
Podcasting FOR YOU

What you need to know to start that podcast.

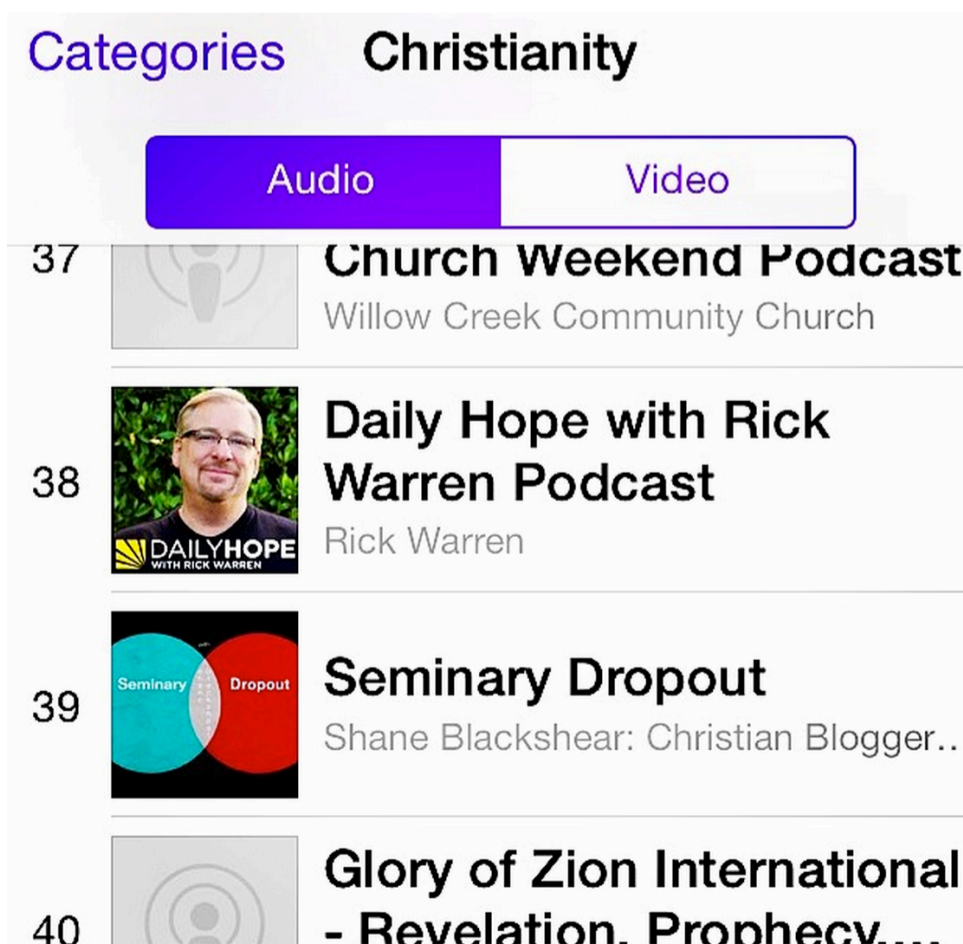
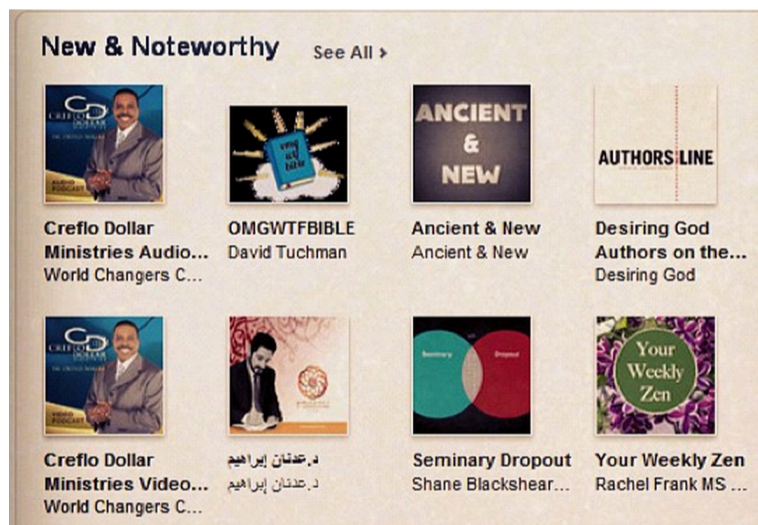
**BY
SHANE BLACKSHEAR**



Introduction

Congratulations on take the first step into learning more about podcasting. This free ebook will tell you *what* you need to know to get started. If you want to know more about *how* to get started be sure to sign up for my [e-course](#).

