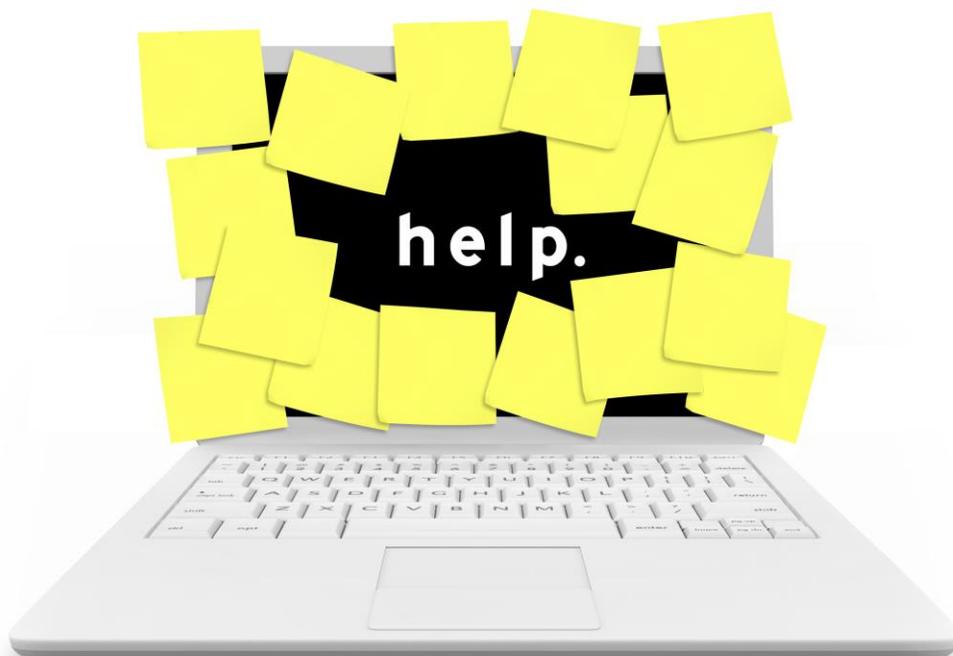




Presents:

## Podcast Episode 113: How to Blog and Build Your Business when life gets CRAZY - Learning with Noah



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](http://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 going to be talking about *how to build your blog and business when life gets crazy*.

I don't know about you but, my life gets extremely crazy from time to time and sometimes, that affects my blog and definitely my business. The last few months have been just like that and in retrospect, there are some things that I did that really helped and things that I could have done better.

So, I'm here to be open with you and share those things so that, you can better prepare your blog for the unexpected and still be successful in what you do. That's what we're going to talk about today.

You're probably wondering why I'm laughing so much. This is actually a special episode. It's a special episode because I have little Noah here with me. He's sitting right here on my lap because I need to record my podcast and I need to be with him. There's no one here but me and him.

Why I was laughing is because as I was saying, "This is Learning with Leslie," and I'm doing all these things that I'm saying, he was like getting afraid when I would say something all of a sudden exciting, he would jump like, "What's going on?" *[laughs]*. It was kind of funny to look at this face. Right now, he's just staring up at me kind of like in awe like what's going on? Why

are you talking into this silver machine? Right, Noah? You want to know what's going on. Why is daddy doing this weird thing, right?

Anyhow, so Noah is going to be joining us today just because I got to get... You know, I haven't recorded a podcast in two weeks and that is absolutely ridiculous. I needed to talk to you, man. I got some stuff to share with you because that's what I do here. I got to give you some value so, Noah and I are going to be recording this podcast episode today.

Right now, he's reaching out to try to grab the mic and I'm sure you'll hear his voice a few times. We'll see how things go. He looks a little shell shock that's why he's doing these weird things.

Anyhow, in today's episode, three things I'm going to do. First, I'm going to give one quick announcement. I'm going to be answering two questions that were called in to the hotline and then, I'm going to dive right in to the content on how to blog and build your business when life gets crazy.

