. That's what we're going to be talking about today.

All right, all right. Welcome to another episode and I am excited to just kind of talk. This isn't a typical episode because I'm really just going to be sharing some stories with you, some things that have happened along my journey of building what I built online today because it has not been a very easy process. It's had its ups and its downs. It still has its ups and its downs and you know, I think sometimes, we over glamorize entrepreneurship. We over-glamorize what it takes to be successful online and we think sometimes that man, everything is just nice and pitchy and all that stuff.

And then, what happens is that people come along and they are trying to build an online business and they are encountering struggles and all kinds of problems. But then, they look at all the people that are out there and it looks like they have it so easy and that everything has always been working out for them and they feel bad about what they are doing or what they are trying to accomplish.

Some Quick Announcements

I don't want anyone to listen to my podcast and think that that is the case for me because really and truly, it has not been the case for me. That's what I'm going to be talking about. Just to quickly mention, I am going to be in... Where am I going to be? Milwaukee, Wisconsin on... That's this Sunday. So, if you're listening to this after Sunday, what is that, the 17th? Well, it's too late and if you're in Milwaukee, Wisconsin and you're listening to this then, I'm sorry but, I'm probably already gone but, if you're listening to it before, I know a few of you have signed up already for this **Blogging Concentrated** workshop that we're doing. I'm excited about it. I think it's going to be really awesome and I'm excited to see the people that are going to be there to share with the people that are going to be there and just to have a good time.

If you are in the area and you want to check it out, you can check that out. I think, what's the link that I made for this? I think it's becomeablogger.com/bloggingconcentrated.

If that's not the link, just come back to the show notes for this episode. This is going to be Episode 138. So, becomeablogger.com/episode138 and you will get the link to that.

We don't have any listener questions today, we don't have any. Let's just get into this content.

I remember when I was in college... this sounds like one of those bedtime stories [*laughs*]... But, anyhow, I remember back when I was in college, let's go actually before that. I was born in St. Maarten, raised in St. Maarten, went to school to school in St. Maarten until the age of sixteen and just right about when I was turning 17, I came to the United States to Michigan, to go to Andrews University and to study and get this higher education thing.

I was so excited to go to United States of America, the Land of Opportunity, looking forward to all of the different experiences that I was going to have in that process. When I was in college, I wasn't always the best student. I was actually a pretty terrible student. I didn't do my homework. I didn't study and all that kind of stuff or, at least not as much as I was supposed to.

But, at one point in my life, there were a number of things that started to change. One of the things that started to change was prompted by a book that I read and I know a lot of people have had this experience but, I ended up reading the book, *Rich Dad, Poor Dad* from Robert Kiyosaki, and it was recommended to me by a friend. When I read that book, my eyes were opened.

This entrepreneurship thing, this sounded like something very interesting because the concept that was in my mind at that time was man, you don't necessarily have to work for money. Money could work for you. If you do it the right way, if you're an entrepreneur, if you're an investor, if you're a business owner and all that kind of stuff.

That to me was so exciting. So, I started this quest to figure out this entrepreneurship thing because it seemed so easy. So many people were doing it. So many people were having success with it and I wanted to do the same thing.

Venturing into the Stock Market

So, my first venture was going to be with the stock market because when I thought about investing, that's what I thought about and I know that people put money into the stock market and they made money and it seemed like they didn't really have to do anything. The money just, it grew and grew. The money was working for them. It was a beautiful thing.

I had a friend, he was a pastor and I remember, I was so impressed with what he was doing because when I came over to his house, he had three monitors and that blew me away.

There were three monitors next to each other. There was one that had his stock tickers on there so, you could see them as they rose and you could basically just look at the money and it was just increasing and increasing over time and that got me so excited.

I wanted to be the guy behind the three monitors making money so, I decided I was going to invest in the stock market. But, I didn't just invest immediately. He recommended for me to just kind of monitor the stock market, pick a few stocks and see if I were to invest in this stock, what would have happened.

I was playing around with it and it seemed as if I was figuring this thing out. So, I decided, you know what? I'm going to make a go for it. I'm going to invest in a stock. I don't remember the name of the stock but, I remember the symbol was Qnet.

What I did was, in coming to Michigan, in coming to the United States of America, I was sponsored by the government. They gave me a scholarship or more like a semi-scholarship loan or something of that sort.