I've taken a few screenshots over the years when my podcast, Seminary Dropout has climbed the charts in my category in Apple Podcasts (iTunes at the time). Below is when I was on New & Noteworthy, and when I was ranked 39 just behind Rick Warren. Later in the course I'll tell you how to rank high in podcatcher charts as well.



I don't share these screen shots to brag but to show you that I've been successful in accomplishing my podcast goals and you can be too.

*For more detailed information about how to start your podcast, sign up for my e-course [Podcasting For Everyone](#).
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Chapter 1: Content is Key

“Great marketing only makes a bad product fail faster.”
-David Ogilvy

The same applies to podcasting. If you don't have a unique message, useful information, or valuable resources to share with your audience, then podcasting (or any other platform for that matter) won't help you.

Before we dig into the "How" of podcasting, we have to talk about the "Why". The last thing you want to do is to get in front of an audience and be boring, trite, or an echo of something people have said a million times before. Content truly is king!

Steps to Making Great Content

1. Have a clear purpose statement.

It's important to keep your purpose front and center.

2. Create an Avatar and Talk Directly to that Person.

It's important that when you speak on your podcast, you are speaking to one person who is listening out there. Obviously you'll be talking to many people but you want each of them to feel like you are speaking to them only. To do this you must create an avatar, a fictional person that represents all of your listeners.

3. Don't be a copy of something else out there.

This isn't to say that you can't cover a subject that someone else is already covering or have a format that someone else is already doing, but make sure your podcast has a unique voice and strive to think of things that no one else is doing.

4. Watch your mood and energy.

No one wants to listen to a Debbie-downer. Unless you have a purpose for being otherwise, generally you should keep your energy up and sound like someone who loves life!

4. Be consistent. Be consistent.

This one is HUGE! Choose a schedule for releasing new episodes and stick to it. It's better to publish monthly than once a week for 3 weeks and then disappear for the next 2 weeks.

5. Use YOUR voice.

Are you funny? Be funny. Are you quirky? Be quirky. Analytical? Be Analytical. You get the picture. So for the love of all that is good and holy, don't be a human text book. Be yourself!

6. Write an outline of your 20 episodes.

One reason so many people stop podcasting after 7 episodes is because they've exhausted all of their good ideas after that many shows. If you write down the subjects for each episode ahead of time, you won't find yourself in front of the microphone the day you're supposed to publish a podcast with nothing to say.

Format

We should spend a few seconds addressing the format of your show.

The easiest format, which might be a good way to go when you're first starting out, is simply sitting behind the microphone and **talking to your avatar**. You can address one aspect of your given subject each episode. This is easy because the technology set up is straight forward, also you can record on your own time.

Other formats include chatting with a **co-host**, another is **interviewing guests**.

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Chapter 2: Equipment & Tools

This is a fun lesson because we're talking about podcasting toys. There are a million different combinations of tools that you could use to podcast. This lesson will help you make sense of it all.

I'll not only show you the best equipment to use, but I'll show you what to use for every budget. I understand that in the beginning you may be on a tight budget or you may just want to wade into the podcast waters slowly and upgrade your equipment as you go.

The truth is, if you're on a shoestring budget, you can still have a podcast that sounds better than 90% of the podcasts out there for a very affordable cost.

Tools

A Website

All podcasts are hosted on a website. They are basically blog posts that contain an audio file. Check out the screen shot of [my site](#) below for an example. Notice the play button, progress bar, and volume control. A Wordpress based site is best made for hosting a podcast.

Audio Editing Software

There are many options available for various prices, one is even free!

A File Hosting Site

You'll need a place online to host your audio files. Your web provider may say that you can host them there, but that's risky. It's best to have them on a dedicated site.