Hopefully, you're not hearing too much with Noah holding on to the mic and all that stuff. But, you're helping me baby sit right now. We're just going to chill. We're going to hang out with Noah and it's just going to be two friends talking while hanging out with this little cool dude.

## **First, some special announcements**

Anyhow, for the special announcement, I am going to be redoing Become a Blogger Premium over the next few weeks, maybe a month or two or so because you know what? As I have grown when it comes to my blog, well, my blogs and the different things that I'm doing online, I'm learning so much in terms of what's working today better than it was working before or different things that are working today that we didn't have before.

I'm going to be working on redoing that. That's all I'm going to be saying for now. There's going to be new training. There's going to be new modules. There's going to be some shifting around on some of the things and I'll be telling you a little more about it as we get closer.

Actually, another announcement that I just remembered, I am going to be in Cincinnati, Ohio from June 20<sup>th</sup> to June 22<sup>nd</sup>. I'm going to be at the [Savvy Blogging Summit](#). I'm very excited about that. I'm going to be speaking there on the topic of podcasting and if you are in the area, I will be doing a meet up. I posted about this in the [last episode](#) and there were a few people that responded saying that they live in that area and they would love to do a meetup.

If you are in that area or can drive or fly or whatever to that area to connect, I would love to see you there. I'm going to be sharing more information about that as the time gets closer. So, those are the announcements.



## Your Questions Answered

Now, I have some questions that were called in to the hotline that I need to get to. We have one question from June and another one from Vincent. The one from Jun is about some general tips about her brand spanking new blog. Vincent has some questions about his mailing list and the best way to grow your mailing list.

## General and basic things to consider in having a blog

Take it away with the first question, June.

*"Hi Leslie,*

*My name is June. My website is [www.journeywithjune.com](http://www.journeywithjune.com). I was really inspired by your website becoming a blogger and I recently started my own web page. I would really appreciate it if you could have a look at it and give me some tips. I originally come from Malaysia and I've traveled the world and decided to talk about my experience and share it with people. Give me your comments.*

*Bye!"*

Thank you so much, June for calling that in. This is a question that I get a lot. There's one thing I want to say about these types of questions. It's a great question and I understand why people ask this question because we all want general tips when it comes to our blog.

But, when it comes to blogging, one of the things people don't realize is that there are so many aspects of blogging and there are so many things that need to be done in order to build a blog that... I can take that question in a million different ways probably.

For future references, if you have a question, it's best to have a very specific question. Say, "Hey Leslie, I'm struggling with such and such. Can you give a tip about that?" Or, "How do you do X, Y, and Z?"

But, I did want to answer this question. I want to give some general tips. I took a quick look at your blog and I see that you have Wordpress installed, good stuff. You have the default theme from Wordpress and that is a good start.

You're just getting going. It's great to see people taking action and doing these types of things. You're all the way in Malaysia and I'm here in Michigan and I'm recording this content and you're checking it out over there and doing things as a result of that. I was excited to see that you had your blog up and running.

In terms of general tips, this is what I would like to say...

Number one, think specifically and get as specific as possible about who your target audience is and how they will benefit from your blog. That is something that a lot of beginning bloggers don't think about. I didn't think about it when I started to blog. I just started to blog and I started sharing content and if I had that in mind from the beginning, I think I would have grown significantly faster than I did.

So, really think about who that target audience is and how they will benefit from your blog and make that extremely clear. When I come to your blog, I should see your target audience is people that are trying to travel to Malaysia, or whatever the case might be.

I don't know who your target audience is but, that's something for you to think about and ask yourself questions like what are the things that they struggle with so that, you can write about those things and you can make videos or podcasts about those things to help them solve their problems.

