



PLAN

Her

PODCAST

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Hello, I'm Jamie Marquez-Bratcher and I currently live in a 32' travel trailer with my husband and 12 year old daughter. You'll typically find me in a conversation where I'm talking too much, with a cup of coffee and planner in hand.

Professionally I've been in sales most of my adult life. I spent nearly 10 years as an outside sales rep for a business telephone company. After my husband started his own business my stressful demanding travel schedule was no longer cohesive to our life in spite of the six figures it brought in.

With a gift of gab, a passion for organization and more time than I'd ever had in my life to do whatever I wanted ... I honestly had no idea what to do with myself. I spent my time learning WordPress, Podcast Editing, and dipped my toe in a bunch of other business technology. I also threw myself into my hobby of creative planning starting a podcast and holding conferences for the community.

My first podcast was for my hobby and I feel in love with creating content in this way. I quickly realized that this was a tool business owners should be leveraging that was perfect for so many people I knew already. Today I help business owners build podcasts focused on their goals and provide support and tools to help them make this possible.

## Bio



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## Chapter 1

# Finding Your voice

I have a solo podcast and a collaborative podcast. I've often shared many pieces of my past, professional, and private life on these podcasts. It's taken me many years to grow comfortable being vulnerable enough to share my opinions and speak my mind. If this is something that is easy for you, I applaud you. Choosing pieces of your life to share in a way that is both beneficial and logical to others, including me.

I define "finding your voice" as establishing your message, tone, language and ensuring others know what to expect from you.

Why is this important? Brenee Brown vs Joe Rogan. These are both people who have established clear voices that you can hear just when you see their names. Brenee Brown has a calming tone, she speaks on leadership, and has some awesome quotes. Joe Rogan, the hands-down most listened to podcaster in the world, has an excitable tone and is known for saying wildly-all-over-the-place things.

As a podcaster you are placing your voice in a marketplace as a go-to expert for the topic that you are passionate about. Every person on this planet has the desire to be heard, but few choose to record their opinions, edit them, and share them with the world. So where do you start?

I start at the end. I start with what I hope people will take away from what I'm choosing to share. To me, this means I'm entering into a relationship with a community of people. You will likely never meet all the people who listen to the pieces you are about to share. But you need to realize the content you are about to create will build a community of people who are passionate about a topic. You are elevating your voice above the other noise and taking a deep dive into a topic that will influence conversations taking place in the community you are serving. To me this is a big responsibility.



Before you say you aren't sure if anyone will listen...let me stop you right there and tell you your opinion is valid. I'm guessing someone at some time shushed you, rolled their eyes, or made you feel less than. You may be the person who has done this before, too. From this point forward those feelings are invalid. People will listen. It may be just your mom and your BFF to start, but those people are just as important as anyone else. Ok. People will listen, it may take longer than you hoped, but in time, they will hear. 15,000 people a month have been listening to me talk about putting stickers in a day planner. Your message is valid, so is your voice.

Starting a podcast means you are opening up your life, your views, and your worldview to the general public. It doesn't matter if your topic is on your hobby, a perspective on life, or your business; all these things mean you are opening up your life. While the bulk of this is positive, there is also negative that can come along with it.

Remember the scene of Ally Sheedy in *The Breakfast Club* dumping her purse out on the couch for everyone to see her life? (If you have no idea what I'm talking about stop right here and go watch this movie!) In that moment, she was sharing what her life was like. She was open to being vulnerable after spending a day with a small group of people she felt comfortable exposing herself to. Starting a podcast also means being vulnerable.

Let's get the messy stuff out of the way. Where are your boundaries and what DON'T you want to share? Whether you are new to putting your life on the internet or experienced at it, this is always the best place to start. You get to choose what to share and what remains private. This goes for solo podcasts, guests, and even cohosts. Each of us have topics, subjects, or perspectives that are private and should remain that way. Guess what? That's ok! A good episode or podcast, as a whole, doesn't need to be comprised of your dirty laundry, past pains, or uncomfortable topics for the sake of teaching or entertaining others. Even if you are covering a sensitive topic, you can make an impact and still have limits on what you share.



Have an honest conversation with yourself and the people in your life about what topics are off the table. Establishing boundaries will influence the type of show you have and help you get comfortable quickly.

Ask yourself what on this (short) list are you uncomfortable sharing: Your Location (City or State)

- Spouse / Kids Names
- Personal Trauma
- Specifics on your job
- Income or finances
- Religious views
- Family members
- Political views
- Negative opinions
- Sexuality
- Emotionally charged social topics
- Heated opinions of your podcast topic

This isn't a comprehensive list of topics you may want to avoid, just a short list to get started. If you have rules around your social media, the same would apply here. Podcasts are public so the old adage, don't share it if you don't want it splashed on a billboard in Times Square applies. You never know who could listen, so if you are going to share, assume whatever you are saying is going to be said directly to anyone you might know. I like to think, "Would my grandma laugh at this or be ashamed?"

Defining what you want to leave out means you don't have to stress about how you will tackle these topics. It will save a TON of brain space for you to only focus on what you do want to discuss.

Now this doesn't mean these are off-limits topics: you are in charge of shaping your voice. As you mature as a podcaster, things will change and adjust. I'm providing you with some simple guidelines to get started, not hard and fast rules. You may find when you settle in discussing your intended topic that you become more comfortable and feel differently. The purpose of this guide is to help you get started as simply and easily as possible.

Venerable moment: I share tidbits and stories about my family. I share these sometimes – poking fun at them. If I'm sharing it on the podcast it's because I know it's ok. If it's something that is part of their journey, it's not for me to share, I only share it if they've shared it publicly and if I have permission. I never want to upset my family for the sake of entertaining others.



Example: My 21-year-old Zoie is going to ASU to be a teacher; her boyfriend is Dom. My 12-year-old Kendra says silly things and hates flash games. My husband's name is Kelsey and he runs his own marketing agency; also, he's not actually my husband, he's my ex-husband: we are reconciled but not remarried. Kelsey, Kendra, and I live in a 32' Grand Design 2800 BH travel trailer and are traveling the country for 2 years. We launched on May 24, 2019. Zoie lives in our old house with 2 roommates in Gilbert, Arizona.

This is a lot of detail, more than what is comfortable to some people. I've discussed this with my family and these are pertinent details that they are ok with being broadcast to the world. We have had plenty of private talks on the subjects listed above and subjects relevant to my podcast where they will literally say, "Please don't put this on Facebook or discuss on your podcast." I respect that. It's not my responsibility to define how their lives are shared. We are allowed to have private moments: their personal moments with me are just that, private and personal. I'm allowed to talk about aspects of these things and share funny things that happen, but not if I don't have permission. None of them listen to my podcast, but that still doesn't mean I'm allowed to share it. It's disrespectful and I don't want to violate their trust, ever! This is how I show respect.

Eliminating topics or areas of your life that will make you uncomfortable allows you to set the tone for things people can look forward to as they get to know you. You don't have to tell people you are avoiding these topics. Also, as your community grows around your podcast, they will get comfortable knowing how and what you choose to share. I recommend using this as a mental checklist for yourself as you get started.

I'll add that this is a good list to keep in mind when it comes to guests as well. Before starting any interview with a guest, I ask if there is anything off limits. While I don't often tread into these topics purposefully in the podcasts I host, I like to know ahead of time for the sake of editing. If a topic comes up, I can reassure my guest it will be taken out. This also sets my guest's mind at ease so they are comfortable knowing that their boundaries will be respected.

Now that you've defined what you are skipping, let's talk about what you want to leave in!

Regardless of the topic you are planning on building your podcast around, you've likely got a monologue going on in your head - or maybe even on paper already - of how you are planning to start sharing. I want to slow down that locomotive for just a second and ask: have you considered how your community benefits when listening to you share. What will they gain by taking the time each week to come back and hear what you have to say? I remember being pregnant with my first daughter when I was provided the most advice I've ever received in my life. It felt like any woman who had ever been pregnant saw my full-baby belly and turned right to me to tell me the most dramatic sad story they had about being pregnant. They never asked if I or my baby was healthy. They were strangers. I hadn't solicited advice, nor had I expressed any worry. They just launched in - projecting what they thought was important to me. Quickly I stopped listening as I realized they were sharing because it made them feel better or even validated because they got their nugget of advice in. At some point I just nodded until it was over and went on with my life. I did listen to helpful professionals who assured me that these things were not going to happen to me and could tell me why.

Opinions cost nothing. If I had charged a \$1 to listen to the advice that these women gave me, I would have received more of a benefit. Podcasting is not free; your time is worth something and so should the topics you are covering. It is a good idea to value the mindset that the content you are creating by sharing your life is valuable.

You need to consider how others will benefit from what you are sharing. What do they get out of listening to you week after week? Do you want them to consider how to do something differently? Do you want to help them move past something in their lives? Do you hope to make people laugh and make it easier to get through their day?

When I started Planner Girl Chatter I wanted people to benefit from many of the discussions I was having. I was learning from so many people, I didn't want to keep those people and subsequent conversations private. I also hoped people would benefit from laughing about the planner topics I was passionate about. Lastly, we knew there were people homebound who couldn't attend local meetups, so we wanted to give them a way to participate, too. Obviously, this evolved as we went along, and it's become more than that, but those were the initial goals.

Any time I discuss a topic I ask myself, "Why is this important to me?" Is it something that I need to get off my chest? OR is this something I think can help other people. I don't want to talk for the sake of saying something; I want to be sharing with a purpose. I would not recommend using your podcast as a place to vent about topics that only apply to you. It's selfish and it gets old fast.

This doesn't mean what's happening in your life is not relevant to your podcast. Real life will become topical inside your podcast. It's scary how comfortable it becomes. Find a friend, grab a drink, and sort your life out privately. Then, pull out the relevant pieces of what you've learned from that conversation and share as a lesson to benefit others and enrich their lives and to shape your voice for those listening. If you are hearing it on a podcast of mine, it's because I've likely already discussed a topic privately with a few friends before it was recorded.

Your voice will develop over time. My first blog was about professional etiquette in 2011. I shut it down in 2012. A year later, I started a second blog about my teen pregnancy journey. I wrote 6 articles and abandoned it, having never gotten comfortable. I started periscoping (using the Periscope app) about productivity and planners in 2015. My cohosts and I started Planner Girl Chatter in 2017. I started a standalone podcast in 2018. It's only taken me 8 years to get comfortable being vulnerable, and it will take you time as well.

When attempting to establish your voice as a podcast creator, you have to adjust your mindset as well. I like to think that someday I'll be getting interviewed by Barbra Walters and need to answer for myself as to why I chose podcasting. Before I start each episode, I ask myself a few questions to solidify my mindset:

- What benefit did I gain or what did I learn from these lessons I'm about to share?
- What is my motivation for sharing?
- What validation am I hoping to find?
- What do I hope to get out of this?
- How will I handle negative feedback should this message not be well received?

You need to know why you are sharing and be really, really honest with yourself. If you can define these things for yourself, you will be able to benefit others. It's ok to want good things for yourself. It's ok to want to grow your business, get paid to speak on stage, or have people hire you. Do you want to help people or make a difference to a specific set of people? There are going to be days you want to quit, and you will question, "Why am I doing all of this?" You need to write this motivation down and remind yourself this is why you are investing your time and money into this podcast.

With every episode you publish, you are working yourself closer to being an authority or an expert on the topic you are speaking about. In being vulnerable and sharing, we are hoping to be recognized for doing just that. There are a lot of actionable steps that you have to take to create a podcast. What you are doing is no accident. It feels good to share your efforts and have people react well. The affirmation that your opinions are worthwhile comes with the community being built around the podcast and feedback you receive, positive and negative.