Microphones

There are generally 2 types of microphones; dynamic and condenser. Unless you have a professional sound studio (and maybe even if you do) you want to stay away from condenser mics for podcasting. Condenser mics in a normal environment will pick up on too many things in the surrounding area: the air conditioner, the neighbors dog, the kids in the other part of the house, etc. While a dynamic mic is better for picking up only the noise right in front of it (i.e. your voice). Even if you do have a professional sound studio, if you have guests or a cohost in the room you may have trouble when your mics pick up each other in the background.

In my opinion there are pretty good microphones that start at around \$100, and although you can always spend more, the best ones are around \$330-\$449. There are also some in between those price points but if you can't afford the \$400 mic (that's perfectly ok and you'll still get great sound) then don't bother buying a \$200. Just buy a \$100 mic and save up until you can buy the \$400 mic.

Mixers

Mixers help you fine tune the sound and volume coming from your microphone and can also send the sound back into your computer or whatever you use to record.

As with microphones, there are many good mixers out there. I'll give you some pointers.

If you are not recording externally, meaning if you're only recording your audio using software on your computer, then you obviously need a mixer that has a USB "out" port so that you can connect it to that computer. Also, you need as many inputs on your mixer as you have people on microphones. In other words, if you have a 2 other co-hosts who will be recording in the room with you, then you need to make sure your mixer has at least 3 inputs, one for each of you.

Digital Audio Recorder

While some may use software to capture recordings, I've lost a few recordings and decided to always record externally into a dedicated digital audio recorder. Like the other equipment these range in price. For our purposes the DAR doesn't need to be too fancy or expensive. Most of the cost in the high priced models is for capturing high quality audio *without* plugging a microphone into it, but we *are* plugging a microphone in so those advantages are wasted on us.

Accessories

To connect your mixer to your external audio recorder you'll need a cable like this [3.5 mm TRS to Dual 1/4 in TS](#).

If your computer doesn't have a microphone input port you'll also need an adapter that converts a 3.5 mm (1/8 in) jack to usb such as the [Creative Labs Sound Blaster Play!](#).

With the high end microphones, you'll want to buy a pop filter. Just make sure whichever pop filter you get fits on your mic.

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Chapter 3: Getting Your Podcast Online

For years Apple Podcasts (now Apple Podcasts) was the largest and most popular destination for downloading podcasts. Then around 2020 Spotify took its place as the biggest destination for listening to podcasts although not by much. There's no way around it, your podcast must be on Spotify and Apple Podcast, but before that can happen your podcast has to be online on your blog, and you have to have an RSS feed.

You probably don't know what an RSS feed, and I'm here to tell you that it's ok. That's why you're taking this course.

There are a few ways to set up a RSS Feed, but they are not all created equally. I'll show you the best way to set you your feed and walk you through it step by step.

For this step you'll need a Wordpress plug-in called PowerPress by Blubrry. Here are the steps to download it and get your RSS Feed.