Every semester, we got money deposited to our bank accounts and we could take that money out and we could pay our tuition. But me, I had the bright idea. If I could take that money out and double that money, I could pay my tuition and then, have a bunch of money.

So, I remember taking out \$4800 and I invested \$4800 in that one stock. Oh man, I was so excited. I was so nervous because you never know what's going to happen but, I knew that at least, I was going to make a lot of money. So, the pastor guy that I told you about, I remember he invested, I think he was either twelve or \$1800 and he pulled out \$32000. So, I thought to myself, "Man, if I put in \$4800 man, I could make \$100,000." I don't know. I could make a lot. If he could make that amount, I could do so much more with \$4800. So, I put the money in.

When I put the money in, I remember, everyday, I would monitor the stock. I would have my stock ticker. It wasn't on three monitors but, it was on my laptop, or my computer at that time, and I could see... No, I didn't even have a computer. I was going to the computer lab and I would see it.

From a day to day basis, it would be fluctuating between, I remember this so clearly, \$600 above and I'd get excited. Then, it would go \$600 below, and I'd be like, "Woah, what in the world is going on?" \$600 above again and it's \$600 below. It would just continue that way for a few days and it was toying with my emotions. I was almost freaking out.

But, I knew in my mind, in my heart that is was going to be a beautiful thing. I can almost see myself counting the hundreds of thousands of dollars that I would get. Anyhow, I want to make this part of the story relatively short. One day I woke up and when I woke up, it was \$2000 down and that freaked me out. I had no idea what was going on but, I knew that it couldn't stay this way because I just couldn't lose \$2000. That is unacceptable. That could not happen.

I left the money in there. I didn't pull it out. And then, it continued going down and it continued going down and every time it went down, it was as if someone took a knife and stabbed it a little further down in my heart and turned it. It continued going down and I was so emotional at that time, I couldn't not pull it out because I could not lose my tuition money.



If I were to lose that tuition money, oh man, I didn't even know what I was going to do. I couldn't tell my parents that. I just couldn't. This couldn't happen.

Anyhow, it continued going down and down. One day, I found out that they were going bankrupt. So, obviously, I was losing the money and at that point, I needed money for rent desperately, and when I pulled it out, it was \$136. I pulled out that \$136 and I had to add some money to that to pay my rent but, it was all I had at that time. I had lost it all. Literally, I lost it all.

Of course, when you lose your tuition money, all the other money you have, it basically becomes nothing because you got to come up with money for tuition. You got to try to get money for food and all that kind of stuff. It was rough.

That was my first venture into this entrepreneurship. I've spoken about this a little before but, I just want to talk about all these little experiences that I have had. Because it really hasn't always been easy and it's still not easy. Anyhow, later on, after I have kind of recovered from this damage, I got into another project. It was called something... The thing is, I was just looking for some way to make some money especially after losing a \$4800 and after that, not having money for the next semester and all these different types of things, struggling to pay my rent, struggling to pay my bills...

Investing with Auto-surfing

Eventually, I found out about another type of thing that you could do online and it was called auto-surfing. It sounded beautiful because here was the thing, all you had to do was put money in, watch some websites. Supposedly, you would get paid by advertisers or by the website owners to spend some time on the website with the hope that a certain percentage of you are going to check out the website even further, become a customer and all that kind of stuff.

But, all you had to do was watch the website and move on to the next website and you watched 12 websites every day for 12 days and then, you'd get paid 44%... 12% a day, 12 x 12 is 144 so, you basically make 144%. You'll get the amount you invested and an extra 44%. So, if you invest \$100, you pull out 144. If you invest 1000, you pull out \$1440. Beautiful thing, right? All you had to do was watch websites, 12 websites, 30 seconds a day and you're good to go.

Does it sound too good to be true? It does. Because you know what? It was. But, I did it the first time. I invested \$100 and I made the money back. Then, I was so excited that I invested more. I think I invested \$1000 and I got some friends to invest. That's the worst part.

I pulled some friends into it because they saw that I made that \$44 on that first round. One day, I got a call from a friend telling me to watch the news. I turned on the news and I saw that the auto-surf program that I was a part of was on there and they were talking about how it was a scam.

Actually, what happened was, everyday, you got 12%. I got the 12% the first day. The second day, I got the 12%. The third day I got the 12%. After a few days, the site just stopped working. I was like, "What in the world? But, I guess they were having server issues or something of that sort, right?"