Podcasting can be a great way to be helpful to a lot of people, but it is work. Be honest. Work toward the goal you hope to get from creating content for others because this journey can be hard.

The answers to these questions will also help you decide who you want to have on your show. These questions will bring out your personal values and attitudes around creating content on your specific topic and help you eliminate those peoples' voices that don't align with yours.

Specifically - creepy pitchy scammers are out there. There are a lot of people creating content purely to make a buck. They will say anything and do anything to make money and are constantly looking for new podcasts to access in order to gain their latest audience to pitch to. It's yucky, you'll feel them. Go with your gut and don't be that person.

I have more to say on this topic, but I'd be short sighted if I didn't mention authenticity. Authenticity means being real. For me, working in a corporate job meant that I needed to build a persona. I needed to say the right thing in a certain tone, and that would help people take me seriously. Don't do this. It's cringey. People will know.



## Chapter 2

# Discovering & Defining Your Audience

Outside of what microphone to use, how do I grow and build an audience is the #1 question that I get asked about podcasting. Who will listen to this message that I have? How do I find and identify those people and how do I know if I'm doing it right? Short answer is it depends.

Let's start with what an audience is. I define a "podcast audience" as the community of people who will be listening to your podcast. I like to think of it as a theatre of people who want to engage in discussions on the topics you are exploring on your podcast. So, who are these people?

They are likely people just like you. I am a 39-year-old mother of 2. My community is primarily women between the ages of 25 - 45. They value family, organization, and love talking about day planners. Not everyone is a mom or the exact same age, we don't have the same body types or jobs, but we have common concerns and values. You may not be sharing anything at this point but look in the mirror because chances are the people who will become your audience are very similar to you.

Attracting people who will listen to your podcast is much easier when you are looking for people similar to you. If you notice, there is a common theme here. Sharing is not for everyone. Back to the theatre example, it's awkward to stand in a room with other yours demographically and choose to elevate your voice. I remember when I heard all these things, I rolled my eyes a bit. But as I've grown communities around the things I love, I see pieces of myself in all that I am doing and I hear experiences that seem familiar. I meet people often who have been able to relate their lives to mine quickly because they've heard me share relatable experiences that have impacted them.



Come to this project with your own voice. Don't model yourself after anyone. Don't play a character. When it's time to hit record and you open your mouth to share your life with people, be yourself. Tell your stories in your words. Share your experiences and don't hold back the feelings, emotions, or hide how you felt.

This may be the first time in your life you are exploring the idea of actively sharing you as a whole person. You are smart. You are relevant. Your feelings are valid. As you go down this path, let people SEE you and fall in love with you. Over time magic happens, and one day you'll meet someone whose life was changed through what you shared. They will come up to you and cry because you were the person who had the courage to share.

You are the person who had the confidence to encourage them to make a change.

You modeled a next step for them they didn't think was possible.

Podcasting is 100% better when you are just you, vulnerable and open, building a community around the things you care about and people who care about you. Remember, your goal should always be building a community around your podcast. You are doing this to stand out, if you don't want to step out of the crowd, stay right where you are, stop reading right now and go do something else.

Don't show up in costume; come in sweats and a messy ponytail ready to dig deep and have great conversations that start with coffee in the morning and 6 hours later it's lunch and you want more. Fall in love with yourself, and your community of listeners. Share your experiences, connect with others, learn from them, ask for feedback, build a relationship.



The technical term for what we are doing is defining an avatar. You can also think of this as a list of preferences and facts that make up the average person who comprises your audience. This doesn't mean that every person is 39 with 2 kids. It does mean that moms who go to Target are avatars. People who like Pumpkin Spice Lattes are avatars. We all likely fall into stereo-typical categories, whether we like it or not. Yes, we are all unique, but collective likes and dislikes mean that we can all find commonalities, especially when speaking on specific topics.

There are dividing lines on these topics though, too. In podcasting, there are a few areas that I see predominantly, and you may need to decide, inside of what you choose to share, who you want to attract. Like we discussed in the previous chapter this will come down to what and how you choose to share.

Here's an oversimplified example of me: I cuss, so do my podcast cohosts. We decided early on to cuss. This is not in line with some potential audience members' values or how they choose to spend their podcast time. If you listen to podcasts with your kids in the car and you don't want them to hear the f word used like a comma, then don't listen to Planner Girl Chatter. While I may have the average mom of 2 between 25 - 45, others may not be in my audience because I cuss. I'm ok with that because that allows me to be comfortable sharing my hobby authentically.

Your audience will define themselves. Those who love you will share you with likeminded people and grow your audience. Over time this becomes a refined avatar that you will recognize.

Realizing this early on not only helps you shape your voice but know where to share your message with the right people. Where is your audience? Not in physical location, but in like thinking, so they can find you.

There are thousands of books, courses, videos, and entire podcasts dedicated to audience-growth strategies. I'm not recreating those, but there is a point: they are relevant. For the sake of getting started, here's what you need to know: when starting out, your audience will be comprised of the people you know and the people they know. You will be sharing your podcast on all the platforms where you hang out and interact with people on your topic.

If you have a successful online following, you are obviously going to be sharing with that existing audience you've built. The people who listen to podcasts may make up smaller audience. For example, I do not watch a lot of YouTube videos, but I follow a lot of YouTubers on Instagram. Now if they come out with a podcast, obviously I'm all over that.

If you are still saying in the back of your head, my social media audience size is too small? Its a common hangup, and deterrent by many to get started. There are brilliant people outside the internet. There are also people with 50K+ subscribers who wouldn't take the stage in front of a live audience if their lives depended on it. The number of people listening to you where you are today does not reflect what your potential podcast audience my look like, nor does it mean your message isn't relevant to your audience. Again, think relational and impact, and don't get wrapped up in a follower count.



I'll use myself as an example. As of writing this I'm personally hovering around 1700 Instagram followers, Planner Girl Chatter has around 2500. A popular artist I follow launched a podcast earlier this year. She has nearly 200,000 followers on Instagram, but I'm outranking her in the podcast category we both share. We have a similar audience, we are in the same category, there is cross over of listeners. BUT I feel awesome that our podcast is more popular at this moment with our shared audiences in spite of lacking 180,000 followers on one platform.

Remember in the last chapter when I asked you to examine your motivation and what validation you're getting? This doesn't always translate to numbers. I know I'm making an impact.

We are building deep connections: I will always come back to this theme - you are building a community of people around the topics you are discussing. I promise, promise, promise you that no number of followers is going to validate you. What people DO with what you share and the impact it makes on their lives and their families' lives will be the thing that keeps you going.

Strategies and the way we communicate are rapidly changing. It is time consuming, and the fulfillment is waning when you are chasing followers. I know women who have 6 figure incomes from creating content and have very few followers on social media because the impact they make 1 to 1 serving people extends beyond a like.

Also, over the years we've all participated in this grand experiment called social media; we've slowly become conditioned to sell to each other. We don't even realize we are doing it. The way we share things. Adopting the tone of people we emulate and look up to. Even the way we capture moments to ensure logos and brands can be tagged and highlighted. It's like a constant unconscious pitchfest out there. For me at times I only hear the voices of the parents in cartoon Charlie Brown...wha wha wha, wha wha. Be cautious with these tools and recognize early how you want to be using your voice to share with an audience.

On the flip side of this you will leverage social media to share what you are up to as you grow. I do my best to treat my “audience” intelligently, and document what's happening vs constantly asking and asking for more. Because I've not abused this and I've asked for people to listen, as I've shared, and had success when I've asked people to participate in my . we build, keep in mind ways you can leverage that to your benefit. Ask the people you know are listening to share, ask them to send this episode or that episode to someone who will find it relevant. We aren't here for shallow numbers; we are here for connections.

So how do you get the attention of people who have nothing but nonstop noise happening around them at all times? I promise you, as you embark on this journey there will be times that you will feel like you are standing in the middle of a crowded room and everyone is talking. In other moments you will be the guru speaking truths that resonate with people in ways you never realized were possible.

At the risk of dating myself, I think the easiest way to illustrate this is by talking about landlines. I'm a child of the 80s and a teen of the 90s. In those decades it was not normal for every member of the family over the age of 10 to have a cell phone. You had a house phone – maybe two. That phone sat in the kitchen, or sometimes you'd have one in the living room; in fact, if you were really rich (I was very poor, lol) you got a phone in your room. Now, this usually wasn't a private line. When the phone would ring in the house, all the phones rang in the house, meaning anyone could answer OR more than one person could answer at the same time.

This meant if you were trying to call your BFF, her mom, dad, brother or any other family member could be answering the phone. God forbid you were calling your crush and their older brother or sister, fully aware of said crush, answered. You had to be prepared for any situation because this was like telephone roulette!

Once you called your friend a few times you'd quickly become accustomed to who would answer. If it was their mom, you'd sit up straight, use formal terms like Mrs., and politely ask for your friend. If it was your BFF's little brother, whom you hated, you had a special greeting for them.

The point being, you tailored what you wanted to say to the appropriate tone for the conversation. If you failed to communicate politely or worse choked and said nothing...click, they would hang up and you'd get disconnected. Before starting your podcast, you need to know who in the heck you are calling so you set the appropriate tone.

Now I know I ended the last chapter talking about showing up, as you in your tone, which still stands. We've also discussed how you are looking for pieces of yourself as well and how avatars make up your audience.



In the analogy above, you are trying to reach your BFF or your crush on the phone. When building a relationship with your podcast listeners think of them as someone you want to attract. You've attracted a friend by opening yourself up over time, you've both shared experiences, and know what to expect from each other inside that relationship. This doesn't mean that your friend's mom may never find value in what you are sharing in time. Be cautious not to completely isolate the people who listen to your podcasts' extended network of people as you go as well. The people listening to your podcast are likely folks looking to learn more from you and they know people who are likely similar to you. Keeping your overall messaging broad will allow you to be relatable.

I'll share how I've conscientiously executed on this:

Not everyone who listens to my podcast Plan Her Podcast is looking to start a podcast or a business. Some are just looking for inspiration to keep going on whatever project they are focused on. I want to provide encouragement to them, in spite of my personal focus of finding those wanting to add podcasts to their business venture, so I can provide services to them. I keep my advice broad and relatable as they are both similar final objectives.

OR

I use my planner to manage my family, but I know not every person who listens to Planner Girl Chatter and relates to me is 39 years old with 2 children. When I do give advice, I'm keeping this in mind and attempt to keep it broad enough that it's applicable to anyone who is slightly type A and using a planner to manage their life. While there are times I provide mom-specific advice it's unusual to steer the conversations that way.

So, while there are times that you will record specific episodes that are so topical it's going to sound like venting or talking to yourself, that is outside of the norm. Think of it like this, would your BFF stick around if the time you spent together ONLY revolved around talking about your life? Find opportunities to include everyone in the conversations you are having by asking open ended questions OR ask your audience to find you on social media to be a part of the conversation. Developing this skill will help you build a stronger relationship and ensure you aren't just taking nonstop about yourself. Encouraging and supporting your audience while engaging with them gives back to those people investing in you and recognizes their contribution to the relationship.

Keeping with the telephone analogy, I used to call my high-school BFF every day at 4. No one at her house would answer the phone because they knew it was for my friend. It was like a date. Releasing your podcast on a consistent date garners trust and excitement. If people know you release on Monday, release as often as possible on Monday. If you release weekly, but with no date just release it weekly. Make a date with people and stick to it. The more consistent you can be, the more people will follow along. It also makes it easier for them to share with their friends knowing when new episodes will come out.