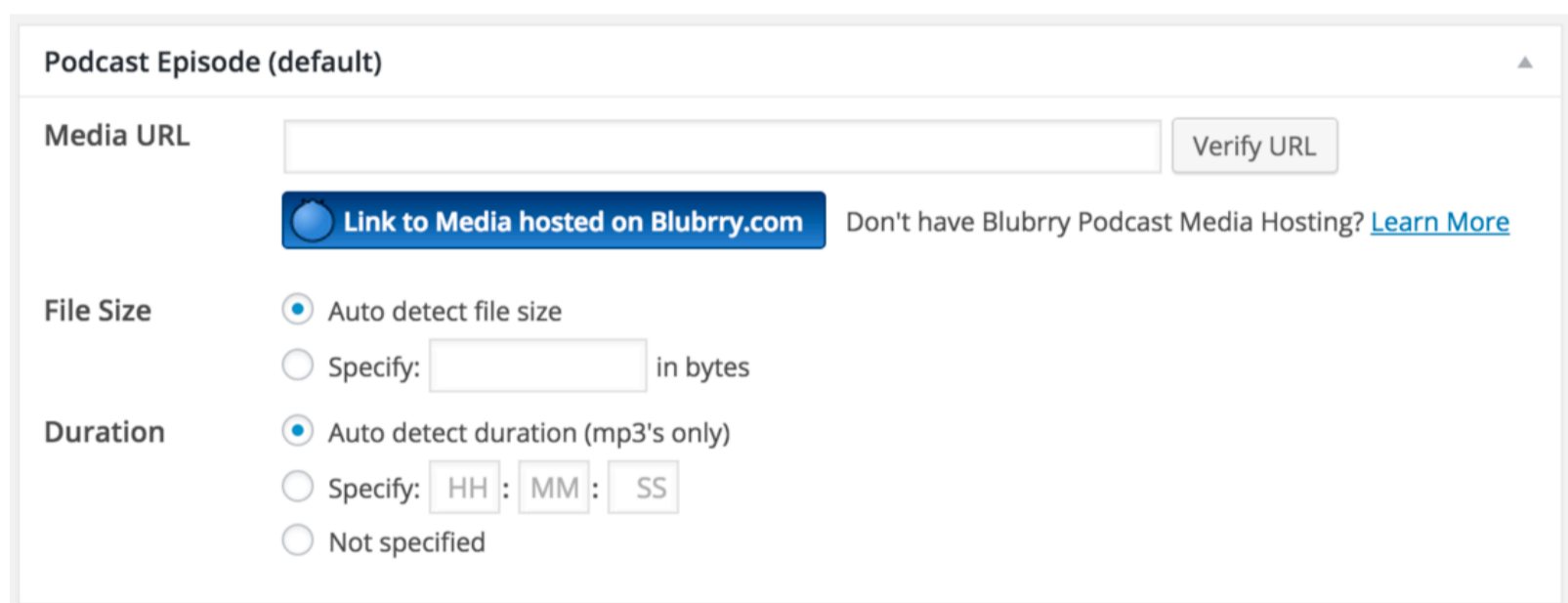
1. Go to your Wordpress dashboard.
2. Click the "Plugins" tab on the left.
3. Click "Add New".
4. Search for "Blubrry PowerPress Podcasting plugin".
5. The first result should be the Powerpress Plugin that we're looking for. Click "Install Now"

6. After Powerpress is installed you should see it on the left hand side as a tab. Click it to open Powerpress.

7. Now click the "feeds" tab at the top.

8. Scroll down until you see "podcast feeds". The address next to it should be your podcast feed. Make note of this.

9. To put your episode on your website go to your Wordpress dashboard and click "Post" and then "Add New". You should see a place for the title of your episode and then a place to put the body or show notes of the episode. Below that you should see this or something similar...



Podcast Episode (default)

Media URL

Link to Media hosted on Blubrry.com [Don't have Blubrry Podcast Media Hosting? Learn More](#)

File Size Auto detect file size
 Specify: in bytes

Duration Auto detect duration (mp3's only)
 Specify: HH : MM : SS
 Not specified

Important Note: Do not submit your feed to Apple Podcasts until you have your first episode recorded and published to your blog/website.

Remember Spotify and Apple are just two podcast directories. They're the biggest ones, and thus the most important, but there are others. The important thing is that once you have your RSS feed using the steps above, you've got what you need to get your podcast in any directory.

As for other directories after Spotify and Apple Podcasts, the list is always growing and changing. A simple internet search should tell you the major podcatchers currently available.

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Chapter 4: Promotion

Remember how we started out by saying "Content is Key"? Well the full truth is that good content *with good promotion* is key! "Blowin in the Wing" would be a good song no matter what, but would it have really mattered if none of us had ever heard it? Good thing Bob Dylan had someone on his side who knew how to promote!

There's no shortage of social media platforms. Should you be on Facebook or Twitter, TikTok or Instagram? Yes! BE EVERYWHERE!

Once you start using these platforms to get the word out about your podcast, you'll quickly find out which ones your audience utilizes most. Once that happens you'll want to dial up your use of those platforms and find a minimum effective dose for the other platforms. The fact is that most of us don't have the time to use every platform as much as we could, that's why it's important to narrow it down to 2 or 3.

Podcatchers like Apple Podcasts and Spotify are platforms of their own. Many rank podcasts on their roll. So you'll want to rank as high as possible. For details on how to rank higher enroll in my e-course, *Podcasting For Everyone*.