I got the call. I watched the news and I found out that it was all a scam and that a bunch of us are losing money basically. Fortunately, I got my money back this time. Unfortunately, some of my friends that I got into it didn't get their money back. It was just a terrible experience.

Getting Scammed with High - Yield Investment Projects

From there, I went on to another thing. These projects were called high-yield investment projects or something like that. It really was a scam online that would work for a little while so, some people would make money and then, they would disappear. I invested another thousand dollars in one that's called [Golden Roxy?], just put it in there, invest it in something. I think they invested it in gold or something of that sort and then, in 30 days, you get 70% back.

Evidently, I had not learned my lesson because I took a thousand dollars of my wedding money and I invested it! Fortunately, my wife still loves me, she still married me but, all of these different projects were failures and one of the things that I really got from it is **you shouldn't be investing in anything that you don't fully understand** because when it came down to it, if you were to ask me exactly what was happening in order for me to make that money, I couldn't tell you. I couldn't tell you exactly where the money was coming from. I couldn't tell you exactly what types of investments were being made. Everything was uncertain but, I just had this entrepreneurial vision that my money could work for me and I wouldn't have to do the work. I was so wrong.

It takes work to make money. It takes a lot of work to make money. Those successes that you see out there, even the ones that seems like instant successes, it took a lot of work for them to have, to reach the point where they can have the almost overnight looking success.

You hear people talk about it takes ten years for that overnight success. I believe that that is true. It has been true for me because I have been working on this thing for so long. Eventually,

Making My First Legitimate Income

I moved on to something else. At this point, I was out of college. I was working at a highschool so, I wasn't struggling for money. I wasn't rolling in a dough or anything like that but, my bills were being paid and we had a budget. Everything was fine and I stumbled on to something that was called freebie trading at that time.

This was the first time I did something legitimately and made some money. Now, you've probably heard of those sites. They sound like scams but, there are those sites where you can sign up, complete an offer, refer others to complete the offers and you can get a free TV, a free iPod, a free whatever the case might be.

Back in the days, those used to actually work relatively well. Some of them maybe still work today. I would not touch it at all today but, it used to work very well back then for me. I understood where the money was coming from. It was basically affiliate offers that you would complete.



If you complete an affiliate offer, let's say, I refer you to Hostgator right now. I give you the link becomeablogger.com/hostgator. You go and you sign up. I actually get \$100 commission for getting you to sign up. It's a beautiful thing. Those sites work on that model knowing that these affiliate offers would give them a certain amount of money and they would use a percentage of that money to be able to purchase your TV or your iPod or whatever, depending on how many people you refer and how many offers they completed.

So, it worked and I fully understood this. This is when I really got into freebie trading. Many of the sites not only gave you free stuff but, they also gave you money so, you'd get \$40 per referral or \$50 or \$60. Sometimes, even as much as \$100 per referral, depending on how many offers you're completing and they're completing.

I am not going into all of the details of it. This is not something that I support anymore because the advertisers aren't paying as much anymore and they are hesitant to do it because it's incentivized to complete the offer.

So, you're not really an interested customer. You're just completing that offer so that, you can get the reward. It's not as valuable today but, my first year doing it, I made over \$30,000. My first day doing it, I made \$70. I only invested \$3 of my own money and then, everything that I made from then was just going based on the profit that I had made from completing the first offers and the next offers and so on.

I was able to figure out a system to turn that into a full business, make some money on the side and that was extremely helpful at the time.

Building Websites to Help Me Get Through

Now, I would consider this to be my first successful venture. I missed one in between because when I was doing my masters degree, I was sent to Germany to do research for my masters. I did a masters in Neurobiology because I'm very fascinated by the brain and how it works and all that kind of stuff.

I was sent to Germany to do research and I needed to make some extra money. So, what I decided to do was to build websites because I had taken up computer tools class but, it was in college and I had fallen in love with this whole online stuff, HTML coding and all that kind of stuff, and I decided to start a business building websites. I got a bunch of templates that I customized to make it a bit easier and I started charging people to build websites for them.

I remember I was charging \$500 a website and then, there was one huge website that I worked on for a radio station and they paid me \$13,000. This was an exciting time for me because I was making money somewhat online. I was at home building stuff, putting it on the Internet and people would pay me in exchange for my service of creating that website for them.

That really allowed me to survive when I was in Germany because the department ran out of money that was sending me there so, the second time I went to Germany, I didn't have the money. So, I had to do something on the side and this helped.