A few notes on this: If you choose to have a podcast cohost your episodes are going to rely on both of you taking the time to record episodes. Take it from me, this can be challenging. While I'm writing this book, I have 1 podcast cohost who is traveling for the next 2 months and another that has a packed schedule. I already know there is no chance a recording is going to happen, and we are going to get behind. We didn't communicate well to say this is what's coming up, and it crept up on all of us. No one is perfect and your podcast will experience weeks like this. Let people know you are coming back. Schedules, technology, and life gets in the way of perfection, give yourself a bit of grace.

I've talked a lot about relationships and community up to this point, and now I'm connecting those back to BFF's on purpose. I want you to start seeing that taking on a podcast also means showing up regularly. In the past, I've coached people who said, "The audience doesn't listen consistently." Then I look at their release schedule and one time they released on a Tuesday, then 3 weeks later on a Friday. I, too, am guilty of doing this.

The challenge an uneven release schedule creates is people have no idea when your next episode is coming out. Your podcast becomes less and less relevant. Also, it stops showing up in social media feeds and may unsubscribe them from your podcast on some platforms if you wait too long. Do your best to show up for your community and let them know when you are taking a break. If you stop calling your BFF, she may not be there a year later, and the same is true for those folks listening to your podcast.

I'm sure you are still wondering how you expand beyond those people like you who are hanging out in areas where they may already know you. My next recommendation is bringing guests onto your podcast. This is a powerful way not only to validate your voice, but expand your community beyond those who already know, like, and trust you.

So how do you find great guests for your podcast? I look to people I'm following, those in the same space as me who I can learn from or want to get to know better. When I choose a guest, I prefer partnering with people who have similar voices to mine. I don't need them to agree with me, I don't need them to repeat what I say, I need them to compliment the topics I'm already covering. When their episode airs, they share with their audience. The guest's influence and recommendation validate my voice and can help people find me. I'm also helping to establish them as an expert on the topics they are speaking on.

I would also recommend you find podcasts you'd like to be on! Reach out to those people covering complementary topics. Many podcasts have a guest submission form on their website, or you can reach out over social media. Should you choose this, it's a good idea to actually listen to the podcast and make sure it's a good fit and that the topic you are thinking they discuss is in fact what they discuss. I had someone pitch me a party planner podcast guest once and I was so confused considering our topic is paper planners not event planning. Don't be that guy.

The purpose of this guide is to get you started podcasting. I want this to be the little push that eliminates the excuse standing in your way of actually getting your butt in a chair and recording.

Getting hung up on this or going much deeper is like waiting to buy a house so you can get top dollar for reselling it. All you need to do is find an area that reflects you and decide where you want to live.

Growing an audience happens with time: discovering more about who wants to hear from you will only come if you actually share your life. I am constantly surprised at some of the connections I've made while podcasting. I've had the opportunity to have conversations with people I've looked up to who were listening, and I didn't even know it. The most impactful moments for me have been meeting people who are not influencers or people who have never interacted with me but I was able to cry with as they shared how I'd impacted them.

Your audience will find you if you are consistent. Your voice will resonate - if you share it. The impact you make will be unexpected and can be unpredictable. You will discover things about yourself, and your audience, (which becomes your community) will change you as you discover and define yourself and your voice. Concern yourself more with making consistent quality content that people are comfortable recommending, and your audience will find you.



# Chapter 3

## Making offers & Monetization

I do not love the side-hustle culture that exists today. I think that it's ok to have a hobby and never monetize it. I also believe it's ok to share your story for the sake of sharing instead of making money. BUT having invested a lot of time and personal funds in passion projects I wish someone (other than my husband...who of course I rarely listen to) would have stopped me and asked me how I planned to monetize everything I've done. It's not horrible to have this mindset and there is a cost associated with having and maintaining a podcast.

If you were to book a 1-on-1 with me the first question I ask you is, "What is/are your plans to monetizing this?" In my humble opinion, yes, you should go into your podcast project evaluating how you can make money off it. If monetization is your only goal, there are easier ways to make money, go do something else.

This is a topic I debated skipping since this is intended to be a getting started guide. I am leaving it in because I want to be fair and ensure you have the right mindset around getting started. What I hope this doesn't leave you with is the idea that you will have a 6-figure income after your first 3 episodes drop. So, I'm going to do my best to inform while also managing your expectations.

Business owners should be creating content as a strategy to help drive business. If you have the gift of gab and love talking instead of writing (like a blog), or being on video (for YouTube) voice is the perfect platform. Podcasting is a neat way to allow customers to get to know you and for you to share business-adjacent topics you are passionate about, keep them informed on new things you are offering, and create a really loyal customer.



If you do not own a business and want to start a podcast, you should not discount the idea of monetization. I would just recommend you consider what I'm about to share. There are hard costs associated with starting: hosting, microphone, your time, whether to add a website, episode graphics, intro / exit. Even if this is for a hobby, you've got costs. Knowing the right time and having the confidence to take money for podcasting is going to be key.

Below is a brief overview, in no particular order, of ways you can make money podcasting. Some people use all of these strategies; others use none. This is totally up to you and is something to consider prior to getting started, as it may shape the way your show is structured, or how to go about tackling the topic you are choosing.

## Sponsors & Ads

It doesn't matter what you are talking about, there are products that will compliment your podcast. As a podcaster, you are creating a hyper-focused list of potential customers and businesses who look to you for advice. Your voice is, or will be, valuable in that space. Advertisers are willing to pay you to access the audience you are building.

One way you can leverage sponsored content is to get a company to sponsor an ad for a fixed amount, a 1-time amount, or an ongoing amount for you to talk about them on your podcast. That ad could be placed at the beginning, middle, or passively when it's semi-relevant.

This is a great way to establish strong relationships and cover aspects or all of your podcast content. Building strong relationships with brands can help enhance your voice and validate you as a pro. It's also a great way to become the go-to person who has the latest greatest of whatever a company you are passionate about is releasing.

The downside to this is that for some audiences, it can cheapen your message making people feel like you are "only saying this because you are paid to." Also, being too aggressive with ads and sponsorships can be annoying and detract from your overall message. I'd recommend using these relationships cautiously.

I tell anyone who asks that they should keep their content separate from a brand. Running an ad or creating some sponsored content for a company that you don't own means you are tied to that company. If they make a public misstep or decide to move away from advertising with you, it can significantly impact you. It's the classic don't put all your eggs in one basket advice.

Ads or sponsored content will allow you to share a brand's message inside your content. You may seek this type of relationship out, or the company may reach out to you, if they find value in the content you are sharing. These may sound like a little commercial inside your podcast or a whole episode dedicated to the product. Compensation is typically negotiated based on both you and your sponsor's needs and budgets. This is a great way to grow relationships with relevant companies that you already enjoy.



# SPONSOR

Your podcast hosting company may also offer ads once you hit certain tiers of listeners. Some will allow you to record the ad so it allows you to steer the conversation toward that ad. Others will interrupt your episode and the ad will play. You often have less control over where this ad is placed. Some will allow you to choose the place the ad plays. These services vary significantly so do your research.

When you are ready to seek these relationships, be prepared to share listener data from your host. It's also a great idea to put together a media packet about your podcast prior to attempting to form this kind of relationship.

The upside of this strategy is that they are relatively painless to record and add to your podcast. Again, the downside is that they can be annoying to listeners and overuse can be obnoxious. I can't recommend strongly enough limiting these ads and making sure the product is relevant to your audience. If you want to turn people off quickly, put in a crap-ton of irrelevant ads. I've had a few podcasts I've stopped listening to because for every 30 minutes of podcast it feels as if I have to listen to 20 minutes of ads.

Sponsored ads are a good way of generating income and building valuable relationships or even getting first access to new products. This is a powerful way to grow your podcast, as well, should the company be open to sharing what you are doing and also has a significant following.

## Patreon

Built off the idea of supporting a variety of arts, Patreon allows you to create tiers of content for listeners in exchange for a fixed amount of money paid on a monthly or per item basis.

You can choose to do special events, monthly special content, or one-time content. This is a great place to bring your most exciting community members and reward them for supporting you. I love leveraging Patreon to engage in deeper discussions around the topics I'm creating.

I have used Patreon for our Planner Girl Chatter podcast and we are currently executing on 4 tiers of support. These give people access to different levels of interaction with us throughout the month. We are getting ready to start leveraging more one-off products and classes in 2020 so I'll update this guide as I learn how that goes.

I've leveraged this platform to cover all the travel costs for my cohosts for going out and meeting our community at events over the past year. Patreon funds have allowed us to attend 6 events where we have spoken and to cover the cost of creating our podcast. It's been very valuable.

Patreon can be a lot or a little bit of work, but it is work. This requires setting up and maintaining a separate page and executing on the services you've committed to. This is ideal if you've got a really engaged community and you'd like to streamline and monetize their access to you.

## Kickstarter

Kickstarter is a way to fund a variety of projects. People can pledge a fixed amount of money for a definite perk. If the requested amount of money is pledged, the money goes to you and you are responsible for delivering the perk.

The upside of Kickstarter is that you can measure the interest in your podcast project, get the word out and, heck, maybe it will work out. The yuck side of this is that I see it being used to raise money to pay the podcaster's time for making episodes and most of these projects fail.

I've not used this strategy, just observed it. I don't think it's ideal for podcasting, and it's relatively inexpensive to get started anyway. In speaking to people who have attempted this, it's not worth the time to do this.

## Products & Offers

If you own a business, sharing your products or services in your podcast is a great way to let people know about the latest greatest thing. You can make offers to them for special deals, announce release dates, and even give promo codes. Like in the sponsored ads section, you are benefiting directly from the advertising of the products you sell.

This is 100% the best way to make money from podcasting in my opinion.

## Events & Workshops

Since I believe that you are building a community around the topics your podcast is discussing, doing events and workshops are really really relevant to me. It doesn't matter if you are getting together online, planning a workshop, or a multi-day event, people want to get in a room with others. They not only want to connect with you, but with others passionate about the topic you are sharing.

**Workshops** - I would categorize these as less than 75 people. Typically, they last 1-4 hours and are focused on 1 topic or overview of a group of topics. I've taken workshops that range from \$20 to \$400, and they've taken place online or in person.

**Events** - These are typically a 1 - 3+ day affairs. These are comprised of a group of people speaking on complementary topics and the attendees range from 75 - 500.

Putting events together is time consuming and a huge undertaking. If you've never put on a large birthday party or wedding, you may not know how stressful these events can be. I would recommend hiring a professional event organizer if you choose to go down this path.

Workshops and Events can be profitable if managed with profit in mind. Again, there are better ways to make money, and there is a limit to how many events you can hold in a year. Be clear on what your vision is, evaluate what value it brings, and manage that budget closely.

## Public Speaking

Getting out from behind the mic and out in front of a crowd can be another great way to monetize your podcast without having to put on an event. The people you want in your audience are also physically at conferences and workshops that others are putting on. Search for events that center around your topic and reach out to the event organizers or keep an eye out for open speaker calls to apply.



Speakers and experts can be compensated not only for their travel but also for their time. Plus, being physically present at an event can open up a variety of opportunities for you, like additional speaking opportunities, sponsors, or future guests, and even other speaking / sponsorship opportunities. You are also able to leverage speaking as a tool to pitch and find not only new audience members, but to share products you are creating or launching.

Should you choose to integrate speaking as a strategy to create income I've got a few amazing people I can recommend who have helped me tremendously. Just don't work for free or for the opportunity. Ensure their budget is workable, and find a way to make sure it's profitable for you as well.