Building an email list is another great way to promote your content, plus if you ever develop a product you'll have a list of people who will be eager to sign up.

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Chapter 5: Monetizing Your Podcast

For most of us monetizing our podcast is something we'll be interested in at some point. Even if making money from your podcast isn't your first priority (Hint: It shouldn't be.), if the opportunity to make money is there, you probably won't balk at it. Once you're set up to podcast, the monthly costs can be pretty minimal, which is good because that means you only have to bring in a little money to make podcasting free to you, and then a little more to make a profit.

There are two main ways of making money in podcasting: Direct and Indirect. Direct ways are things like: sponsors or advertisers, affiliate relationships, and crowdsourcing. Indirect ways are when you sell to your audience, like your book, e-course, consulting, seminars, or physical product.

Let's discuss each of those ways in detail.

Direct

Sponsors

For many people this is the first thing they think of when they think of making money in podcasting. Getting a sponsor for your podcast can be one of the most difficult things for podcasters to do simply because it generally requires that you have a ton of downloads (A HUGE audience). (Note that I said generally in that last sentence. We'll talk about how your podcast can be an exception to that rule in the next paragraph.) There's a general rule of thumb that you'll need to get 10,000 downloads per episode before you start attracting advertisers. For many of us that's a problem. What if your podcast is about some obscure niche hobby?

Even if you have a killer podcast about underwater animal husbandry, there may not be enough underwater animal husbandr-ists(?!) in the world to get you to that 10K download number. *Note: Do not let all of this talk of big numbers and small niches make you think that you need to broaden the scope of what your podcast is about. Smaller is better. Remember your avatar? That's who you need to make your podcast for, that one person.*

So what's a niche podcaster to do? This is when you do some podcasting judo and turn what looks like a weakness into a strength. To stay with our example, there is some company out there that sells some product just for UAH (I'm using that abbreviation for underwater animal husbandr-ists now). Let me ask you, if you were selling a product just for UAH's, wouldn't *you* be interested in a podcast that speaks directly to your target market? Even if it had a small audience, I bet you would. So your job is to form a relationship with that company that could lead to a sponsorship. Don't go with the hard sell immediately. Start by contacting the person that makes advertising decisions at the company. Just introduce yourself, send them a link to your podcast, and thank them for producing such fine products for your niche. Remember, this is a real life person at this company, she values relationships just like you do. Stay in touch and in time the hope is that you won't have to sell them on anything. The company should see the value in what you have to offer.

Affiliates

This is similar to a sponsorship but except that you don't get paid until a listener buys something. Amazon.com for instance has an affiliate program. If you enroll in Amazon's affiliate program, anytime someone clicks on a product or link on your site that contains the affiliate code,

Amazon will give you a percentage of what that listener spends on their site.

Here's the thing about the Amazon affiliate program. It doesn't pay very much. Most of the time it's less than 3% of the sale, and when the only product you can organically promote in your show notes are books as is the case with my podcast, it's difficult to make a substantial amount of money. Still it's free and doesn't take much work once you set it up so I do it. However if your podcast covers items that are higher priced like electronics, then you can probably do much better with an amazon affiliate.

The great thing about affiliate programs is that there is no barrier to entry. You can use them if you have ten thousand listeners or just 10.

Crowdsourcing

The last direct method of monetizing your podcast that I'll address is crowdsourcing. You've probably heard of [crowdsourcing](#) and a few sites that you can use to crowdsource like [Kickstarter](#), [Indiegogo](#), and [GoFundMe](#). Each is a little different than the other and each have their specialty. For a long time I considered doing a Kickstarter campaign to fund Seminary Dropout. There were two things that kept me from pulling the trigger. First, in Kickstarter you are funding one project, not an ongoing project or a string of projects (like episodes of a podcast). So to fund Seminary Dropout I would have had to frame it in terms of "seasons", as in "fund this season of Seminary Dropout." That wasn't how I organize my show, there aren't seasons, it's just one episode after another. The second reason holding me back was that in Kickstarter you have to set a goal and if you don't meet that goal you get nothing, ZERO!