What are they searching for in Google? Are they going to Google right now? I see you have a post that's entitled [Hidden Beauty](#). I'm not exactly sure what that means. [Water Front Teahouse](#), I have a better idea of what that is but, I'm most likely not going to Google and searching for Water Front Tea House.

Just think about the types of things that they are searching for and write content, create content that's going to solve that.

The last tip I want to give you, and this is something that a lot of experienced bloggers wouldn't tell you today, one of the things they wished they did from the very beginning is build a list. I want to recommend for you to build an email list. That is extremely important for a number of different reasons that I have spoken about in this podcast a number of times so, you can go and check back at some of the previous episodes.

Those are some of the general tips that I'm going to give you. I'm not going to go into much more detail. If you have a specific question, in the future, you can call that in and then, I'll try to get that also.

## Effective method/s to increase subscriber engagement

Then, we have another question from Vincent Duncan, my good friend from right here, locally. Take it away, Vincent.

*"Hello Leslie,*

*This is Vincent. I'm calling from [richsinnerspoorsaints.com](http://richsinnerspoorsaints.com). I'm calling in regard to newsletters. I notice that some of the big name bloggers send a full copy of their posts within their newsletters and others just send a summary. I notice that you do something a little bit different. You send basically an invitation asking people to click over to your post.*

*I'm wondering, which one of these methods have you found to be most effective for subscriber engagement? It seems that it would be better to have persons track on your website for user engagement rather than just depending on open rate.*

*So, I'd like to hear your thoughts on this. Thank you."*

Thank you, Vincent for calling that in. It seems Noah is getting a little bothered for some reason. But, hopefully, he'll make it through. I might have to pause at some point and go and deal with him or go and, not deal with. That sounds so bad. Anyhow, you get the point.

All right, so email lists and engagement with your lists, what format works best? This is my general answer – the format that works best [*laughs*]. Does that help?

Okay, let's move on to -- No, I'm just joking.

No, seriously, I do different things for my different blogs. For my [Biology blog](#), I have something different. For my [Become a Blogger blog](#), I have something different. For me, this is the format that I like. I'll tell you what I like. You can test it out. You can test out different formats and you can see how your audience responds to it. It's all about testing and seeing what the response is.

My format is this...

Number one, I want to give them value in the email. Before they even come back to the site or anything of that sort, I want to offer value.

Number two, I want to be very personal. That's the type of feel that I want to have with my blog. I want you to get to know me as a friend, someone that you trust, someone that has good information that can help you accomplish your goals so, I try to be personal. I share personal stories, experiences that I've had that's relevant to them and all of that kind of stuff.

But then, what I like to do is link back to my content in that email.

Number one, I might teach you how to use stories, I might send out an email, this is one of the emails, *How to Use Stories to Increase Engagement* and I tell you about the value of stories and all that stuff.

And then, I link back to a blog post where I use a story as an example. I always want people to come back to my blog. It helps with engagement. It helps with traffic and it just keeps you in the forefront of people's minds. That's what I do. I give value upfront in the email. They don't need to come back to the blog to get the value but, they can come back to the blog to get additional value giving more traffic and engagement.

Then, the last tip I will give you is make sure you have a clear path to accomplishing a specific goal.

What is your goal with your email list? Is it to get people back to your site so that, you can promote products or something of that sort? Whatever that goal you have, you want to make sure there is a clear path you're... It's as if you're taking them on a journey. You're filling in the blanks as they get more and more emails from you and ultimately, it's helping them accomplish a goal. It's helping you accomplish your goal and so on.

Those are my tips when it comes to building your lists and having engagement with that list. I hope that helps.

Hey, if you have a question, as usual, you can call it into the hotline. The hotline is available 24-7. You can call and leave your message like these guys did. The number is 888-835-2414.

All right. Get your questions in and I will deal with them on the podcast.

## Growing your blog and business as life gets crazy

Let's get to the main content. How do you grow your blog and your business when life gets crazy?