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See, there are plenty of ways to make money podcasting and you should be considering that before you get started. I didn't go into my initial blogs, passion projects, or first podcast thinking about how this could become profitable and I probably should have. You would think I'd know better with my background being sales.

I did professional sales for nearly 10 years. Creating a pitch and asking for money is something I've grown comfortable with. I've got a course in mind for how to do this for the future, but for now I'm doing 1-on-1 consulting to help my clients structure these monetization strategies. If you have an existing podcast and you'd like to set up a strategy session to discuss monetization, reach out to me at [jamie@planherpodcast.com](mailto:jamie@planherpodcast.com) (see that's a pitch!)

We've all got that friend who just nonstop talks about their business, mildly selling all the time and it's annoying. If your podcast becomes a pitch fest people will be annoyed and stop listening, so make sure you are balancing relevant content and offers / pitches. Treat your audience intelligently and respect their time. When making offers, do so sparingly. Place ads in relevant places and don't sacrifice the quality of the content you are creating for the sake of a buck.

As you can see there are plenty of ways to monetize your message inside of podcasting without being sleazy or going too far out of your comfort zone. Before you get started it's a great idea to build a short list of people you may want to work with and strategies you'd like to explore. You may use that list sooner than you expect.

Podcasting has benefited me financially in a few ways. It's created an income that's allowed me to eliminate a job and own my own business. Sharing my life has allowed me to speak at 7 events in the past 12 months, all paid for with many of these strategies. Right now I'm living several dreams I've had for years like traveling full time, teaching about goal setting, and speaking alongside people I look up to. Thanks podcasting!



## Chapter 4

# Show & Episode Structure

In 2007, a movie came out called *Knocked Up*. In it, Seth Rogen and his roommates have an idea for a website. They reveal that they dumped 2 years into developing the idea and concept only to have Katherine Heigel tell them it existed already. It can be a real let down when you realize your great idea is already being executed.

Chances are a podcast exists on the topic you are wanting to discuss. With all the volume of content being created today being the first to cover a topic is very challenging. That doesn't mean that the people you know will not listen to your podcast. *Plan Her Podcast* is a podcast on personal development and pursuing your passions while planning your podcast journey, kinda basic and this is a very covered topic.

The topic you have in mind is likely going to have this same challenge to overcome. Your homework is to go find it and listen to it. Leverage the fact that it exists! Tune your ear and decide what you love, what you hate, and what you'd do differently. Be open minded, too, because this person is already doing what you want to do; learn from them for free! YAY! Heck, this may be someone you want to have on your podcast in the future.

I listened to at least 8 craft podcasts and probably another 20 podcast intros just to get an idea of what was possible so I could differentiate my voice from everyone else's. When I listen to a new podcast, I've got my ear tuned to how the topic in the episodes is introduced, discussed, and closed out.

Creating a flow and structure to your podcast will allow people to get comfortable with the flow of your podcast. When you listen to other podcasts, you are going to see a few formulas for how a podcast is structured. The basic mechanics of most episode is as follows:

Intro > Episode Introduction > Introduction > Discussion > The Point > Close

Episode Introduction > Intro > Introduction >> The Point > Discussion > Close

Sprinkle in a few rabbit holes, personal updates, and banter, and you've got a podcast episode. This is the magic. These are small conversations. Sometimes the rabbit holes are what people look forward to the most! Don't be afraid to bring in personal banter, just make sure to return to the topic.

Podcast episodes can range from 5 min to 3 hours. There is no hard and fast rule on how long they should go. It's personal preference and relevant to the attention span of the audience. Marie Forelo does 5 - 10-minute episodes 1 - 3 times a week and has longer episodes here and there. Joe Rogen has episodes that last 1 - 3 Hours and releases them nearly daily.

What's best for you? That's up to you. Look at the amount of time you have to dedicate to each episode. If you are self-editing and self-publishing, I'd add 45 - 60 minutes for every 30 minutes of recording. It's not unusual for a 1 hour episode to take me 4 hours to put together from start to finish.

For my solo podcast, I keep the episodes at 20 - 30 minutes because it's hard for me to talk to myself for longer than that and stay focused on the topic. For the podcast I have with cohosts, we literally have to cut each other off at 60 minutes because it's social and at times hard to stay on topic. In your intro episode, you will be letting people know what they can expect, so start considering what you can commit to.

Back in Chapter 2, I talked about keeping consistent release dates. In addition to length, format, and flow, scheduling your podcast to release on specific days is also an aspect of your podcast structure. Having a successful podcast comes from consistency - from the way you talk to people, to the flow of the discussion, and onto the way you explore the topics. The more routine you can get, the more comfortable and excited the community listening to your podcast will be about new episodes, offers, and sharing what you are up to. Everything in this guide is to help you build a solid foundation to be successful as you launch into your podcast.



## Preparing for Your Episodes

When I was in corporate sales, many of my presentations consisted of weeks of engineering, custom power points, planning and testing software demos. No matter how prepared I was I was still nervous for the first year or so that I didn't know enough. So, do you need weeks and weeks of preparation for each episode? I can assure you, I never spend a week or even more than an hour thinking in advance about episodes I'm going to record.

Gasp.

Now, I am a brilliant conversationalist. I'm half joking, but also totally serious. I've had a lot of training as a sales person, I'm extremely extroverted and have done a lot of networking over the years. My background and experience make me comfortable speaking to just about anyone on any topic, and it's rare that I find myself in a speechless moment. My mom says I've always had the gift for gab and connecting with people. She even recalls that when I was a kid I would go right to the front of the room at any baby or bridal shower and inject myself into the action. I am not everyone.

How much time and research you spend on a topic and organizing your thoughts will be up to you and the weight of the subject matter. My general rule of thumb is to stick to topics I know I can comfortably speak on. I also try to interview people on topical issues that I know I can discuss. There have been times where I've brought up articles and topics that I'd read an article and done some additional research.

I've coached others who want to cover topics that are more political, technical or sensitive who have asked this question. My advice is do your research. One of the podcasts I edit is for a real estate agent and another is for a lawyer. They do their research. The topics they are covering could cause them personal liability, be perceived as professional advice, or impact people if they don't have due diligence. Episodes they are publishing have a significant amount of pre-recording time invested in them.

How you prepare for the topics you are discussing will vary on who you are and how prepared you'd like to be. While you may not be an expert on every topic, you are likely an expert on some topics. You know how you feel about a topic, and we've already established where you don't want to go with your podcast.

When I have moments where I'm not sure how I want to tackle a topic, I will build an outline. This doesn't take me long and looks something like this:

- Introduce topic
- Reason I want to discuss this
- Point 1
- Point 2
- Point 3
- How this benefits my listeners
- Why they should agree with me
- Recap & Final thoughts.

I often walk myself through this outline on my solo podcast and use it as a reference guide when I feel like I'm not getting to the point. Sometimes when I start talking my brain starts moving faster than I realized or I think of other things. This structure helps me keep on track, get to the point, and ensure the episode covers the topic I anticipated.

Some people do choose to write entire scripts for their episodes. It's ok to do that as well, just keep in mind when you are reading from a script you can lose the natural vocal tone, breathing, and normal laughter that comes with a conversation.

A script for your podcast isn't a bad idea when you are first starting out, especially if you are really nervous. If you record it and listen back, I'm sure you'll be able to hear where you are comfortable and where you need to spend some time improving your public speaking skills or getting more comfortable with the content you are discussing. Should you choose this method of getting your point across I'd encourage you to gradually move away from them and to an outline in time. Once you are regularly recording, editing and sharing you'll get more confident in this process.





## Guests or no guests?

I enjoy interviewing people. If you plan on including guests in your podcast, all the stuff we've talked about up to this point is hyper-relevant. This person is throwing their voice behind your project, and you are also validating them as an expert. This can be a really big deal for all involved.

When I ask someone to be a guest on my show, I've typically interacted with them on social media or they've interacted with me. I like talking to people I know and trust. I want to elevate voices that have been helpful to me, and as we discussed in chapter 1, that align with my values. In the situation where my cohost is choosing the guest, I have to do some research. I'll take the time to look at their social media, watch their content, and get ready to have a relevant conversation. I want to respect them and hope they do the same for me.

If you aren't quick on your feet or if you don't know your guest well, I'd recommend emailing research-based questions to your guest in advance of the planned episode. Some guests may not listen to your podcast, and you can calm their nerves by doing this, plus it gives them prep time too. I don't like to think of myself as a gotcha kind of interviewer. I want a good experience for everyone, so I do my best to manage their expectations and share how I record. I also like to get a photo and an introduction, so I can represent them in the most respectful way.

Literally treat people like they are a guest in your own home is the best advice I can give. Not only email questions in advance, follow up with them when their episode is released. It is kind to share their episode's graphic and a link to where they can find it. Be sure to send a thank-you, too!

## Seasons

I make a new season every year. I'm currently in season 1 of my solo podcast but in season 3 of my collaborative podcast. This is another preferential thing about podcasting; there is no rule saying you have to do one thing or another.

I've seen seasons used in a lot of creative ways.

- A new season each quarter to break up the discussions on smaller topics a host is tackling. This is a great way to separate or move on from a topic that may have a lot of perspectives but limited discussion from your perspective.
- Fresh seasons to change out cohosts: yes, this does happen. Life happens and circumstances change; some podcasts will have seasonal or topical cohosts as well.
- Fresh seasons to mark a milestone or end with a goal achieved. Recently a podcast I follow had a sponsor leave, and they used a fresh season to introduce a new sponsor.
- Lastly a chance to refresh. If you've been tired, find a nice stopping point, and let people know you'll be back. Fresh intro, fresh perspective doesn't hurt ever.

The options and flexibility are endless when it comes to podcasting, and the great thing about creating it is being able to tailor it to what works best for you. I can't recommend enough that you get into a routine early on with release dates. Know yourself and know what's important to you and to your community. The goal is to benefit both you and your community. If you are uncomfortable or get off track, reset it. If you aren't sure where to go, you're building in people who want to hear you explore topics that are important to all of you. See the layers coming together!?



## Chapter 5

# Naming/Logo/Social Media

Ok what are you going to call this podcast? You likely have something in mind, but let's check it and make sure it's going to work before we get married and have babies with it. There is no worse feeling than getting really attached to a name and finding out there is something horribly wrong that forces you to abandon a name you love or worse that someone else is using it already.

Lead. Don't Follow.

This is my rule when it comes to naming. Early on in my experiences creating, I got an aggressive message from someone telling me I was treading on their trademark. I was threatened with a cease-and-desist and in the end, I wasn't married to the name and changed it. Where I had gone wrong was that I used a pair of words that were close to someone else's business. It was a problem, I had no idea, they saw it quickly and reached out very kindly.

So how do you avoid that? Research!

Start by making sure the name you want isn't taken. The first place I start is a website called [namechekr.com](http://namechekr.com). This website allows you to plug in the name of just about anything and searches the web for that user name across domain hosts, social media, and a variety of other platforms. Type your name in exactly how you'd like it; then, try it a few different ways to make sure the phrase isn't being used. Example: `plannergirlchatter` could also be `planner_girl_chatter` or `planner.girl.chatter`. Just try it a few ways to make sure no one is using it.

*Next up:* google it. You never know what people could be using a phrase for.

I also like to check hashtags on Instagram. You just never know what a name you love could be associated with.

If you have words like “co” for company, drop those and perform the same search.

Once you've searched on the web, tell a few trusted friends what you are thinking of. None of us want to be Joey from Friends thinking Joseph Stalin is an acceptable stage name. There may be something you overlooked that you want someone to point out to you at this stage!