I still was struggling. There were some days I could not afford to eat because I didn't have enough money or, I didn't any money. My money was done by the second week of the month and I had to struggle to find for food and all those types of things. It was rough!

But, I made through. I'm still alive. I lost a lot of weight. I remember when I came back from Germany and my girlfriend at that time saw me. She was like, "Oh, my word! What happened to you?" Because I had lost so much weight because I hadn't been eating as much because I couldn't afford to do it.

Learning from my Setbacks

It has not always been easy. That's the thing I want to emphasize but, you know what? I learned from that. I learned how to deal with customers. I learned how to get some customers. I learned how to do research because I would be paid to do things that I had no idea like how to do.

A client would ask me, you know I have this idea. I want to get this done. Do you think that is something you can do? I would tell them, "Of course, that's something I could do, definitely. We can work that out." Then, I go home having absolutely no idea how to do it so, I would have to go to Google, go to YouTube, do some research and figure it out.

And, once I figured it out then, I'd be able to do it and then, I could charge them for it. I never said, "no" to something that someone asked me to do when it would come to a website project that I was working on.

Making Money with Blogging

Let's fast forward again to the freebie trading. I learned about it and then, I found out about blogging and I started my blog at the freebieguy.net at that time. I was teaching people how to make money with freebie training. That then evolved to Learning with Leslie because I didn't want to just do this freebie training thing. I didn't even care about freebie training. I wanted to help people build blogs so that, they can reach others.

So, I changed my branding to Learning with Leslie. I was still doing some of the freebie trading stuff. I bought a forum in the meantime and we grew that forum from about 10,000 members to about 40,000 members. It was an exciting time. It was a tough time and the toughest part about that time and I know I have spoken about this before was that I was spending so much time attached to my computer.

I figured out what worked. I figured out how I could actually make money online but then, I full invested myself into that and I neglected every other aspect of my life. It was rough because I wasn't spending time with my wife. I wasn't taking care of my health. I wasn't doing the things that I needed to do as a man, as a husband, as a human being... Just leaving to use the restroom or to eat lunch seemed like an inconvenience because I had work that I needed to do and I was extremely stressed and I eventually gave up.

I said, "You know what? I can't continue this way. This is unhealthy. It's not good. It's not good for my personal life. It's not good for anything besides making money." Quite frankly, making money is not everything. It's not everything to me."

I do what I do just because I can make money with it. I do what I do because I want to help people. In the process, what I learned was, when I gave up on this stuff, I said, "Stop" but, when I stopped, I continued making money and that fascinated me because for the first time, I wasn't doing work but, based on the efforts that I had put in before I was making money.

That convinced me to get back into the game but, to be more strategic because if I could not do anything and make money, I could also put systems in place to help things to continue to work even when I'm not doing it. That's exactly what I did.

I started outsourcing. I started systematizing my business and as a result of that, it continued growing and I didn't have to do as much work.

There was a lot that I learned in this process. First of all, I learned that it takes a lot of work to build an online business I learned that sometimes, failures are part of the game. I learned that it's not always easy. It is extremely difficult. You see all these websites that promise you you'll make this amount of thousands of dollars in 30 days because that's what they did and they are on the beach in the Bahamas, sipping on some champagne or whatever the case might be, and that is not just the reality of the matter.

It has not been a reality for me and for the people that I know that are successful online, the people that I associate with, the people in my Mastermind group, the people that I partner with, the people that I know that are doing big things online. It has not been easy for them. It's easy now or easier now but, it has not been easy for them.

They have learned a lot in the process. And then, Become a Blogger evolved out of this. Yaro Starak and Gideon Shalwick, they started Become a Blogger. It was one of the courses that I went through to learn about blogging. Eventually, they saw the things that I was going, they were impressed with it. They had moved on to other projects and they wanted someone to take over Become a Blogger.

I took over Become a Blogger. It was a tremendous success that first year, with my first year making six figures online and that was extremely exciting. That was not this last year. It was the year before, 2011. We did the launch.

I remember being on the first webinar where we launched Become a Blogger. I'm sharing some numbers with you and I hope you appreciate what it took to get to those numbers because it took so many hours, so many days, so many weeks, so many months and even years to reach to that point where I do one webinar. It was Gideon, Yaro and I.

At the end of the webinar, we announced that we were going to be releasing Become a Blogger and I remember logging in to Paypal because I remember, we had a Q&A session for about an hour after that and within that hour, I saw over \$8000 deposited into Paypal.