So in this scenario if I had launched a Kickstarter campaign and made a goal to raise \$10,000 to fund a season of Seminary Dropout and let's say that a season was a year long, if I raised \$9,999 by the end of the campaign, I would get nothing, game over. So let's say that I wanted to play it safe and only set my goal at \$1,000 to fund a season. If I met that goal, I would then have to wait an entire year before starting another campaign and raising the funding goal. Do you see why Kickstarter isn't a great option for podcasters? The truth is none of the other options I listed above are much different. Enter [Patreon](#). About the time that I was really frustrated with the lack of good options for podcasters I stumbled upon Patreon. Very quickly I started hearing from other podcasters that they were giving it a try. Patreon was made specifically for ongoing projects, so it's perfect for podcasters. Instead of a set time of raising money and an all-or-none proposition, Patreon collects donors (or patrons as they're known on Patreon) giving on a monthly basis for as long as you have an account. So if you launch an account and just have a few patrons giving twenty five cents a month, that's ok, because as more people discover your podcast as time goes on, some of them will become patrons as well, so it only grows as time goes on. This is a great way for family and friends to support you from the beginning.

Indirect

Now let's talk about the indirect ways of monetizing your podcast.

A Book

You wouldn't be starting a podcast if you didn't have something to say about specific issue or topic. So why not write a book about it. If your podcast is about the 80's television show "Who's the Boss", you could

write a book about what WtB (you would certainly have developed an abbreviation for the TV show if it was the central subject of your podcast) has taught you about life, how you originally thought you were a Mona but then found out you were a Samantha. Ok maybe that would be more suited for an e-book.

E-Course

This can work for a variety of podcasts. Imagine that your podcast is about reupholstering furniture. You could create an e-course where you take the participant through the process of reupholstering an old couch and include photo's and step by step instructions, or even videos.

Consulting

Maybe your podcast is about public speaking. You could make yourself available to people for 1 on 1 public speaking coaching. People will pay big bucks for personal help.

Seminars/Webinars

Let's say that your podcast is on speed reading. You could host a once a month speed reading webinar to teach others how to do it, and take questions from attendees.

Physical Product

Finally we get to the physical product. This is different from all other forms of monetizing because it's well... physical. You actually have to go physically make something. The other products we've been discussing are a transfer of ideas, this is a transfer of a good.

Ads

Let's talk about ads for a minute. I know we talked about how to get sponsors earlier and how to get them, but we didn't talk about how to do an actual ad once you get the sponsor.

First of all you should never do an ad for something that you don't believe in. That last thing you want to do as a podcaster is the break the trust of your audience and directing them to a less than stellar product will surely do just that. Also, when you're not truly excited about something, people can tell.

Conclusion

The truth is that for 99% of us no single revenue stream mentioned above will enable us to quit our day job, but with several of these methods combined you'll start to bring in a few dollars and it will grow from there.

Trust

You might have realized by now that "trust" is the keyword here. You want to develop a relationship with your audience and treat them like friends, not dumb sheep or even customers. For this reason you may not want to monetize your podcast until it's been around for awhile and you've built some trust. Use your discretion but be careful. Plugging your Patreon account in your first episode is almost certainly a bad idea. Imagine if you went to a party, met someone for the first time and found out that you have an interest in common. Now imagine that this person immediately asks you for money. That's what it would be like if you plug

your Patreon account in your first episode. You need to show the value of what you're doing *first*. Remember, *content* is key, *not* monetizing.

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Chapter 6: Conclusion

I want to close out this course with a story.

My first (and so far only) book I've written was a direct result from podcasting. I was about to start an interviewing with someone on my podcast and based on the questions I had sent ahead of time he asked if I would write a book with him.

That's the power of podcasting, it puts you in a position for things to happen to you. The point of this is not that you need to have an interview style podcast (trust me it's a lot of work). The point is that when you just consistently create good content, opportunities will arise seemingly out of nowhere.

That wasn't the only time I've had opportunities come to me because of my podcast. I've been asked to contribute to a [book](#), and guest blog for other sites, and be a guest on several other podcasts. All of this because of podcasting.

Now, go create, and see what opportunities are waiting for you.

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If you found this helpful, my [e-course](#) provides more hands on learning including videos, worksheets, and more, as well as access to a private Facebook group of podcasting practitioners like you as well as myself, where I'm available to answer questions and give tips.

-Shane Blackshear