If you find anything that looks or seems similar or if someone could confuse your podcast name with someone else's name, just start over. It's not worth dealing with problems like this. People will try to fight this or think people don't know. They will. The world is too small a place these days to mess with this; literally, just go back to the drawing board.

Now if this name has cleared all the checks, get all the things for it right now. Go out and buy the .com, get the Instagram, make a private Facebook page. Lock that down. If it's tied to your business, hire a trademark lawyer and trademark it. I cannot express how important it is to tie up your name early on. You are about to start investing money and time building around that name: lock it down whatever way you can afford to do so. You cannot afford to skip this step because if you do, it may come back to bite you later.

Do you have an existing business or brand name you want to go by and own all the social media to? You are welcome to use that as the name of your podcast. That's ok too! Lots of people will extend their business name to their podcast.

## Logo Creation & Branding

There is only 1 graphic you HAVE to have on launch day for your podcast.

iTunes requires a 3000 X 3000 sized image less than 500 MB.

- This could be a logo or a graphic for each episode. I like to create a new episode graphic for each episode and repurpose it for Instagram.

iTunes is the most popular podcast platform; you want to be on here. This is the size they need. You can have one graphic and assemble your social media however you want, but you must meet this requirement to be accepted there.

If you want to do more than that, look to a few different tools to make this happen. If you are planning on working with someone or doing this yourself, don't just rob someone else's logo. I like to go to Pinterest and see what's inspiring to me, and I build a "brand board." I'll start adding things that inspire me, colors and images I like. Pick images, stationary, fashion, interiors, and nature landscapes that you are drawn to. You'll likely quickly see colors and designs that seem relevant.

If you want to take a stab at making your own logo, you can use a free tool called Canva to get started. Log in and choose "logo" to get an idea of designs. Just know that since these are templates, they aren't very individualized, and you may start to see familiar logos here since other people may use the same templates.

If this seems outside your skill set, then you can use a website like Fivrr.com that allows you to search logo styles and have someone design for you for \$5. Since this is a \$5 logo, take it with caution, I've gotten great and horrible results doing this.

99Designs is another on-demand graphic design site. You can purchase a logo or whole podcasting package from them for less than \$100. Designers can take your ideas and offer up a variety of designs that you can ask for a few changes on and purchase your final choice.

Another option is to hire a branding specialist. When I have the budget, I'll hire someone for a complete branding package. I hate seeing people waste money on graphics at the start of a project. If you've been creating content and have a website or business, I'd recommend making this investment to get a cohesive look and feel across everything that you are doing.

Social media is another place where people get really, really hung up. You don't need to invest a ton of time in these platforms when getting started. You will eventually need graphics for all the social media that you secure. Profile photos, header graphics, and cover photos change all the time. Check the templates and adjust as these platforms change. Later when we get into launch, we will talk more about that and more about how to use these platforms for your benefit. For now, secure them, and get some basic graphics going for them.



## Sharing your podcast on Social Media

Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and anyplace else that you are planning on sharing your podcast will always have one thing in common. Change. There are constantly free courses helping you hack algorithms, get more followers, and increase engagement. Pay attention to these guides from social media. Take their free webinars and download their guides.

I think you need to know a few things about social media and I'm going to cover it in very general terms in this guide. The bulk of the discussion we will have around social media will be covered when we talk about launching in Chapter 8 - Launching and Chapter 9 - Keeping Your Momentum.

If you want to grow your podcast, creating little villages for people to commune together to discuss your topics is important. Facebook Pages, Facebook Groups, LinkedIn, Instagram, and Twitter are great places to keep the conversations going and they are free. Long term these are things advertisers and sponsors are going to look to in order to decide if partnering with you will be profitable as well.

With the time you've invested in creating this podcast, it's worth the little bit of extra work to create the custom graphics, click publish and share.

Here are a few creative ways you can share vs just a simple title on an image:

- **Audiograms** - These are little snippets of your podcast episode with a graphic.
- **Quotes** - You or your guest say smart things. Highlight those on a separate graphic to share.
- **Images** - Share an image of something that was discussed in the podcast episode.
- **Questions or Surveys** - If there was a topic you centered an episode on, create a graphic to spark discussion. You can survey your audience as well for future topics and guests. You can even ask for recommendations to add to your podcasts.
- **Meet & Go** - Document going to an event. Heading out to meet listeners or creating events around your podcast can provide social interaction.

Get creative with this list! There is no shortage of ways to engage with your podcast community. I know you haven't launched yet, but we are covering this topic so you can start thinking about these opportunities as you are planning what's next. Also, I hope after you launch, this guide will be a great place to come back and glean additional ideas from, too!

Curious about best practices when it comes to securing your name? My rule of thumb is to register your podcast title on any social media platform that you can. Even if you don't use it. If it's available grab it so no one else can use it. Social Media companies will not give you your username if you own the url or have even trademarked your name. Secure it on all channels and verify with your phone number if you can. You can register a name with an email address and hide if you'd prefer, especially if you don't plan on promotion your podcast that way.

You can share your podcast on your social media in any way that works for you. Here are a few ways I've seen podcasts shared and the pros and cons around them.

Dedicated social channels to just the podcast. This is when you've got a specific channel and all you do is share podcast related topics. New Episodes, quotes from the episodes.

**Pro:** This is a great way for people to find, follow and engage in your podcast. It's also clean and can be branded. Ads can easily be tailored and offers can be made. Everything is in one place focused on just the podcast.

**Con:** If you have a strong social media presence, it may be challenging initially to have people move to this channel. It may also become a lot to keep up with depending on the time to have to dedicate to this channel.

Branded Graphics blended into an existing social media feed. The podcast lives on the podcast host and new episodes are shared in an existing social media feed. There is no separate feed for just the podcast.

**Pro:** You aren't managing separate social media channels which means less work. If you have an existing social media following, it's a great way to promote another valuable way you are benefiting those following you.

**Con:** Listeners may struggle to know how to connect unless explicitly instructed to discuss episodes. Also, as episodes progress, it may be more challenging for newer listeners to go back and engage with older content.

I said it above, but I'll say it again, I think it's silly to not have a place that people can land when listening to your podcast. You've put a lot of time and effort to making this happen. Give your listeners a reliable space that you own to have discussions.

Ok let's recap before we move to a technology discussion in the next chapter. You've defined your voice, you know who you want to talk to, you know how you can make money off this thing. You've got a structure for how you want to run your show and how often you want to release episodes. PLUS, you've got a name and secured the social media. NOW let me hold your hand and walk you through the technical side of podcasting and recording. Do you feel it coming together? It's getting real!



# Chapter 6

## The Tech Behind Your Podcast

In a recent Instagram survey, I asked what worries you most about starting your own podcast beyond content and the answer was overwhelmingly the tech. I can understand why that would be. If you join any podcasting or Facebook group, it's a constant question people ask. I'm going to break this down into 3 sections: recording, editing, and distributing.

In each section, I'll share a good - better - best option for you to choose from, based on the amount you have budgeted to invest in your podcast. I'll add some reasons why you may want one over the other, as well as the perceived benefits of each. In addition, I'll share some reasons why you may not need something like this to launch your podcast and when adding it would make sense.

Before we jump into that, I want you to remember that sound quality is important, but it doesn't overshadow what we've discussed up to this point. I've listened to podcasts that have garbage audio because I wanted to hear the message. The goal I've always had is that someone never has to touch the volume, that they can hear everyone consistently, and vocal tics that annoy me are eliminated.

We start with the first step, recording.

## Recording

I like a high end perfectly smooth piece of paper. I can feel the weight, the texture, and know how my favorite pens will work with it. Plus, the possibilities are endless with what I can do with it. Once I write on it, that paper is changed. A lot of factors come into play, like the pen or pencil I choose to write with, as well as how I write. Recording a piece of audio can be like that. All audio is not created equally.

Audio quality can depend on the following factors:

- Environment
- Microphone
- Software
- Editing

In a perfect world, here's what happens: you book time at a soundproof studio. Have your content ready to go when you arrive. The audio editor checks the mic levels, tells you where to position your mouth to the microphone, and coaches you through your session. You flawlessly record your message with no distractions or interruptions. At the end, he edits and tweaks minor things and sends you an audio file to upload to your host.

This is not what the average podcaster is doing.

The average podcaster is finding the quietest room in their house and locking themselves in it.

## Managing your Environment

What makes the perfect room? A quiet, distraction-free space. Ideally with a lock!

The space I record in right now is my 32' travel trailer. While I turn off the fans and, when possible, silence the air conditioner or heater, I'm in a room with breathing humans doing their best to be quiet. I don't hide under blankets or build a fort of pillows. Generally, I've found that my mic is not sensitive enough to pick up the average noises happening. Yes, if someone sneezes, farts, or starts opening a bag of chips, this will show up in my audio.

BUT most people listen to podcasts in their car or phone on a Bluetooth connection. They are using average audio headphones and are happy as long as they can listen without touching the volume knob and hearing too many "likes" or vocal tics.

When we were living in a house, I would record solo podcasts in my bedroom closet. It cut down on any echo because the sound was absorbed with the clothing. It did pick up the sounds of my smacking and breathing more though, but it was quieter, and I had fewer distractions. The sound was different, and I found I needed a lot more editing of my small sounds, but the sound quality was better.

When I was recording with a group, I just sat at my desk in a bedroom. The door was lockable, and I often ended up with a snoring dog next to me. Yes, sometimes you could hear it, but most people have given me the feedback they can't hear it at all. Typically, it's noticed when our podcast cohost or guest points it out. The point being, a quiet room is fine. If you can have a phone conversation in the room and people can hear you, you are likely fine.

If you have an office, access to a conference room you can schedule, or a quiet bedroom, you are likely fine for your podcast. Close the blinds and put your back to the door so you can focus on your thoughts you want to share.

You want a quiet room, but distractions, interruptions, and people will break up your space more than anything. I feel like any time I would sit down to record, my husband would come in and out slamming the door, my daughter would come home from school and want to talk about her day, or my dogs would suddenly need to bark at the wind. The distractions eat way at your thoughts and take more time to edit your podcast.

Once you've located the best spot to record, you need to tell people what you are doing. The people you share the space with need to know you are recording and should respect the fact that you need a quiet time to make this happen. In my house, the evenings are the quiet time so that's the best time to ask the family to mute their games and get their snacks before I start recording.

## What microphone should you buy?

This is one of the most cringey questions I see in the podcast community and I've seen many a thread go sideways trying to tackle this subject. People have a lot of passionate opinions on this, all of which are totally valid. The quality of the microphone is important, but so is the way you use it. People build whole courses on just setting up your microphone.

Something to keep in mind before you start reading this: when you are first getting started, you want good audio quality, but getting the content, environment, and using any mic properly is more important than having the most bomb mic ever.





## Headphones W/ Mic

If you have access to a set of headphones with a mic, record on it and see if the sound is ok in your room. It might be ok to get started. Also, doing this will help you hear and see what your guests will likely go through to get ready for coming on your podcast. This is the low-cost option. An inexpensive set of headphones with a mic is likely less than \$30.

I would not recommend wireless headphones, corded have a better sound because the mic is closer to your mouth where the sound is coming from, and it's not going through Bluetooth. There is an empty static sound that is a total hassle to edit out when you don't adjust this detail with podcast guests. If you don't believe me, record a sample of both and see for yourself.

I want to stop right here before I go on. I recommend that you buy an actual podcast microphone and not just use headphones. If you are passionate about the topic you are going to cover, it deserves a bit of money invested to make it happen right. If you hope to monetize your podcast by selling things, getting sponsors etc., they may only listen to the first few episodes and if the quality is not awesome, it could impact the outcome.