Now, my life over the last few months has been crazy. Little Noah here, the joy of my life, or one of the joys of my life was given to us back in November and since then, things have been, it's been an interesting experience, an experience that I have loved. I cherish every single moment, the challenges, the exciting things, the milestones that he's been reaching and all that good stuff.

But, as you probably can imagine or if you have a child or children, some of you I know have four, five and six children, God bless your soul, but if you have a child, you know that things can get kind of crazy.

But, not just that. I'm working a full time job as a University professor. I'm running two online businesses and over the last few months, my mom has been having some medical issues. She had to travel to Columbia. I went down there to be with her. The first time for ten days and then, I came back to give my final exam and then, I went back for another seven days and then, I came back last week.

In addition to that, in order to be able to meet those requirements, I had to take all of the classes that I had to teach for the rest of the semester and compress them into a shorter period of time. I'm saying all that to say, life has been EXTREMELY crazy!

As a result of that, I have noticed certain things when it comes to my blogging, when it comes to my business, some of the things that I have done that have been extremely helpful and I want to share those with you and some things that I could have done a little better.

I want to do this first by giving you a little bit of a story. Over the last few weeks, I have decided that I want to do better when it comes to exercise. So, I decided to start running. Running seems like a good way to start my day so, one of the things I do in the morning is I go for a jog.

But, in order to really keep track of my running and hold myself accountable, I installed the [Nike+ app](#). I don't know if you know anything about this app. I installed it on my phone. It is a great app. I love this app.



It has GPS so that, if I'm running, it tracks exactly where I'm running and I can keep track of where I'm running, how far I'm running, how long I'm running, how much calories I'm burning and all that fun stuff.

But, not just that. I can also share that on Facebook, on Twitter with people that are connected with me on there. Not just that, [*laughs*] I sound like a salesman but, anyway, if there are other people that are running that I'm friends with that are using this app, it's almost as if we are racing with each other.

I have a leaderboard where I can see how my friends are doing and where I rank in comparison with them. We have been talking about it on Facebook, sharing that kind of information, taking screen shots of the leader board and sharing it, it's just been very interactive.

I'm running with people right now all over the world because of how this technology has kind of brought us together.

But then, when some of these things started to happen with my life and me traveling to Columbia and so on, it came to the point where I missed one week of running. I didn't feel good about that because I have been running consistently for the few weeks before. I just didn't want to mess things up.

While I was missing those days, some of my friends were posting on Facebook, "Hey Leslie! What are you doing? You need to get back out there." Not just that, I was able to see their rankings and their number of miles was increasing significantly.

I was looking at that and I see myself go from position number four to number five to number seven to number nine to number ten and just yesterday, I started back running.

After about a week of not running, I got back into it and now, I'm going to be pushing forward and moving consistently as consistently as I can as time allows and so on,

But, I'm on this journey with others. I'm using things and systems that are helping to keep me accountable, that's keeping track of what I'm doing and that has been extremely beneficial, especially for when times get hectic and I'm not able to do what I'm supposed to be doing.

That story, I'm telling you that because I'm looking at that, I'm looking at what I am doing online and there are so many similarities.

I want to pull out some lessons from it.

## Lesson #1: Life happens.

Lesson number one, I want you to be aware of the fact that life happens. Life happens. Sometimes, that's great but, sometimes it's bad. When there's a sudden illness in the family or something of that sort, that hits you many times by surprise. That is something that we have to accept.

A lot of people when these things happen, what we do is we sit around, we moan, we groan and all these types of things because some of these situations can be very difficult situations and I don't know what you may be going through right now but, maybe you're going through a challenge in your life like I have been going through over the last few weeks.

That is okay. It's a part of the journey. Accept it and then, move on.

## Lesson #2: Put systems in place.

Now, there are some things that you can do to make sure you have systems in place so that, the effects are not as harmful as they could have been if you did not have those systems in place.