At that point, that is when I felt more than ever before how financially successful an online project can be. Then, over the next few days, we did a one-week promotion. Over that one week, we made over \$20,000. I thought back to the countless hours that I spent, the countless hours that I invested, the failures that I made, the difficulties that I encountered and I thought to myself, "You know what? It was a rough journey but, it was worth it. I made sacrifices but, it was worth it. I learned and that was worth it."

In the process, I started my Biology blog and more than the money, the feedback that I have been getting from people all over the world, that have access now to a Biology education that they would have never had access to and how it's impacting their lives, how it's changing lives all over the world, people that struggle to understand Biology but, now they are finally understanding it, I look at that and I look at the financial success that came with Become a Blogger and I think to myself, "Man, those struggles, those hard times, was it worth it?"

Shifting Priorities - Putting My Family First

Yes, it was. It was extremely worth it. So, 2011 was a very successful year -- 2011 into 2012 and then, you know what happened in 2012? Little Noah was born and my priorities kind of shifted. I'm not going to lie. They shifted because you know what? There's this little tiny life that my wife and I are responsible for and we want to be there for this little cute Noah that I post pictures on Facebook and videos on Facebook and people enjoy so much.

I pulled my products off the market because I wanted to revamp them. I'm still revamping them so, if you have no products for sale, you're not going to make money selling products. So, this last year, I'm not going to lie, I made significantly less money than the year before.

You know what? I'm okay with that because there was something more important that I needed to focus on and that is my family.

Now, Noah is going to be a year this month. I can't believe that time has flown by so fast and we're actually going through a transition right now and I can't tell you much about the transition yet. This transition has to remain a little bit of a secret for a little while longer and that transition has to do with what I'm doing online, a significant amount has to do with what I'm doing online.

I'm going to be entering a different phase of my business and I am so excited about it. Now, don't think I'm going to be leaving you guys. No, I'm definitely not going to be leaving you guys. The things that I'm going to be doing is to help even more and I am excited about it.

But, before I go into that phase, I just want to take some time and look back and just share with you what it took for me to reach where I am today. I don't see myself as one of those guys that's way on top there or anything of that sort. I'm just a regular guy, a regular guy with struggles, regular guy living in my little apartment here in Berrien Springs, Michigan with my family, working my full-time job, university professor, doing that, building a business on the side, taking care of my family and all those types of things, experiencing the struggles that come along with that, also experiencing the joys that come along with that.

And, I have no regrets.

Entrepreneurship isn't always smooth sailing There's usually more failure involved than success. But, if you can stick with it, the success that can come can be so huge.

I know that people might be listening to this right now and you've been at this blogging thing for while. You can add this business building thing for a while, you haven't fully been able to figure it out and, that's okay.

You're going to learn in that process. I hope that Learning with Leslie, Become a Blogger, I hope that those resources have been helpful to you. I hope to continue to be helpful to you.

We're always tempted to look at the success of other people and we don't know what's behind. It seems like they came from nowhere. I've said this before but, they did it. It took a lot to get to where they are.

Sometimes, they are that lucky person, might win a lottery or whatever the case might be but, most cases, you have to work hard. You have to be willing to invest. Are you willing to invest? Are you willing to work hard? I really hope you are.

And, I look forward to getting to know you better. Many of you I've gotten to know so well over the last few years and it's been a tremendous experience. Some of you have been with me from the beginning of the Freebie Guy, I value you so much so, thank you for your support. Without you, I would not be where I am today. I don't want to continue without you.

So, let's do this. I hope you got some value from this. It was in one lesson where I am teaching you how to do such and such but, I just felt the need to talk about this stuff. So, yes. Episode 138, I'd love your feedback. I don't have a specific question but, just come back to the episode

becomeablogger.com/episode138 and let me know what you think, let me know your thoughts and all that stuff.

If you have questions, you can call it into the hotline. I'm going to play the number at the end, of course, and if you are enjoying this podcast, leave a review on iTunes. That helps so much. A few people have been leaving reviews and I'm seeing the rankings go up and that's just awesome.

Lastly, freebloggingvideos.com, if you want to get your blog up and running, you don't know how to build it, you want to build a business or you want a refresher, check it out.

So, that's pretty much it for this episode. Leslie Samuel from becomeablogger.com, changing the world one blog at a time. Until next time, take care and God bless!