I'm the first person to spend money on stupid things, but my passions deserve a bit more of an investment. People will take you more seriously if you take yourself seriously. You are worth the \$120 investment of a good mic to share your messaging and passion with the world.

**Blue Yeti** – Most commonly used microphone in podcasting.

Here is my two-cents' worth: I'm writing this in 2019. I started podcasting in 2016. I started just using a set of SkullCandy headphones that had a mic, then moved up to a Blue Yeti Mic in 2017, and I've been using it ever since. It's not prevented 15K downloads nearly every month for the past few years. My husband has been running multiple 6-figure businesses using that same mic for his business calls and podcasts. It's fine. In fact, it's a great investment.

This is hands-down the most commonly used microphone in the podcast community. It's an affordable entry level mic ranging between \$115 – \$150. It can plug into any computer, so you can start recording your podcast right away. I haven't run into a piece of software that it doesn't work with. It is light and uncomplicated for travel and it has a bunch of settings for different situations that you might run into throughout your podcast journey.

**Rode** – NT1A

This is a bit more expensive, a high-end mic coming up in the podcast community. I haven't used it, but I've seen it suggested over and over. It is recommended that it be used with a mixer due to its range of options that capture a rich sound. I've not gotten to this level but it's an investment I'm close to making. One of my podcast editing clients has it, and the sound is crisper and clearer than what I'm recording.

## Setting Up Your Microphone

Whatever microphone you choose, it's important you know how to use it.

Before you even buy a microphone, survey the spaces you have access to. Walk around your house or office and find a quiet place where you can be uninterrupted. You aren't just looking for a quiet room, you are also looking for a space that has limited distractions too.

A quiet distraction-free room is so important because as soon as you sit down everything will fall apart. It becomes like Pennywise the clown is standing next to you. There's a fear that a sound will be hard to edit out

I've found in my time working on a podcast that I have moments where I don't want to record, but I have an interview scheduled. Or, I'll have the best idea and my daughter decides it's the perfect time to shave her legs and the sound of the shower shows up. This is not the end of the world, but after editing audio, I know what letting the shower runs sounds like – hardcore background sounds that make it seem like I'm in a tunnel.

In a perfect world, choose a place that has a lock! In a perfect world, your office, conference space, or a quiet bedroom would be ideal. When we were living our home, recording in my closet or our bedroom worked fine. The more challenging part of all of this was to keep my dogs quieted and remind my family that I was recording. We will talk more about managing outside interruptions in the next chapter.

I suspect you'll eventually join a podcast group. Search the group for questions and you'll see a lot of opinions. Like I've done throughout this guide I'm going to share a few but not all the options you have here. There are a lot of podcast tools becoming available. Again, I'm not an expert on all things recording and editing. I am an independent podcaster and much of what I've learned is from YouTube tutorials, reading, and taking a few courses. Your technical background may exceed mine. Your time will be different than mine. Also, things you want to hear (or that bug you) will be different. Should you join a podcast Facebook group, you'll see and hear pros and cons of all these things.

## Software for recording

An episode recording is ultimately an audio file. You need a piece of software to record your voice from the microphone so the recording can be saved as a file. This audio file can be an .mp3, mp4, or .wav file. You can use editing software (covered in the next section) to remove, or change the sound of the recording. This section I'll be talking about the software that you can use to record a podcast.

### Zoom

This is a conferencing platform that allows you to record a meeting. You are able to register for a free account which allows you or you and guests to join a virtual meeting room, click record and make an audio file. Zoom's has a really simple interface that is easy to navigate. You can see your guests using video from your laptop (they would share their camera view). Seeing my guests makes it easier for me to hold conversations, but this is not a requirement of a good podcast.

Guests can join the audio portion of the meeting by calling in on their phone. OR they can connect to the audio using the meeting connection. Both ways they are using a VoIP connection. As a host, I have a microphone and make sure the audio in the meeting is recording using my microphone and not my computer audio. If my guest has a poor internet connection, I'll ask the to call in on the phone line. When the episode (or meeting) is finished, a file is created that you can download (or stored in the cloud on the paid version). The file is stored as an .mp3 or .mp4 depending on how your settings are setup.

I like this tool because it's inexpensive. A year's membership costs less than \$200 for unlimited recording. You can use it for free, but you'll be limited to a 45-minute meeting.

This software will allow you to save your file with separate audio tracks. This is great if a neighbor's dog is barking, and you want to edit it out later.

## QuickTime

Quick time is a free application on both Apple and Windows that allows you to record and playback audio. Using this tool means each party is recording an audio file on their computers and the recording is edited together later. My husband likes his audio to be as crisp as possible and this provides that for him.

This tool provides a one-sided audio file recorded only from your microphone. So if you have a cohost or guest, they need to record on their side and share the file with you later. If you are new to this, it may be something you want to try out before committing to. It's also a good idea to have a pre-screening discussion with your guest or test with your cohost before using it for an episode.

## Zencaster

I use this tool for my solo podcast on occasion. I've not used this for group discussions because I've had such good luck with Zoom. I have a few podcasting friends who swear by it.

This software has a simple interface. After creating an account, you can start recording and easily listen back. You can also add intro / exit music onto the recording. This will allow you to have 1 guest on, and it will record a separate audio track for both you and your guest like Zoom did. Once your episode is done recording, you can access the track right away, add your intro and exit, and the recording is stored until you are ready for it. You can choose to download as an .mp3, mp4, or .wav file.

This tool has a fair amount of preset audio edits on it and intends to provide a clear recording even if the connection is poor for you or your guests.

This is considered a step up from Zoom and is built specifically for podcasters. I've not moved there fully as I've not had troubles with the software I've been using. I've also experienced mixed quality for the recordings I made on my own. Some sound great and others I've re-recorded. Just like anything else, experiment and see what works best for you.

## SquadCast

This is a professional podcasting product. You are able to email out a link for your cohost and guest to join. They record video and audio in a .wav file that is high quality and ensures each separate track is synced to each other. Your recording goes into a library where you can share and organize your files.

I have not had the opportunity to use this software yet. You are limited to 3 people and I have 2 cohosts on my main podcast that has the largest budget, so we are maxed out before we have a guest join.

If it's just you and a cohost on your podcast, this may be a good one to take for a trial. They do offer a trial if you'd like to take it for a spin.

## Anchor

Podcast recording, monetization, and hosting all in one for free.

This tool allows you to click a button and record. You can invite up to 8 guests for a recording. Once your recording is done, you may edit, add audio transitions, and publish your podcast within the tool.

This platform is where your podcast is hosted, distributed and monetized. All of this happens in one place.

So why use anything else?

This is a heated debate in the podcast community. I'm cautious of anything that is free and all in one. This tool has made it super easy for some who are not very technical to create a podcast. Cheers for that. The episodes I've listened to off of this platform are typically (not always) poor audio quality; there is nearly no time spent taking out things that annoy me like smacks, excessive use of vocal tic's and background noise. Yes, I'm being a podcasting snob here, but I have an editing business and spend a lot of time listening to podcast audio.

I think you can have a successful podcast and use Anchor to do it. I think there are easy to use free professional tools that allow you to do a better job making a podcast.

## Editing Your Audio

I like edited audio. I am annoyed and distracted easily. If I hear "like", "um", "so" or any combination of these too many times, I'm just going to start counting the number of times it's said and miss the point of your podcast. Please edit your podcast, or hire me to edit your podcast if you don't want to do it.

I love conversational, non-scripted podcasts. This is a popular style of podcast. It is accomplished by being confident in the topics you are discussing, not by skipping the editing process. This is a reflection of you, your work, and taking the time to check the audio levels and listen back to what you and your guests said is a great way to quality check what you've done.

Funny story, I was listening to a podcast with my husband last week. The intro was very quiet, so we turned up the podcast to hear it. The host started talking and he was so loud we both reached for the volume knob to turn it back down. When the cohost started talking, they were so quiet they sounded like they were yelling from down the hall. The host addressed the audio issue by saying, he doesn't edit the podcast, but the one time he listened he didn't hear anything unusual, so he's never listened again. I looked at my husband with big ol eyes and he said you need to email him and ask him if he's hiring an audio editor.



I hate to tell you that now that you've recorded your podcast, you aren't finished yet. It's time to clean up the file. I wish I could tell you that your podcast will be flawless, but it likely won't. Remember when I told you to listen to other podcasts and be attentive to what bugged you? Now you need to go back and listen for those things and pull them out or fix them the best you can.

There are all kinds of wacky things that happen while you are recording that you may want to clean up. Vocal tics are the most common, but in my time recording I've had everything from interrupting spouses, naked kids, dogs barking, landscapers, and my favorite.... a cat barfing.

Again, this is a starter guide, in the future I'll go in depth on other topics if this guide is well received. Here's a quick overview of what I focus on when editing.

Adobe Audition provides you with a full spectrum of options beyond audacity. I'm currently learning this, and I have an expert helper. This has more tools but a few extra layers of steps to execute on unusual things that come up. You can save presets to come back and automatically apply so that can save you time. This can be a costly investment if you are just getting started, unless you have it with an existing Adobe Creative Suite plan, this may not be something you want to take on when getting started.

If you are an Apple user, Garage Band is another tool you can use, just note you need to import an .mp4 or .wav file to edit audio in it at the point in which I'm releasing this guide. This falls somewhere between Audacity and Audition and has a limited learning curve.

There is a long list of other editing tools you can use; these are the ones I've used and are most commonly used by people I've met while podcasting.

At the end of editing you will have a finished episode. Export it from the editor and save it. From here we'll be publishing.

Note: I create my show notes while I'm editing. My goal is to grab the highlights and log anything I mentioned I would provide in the episode. I also make it a point to look for good quotes I can make into social media graphics. This will save you a ton of time doing it this way and provide listeners with an overview of what to expect too.

## Distributing Your Episodes

This is the part where you actually put your podcast on the internet.

Often when people reach out to me to get help on their podcast, they are starting their research here. It's a good place to start if you are evaluating the costs. I hope you can see how much goes into a podcast long before you get to this point. Again this is a process, it is fun, I do enjoy it, but have you noticed all the purposeful steps come before publishing. If you don't start a podcast at this point, I hope you will at least hug your favorite podcaster and thank them the next time you see them!

Alright your podcast is now an episode, so what do you do with it and how does it get into the ears of the listeners who are dying to hear this? Well first you will upload to a host, then they will distribute it.

So, what is a podcast host? A podcast host is a public place where your file resides so that people can easily access it to listen. Your host will distribute the file to places like iTunes, Spotify, Stitcher and anywhere else on the internet it ends up via your RSS feed. RSS stands for Really Simple Syndication.

Who are reliable podcast hosts?

Simplecast, Blubrry, and Buzzsprout offer very similar services and are constantly working on improving the quality of their reporting. They all work equally hard to simplify the interface that you interact with to upload your podcast and enter show notes into. These have a free trial and have starter packages that range from \$12 - \$15 monthly.

Libsyn, Spreaker and Podbean have plans that start less than \$10 and are also trusted by many podcasters. Not only are they affordable, each is helpful should you need support.

I personally use Libsyn and have had no issues with them. Previously I used SoundCloud and it had fewer features. I migrated to Libsyn in 2018 and have been happy with the service, reporting and experience.

The host will walk you through their setup process. Since each host is different, I won't even attempt to tell you what each one will request. But here is a list of potential things you will need, if not when you register, then you'll need it before you launch.

- Personal / Podcast Bio
- Name of Your Podcast
- Podcast Cover Art
- Podcast Logo
- Introduction Episodes

Watch or read any available tutorials on the hosts best practices for uploading an episode. This will become very routine for you in the future and you will follow this process every time you release a new episode.