For me, I have a number of systems in place. I have people that are helping me out. I have two assistants, one that's a technical assistant and one that helps me with just general things, answering my email, dealing with interaction on my Facebook page, posting to the blog, my transcripts and all those types of things, a bunch of different things.

Over the last few years, I have been working on building these systems so that, in the event that I am not able to respond to email, in the event that I am not able to do some of the things that I am normally doing in my business, [*Noah is getting excited*], in that event, things are still happening. My audience is still getting served. Make sure you have systems in place.

For me, when it comes to running, the system that I have that's helping me to track what I'm doing, that's helping me to be efficient with what I'm doing is the Nike+ app. That is working extremely well. When it comes to my online business, I have great help. I have great engagement but, I have been building that over the last few years.

As you build, think about the different systems that you can have to automate your business, to make sure things can still function. That might be as simple as having an auto-responder sequence. That is something that I very much find a ton of value.

As you know from the questions that I answered, I really see that your email list is extremely important. By having an auto-responder, when someone signs up today, I don't need to be

there to tell them about the different aspects of what I do and how I can help them and so on. The auto-responder sequence is taking care of that.

### **Lesson #3: When present, be present.**

The next point I want to mention is that when you are present, when things are smooth, when things are going the way you want them to be going, be present.

When you are present, be present, be engaged in your community. Be active. Be offering a ton of value and do that consistently. You want to make a lot of deposits because as I said in the beginning, life happens. When it's time for you to withdraw from that bank, you've already made enough deposits that it's okay.

If all I'm doing is paying bills and I'm not making any money, that's going to be a problem. But, if I'm making money and putting deposits into my bank account, when it's time for me to make those withdrawals, it's 100% okay.

I'm here with my son and it's important for me to spend time with my son. If I'm not spending time with my son, I'm not making any deposits. So, when I do have to be away, there's just not as much there to hold on in terms of our relationship. You want to be making deposits.

From time to time, I purchase a product or I sign up for a newsletter and I hear nothing from those people. For months and months, sometimes even years and then, all of a sudden, out of the blue, they spontaneously appear. Maybe, they have something to promote or they have some value to add.

I'm like, who are these people? I don't know them. I have no relationship with them because they have not made any deposits.

So, when you are present, you want to be present, as present as possible.

All right so, number one, life happens. Number two, make sure you have systems in place that you're building systems as you build your blog and number three [*talking to Noah, "Oh, I thought you had a point to add, Noah. You look like you were getting excited about something."*] Number three, when you are present, be present.

### **Lesson #4: Plan and create content in advance.**

Number four, as much as possible, try to create content in advance. This can be a tricky one especially when you have a full time job and all that stuff.

But, when I left for Columbia the first time, it was not a huge issue because I had already recorded some podcast episodes and I was able to post those in addition to one that I did record down in Columbia.

If you can record content in advance and just have a little bit of a buffer, that helps so much. As much as possible, create contents in advance. Having a content schedule really helps with this and knowing what you're going to be talking about over the next few weeks or months and so on, that really helps.



## **Lesson #5: Have an accountability group.**

Number five, it is a great idea to have an accountability group. Every time I look at my Nike+ app and I saw that someone got ahead of me, I was just like, "Oh man, I need to step up my game. I need to get back in this. When I get back to the States and when things get back in order, I'm going to jump in and start running because I want to be there with my group."

That has helped me so much. It has motivated me so much on some days when I didn't feel like running, I would look at my app and see that someone just ran today, one of my friends just ran and they passed me or something of that sort.

That accountability goes a long way. With what I'm doing online, I'm actually a part of a Mastermind Group with some great individuals and we meet every week and we keep each other accountable. We look at what each other are doing, we get suggestions, we get input... It's great to be able to have people that you can bounce ideas off of.

Not just that, people that are going to check in with you. If you're doing something that is just not working or they have some suggestions as to how you can improve, that really helps to motivate you and keep you on track for accomplishing your goals and doing the different things that you want to do with your blog.