Investing a bit of money and time in making the content you are creating better for your audience will pay off in the end. This may sound cheesy, but if you invest the time in putting the finishing touches on your podcast people will be able to tell the difference. All these steps are very purposeful, and none are by accident, so put the time in that reflects how much you care about these topics, guests, and your voice.



## Chapter 7

# Recording Your First Episodes

This is where the magic begins. Also, this is the most terrifying part of this whole process! You are about to record your opinions, voice, and thoughts and share them with the world. I'm sure you've got all kinds of nerves surrounding this moment and I promise you, it's not what you've built it up in your head to be.

You should first be focused on 3 key episodes that I think are beneficial to tackle first and foremost before taking the deep dive. These will sit as your base episodes and they will be the first ones to release prior to your launch so you have a foundation to preview to all those hungry listeners.

### Initial Episode

I recommend you make this episode between 15 - 30 minutes long. As a first-time listener I don't want to invest an hour getting to know what the heck you are going to be doing before I decide if I want to keep listening.

This episode should be short, sweet and to the point. Think of it as meeting someone for the first time. It should go something like this:

Hi, I'm Jamie and this podcast will be about (insert topic). I care about this because (a significant thing that happened). My podcast will be released every (anticipated release day) and each episode will be (the length range you are shooting for). This will be a (solo podcast / interview style / mix of both) podcast. I invite you to join me for future episodes.

You can totally manage that, right? It makes sense, too, right? It's like a speed dating version of your podcast episode.

If you have a podcast cohost it's a good idea to decide who will introduce what as well. This will allow them to get used to both of you talking and having a voice throughout the episodes.

This is the episode you will record last. You will record the next episode first.

## Introduction Episode

Recently on NetFlix they brought back one of my favorite childhood stories: The Dark Crystal. This beloved childhood movie of mine was made into a series taking viewers back in time to learn how the world of the Dark Crystal came to be. The backstory. I'm a sucker for a good backstory movie or show.

You get to star in your very own backstory in this episode. WHOO! During this episode you'll be telling the story in depth why this topic has stirred such a passion in you that you are dedicating the time to make full-fledged episodes. This deep dive should allow your listeners to connect with you and get to know what is driving your desire to share. This is your opportunity to be long winded, and let your passion come out.

While this is your backstory and your passion, this episode should still allow listeners to connect with you. Remember back to English class, you want to cover the who, what, why and how that got you to the point that you are recording this. Not logistically per se, but how you arrived mentally at the place you are wrestling, teaching or sharing the topic you are going to be discussing.

If you aren't accustomed to sharing this story imagine the interview legend Barbra Walters (man I'm really dating myself with these examples) is sitting down to interview. What answers would you give her if she was asking you about your passions?

Not comfortable talking to yourself? My husband struggled with that as well. We sat down and came up with a series of things he wanted people to know about who he was and why he had decided to make this podcast. I read the questions back to him like an interview. We practiced a few times and his on-again-off-again cohost was able to ask the questions so he could do this episode.

I recommend recording this episode first. You will likely record it once, relisten, realize you have too many nerves and want to re-record. Talking about your story is much easier than anything else you are about to do, so give yourself the time to work out the kinks. Go back and read chapter 1 if you need to. Book some time with me if you want to review this 1-on-1 for an hour, too. It's ok to start with a script or outline and work your way through it until it feels right.



Also, if you have a cohost, it will be up to you if each of you wants to dedicate individually or if you want to share a collective story. It's ok to have more episodes than less. I was really excited about a podcast that came out 2 years ago by someone I'd followed for a long time. I learned so much about her in this episode that I never knew. Her podcast co host was new to me, I had no idea how they met, I was naturally curious how this all came together. I was happy to listen to both their stories in episodes two and three and an origin story as their fourth episode.

Again, your podcast going forward will be really focused on topics, guests and expanding on this topic. Connect people to you, so they know they can trust you, and that you really get it. Feed them the answers to what experiences have brought you to this point of passion on this subject.

This episode should be the standard episode length you anticipate releasing regularly. It should also have an intro and exit to it as well. Again, I would record this first even if you need a few tries to get it right.

## First Actual Episode

Ok you have a solid episode under your belt with the introduction. Now we are recording your first actual episode. This is the vision, this is what you are actually planning to do going forward. I'm sure you are thinking what do I do now?

Well we already talked about this, so you can revisit Chapter 1. This is where the structure of your episodes comes into play. Remember this chart?

Intro > Episode Introduction > Introduction > Discussion > The Point > Close

Episode Introduction > Intro > Introduction >> The Point > Discussion > Close

Here is the flow of my collaborative podcast:

- Pre-recorded podcast intro plays
- One of us intros - Welcome to another episode of Planner Girl Chatter. This is XXX and I'm here with my lovely cohosts > They introduce themselves
- Today we are talking about > We introduce the topic
- Conversation > Banter > Rabbit Holes
- Bring it back in to the topic > The cycle repeats a few times
- We recap what just happened
- Catchy close!
- Pre-Recorded podcast exit plays

This is in fact where the rubber meets the road. You will fall into a natural flow of your podcast as time goes on and this is what people will come to expect. It's ok to change it out if you don't like the flow.

I have a few standard questions I like to ask guests when we have them on. It kicks the nerves out for me and puts me in the groove of recording. It's almost like asking "how ya been" when you are visiting with someone you know. Having a few of these as a fall back can also fill awkward pauses in conversation.

I recommend recording this episode second. Follow up with the recording your initial intro episode. Once you've done your back story, then this first actual episode you'll be able to adjust any minor things that you couldn't foresee covering. Like if you planned on only doing 30-minute episodes but realize talking for an hour is no issue, you can now make that adjustment to the script. Also, you are more confident now that you know you've told your personal story and recorded your first episode.

You should be getting really pumped at this stage. You can start hearing your voice coming together. Pause for a moment and realize this is executing the vision, and that this podcast vision is possible, and you can do it.

## Creating Your Intro / Exit of Your Podcast

So, no one told you life was gonna be this way <clap><clap><clap><clap><clap>.

Let's face it, we probably aren't going to create something as iconic as the Friend's theme. This massive 90s' hit that's made a massive comeback has a catchy intro song by the Rembrandts called "I'll be there for you". The song was perfect, it set the tone for the show and got you ready to settle in and visit with your "friends". Your intro should give the same feeling.

I would not tackle an intro until AFTER you've recorded the 3 episodes we just discussed. Because you basically have no idea what your show is until after you've recorded a few episodes. Your podcast is starting to take shape and your personality should start to shine through.

An intro is typically comprised of a piece of music followed by a description of the show that sets the tone for what people should get ready for. This should be general because you are going to record this 1 time and use it over and over again. Some people will take the music they choose and overlay it on a description of each episode and the title of their podcast. It creates extra work for me, so I recorded this once and after editing an episode, add it to the beginning.

This is a great time to sit down and write a script. You can be funny, clever, to the point, you can even just ready the show name and set up what your podcast is about. Keep it less than 30 seconds ideally. When I write an intro, I will say it out loud a few times before I record it.

Note: Keep in mind the listeners you hope to attract. I am a picky listener. I don't want to hear 2-minute description of your passion. I'm already listening to your podcast episode. I want to hear what we are talking about this week. If you are releasing weekly, I don't need the intro episode at the beginning of each new podcast. Short and sweet 15 - 30 seconds will do it.

Your exit will depend on your objective. On my solo podcast this is where I share how people can find me as a reminder that I offer podcast services. On my collaborative podcast I just end it with a snippet of music. Just like ending a great phone call or meeting, invite them back, and thank them. If you wanted to make an offer or ask them to take steps after the episode to engage with additional content in the episode itself leave the exit to close the show.

Keep in mind where people listen to your episodes. They may be at work, driving down the highway, cleaning their house, or even working out. I would love to think that people are intently listening and taking notes, and some people may do that. In the lives we live today, it's just not very likely. I like creating a beginning and end that gets people ready to listen and leaves people glad they took time out of their day to invest in the content I've created for them.

Where do you find the music for your podcast? I've found the most options for high quality audio on a site called Audio Jungle. I paid for my podcast music personally. I'm ok paying people to do things they are good at. They worked hard to put this together and I'd like to pay them. Music starts at \$1 a track and can go up to thousands of dollars. You need to renew your license each year. An episode is considered 1 project, so the standard license is all you need.

You can find free music, too. I've used Free Music Archive and the YouTube Audio Library to find music for intros. Pay attention to the licensing for the music you choose. Podcast music typically falls under a royalty free Creative Commons License. You only need to give the artist credit to use their music. Read the license for whatever site you choose and follow it. Do this to be a fair person in the world, not because you "might get caught" chances are no one is coming after you for this but be a good member of the content creation community and follow the license guidelines.

On that note: You should never, ever play a snippet of a song in your podcast. This is a great way to get sued, banned from iTunes, or worst of all lose the respect of your audience. It doesn't matter how much you want to play this great part of a song you love that fits perfectly into your segment, don't do it.

You may have downloaded this book and never listened to any of my podcasts or met me personally. So, let me introduce myself. My name is Jamie. I have a gift for gab; some would say I never shut up. I'm naturally curious (also nosey). I'm an extravert, and I've spent nearly 20 years as a sales person, including door-to-door sales. Not only do I love public speaking, I have had a lot of training on how to ask open ended interview style questions.

Now that is a lot about me. I share this because you are not me. I don't expect you to be me. I do hope you will leverage the knowledge I'm about to share with you on finding your comfort zones inside of being you. Being a podcaster means you are a storyteller, teacher, interviewer, fact finder, and curious person.

I would be remiss to not mention this. As you are going through this process, don't be a character. Before you record, relax and plan to speak your mind. Don't lie or make up stories. Do your best not to exaggerate. Tell your stories, not other people's. This is your opportunity to spotlight you.

Let people meet your authentic self. If this goes well, maybe they will get to meet you in real life, and you'll be able to see you. I promise that if you fall into character and become a personality you'll regret it. I enjoy sitting down with someone and knowing they know me. I share from my life and things that are happening in real time. When something bad happens, my podcast folks know about it. I love that I've created a space about our relationship where I can show up my messy self and be accepted. Just be you.

It's natural to want to get it right the first time, to feel like you have all the answers, and to expect things will go flawlessly every time. I mess up interviews, say incorrect things, cut people off mid-sentence and the list of mess ups goes on. Sometimes an interview or topic goes in a totally different direction than I anticipated. This doesn't mean it's a bad episode, it just means you are human.

Recording the conversations you are having already is hands down the best part of this whole process. I love that I've got a space to express my opinions, share my life, and do so with cohosts, and guests. Bringing others' lives and experiences to an audience of people on this platform is extremely rewarding, and I don't see myself stopping anytime soon.

This is what you are doing; this is what you are signing up for. If you've just read this guide up to this point and not taken any action you can start doing that now. I'm 7 chapters in and I've given you all you need to get started.

If you have too many ideas and they are just swirling around in your head and you'd like to talk them through at this point, invest a bit of time in your project with me. I build all my packages for clients around their needs. Don't hesitate to reach out. If you've got a heavy story, a lot of content to cover, or if you are just worried your message is muddled and you need clarity, I'm here for you. I don't always want to hear more content, I want to hear good content executed in a way that is easy to consume and helpful. For additional resources, or work with me in the future go to [planherpodcast.com](https://planherpodcast.com).



## Chapter 8

# Launch

Episodes are recorded and edited. Show notes are ready. Logo is made, social media is set up, when do you tell the world about this? On launch day.

Launch day varies based on how you are interacting with the world today. Before I make any recommendations let me first explain the podcast submission process.