Just before I started recording this podcast, Michael Stelzner from [Social Media Examiner](http://www.socialmediaexaminer.com) is one of the members in the Mastermind Group and he had some feedback on Become a Blogger.

I'm going to be redoing Become a Blogger as I mentioned and he was giving some really good advice as to certain things that I could do a little differently or to think about in building the new version of Become a Blogger.

Having that accountability is invaluable and if you can find that, if you can create that for what you're doing online, that is great.

There are a number of people in the Become a Blogger community and I have mentioned this before that have started little mastermind groups. I just love seeing those things because it helps them to move forward. It helps to keep them accountable.

Having my friends pass me on Nike+ is great. We're doing it with each other. We're cheering each other on and it's just awesome. So, point number five, have an accountability group.

## **Lesson #6: Be upfront. Be honest. Be real.**

Point number six, and this is important, be upfront and honest when things aren't going well. People understand that things get crazy from time to time. That's just a part of life. It gets crazy with all of us [*"Right Noah?" Oh yes, oh please.*] He's burrowing his head into my chest right now [*Noah coughs*].

Uh-oh, you're coughing. What's wrong, Noah? You doing better? Yes, that's the smile I'd like to see.

All right, when things happen, let people know. Hey, this is going on. My mom is not doing well. I need to travel outside of the country. When that was happening with me, what I did is I posted on Facebook, I posted on Twitter and I let people know, "Hey, I may not be recording an episode next week because of this that's happening."

I could have done a little better with that. I could have sent an email out to my list and let people know, "Hey, you know what? I'm going to be away and I might not be able to record a podcast." People understand that, right Noah? You understood it, right Noah? Yes, he understood it that's why he's getting excited right now.

That's one thing that I could have done a little better.

Be upfront. Be real. Be honest. Let people know. "Hey, things aren't going as well as I would like them to go so, I may not be able to do such and such this week."

Very important. Be authentic. Let people know what's going on.

And, if you have made enough deposits in the past, it won't be an issue.

## **Lesson #7: When you get back at it, give and give some more.**

One last point, and this is the point that I love. This is the stage that I'm at right now. I love all the other points, too but, this is what I'm doing right now. When you get back at it, when things smooth over and you do get back at it, get back at it.

Add a ton of value. Just give, give and then, give some more because now, it's time for you to continue making those deposits. Now, it's time for you to get back into running.

I went running yesterday morning. I went running this morning. I'm going running tomorrow morning and the day after and I will continue to go running because it is important to me. It is important to my wealth and my well-being and my family and all these types of things.

Now that I'm back at my online stuff, I'm going to get back at it. I'm redoing Become a Blogger Premium. I'm going to be redoing a number of things, restructuring a number of things to help make it better so that, we can all go out there and change the world one blog at a time. Create content to inspire others and even change the world.

So, once again, those seven points are:

1. Life happens. Accept it.
2. Make sure you have systems in place.
3. When you are present, be present.
4. If it's possible, create some content in advance.
5. Have an accountability group.
6. Be upfront and honest when things aren't going well.
7. When you get back at it, get back at it.

Man, I hope you got a ton of value from that. Noah, I hope you... You did pretty well. You didn't cry. You were just chilling. I scared you a few times but, he stuck with us.

Oh, it's good stuff. Being a parent is such a blessing. Many of you probably already know that.

Anyhow, as usual, this episode is brought to you by my free videos over at [freebloggingvideos.com](http://freebloggingvideos.com). If you want to build a blog, you need some guidance. Head on over there and I will give you that guidance, teach you one step at a time how to go about building your online business.

Those ten free videos are also being revised. I am excited about it. It's more lining up with what I'm passionate about and helping people in the way that I'm passionate about.

But, that's it for this podcast. I'm just going to stop. Until next time, take care and God bless.