Fun fact, your podcast will already be published for weeks prior to this date. HA HA HA! I bet you didn't see that coming.

So a few things you need to know about podcasts. Since they are distributed via RSS feed they spread over time. As a new podcaster, you will not be everywhere immediately. Upload at a minimum that intro episode and get it out there in the world. It's fine to release all 3, no one will know they are there until you tell them.

I can't urge you enough to submit to iTunes. Your RSS feed needs to be submitted to iTunes for approval and they are not quick. iTunes is the biggest (and worst with any amount of detail on reporting) podcast distribution outlet. You want to be on iTunes. Typically you need to create an iTunes account if you don't have one already, and manually submit your RSS feed. It may take a day or 3 weeks for your podcast to be accepted. Also a lot of other podcast networks use iTunes as a RSS feed aggregator. This means they pick up your show on their network (or app) because you exist on iTunes.

Check the places you listen to podcasts to see if you show up there by searching for yourself. I like being on Spotify, Google Play, and iTunes. Those were important to me. Your listeners will tell you if you are missing a platform. We weren't showing up on Stitcher, so I submitted manually, but I didn't know that existed there. This is a listener preference and easy to accommodate by following their guidelines and submitting your RSS feed.



This submission process is only delayed the first time you are submitting podcasts. Once your RSS feed is established, new episodes will be automatically published and available within an hour of release on most platforms after you've uploaded to your host.

Once your podcast is live, you can set a date to share it with the world. You can choose a significant date to you like an anniversary to your business or make it a big splash. I would share it within 2 weeks of everything coming alive. You don't want to delay this because you'll lose your momentum for new episodes etc.

If you have less than 2,499 followers, document the process of starting your podcast so they know it's coming. Get them excited and bring them along in the journey with you. They can be the best critics when you need feedback on your art. Ask them what topics they'd like to hear from you. Prime them for the fact that this is coming and get them invested in listening as they wonder if you'll mention them or use their suggestion.

2500 - 10,000 followers, you've likely been doing this for a while, you are making purposeful content already. Use the fact that people are paying attention to you to your advantage. Since you are more comfortable with campaigns, build one out for this. Again, just don't build a launch day campaign without first making sure your podcast is showing up places that people listen. This should be part of your regular routine and giving you one more thing to share with folks.

10K+ followers. First share this book on your social media and tell people how amazing I am. Yes, I'm being serious. You have to be a bit more strategic because people will stalk you. Someone I follow who has over 250K followers just hinted she was thinking of starting a podcast and the world found it in less than a few hours. Within 24 hours she had over 500 reviews. You already know you can't control this. Tell people it's coming, but before you start a launch campaign, make sure your RSS feed is everywhere.

Regardless of what size audience you have today, recruit a few friends and people who you've shared this journey with to share your podcast with the world. They won't know about it if you don't tell people about it. Having a small launch team can make a big impact on who sees your podcast. Since your podcast is out there, send a link to the people who you think would do a good job sharing and ask them to listen to your episodes. Let them know when you plan on announcing it to the world and ask if they could share and tag you. Social proof that your podcast is worth the time goes way further than paid ads.

Can I ask something of all of you? I've shared all this good knowledge with you that I've learned. If you are reading this, please share that on your social media so I can feel validated as an expert and so others know about me. Don't keep me a secret. I'd love to know that this book is making a difference and see the impact it's having out there in the world.

I like numbers, so when I check how things are going, I like seeing my podcast numbers gradually increase as I release episodes. I'm happy if I've got a 10% increase month-over-month in numbers. You may be looking for a lot more growth based on your goals. Again, this journey will be different for everyone based on how you've been interacting with the world today. Don't be bummed out if you aren't an overnight success. This is a lot of work with a slow payoff.

Once you've officially launched to the world it's time to celebrate! You've put your stamp on something. You've made this happen. The heavy lifting is done, and you are now a podcaster. Congratulations, and welcome to the club.



## Chapter 9

# Staying Excited About Podcasting After Launch

I've been podcasting now for nearly 4 years. I've at times wanted to produce more episodes and had other times where I felt like I have nothing to say. When you stack on the challenges of coordinating guests and cohost schedules, there are times you ask why am I doing this. I'll share a few ways to keep that fire in your belly that you have had up to this point.

I have a pretty engaged big-to-me audience for my podcast. They participate in Facebook Groups, Instagram, and I've had the opportunity to be a part of many of their lives at live events. I strongly encourage you to build a community around whatever you are doing. Make a space for people to land. Find the cheerleaders.

You will grow to rely on this community for picking topics, guiding the conversations, and so much more. They are going to help you because they are listening. I like picking topics and discussing them with everyone that is listening. You are the person trying things out, learning about new things and using your platform to help them get access to people they want to hear from. You are like a really great connected friend!

Over time you will experience a lot of things related to building this community around what you are doing. Wherever your community resides should be like a hangout place to catch all the things, and you are the host of the party. I like Facebook groups for this purpose, adding episodes and letting people bring their thoughts to one space gives all of us food for thought, things to laugh about and ideas for upcoming episodes.

I have had the pleasure of leveraging my Patreon and public speaking at other people's events to be able to meet a lot of people listening to my podcast Planner Girl Chatter. In fact Plan Her Podcast (formerly Caffeinated Possibilities) was born from the requests of listeners asking me to talk more about goals, pursuing passions and sharing podcasting, too, with them.

I have people who send me messages to make suggestions on open ended questions I ask. I've had companies send me products to try out because they heard me talking about it on the podcast. I've even had people send my kiddos gifts because I mentioned they liked something. The world is a good place, and the kind people keep you motivated and encouraged that you are adding value. I often say, I'll keep doing this if I'm providing positives for at least 1 person. That makes me happy and I'm thrilled to hear positive feedback...like all humans do.

The negative. The assholes will find you. My husband gave me the best food for thought before I got started doing any of this. He said, "If you choose to share your life people will hate you. Are you ready for women to be jealous of you and be mean and catty? Are you ready to endure that, and can you let the happy voices rise to the top?" He is right on the money. While I've had some of the greatest experiences because of podcasting and building communities, I've also had negative ones. Human nature dictates these are the ones that stick with you.

I've learned to step back from social media. I have trusted friends who will listen to me vent and help me flip back to positive mode when things inevitably happen. I've adopted an attitude that I can't make everyone happy. The only person I'm responsible for bringing joy and happiness to this world is 1 person... ME!

Now tossing on rose colored glasses doesn't fix anything. Words hurt, actions hurt worse. My mom is the other person in my life that gives excellent advice. She will adopt you if you do not have someone like her. She always tells me, "Have your pity party. You get the day. Tomorrow you've got to dust yourself off and move on." I can't tell you how many hard days in life overall that I've reminded myself of that. If you don't ever start a podcast, this should be your take away because none of us are immune to this.

She's also told me I have to own up when I screw up. I'm not perfect and when I've made mistakes, as you will, as well. Own them, apologize, and learn from them. Over time you'll navigate, you'll stop to google things, or you'll just get used to being the less informed one on the podcast.

Again, overall these are good experiences. People want to hear from smart people on topics they care about. I'm confident you'll navigate and not lose steam. If you are comfortable with it, allow your platform to be a space to share all sides of the podcast journey. This is a powerful platform, and I'd recommend treating it carefully and pulling inspiration from all the things happening in your world.

In the first 30 days after launching your podcast, you are going to be sharing your thoughts and people will be listening. Make sure you are asking them on social media what topic they would like you to hear and explore. Take those ideas in and don't discount them. While this topic may be something that you don't plan on discussing that doesn't mean you will always feel that way.

Don't over complicate tracking these ideas, use the spreadsheet I provided you to add them to a list. When you run out of ideas, or can't think of what's next, leverage that list to get things done! Capture the bare minimum of the idea and jot a little note down, this will allow you a jumping off point to get started when it is time.

I've found times when I needed to fill in an episode as well because of a guest cancelling, a busy week where an episode is due, and this list is my go-to for topics I could cover. It's ok to ask on social media "What would you like to hear from on an upcoming episode?" This is a great way to cover topics that are relevant to your listeners and give them something they want to hear from you.

Finding time to record regularly should become part of your routine. When I'm really on top of things, or if I know I have the foresight for a busy season coming up, I will record episodes for a month on 1 day and edit them on another day. You can upload episodes to your host in advance and set them to publish at a later date. This may help the process be more manageable.

I like having guests on my podcast. I'm always on the lookout for people doing something new to me or launching something that I want to be able to share. The oddest thing that I've found about asking guests to come on my podcast is that they go through all the emotions I discussed back in chapter one. I've had popular YouTubers, regular instagrammers on and they can be just as shy as someone who you met that is cool and leads a fairly non documented life. Don't pick guests just on follower counts. There are awesome voices out there doing really cool things that can bring insight and value to you and your audience.

It's inevitable that you will miss an episode here and there. I try to treat this like cancelled plans with friends and get it uploaded as possible. I let people know it is delayed. Don't feel like you have to wait for the next week, or that you need to apologize. Just release it and move on; things happen as you are growing and even once you have a steady routine.

**Podfading** - When your podcast slowly but surely has less and less episodes eventually dying a slow death with months and months passing with no new episodes. I had this happen recently. We came off a busy summer and both my podcast cohosts had packed schedules with no time to record, and no back up episodes. We had a discussion on it, and we are back on track now. We had to almost double down with each other and commit to recording again. This is a time commitment that can take up 6 - 20 hours a month of your time depending on how you run your podcast. The commitment is real, be realistic with yourself.



Real talk to close this thing out: You will encounter family members, friends, and in the future strangers who don't believe in you. There are people that will not understand why you are podcasting and sharing your message. These people will question your expertise and encourage you to stay small. Don't listen to them.

When you grow, and trust me, this process will require lots of growth from you, you will make people uncomfortable!! You are purposefully disrupting the way things are going in your life and the lives of people around you. Change becomes a mirror that reflects back on other people and makes them have to consider what they are doing with their lives. This will not go away.

Don't stay small to accommodate others and make them comfortable. If you are ready to step out from the crowd, put the time and effort into this project, build it and monetize it, create a community of people around you that love.

# LET YOUR VOICE BE HEARD!

They can keep their Netflix binge series and incessant scrolling. They can be caught up in the lives of the Kardashians and worried about what the neighbors are doing. You may want that, too, all of them will be there.

Those little time sucks keep you away from living out your purpose and prevent you from pursuing your passion. They keep you small. They keep you distracted. Make a commitment to yourself that you are worth investing time in you the way you do in every fictional character on every Netflix, so you are waiting for new seasons on.

I can guarantee if you prioritize this, you will find the time, courage, and endurance to continue doing this. You've been given gifts and a perspective that you are being drawn to share. It's time for you to get started and make this happen.

I'm not here to convince you that you should start a podcast, but you just read my guide to podcasting so presumably you are interested. I've given you more than enough detail in this guidebook for you to make the podcast of your dreams this possible. You've got good-better-best options, too, and I've shared what is working for me, who at the moment has the #2 Craft podcast on iTunes.

Use this book as a template to get launched on your own. Come back to the chapters and review as you need it. If you need more help or if you want to work with me to help guide your process or have a bunch of this done for you, come to my website, fill out the form and let's work together!

If you use this book to launch your podcast tag me in your social media so I can share, I invite you to come on my podcast and gush about what you are doing. I've helped many people get started podcasting and I'd love to help you beyond this book as well. To find additional resources, or work with me in the future go to [planherpodcast.com](http://planherpodcast.com).

You are now a part of my community of podcasters and I'm here for you for all the ups and downs. I can't wait to hear what you create!